

THE IMPACT OF ADOPTING A CLIL APPROACH ON EFL LEARNERS READING SKILLS IN A CATALONIAN SCHOOL.

Final Degree Project

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Abstract

In the last few years, an increasing number of teachers and schools have been introducing CLIL initiatives in Catalan schools. In most of schools, however, English is still taught as a foreign language following a scheduled timetable which limits the opportunities to be in contact with the foreign language in a different context. The purpose of this study is to analyse the impact on learners' reading skills EFL learners who are involved in a CLIL project and test if there is a significant advantage over those students who are not involved in CLIL. This empirical study compares the results in the reading tests of two groups of fifth Primary graders. One group was involved in a CLIL project (1 hour a week in addition to its EFL lessons) and the the other one was learning English as foreign language. The main aim of this research project is to find out whether CLIL programmes have an impact on the learners' reading skills in English, thus humbly contributing to enrich the existing literature on the benefits of CLIL.

Key words: CLIL, foreign language, EFL, reading skills, Primary Education.

Resum

En els últims anys, un gran nombre de docents i escoles han estat introduint programes AICLE a les escoles catalanes. A la majoria d'escoles, però, només s'ensenya anglès com a llengua estrangera, la qual cosa, limita les oportunitats d'estar en contacte amb la llengua estrangera en un context diferent. L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és analitzar si els infants milloren en les seves habilitats lectores i comprovar si existeix un avantatge significatiu respecte els alumnes que només estudien anglès com a llengua estrangera. L'estudi empíric que us presento a continuació, compara els resultats obtinguts en dues proves de comprensió lectora. A les proves hi van participar dos grups d'alumnes de cinquè de d'Educació Primària. Un dels grups seguia un programa AICLE (1 hora a la setmana i , a més aprenia anglès coma llengua estrangera); l'altre grup només estudiava anglès com a llengua estrangera. L'objectiu principal d'aquest projecte d'investigació és esbrinar si els programes AICLE tenen un impacte en les habilitats lectores en llengua anglesa dels alumnes. Així doncs, humilment intentaré contribuir a la literatura existent sobre els beneficis de l'AICLE.

Paraules clau: AICLE , llengua estrangera, anglès com a llengua estrangera, habilitats lectores, Educació Primària.

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1. Introduction

In the last decade and, as part of the commitment to foster plurilingualism in the school context, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in Spain has undergone a rapid growth (García, 2012). Schools in Catalonia are rapidly implementing CLIL programmes in order to provide the learners with more hours of contact with the target language in the belief that they will improve their level in the target language.

The issue of how CLIL may affect the language learning skills of the learners has generated continuous concern and that is why research on CLIL is being conducted in several European countries. However, nowadays, most current CLIL programmes are still experimental and there are few sound research-based empirical studies that can prove and demonstrate that CLIL contributes to improve the learners' language skills. According to Dalton – Puffer (2008) one of the aspects that benefits the most in CLIL programmes is that of receptive skills. Analysing the situation, I considered that I could humbly contribute to the present studies on CLIL by checking the impact of adopting a CLIL approach on EFL primary learners' reading skills.

The main objective of this project is to analyse the impact on the learners' reading skills involved in a CLIL project and find out if there is a significant advantage over those students at the same grade who are not involved in a CLIL programme. This empirical study compares two groups of fifth graders who are between ten and eleven years old. One group was exposed to CLIL (in addition to its EFL lessons) and the other one was only learning English as foreign language. The EFL learners followed conventional EFL lessons while the CLIL pupils were exposed to one hour a week of CLIL instruction in addition to their EFL lessons.

I chose this topic because I am really interested in this approach, quite new to researchers and teachers. I also consider that my final degree project could humbly contribute and complement positively to the few research studies on Primary CLIL learners exposed to CLIL.

The development of this research project has taken approximately a year. It started at the beginning of May 2013 when I chose the topic and I wrote my final degree proposal. As soon as it was accepted, I started gathering information in order to write a theoretical framework related to the topic. During this period of time, I also designed and created reading comprehension tests which I later administered to one group of fifth graders in each school. At the end of the academic year, I had the opportunity to collect the data and to analyse it in order to reach some conclusions.

Firstly, I will start this paper presenting a theoretical framework where I define CLIL and its main principles. As CLIL is about learning content and language at the same time, and because this projects aims at language development, I have also included in this section information related to Foreign Language Acquisition. I have only concentrated on the reading skill. The second part of this project, the study, includes the explanation of the research method that I used to develop the practical part of this research, the participants, instruments, data collection time and data analysis. Thirdly I will present the results obtained. Finally, I will discuss the results and state my conclusions on the impact of CLIL on the reading skills of young learners.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)

2.1.1 Defining CLIL

The term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was defined and launched by UNICOM, University of Jyväskylä and the European Platform for Dutch Education in 1994 (Darn, 2006:2). The acronym itself was defined by David Marsh, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in 1994, and explained as follows: “CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language” (Marsh, 1994: cited in Garcia, 2012: 210). This means that, in the teaching and learning process, there are two objectives, one linked to learning the particular subject matter (such as science, history or geography), and the other related to the foreign language, which is not the mother tongue of the learners, and that becomes the means for learning content.

The Eurydice report states that “achieving this twofold aim calls for the development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language. This implies a more integrated approach to both teaching and learning, requiring that teachers should devote special thought not just to how languages should be taught, but to the educational process in general”. (Eurydice, 2006:7)

Even though the term was coined in 1994, the practice of CLIL has been around for a long time with its roots in immersion education from the 1970s and 1980s. “CLIL is closely related to and shares some elements of a range of educational practices such as Bilingual Education, Immersion or Content – Based Instruction” (Coyle, 2010).

The concept of integration between the language and the subject or thematic curriculum areas is fundamental to understand how CLIL might differ in emphasis from these developments.

Coyle (2010) points out that CLIL is not a form of language education or subject education and that it is an innovative fusion of both. CLIL is an educational approach which responds to a wide range of educational and contextual demands. CLIL in many contexts is considered to be a solution to the limited amount of hours of the foreign language instruction in the curriculum. Integrating content and language increases the number of contact hours with the language and provides more exposure to the foreign language which, as will be explained in section 2.2 is one of the necessary catalysts for Language acquisition to occur. Garcia and Rubio (2012:210) defined that this method can be put into practice by the FL teacher using cross- curricular content or by the subject teacher using the foreign language as the language of instruction.

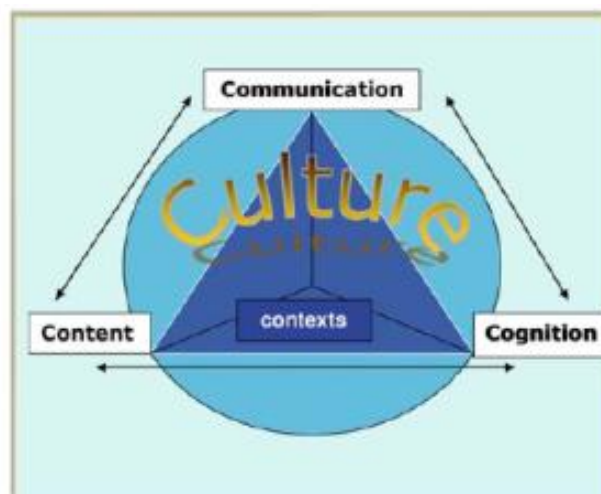
2.1.2 Main principles

Although research tends to indicate that CLIL benefits the students in both content and language subjects, the methodological resources and the guidance available to the teachers are still limited. So far, the 4C's Framework has been the most common theoretical guidance for planning CLIL lessons. In 1999, Do Coyle developed the 4Cs model to support CLIL pedagogy. According to Do Coyle (2006) , an effective CLIL lesson combines elements of content (subject matter) , communication (language) , cognition (thinking) and culture (awareness of self and 'otherness').

On the one hand, **content** refers to the progression in knowledge, skills and understanding that students do related to specific elements of a defined curriculum. On the other hand, **communication** is about using language to learn whilst learning to use the language. The term **cognition** refers to thinking skills which link concept formation (abstract and concrete), understanding and language. Finally, the concept of **culture** refers to the exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, which deepen awareness of otherness and self.

From this perspective, the 4Cs model is seen as a holistic approach built on the following principles (Coyle, 2006:14):

- 1) Content matter is not only about acquiring knowledge and skills, it is about the learners constructing their own knowledge and developing skills.
- 2) Content is related to learning and thinking (cognition). To enable the learner to construct the content, it must be analysed for its linguistic demands
- 3) Thinking processes (cognition) need to be analysed for their linguistic demands.
- 4) Language or communication needs to be learned and it is related to the learning context, learning through that language, reconstructing the content and its related cognitive processes. This language needs to be transparent and accessible.
- 5) Interaction in the learning context operates through the medium of a foreign language.
- 6) The relationship between cultures and languages is complex. Intercultural awareness is fundamental to CLIL. Its rightful place is at the core of CLIL.



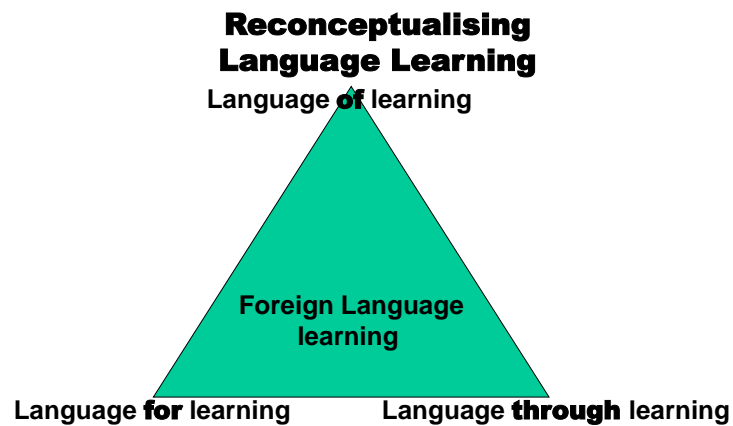
The 4Cs framework for CLIL (Coyle, 2005).

Coyle (2006:15) considered that 'for CLIL to be effective all 4Cs must be carefully considered in the planning and conceptualisation stages of the teaching as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the learning. Whilst content is the starting point, the effectiveness of what follows relies on the interconnectedness of other Cs'.

However, a 4Cs teaching framework requires a re-conceptualisation of language learning towards an integrated model which actively involves the learner in using and developing the language.

- Language OF Learning: It refers to the language of content. This language is based on an analysis of the language needed for learners to access basic concepts and skills related to the subject or topic. The teacher must analyse the content, cognition and culture to find the language of learning.
- Language FOR learning: It refers to the vocabulary students' need to communicate and express what they are learning. For instance, it is the language a student needs to discuss, clarify, etc. Teacher must give support for this language in CLIL classrooms adding language for discussion, for effective group work skills, for research skills, etc.
- Language THROUGH learning: It refers to the language students generate. Teachers must apply it by collecting it and going into it again in following lessons.

All these aspects are necessary to reconceptualise language learning, and as we can observe in the following pyramid they are all equally important for foreign language learning in a CLIL programme:



2.2 Foreign Language acquisition and CLIL

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the pillars of CLIL, is the learning of a Foreign Language.

According to Saville (2006:2) “Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language”.

A second language refers to an additional language, that is not the mother tongue of the learners, but that is the environmental language. Saville (2006:4) defined that it is typically an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other purposes. This term contrasted with the concept of foreign language in the sense that the foreign language is not widely used in the learner’s immediate social context.

This means that, for instance, when learners leave the class there isn't a situation to practise the language because it isn't the environmental language.

Content and Language Integrated Learning offers the required conditions for language acquisition to occur, it allows youngsters to use another language naturally, in such a way that they soon forget about the language and only focus on the learning topic. However, CLIL does not guarantee the success in Language Acquisition (Navés,2010) unless several important aspects are fulfilled. Muñoz (2007) identified and described three key aspects of second language that are needed for effective language learning in CLIL contexts: exposure to the input, processing the input, and output.

1. Exposure to the input

Research has shown that learners acquire languages basically from the input they receive. Input refers to the exposure learners have to authentic language in use. Spada and Lightbown (2006:28) state that learners only acquire languages if they are exposed to abundant input. This type of input should be in the words of Krashen (1985) , comprehensible input, which is language just beyond the competence of the learner which provides the ideal conditions for acquisition to happen. Krashen also admitted that comprehensible input is necessary but that is not a sufficient condition for acquisition. Muñoz (2007:18) points out that input should satisfy other conditions, in addition to comprehensibility and quantity. She said that input should also be authentic and varied, like when we learn our first language, to guarantee that it can be used for communicative purposes.

2. Processing input

Input does not simply enter the brain as the learner is exposed to it. If that was true, then acquisition would almost be instantaneous. Learners filter input; they possess internal processors that act on the input and only part of the input makes its way into the developing system. In Muñoz's words (2007), "when input is processed, the learners' linguistics system changes, without them even being conscious of it".

The part of input that learners process is generally called intake, a term first coined by Corder (1967).

According to Van Patten (1996) intake is the subset of filtered input. It is the input that has been processed in some way by the learner during the act of comprehension. Intake is not synonymous with internalized language. Instead, intake is the data made available for further processing once the input has been processed.

3. Language production (output)

According to Muñoz (2007) the last essential component of learning is production, which constitutes the output of language learning. This requisite was defended by Swan and Lapkin (1995) by their Output hypothesis. According to them, a teaching methodology which only provides input and doesn't demand production from the learners is weak. Apart from giving the learner ample opportunities by making the input more understandable, learners need opportunities to practice the target language with different purposes and aims at their level of language competence. Muñoz (2007: 20) states that output gives the learners two principle benefits. On the one hand, production gives the learners the possibility of choosing the most appropriate form and, in context of formal learning, the most accurate form and on the other hand, production can also make the learners aware of their errors and motivate correction.

2.3 Language outcomes of CLIL Education: the receptive skills.

According to Dalton – Puffer (2008), under CLIL conditions certain aspects of language competence are developed more than others. Table 1 below, taken from Dalton-Puffer (2008), shows areas where clear gains are expected with areas that are not affected by CLIL.

Table 1. Language competencies favourably affected or unaffected by CLIL

Favourably affected	Unaffected or Indefinite
Receptive skills	Syntax
Vocabulary	Writing
Morphology	Informal/non-technical language
Creativity, risk-taking, fluency, quantity	Pronunciation
Emotive/affective outcomes	Pragmatics

In a CLIL lesson, all four skills are combined but as is shown in the table above, the receptive skills (listening and reading) are within the favourably affected. As I mentioned and described in the previous part, a good CLIL programme put in practise three key aspects in order to ensure language acquisition. Input and particularly, comprehensible input, has a lot of importance in CLIL sessions and according to Christiane Dalton – Puffer (2008), this is the main reason why learners who are involved in CLIL programmes can obtain better competence in listening and reading.

2.4 Reading in CLIL

Out of the 4 basic language skills, reading is meant to be an essential skill in CLIL and promoting reading comprehension is considered highly important in CLIL programmes (Wolff, 2005). According to an article posted on the British Council web page ⁽¹⁾ (2006), CLIL assumes that teachers are able to exploit opportunities for language learning and considers that the best and most common opportunities arise through reading texts. For this reason, reading resources are the most used in CLIL sessions together with the oral inputs. According to Hellekjær (1996) CLIL teaching forces students to train their reading skills. This because the students will get stuck when trying to read textbooks in their CLIL subjects if they read it the same way they read their textbook in their English subject. For teachers this opens up for teaching students reading-and word-handling strategies. CLIL also provides the students with other text types that they are not used to in their regular EFL class, so CLIL subject forces students to read in a different way. By reading for example authentic texts, students are required not only to understand information, but to interpret and evaluate it as well (Brinton, 1989).

CLIL also draws on the lexical approach, encouraging learners to notice language while reading. Moreover, Wolff (2005) considers that reading texts is essential to acquire knowledge in the content subject.

Even though the reading skill has been considered one of the most important and successful ones in the CLIL approach, very few studies have focused their attention on the reading outcomes of CLIL (Pérez Cañado, 2012)

(1) www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/content-language-integrated-learning

3. Study

3.1 Objective and hypothesis

As I have already said in the introduction, the main objective of this project is to analyse the impact on learners' reading skills involved in a CLIL project and find out if there is a significant advantage over those students at the same grade who are not involved in a CLIL programme. Therefore, I formulated the following question:

- Do the students exposed to CLIL perform better than students only exposed to EFL in terms of reading comprehension?

Based on the findings in the field of CLIL, I have formulated a hypothesis. My hypothesis based on Dalton Puffer (2008): CLIL students would perform and do better in terms of reading skills than those pupils who are not involved in CLIL. My hypothesis will be analysed and checked through the development of the present study.

3.2 Participants

In order to carry out this project and to test my initial objective I chose a sample of subjects which could allow me and help me to solve what I planned at the beginning of this study. As I said previously, the purpose of this study was to analyse the impact on the reading skills of EFL learners who are also involved in a CLIL programme and test if there was a significant advantage, as far as reading is concerned, over those students who are not involved in a CLIL programme. For this reason, I chose one school that was putting into practise CLIL and another one that wasn't in order to have the opportunity to test pupils who are learning English in different situations. The pupils from the first school that I chose attended one hour a week of CLIL and three hours of English as a Foreign Language. The second school that I chose was only teaching the mandatory 3 hours per week of EFL.

Regarding the age, I chose to carry out this project in 5th year of Primary Education, so all the subjects of the sample where between ten and eleven years old. I chose this school year because, according to the Primary Education Curriculum (2009), the students of superior cycle are able to read and understand the global message of a text as well as being able to locate specific information from written texts.

The participants were forty - two 5th primary graders, 21 attending the curricular EFL classes and 21 doing EFL and CLIL. The description of two groups of participants is provided in the table below:

	Type of instruction	Hours of English exposure	Age when data collection	Number of students
EFL School	EFL lessons	3 lessons of 60 minutes per week (3 hours)	10 - 11 years old.	21
EFL + CLIL School	CLIL and EFL lessons	1 lesson of 1 hour per week of CLIL and 3 lessons of 60 minutes per week of EFL. (4 hours in total)	10 - 11 years old.	21

As is shown in the table, the amount of hours of English exposure that the CLIL group received is higher than the Non-CLIL group. However, both groups were receiving 3 hours a week of EFL classes.

3.3 Instruments

When I defined the objective of the present study I had to plan how to collect the data. Finally, I decided to design two reading tests based on the *Young Learners tests* used in the Cambridge examinations. *Young Learners tests* are examinations for children aged between 7 and 12 as the lexis and the contexts are suitable for this age range. These Cambridge tests are available at three levels: *Starters*, *Movers* and *Flyers* and all of them assess the four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. From all the language tests available, I based my own tests on the *Movers* reading tests because they were the ones that corresponded to the level of fifth grade of Primary Education. The *movers* reading tests have six different parts but I decided to just follow two of the parts to design my own reading tests.

The first reading test that I designed contains a story divided into three parts (see appendix A). After each part, I wrote three or four sentences which the pupils had to complete using one, two or three words. With this activity children demonstrate their reading comprehension of the text. The test has ten questions and one mark was given for each correct question.

The second reading test that I designed is a cloze – type test based on the topic of animals (see appendix B); it specifically talks about giant pandas, a topic that I considered could be interesting and suitable for the pupils. The text has some missing words but at the bottom of the text there is a choice of three possible answers for each gap. So in this second test, pupils had to read and understand the text and decide which answer fits the best and copy the word into the gap. The test has five questions and one mark was given for each correct question.

3.4 Procedure

After studying the theoretical framework and finding two schools that fit in the purpose of the study, I administered the tests to the pupils.

In both schools, the time allowed to do both tests was 30 minutes. Before doing the activity, I gave the pupils clear instructions and I explained the activities using English as a tool of communication. During the explanation, I made sure that all the children understood what they had to do and I let them make questions related to the methodology of the activity but not related to the language. During the test, the pupils were not allowed to ask questions or to use additional materials such as dictionaries. I gave the tests to the learners personally and stayed with them all the time in order to make sure that all the conditions were the same in both schools and to ensure that no other teacher or materials could help them complete the tests.

The activity was developed properly, in the same way that it had been planned. I have to say that the pupils had a positive attitude towards the activity, therefore I could carry out the tests correctly.

After this, the tests were conducted by myself. On the one hand, I decided to do a correction based on accuracy. As the tests were individual, I had to assess all the tests one by one and following the same methodology so to facilitate this task, I created a chart (see appendix C) where I wrote all the possible correct answers for each question. I decided to do a tick and to count one point if the answer was correct and to do a cross and to do not count a point if the answer was wrong. The pupils that didn't answer the questions using the same words and using the same spelling written in the document didn't obtain a point and a tick in the question.

On the other hand, I also decided to assess the tests following a reading comprehension criteria. In this second assessment, I assessed if the pupils demonstrated that they had understood the text so I did not take into account the spelling or the grammar mistakes. I decided to do a tick and to count one point if the pupils demonstrated that they had understood the test and I decided to do a cross and to do not count a point if the pupils did not demonstrate some understanding of text. For instance, if one sentence was required to be answered with the words “a small farm” under the first accuracy assessment, in this case, if the pupils have written “small farm” I count it as if it was correct because the learner demonstrated understanding of the text, even though the words used were not grammatically or exactly correct.

The first test (see appendix A) had ten questions so the pupils could score from zero out of ten to ten out of ten. So, five out to five and above is considered a pass. The second test (see appendix B) had five questions so the students could score from zero out of five to five out of five. So, three out to five and above is considered a pass. To do the first assessment I used a red pen and to do the second one I used a green pen in order to distinguish one correction from the other. An example of both test assessment is attached in appendix D (see appendix D).

4. Results

Concerning the results, after assessing the two reading comprehension tests answered by the pupils of each school, I decided to do some graphs in order to show the results obtained and to better compare the differences between the results of the pupils who were involved in CLIL and the ones of the pupils who only attended EFL lessons.

So in this section of the project, I want to show the results that I obtained and to comment the different aspects that I have observed after the assessment of the tests. As I said before, the participants that answered the tests were forty - two 5th primary graders, 21 attending the curricular EFL classes and 21 doing EFL and CLIL.

First of all, I will show the results that I obtained from the accuracy correction of the tests. As I said before, I assessed them following a chart (see appendix C) where I wrote all the possible correct answers for each question.

In the Figure 1 below we can observe the results that I obtained in the accuracy assessment of the first reading comprehension test (see test in appendix A). We can observe that the majority of the pupils of the EFL School failed the test. Eighteen students, out of the twenty-one who answered the test, obtained a mark below five and just three students passed the test with a mark equal to or above five. We can also observe that the lowest mark obtained was a zero and that the highest mark obtained was an eight. This means that nobody obtained a mark equal or above nine. Two out of ten is the most frequent occurring value among the students in the school only doing EFL.

In contrast, the students of the EFL + CLIL School obtained better results. In Figure 1 below we can observe that just four students out of the 21 who answered the test, failed the test and that the rest of them passed the reading comprehension test with good results.

In this case, the lowest mark obtained was a two and the highest mark a ten. The graph also shows that more than half the students obtained a mark equal to or above seven. Ten out to ten is the most frequent occurring value among the students in the school doing CLIL.

In conclusion, we can say that there exist a big difference between one school and the other and that the CLIL students achieved better results than the EFL learners. So in this first reading comprehension test, the students that were not involved in CLIL had more difficulties to answer the test successfully.

Number of students

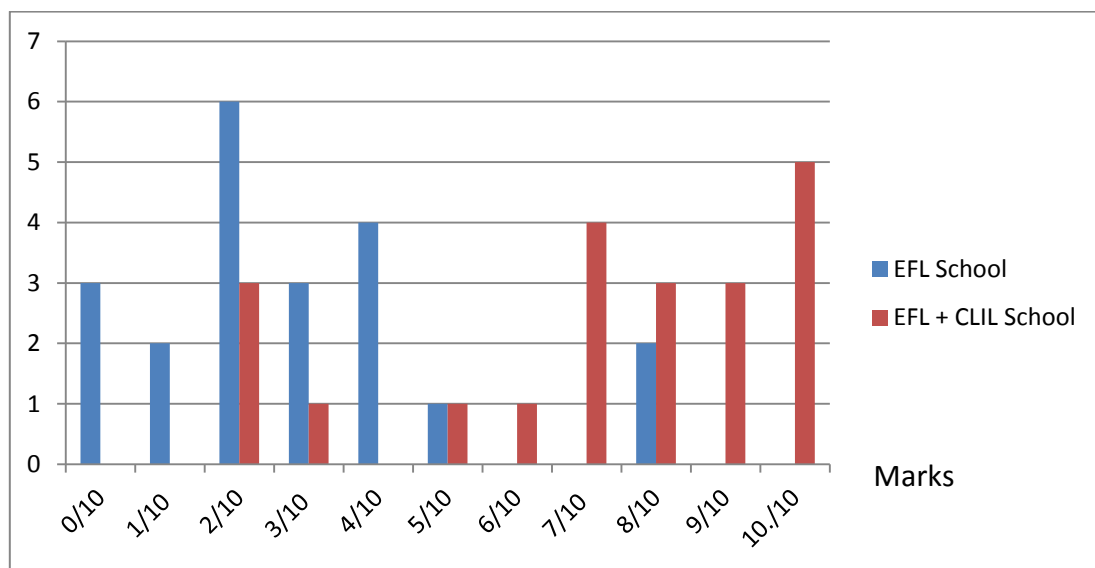


Figure 1: Accuracy assessment results. Reading Test 1

In the Figure 2 below we can observe the results that I obtained in the accuracy assessment of the second reading comprehension test (see appendix B).

If we focus our attention on the EFL School, we can observe that the majority of the pupils of this school passed the test. Fourteen students, out of the twenty-one who answered the test, obtained a mark above two and seven pupils passed the test with a mark equal to or above three. We can also observe that the lowest mark obtained was a zero out of five and that the highest mark obtained was a five out of five. Nevertheless, we can observe that only one student obtained the highest possible result, in this case, five out of five.

Four out to five is the most frequent occurring value among the students in the school only doing EFL. In comparison with the first test, I can say that the EFL learners had fewer difficulties to answer this second test.

If we observe the bars that correspond to the students of the EFL + CLIL School we can see that they obtained better results than the EFL pupils in this second test as well. We can observe that just three students, out of the twenty-one who answered the test, failed the test and that the rest of them passed the reading comprehension test with good results. In this case, the lowest mark obtained was a two out of five and that the highest mark obtained was a five out of five. In contrast with the EFL learners, more students involved in CLIL could score the highest possible mark, in this case, five CLIL students could achieve a five out of five (four more than the EFL learners).

The graph also shows that more than half the students obtained a mark equal to or above three out of five. In this type of school, four out to five is the most frequent occurring value, the same value obtained in the other type of school.

In conclusion, I can say that the CLIL students achieved better results than EFL learners in this second reading comprehension test and that the students that were not involved in CLIL had more difficulties to answer the test successfully. Nevertheless, in comparison with the first test, I can say that the EFL learners had less difficulty to answer this second test.

Number of students

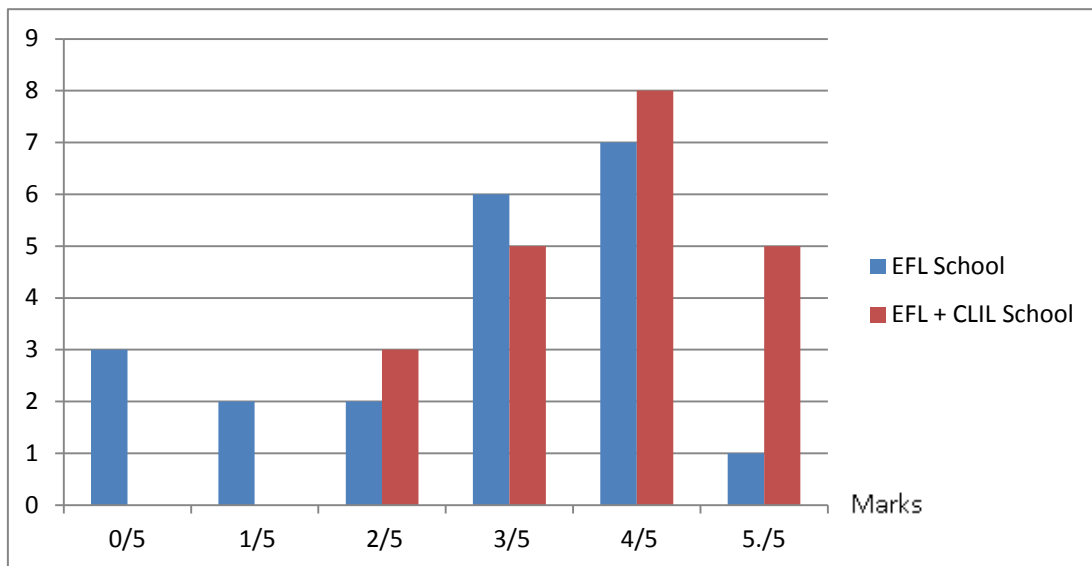


Figure 2: Accuracy assessment results. Reading test 2

Then, I will show the results that I obtained following the reading comprehension criteria. As I said before, in this second assessment, I did not take into account the spelling or the grammar mistakes so I just assessed if the students demonstrated that they had understood the text.

In Figure 3 below we can observe the results that I obtained in the assessment, of the first reading test, (see appendix A) done following the reading comprehension criteria. If we focus our attention on the EFL School, we can observe that, even not taken into account the spelling or the grammar mistakes, more than half the pupils of this school failed the test. Even though, this time they have failed four students less than in the previous accuracy correction. In this case, eleven students, out of the twenty-one who answered the test, obtained a mark below five and ten students passed the test with a mark equal to or above five. We can also observe that the lowest mark obtained was a zero and that the highest mark obtained was ten. In contradistinction with the accuracy correction, this time three children obtained a mark equal or above nine while in the other case nobody could obtain it. One, two and five out of ten is the most frequent occurring value among the students in the school only doing EFL.

The students of the EFL + CLIL School obtained also better results in the reading comprehension assessment. We can observe that just two students out of the 21 who answered the test, failed the test; that means, that two less pupils failed the test.

The graph also shows that the rest of the pupils passed the reading comprehension test with good results. In this case, the lowest mark obtained was a three, one point above the accuracy assessment, and the highest mark obtained was ten. The graph also shows that the majority of the students obtained a mark equal to or above eight. It is necessary to note that nearly half of the students obtained a ten as a result; so, in this type of school, ten out to ten is the most frequently occurring value.

In conclusion, I can say that both schools improve its results under the reading comprehension criteria. Nevertheless, it still exists a difference between the EFL students and the students who were involved in CLIL.

So I can observe that the CLIL students achieved better results than the EFL learners in this first reading comprehension test corrected in one way or another.

Number of students

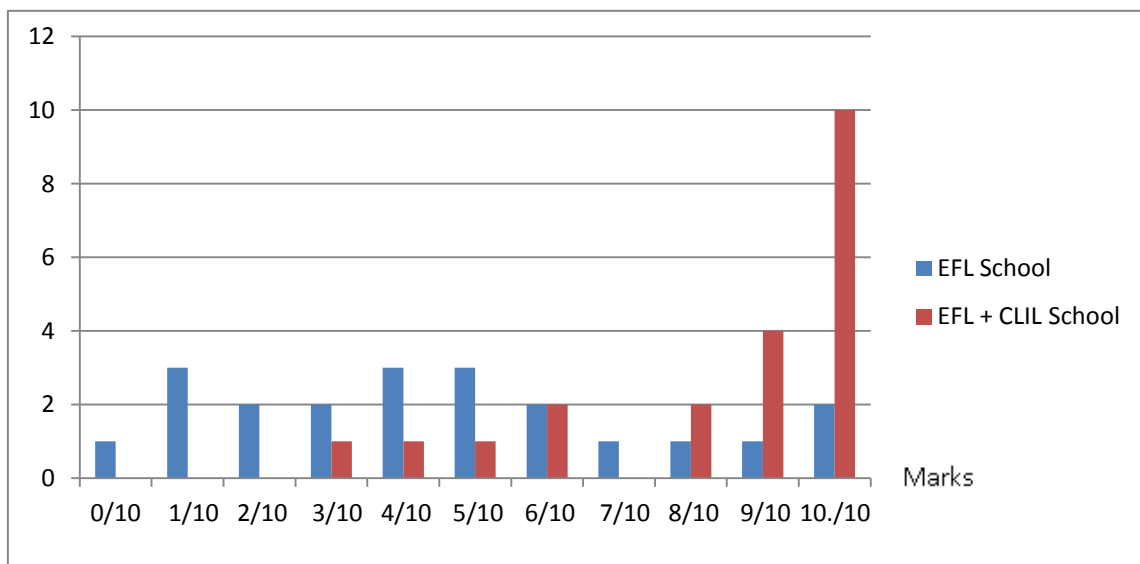


Figure 3: Reading comprehension assessment. Reading test 1

In Figure 4 below we can observe the results that I obtained in the assessment, of the second reading test (see appendix B), done following the reading comprehension criteria. As we can observe, it is the same graph that I obtained under the accuracy assessment so there are no differences between both corrections. The results are the same so there still exists a difference between the EFL students and the students who were involved in CLIL. So I can also observe that the CLIL students achieved better results than the EFL learners in this second reading comprehension test even if the test was corrected in one way or another.

Number of students

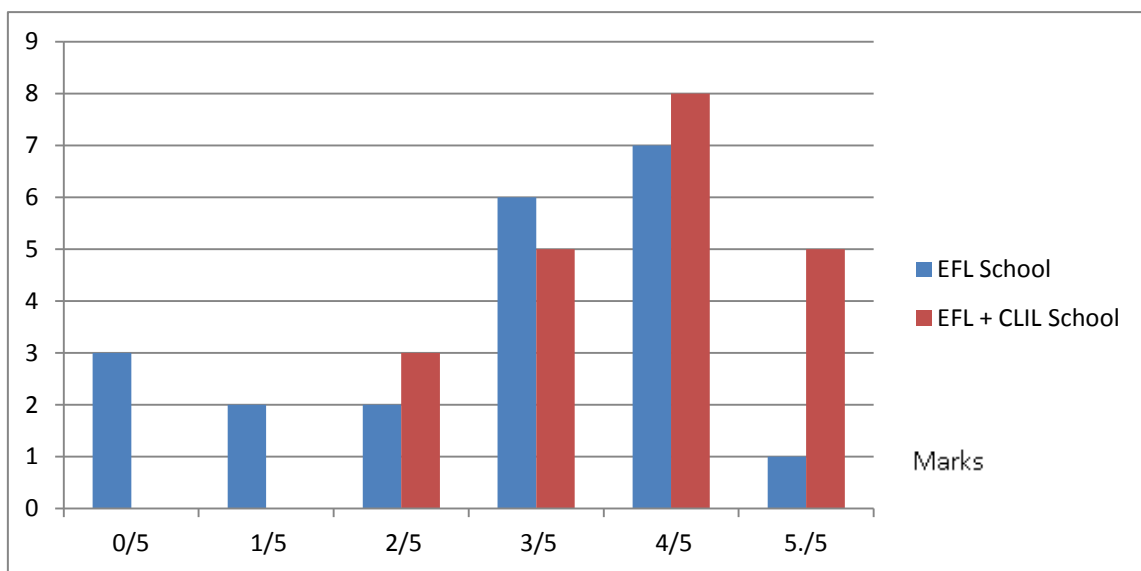


Figure 4: Reading comprehension assessment. Reading test 2.

5 Conclusions

To conclude this project I want to talk about the conclusions that I reached after doing the entire research procedure. This project was aimed at analysing the impact of CLIL on the learners' reading skills and to find out if there was a significant advantage over those students from the same grade who were not involved in a CLIL programme. To achieve my objective, two reading comprehension tests were designed and administered to fifth graders in order to collect and analyse the necessary data to reach some conclusions.

The research reported in this study seems to indicate that CLIL may have a positive effect on the learners' reading skills, as the results obtained by the CLIL learners in both reading comprehension tests, were better than the ones obtained by the students who were not involved in CLIL. So the data confirmed and supported the hypothesis that I formulated at the beginning of this project, which suggested that CLIL students would perform better in the reading tests. Despite that, some conclusions can be drawn from the analyses carried out.

If we concentrate on the data obtained in the first reading test, I can point out that the CLIL group was much better than the EFL group even if the test was corrected by following accuracy or reading comprehension criteria. Considering that this first test required reading in depth and understanding most of the information, it can be assumed that CLIL learners are successful readers and that EFL pupils have more difficulties in understanding the text. Taking into account the results obtained, I can also observe that both EFL and CLIL pupils obtained better marks under the reading comprehension criteria in the first reading test.

Young learners tend to make developmental mistakes which are natural and part of their language learning process. When they were not taken into account in the assessment of reading comprehension, the results tended to be much better.

Considering the analysis of the results in this first test, I can establish that, the pupils who followed a CLIL programme achieved better results in terms of reading comprehension. This is probably because CLIL students are much more exposed with reading texts because as Wolff (2005) said, CLIL lessons are mostly based on reading resources. Moreover, this is probably because as Dalton Puffer (2008) said, input and particularly, comprehensible input, has a lot of importance in CLIL sessions, specifically oral and written input. That is why CLIL learners may be better in terms of reading competence. Another possibility could be based on Coyle's words (2006) who established that CLIL lessons promote cognition and thinking processes. This means that CLIL pupils can link better concept formation, understanding and language.

If we concentrate on the data obtained in the second reading test, which was a cloze-test, I can point out that the CLIL group was better than the EFL group even if the test was corrected following accuracy or reading comprehension criteria. Nevertheless, this second test also required, as well as the first one, understanding of the text I have to say that the differences between the two groups were much more relevant in the first test than in the second one. On the one hand, this is probably because this second test required choosing the answers from a number of given options so the children did not have the added difficulty to produce in the foreign language. On the other hand, I consider that the results were better in this second test because it required grammatical knowledge; EFL classes focus on much more on grammar and students practise it directly in their lessons. Taking into account the results obtained, I can also observe that both EFL and CLIL pupils obtained the same results under the reading comprehension criteria in the second reading test; so there was no difference between one assessment form and the other. Maybe this happened because this time they had the option to choose and it was more difficult to make spelling mistakes.

Despite all the things discussed and involved in this second test, I can establish that the pupils who follow a CLIL programme may achieve better results in terms of reading comprehension.

After doing this research I have seen the importance of a variable that I didn't consider at the beginning, and it is the number of hours of English per week. After comparing the number of hours of English from one group and from the other, I have seen that the CLIL group did one more hour per week of English than the other, the one that corresponded to the CLIL lesson. This means that the CLIL group had more opportunities to spend hours in contact with the language and maybe this factor may have influenced the results obtained.

As we can see in the results, the school with better results in terms of reading comprehension coincides with the school that did more hours of English, that is the CLIL School. Considering this, I could not really establish if the good results obtained by the CLIL students were the result of the benefits of CLIL or were the result of the more number of hours of exposure to the foreign language. If I have the chance to do further research on this methodology, I will try to take into account this variable and I will try to compare learners exposed to the same number of hours of English in order to really determine the benefits of CLIL in terms of reading skills.

I am also aware of another limitation of my research. Since it is a case study, my results are based on one specific example of each methodology; therefore, if I had carried out the tests in more schools, the results might have been different, more reliable and more generalized.

This research could be extended for two big reasons. On the one hand, during this study I only dealt with the reading skills; so, it would be interesting to determine how CLIL may affect the other three language skills (listening, speaking and writing) of primary learners. Doing this, we could have more information on CLIL and maybe we could extract more conclusions about the benefits of CLIL on the learners' skills. I have to recognise and state that if I had had more time, I would have liked to deal with the other skills and to base this project on more school examples.

On the other hand, as I said in the introduction, in the last decade CLIL has undergone a rapid growth because of the interest to promote foreign language learning (Garcia, 2012). In spite of the enthusiasm generated by CLIL, very little research has been undertaken in order to demonstrate its benefits. For this reason, I consider the need to have more studies that can prove its efficiency in order to consolidate CLIL programmes.

To end up, I want to say that this project has been a good experience to learn more about CLIL and its characteristics. I am really interested in this approach so this investigation has given me an overall idea of it. Moreover, this project has also given me the opportunity to research in terms of Education and provided me with an understanding of methodological aspects.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A

Read the story. Write words to complete the sentences about the story. You can use 1, 2 or 3 words.

My name is John and I'm nine years old. Last summer I wanted to see my uncle. He lives in a small farm in the countryside. I like it there because I can ride horses and enjoy fresh food from the farm. I went to my uncle's house by bus and by train. First, I went with my dad to the bus station at the end of our street. I caught the number 6 bus to the big train station.

Example

John is ten.

Questions

1 John's uncle's house is in _____ near the countryside.

2 John got on a bus at the end of his _____.

3 The number 6 bus went to the _____.

When I arrived to the train station I was hungry. I went to a restaurant and I had dinner. I ate spaghetti and some bread. When I came out, I jumped into the train. I sat next to an old man, who was reading a newspaper. I was very tired so I went to sleep. When I woke up, I wasn't in my uncle's small farm! I was in a big city!

4. John had _____ and some bread for dinner.
5. The person next to John on the train was an _____.
6. John slept on the train because he was _____.
7. When John woke up he was in a _____.

I was on the wrong train! I was afraid. The old man said: ‘ What’s the matter?’ I told him my story. We got off the train and he phoned my uncle. Then he bought me another train ticket and took me to the right train– the one that went to my uncle’s farm!

Thank you very much! I said.

8. John was afraid because he was on _____.
9. The old man phoned his _____.
10. The old man got a _____ for John to go to the right village.

8.2 Appendix B

Read the text. Choose the right words and write them on the lines:



Example Giant Panda bears are beautiful and large animals. They look like American bears but their fur is different. Instead of being brown, their fur is white and black. Normally, females are (1) _____ than males. The Giant Pandas live in bamboo forests in China. They eat bamboo because it (2) _____ their favourite plant. Pandas must eat between 12- 38kg of bamboo every day.

One interesting thing about Pandas is that they (3) _____ six fingers instead of five. Their six fingers helps them (4) _____ eat bamboo. Another interesting thing is that they are very good at climbing trees. They can do this because they have very strong legs.

Giant Panda Bears are wonderful animals, (5) _____ they are very difficult to find. Nowadays, they are not able to find enough food so they are in danger of dying and disappearing.

Example	are	am	is
1	small	smaller	smallest
2	is	are	am
3	had	have	has
4	a	to	for
5	but	because	so

8.3 Appendix C

- First test answers

- 1) A small farm
- 2) Street
- 3) train station / big train station
- 4) spaghetti
- 5) old man
- 6) tired / very tired
- 7) big city
- 8) the wrong train
- 9) uncle
- 10) train ticket/ ticket

- Second test answers

- 1) smaller
- 2) is
- 3) have
- 4) to
- 5) but

8.4 Appendix D

FIRST TEST

Read the story. Write words to complete the sentences about the story. You can use 1, 2 or 3 words.

My name is John and I'm nine years old. Last summer I wanted to see my uncle. He lives in a small farm in the countryside. I like it there because I can ride horses and enjoy fresh food from the farm. I went to my uncle's house by bus and by train. First, I went with my dad to the bus station at the end of our street. I caught the number 6 bus to the big train station.

Example

John is ten.

Questions

1 John's uncle's house is in small farm near the countryside. X ✓

2 John got on a bus at the end of his by train X ✓

3 The number 6 bus went to the big train station ✓ ✓

When I arrived to the train station I was hungry. I went to a restaurant and I had dinner. I ate spaghetti and some bread. When I came out, I jumped into the train. I sat next to an old man, who was reading a newspaper. I was very tired so I went to sleep. When I woke up, I wasn't in my uncle's small farm! I was in a big city!

4. John had hungry and some bread for dinner. X X

5. The person next to John on the train was an tired. X X

6. John slept on the train because he was tired. ✓ ✓

7. When John woke up he was in a small farm. X X

I was on the wrong train! I was afraid. The old man said: ' What's the matter?' I told him my story. We got off the train and he phoned my uncle. Then he bought me another train ticket and took me to the right train– the one that went to my uncle's farm!

Thank you very much! I said.

8. John was afraid because he was on wrong train ~~x~~ ✓
9. The old man phoned his my uncle ~~x~~ ✓
10. The old man got a _____ for John to go to the right village. ~~x~~ ~~x~~

$\frac{2}{10}$ $\frac{5}{10}$

SECOND TEST

Read the text. Choose the right words and write them on the lines.



Example

Giant Panda bears are beautiful and large animals. They look like American bears but their fur is different. Instead of being brown, their fur is white and black. Normally, females are (1) smallest than males. The Giant Pandas live in bamboo forests in China. They eat bamboo because it (2) is their favourite plant. Pandas must eat between 12- 38kg of bamboo every day.

One interesting thing about Pandas is that they (3) had six fingers instead of five. Their six finger helps them (4) get eat bamboo. Another interesting thing is that they are very good at climbing trees. They can do this because they have very strong legs.

Giant Panda Bears are wonderful animals, (5) but they are very difficult to find. Nowadays, they are not able to find enough food so they are in danger of dying and disappearing.

$\frac{2}{5}$ $\frac{2}{5}$

Example

	are	am	is
1	small	smaller	smallest
2	is	are	am
3	had	have	has
4	a	to	for
5	but	because	so