

MIRAS

Mediació i Interpretació:
Recerca en l'àmbit social



CHILD LANGUAGE BROKERING THROUGH MULTIPLE LENSES:

the perspectives of parents, teenagers, young
adults and public service providers in Catalonia

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Education, Migrations, Agency (CHILD-UP project)

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Acknowledgements



“Young natural interpreters: child language brokering in education, social services and healthcare settings”

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“Empowering Young Language Brokers for Inclusion in Diversity”

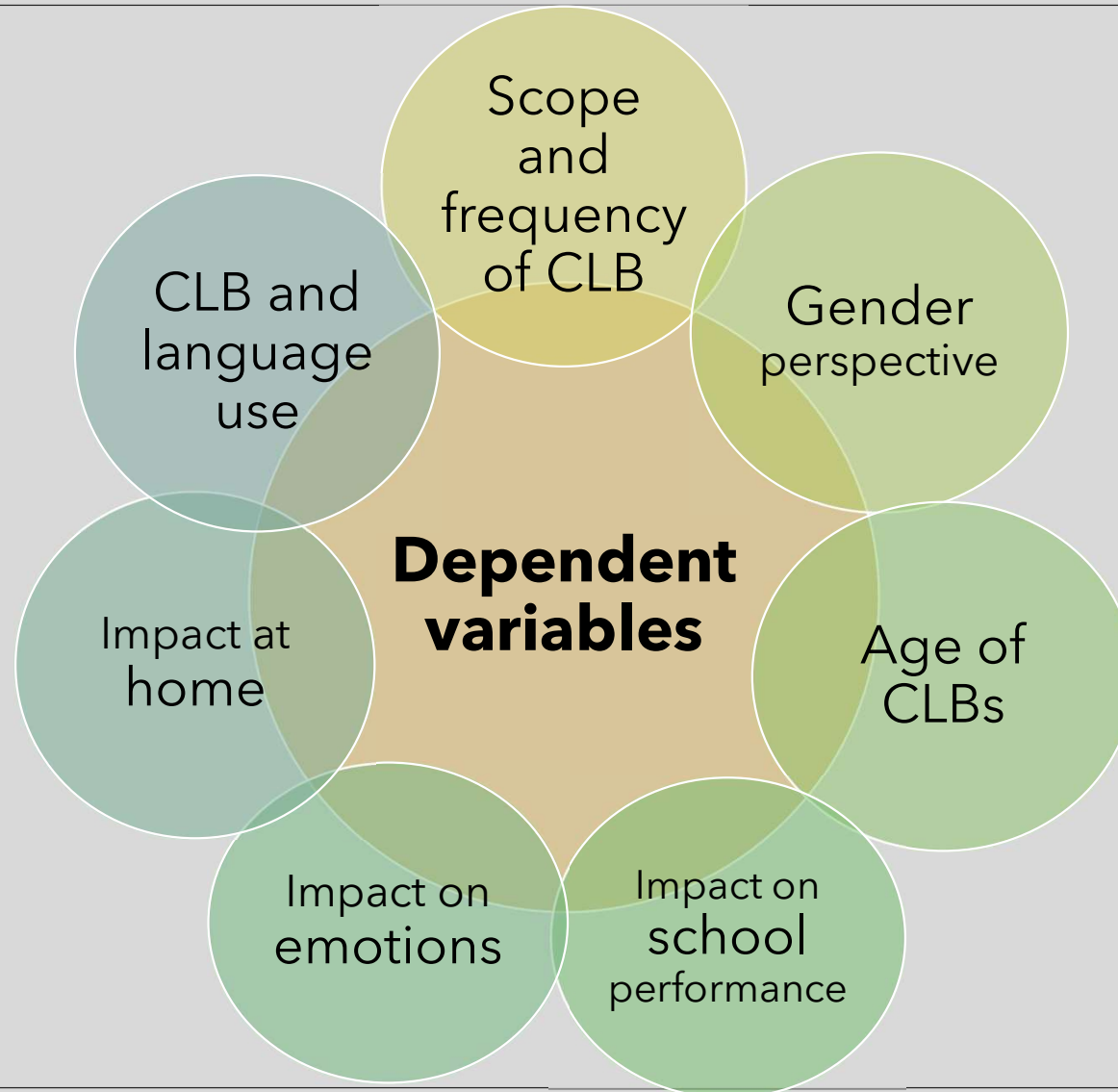
The EYLBID Strategic Partnership has been co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union (no. agreement: 2019-1-ES01-KA201-064417)

Previous research

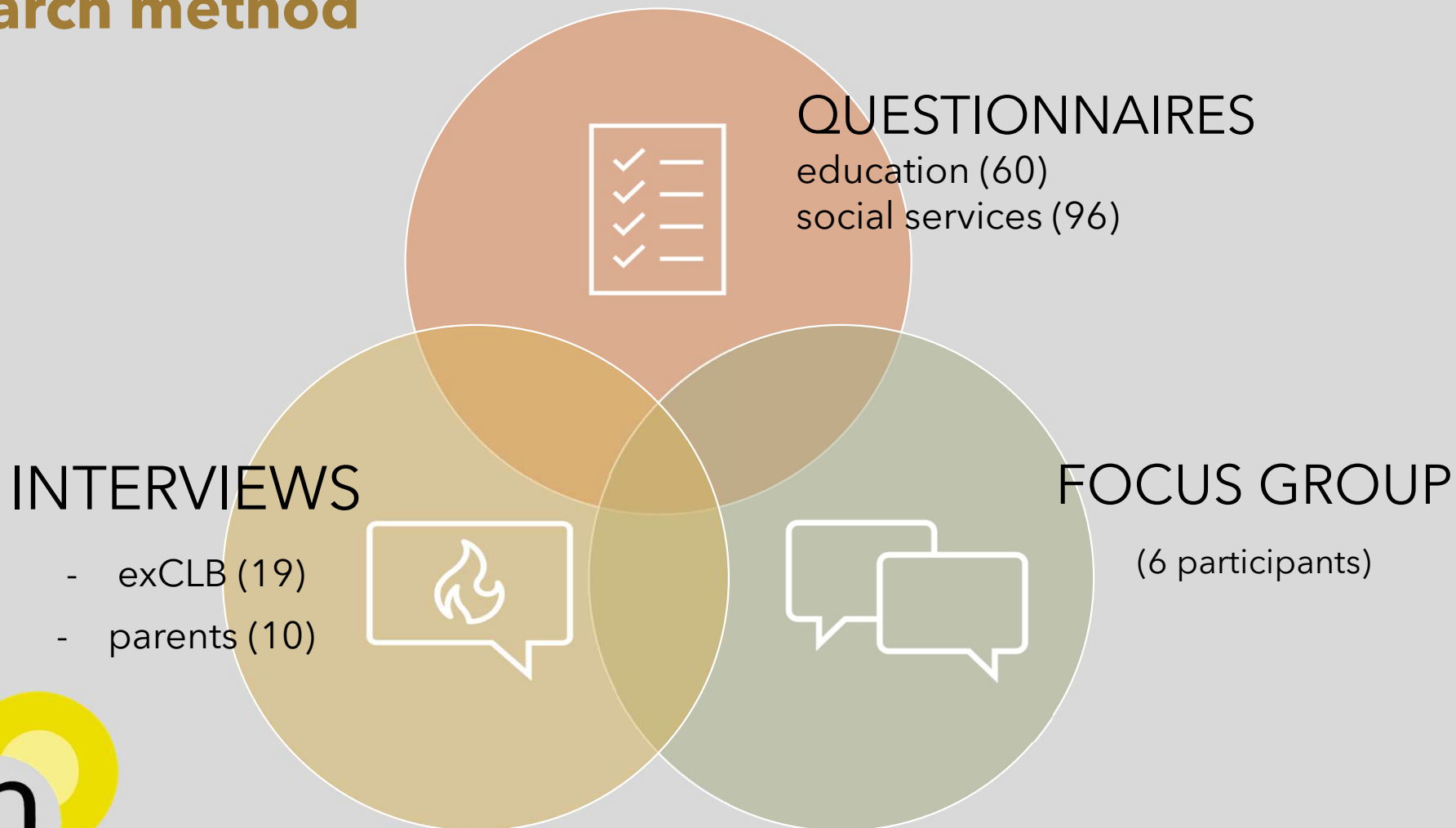
- Fruitful research conducted in other countries (Harris, 1976; Valdés, 2003; Hall & Sham, 2007; Orellana, 2009; Cline et al, 2010; Antonini, 2015, etc.)
- In Spain:
 - García-Sánchez (2010, 2014) - Ethnography
 - Foulquié Rubio (2015) - Questionnaire
 - Pena (2019), Santamaría Ciordia (2021)
 - CLB is also mentioned in studies conducted in the fields of Anthropology or Sociology [e.g. Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López (2001); Arrasate (2018)].

Objectives

- To describe Child Language Brokering (CLB), a practice that has become common in our society but that is largely unexplored to date.
- To provide objective, empirical information about the extent and characteristics of Child Language Brokering among the major migrated communities.
- To raise awareness of the risks of this practice beyond communication to conduct minor bureaucratic tasks.
- To empower children and teenagers in the new society through the reevaluation of heritage languages.
- To introduce the Interpreting profession and its various modalities among young students who already have a high level of competency in two or more languages, and among their parents and supervisors.



Research method

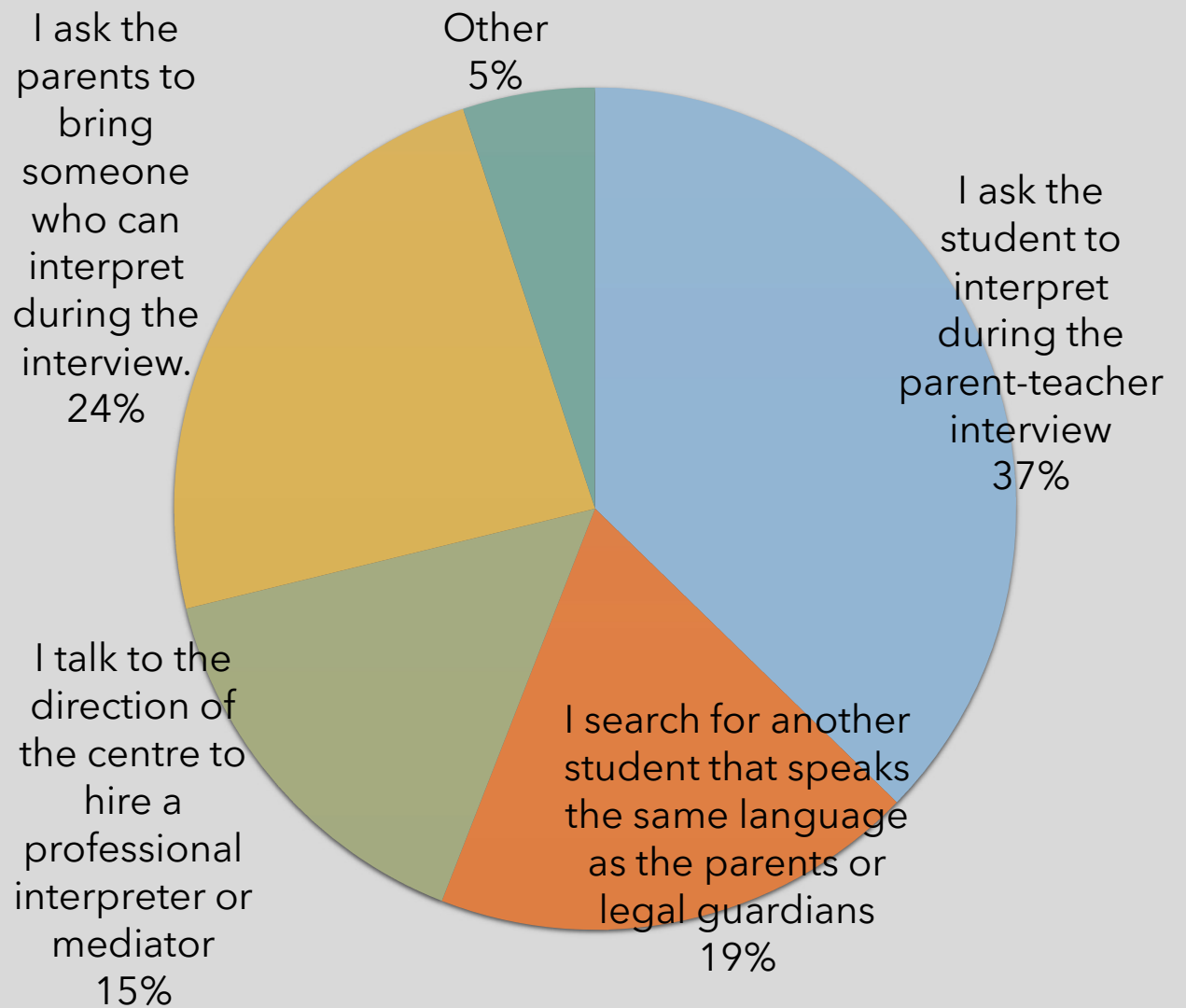


RESULTS

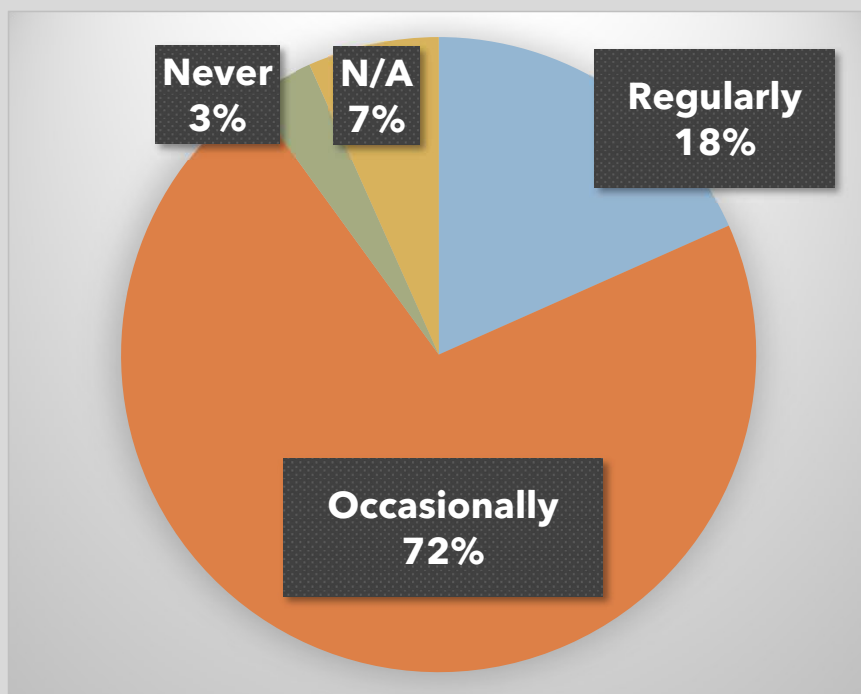


When you need to communicate with a student's parents or legal guardians and they have limited competency in Spanish or Catalan, what do you do?

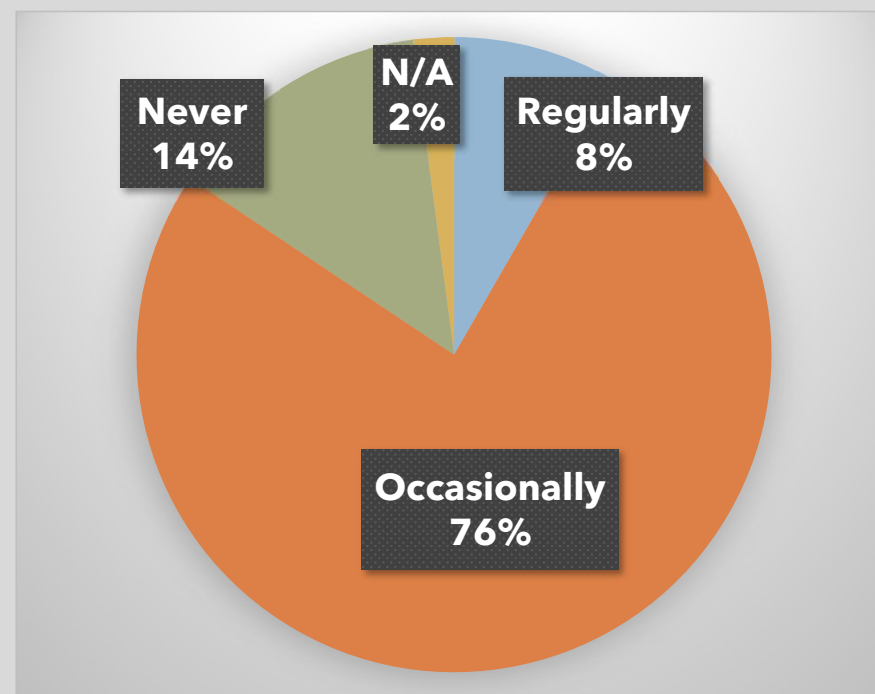
Teachers' answers



How often does CLB occur in your centre?



Education



Social services

CLB sometimes involves skipping class



"I remember that once we were in the second year of compulsory secondary education, and we were having a class of... relaxation. **They knocked on the door and said they had to take me to do something and pffff...** (...) [I]n general the translations tend to be fast. They last less than an hour, so I don't miss the whole class. **But of course, when they take me out of the class, I was in a class! [stresses], so they disturb the classes,** but now I wouldn't mind, because I know that it'd be for a short period of time, so... I don't know." (Xue, exCLB)

But most parents insist that their children mostly interpret outside school hours:

"Making him miss class to interpret is not OK"
(Liwei, father)

CLB is avoided in social services

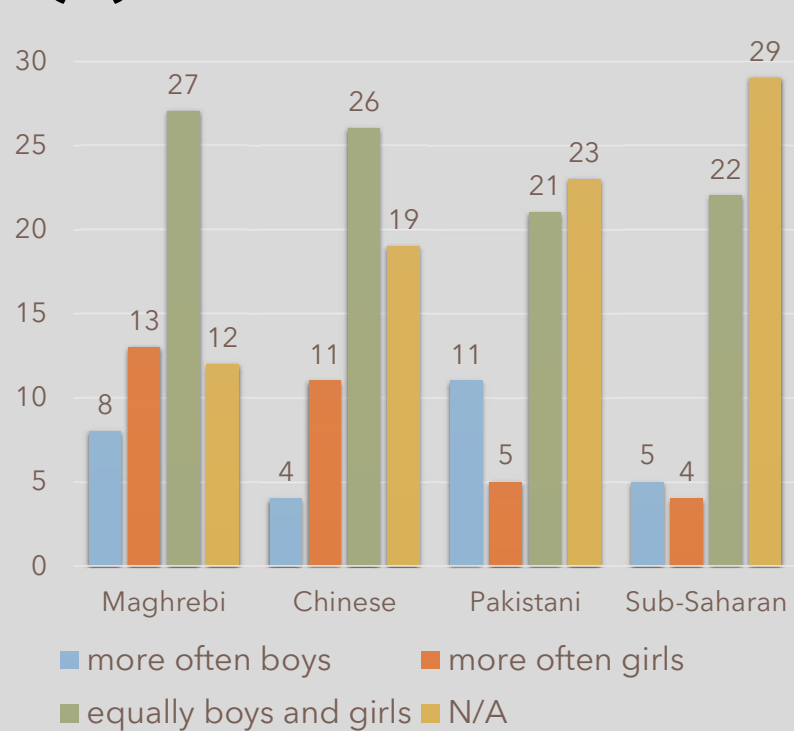


"I also want to mention that, in our service, generally, if someone comes with their children and they're still at the age of compulsory education, and they want their children to interpret during school hours, **we don't allow them to do that, and we ask them to immediately take them back to school.** It's not justified that they skip lessons for this, because if needed, we can also find other solutions to overcome parents' lack of competency in the [local] language."
(Anonymous, social service worker)

"Neither of my two children were allowed to come with us to the social services (...)
When it comes to sensitive family issues, they are not discussed in front of children... An interpreter is called." (Surinder, Pakistani mother)

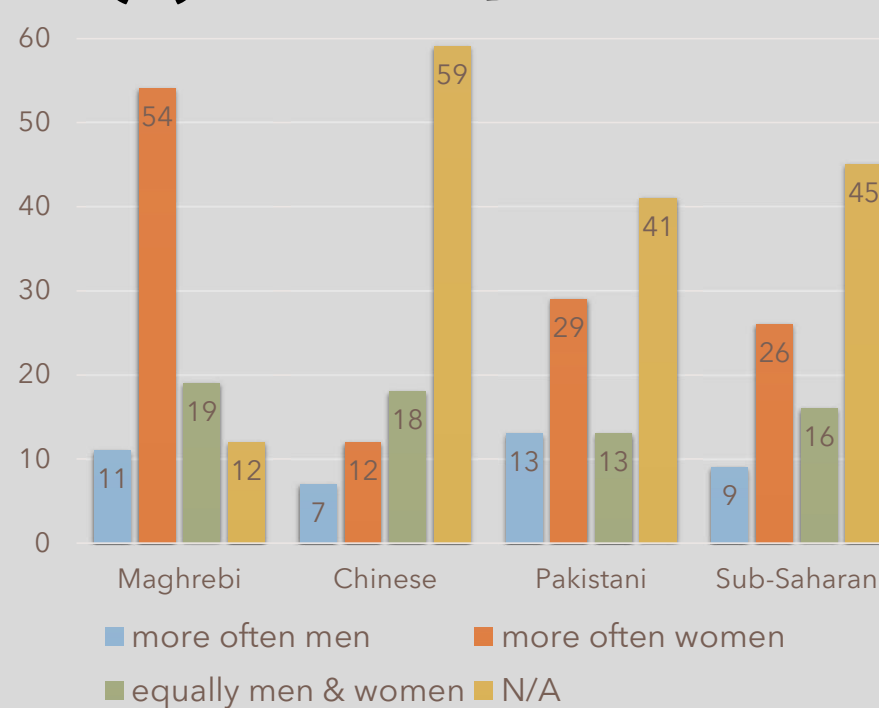
Gender issues

(a) Who performs CLB?



Education

(b) Who requires CLB?



Social services

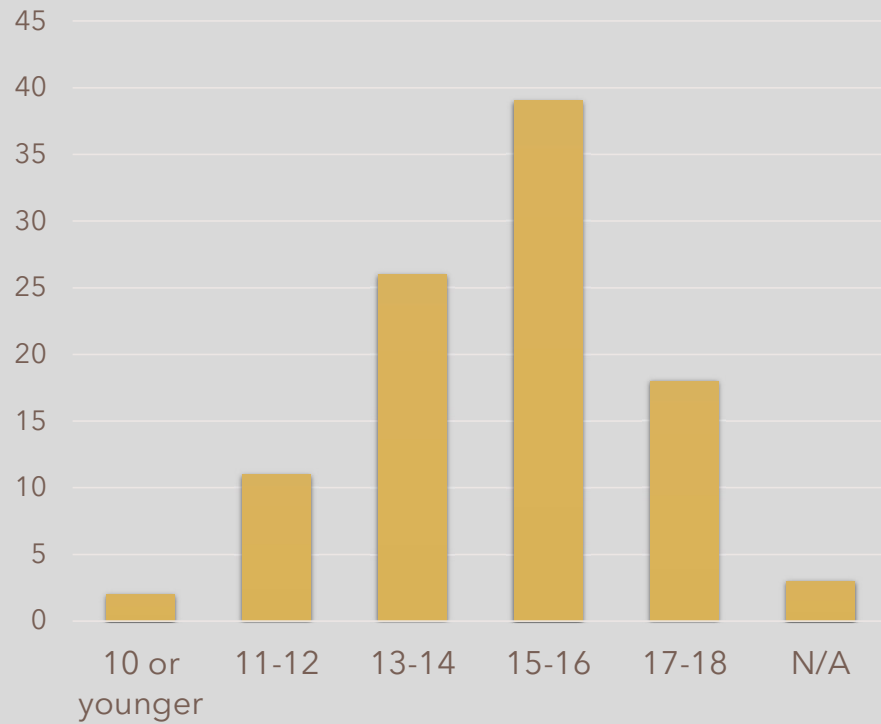
CLB as a gendered practice according to exCLBs



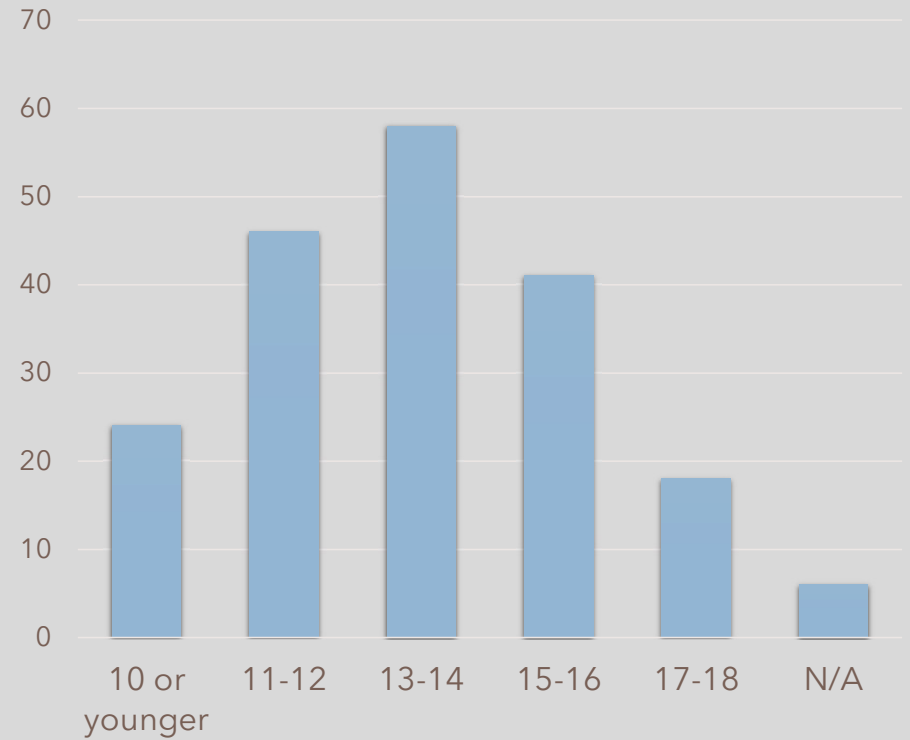
Interviews to exCLBs: 17 women + 2 men

- ❖ Most exCLBs recall brokering for their mothers, grandmothers, aunts or their mothers' (female) friends
- ❖ “But even if it isn't in the hospital or at the gynecologist, they more often asked for girls than boys” (Dounia)
- ❖ “Because girls are more... they are more responsible, more reliable, boys are not.” (Salima)
- ❖ “Because, of course, you had to go with women” (that's why they asked for girls to broker...) (Salima)

What is the most frequent age range?



Education



Social services

CLB: when does it start?

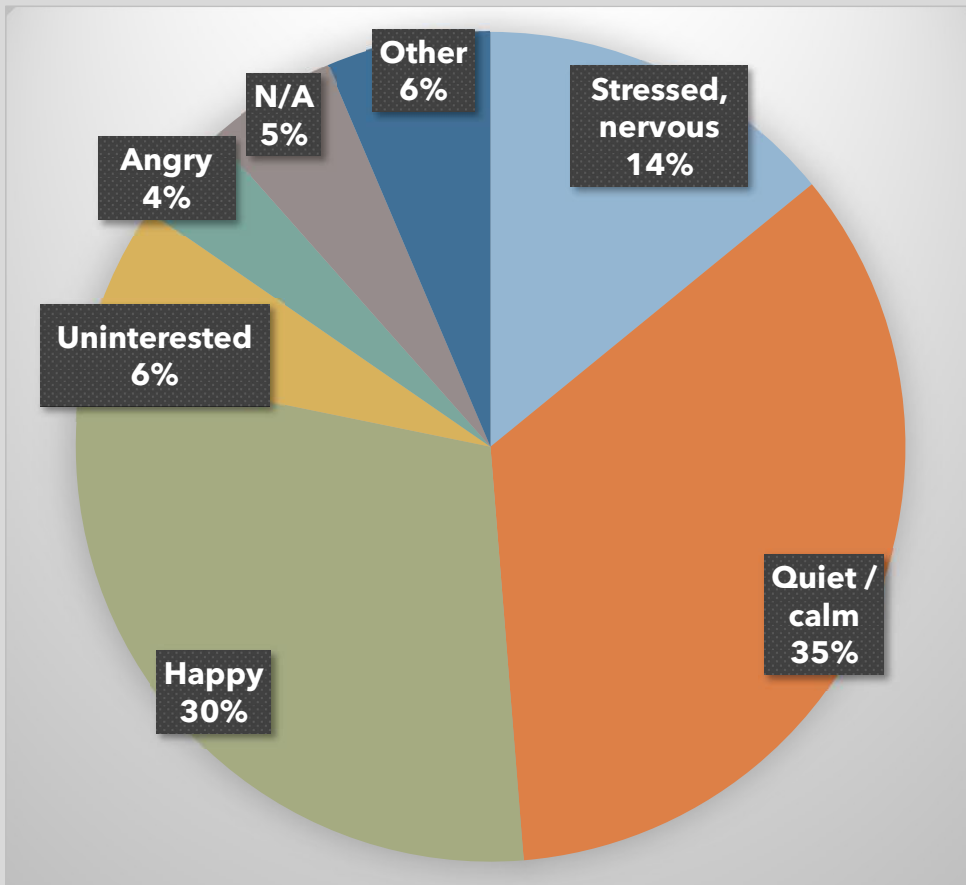
“I took the girl when she was five or six, and she would speak even before I talked to the doctor. She would ask before I could explain. She was talking to the doctor” (Dassin, mother)

“[I started...] at nine or so? When I started controlling a bit more the language, maybe I was ten...”
(Dounia, exCLB)

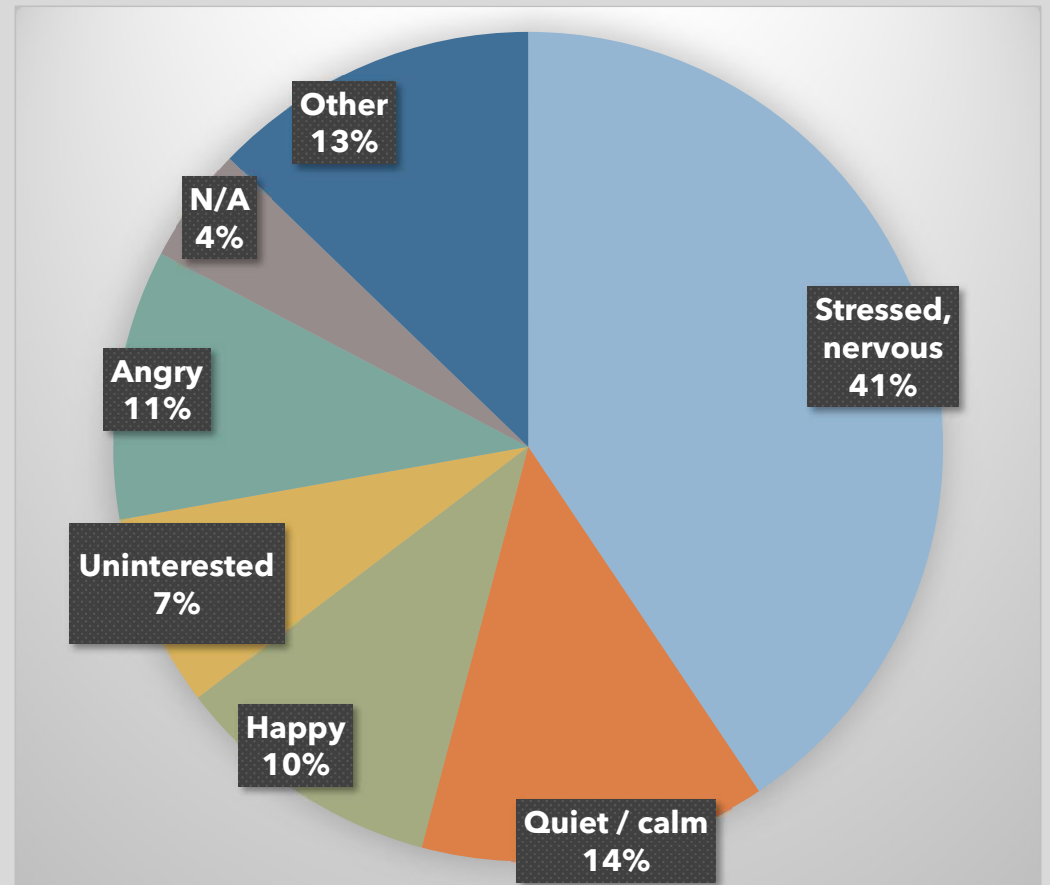
“I had to start doing this task when I myself had only been little time here and did not have a fluent competency in the new language”
(Nazia, exCLB)



Emotional impact



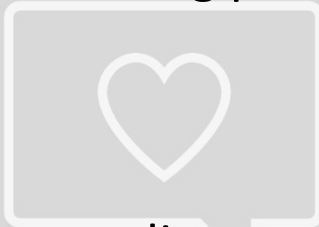
Education



Social services

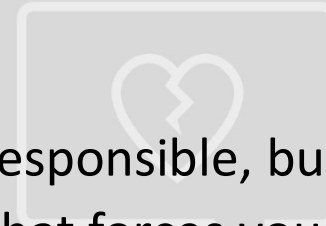
Emotional impact

Positive feelings: privileged practice; being able to help others; feel good; rewarding; gained prominence and felt recognized; being proud of themselves.



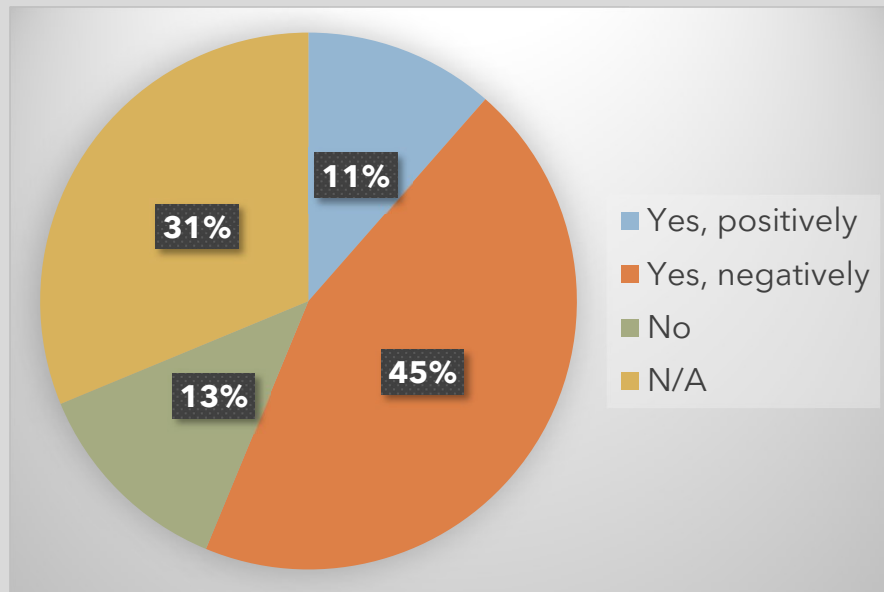
“Yes, it was rewarding, as a fact of contributing and being able to help another who is in the same situation as you, when you arrived.” (Aisha)

Negative feelings: obligation; problem; discomfort; concern; guilty; responsibility (to others when help needed, to the community, not prepared for, not enough knowledge or skills, shame and embarrassment).



“I saw myself responsible, but it's a responsibility that forces you... you don't get it... I was too small and I thought I shouldn't play that role, that role of translator, because I wasn't ready yet.” (Li Hua)

Does CLB affect children's emotional and intellectual development?



Social services

learning experience: being able to empathize with others, improvements in their ability to communicate

I saw a change in this... because I was very shy, I was afraid to speak to the public and with this practice I was being forced. Over time you also mature and feel that it's easier... easier... yes. (Yue)

Parents' perspectives and feelings



Awareness of their childrens' limitations: they competency of both languages is not enough, they specially emphasise their lack of vocabulary in heritage languages.



Cooperation: "Before I take them (to the appointment), I tell her: 'you're going to say that, that, and that', you know? (...) I tell her about the issue, about where we are going, and so on. So that the child knows where we are going and what words we are going to use." (Jasmine, mother)



Children as gatekeepers: Parents recognize their children don't interpret everything, they sometimes omit information regarding to themselves (e.g. bad news) or other information they think that is not appropriate.

Conclusions

1. Common practice with little visibility
2. Important differences between the two main settings which are object of study: schools vs. social services
3. CLB is a gendered practice
4. Perspectives on emotions collide: positive for teachers, negative for exCLBs (but possible bias due to the type of question)
5. Parents' awareness of the limitations of their children
6. Research in CLB as the path for training and raising awareness



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Common situations



How do you think Sebastián might feel?

Choose an answer:

Embarrassed.

Sad.

Angry at the teacher.

Angry at his friend.

Questions about feelings



Thank you!



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