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BENEFITS BILINGUAL CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE WHEN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A THIRD LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The use of English as a *lingua franca* in Europe has increased the importance of language learning processes in modern education. Since an early age, English is introduced in the educational programmes. This research is focused in Betxí, a town from the Valencian Community, and a bilingual area where Valencian and Spanish are used daily. Since pre-school, children from this place have a plurilingual education, because they learn Valencian and Spanish as their mother tongues, plus English as a Third Language (L3).

Some European research has demonstrated that being bilingual has some benefits over being monolingual when acquiring English as a L3. Thus, the main point of this research is to establish the benefits bilingual children from Betxí should have when acquiring English as a L3. However, this research deals with the following hypothesis: Did previous research really prove the benefits bilinguals should have when learning a L3?

In this particular bilingual area, Valencian should be promoted, as well as every minority language in Europe. This study wants to show the benefits bilinguals have for promoting the use of minority languages in those bilingual places where other languages, such as Spanish in this case, play a primary role in society.

Key words

Bilingualism, benefits, pre-school, language learning process, Third Language

1. General introduction

Currently, as *Ethnologue* has established in the most recent research carried out in 2016, 7,097 languages are spoken worldwide. Languages are characterised for being 'living and dynamic, spoken by communities whose lives are shaped by our rapidly changing world' (*Ethnologue*, 2016). There are some languages that are used by a higher amount of speakers than others and this is an aspect which is constantly changing, although it should be pointed out that all languages have the same importance.

Languages are precious tools of communication which help humans to discover and understand the world from the moment when we are born. During our whole life, we are surrounded by different languages and cultures which influence directly everyone's life. As professor John E. Joseph (2016) said in the International Conference about CLIL, at Universitat Jaume I, when a language is used, people are doing many tasks at a time. Languages are related to values, relationships among people, behaviour, self-identity, and self-esteem. Definitely, this multiple task process, linked to each person's personality and lifestyle, creates a personal way of expressing ideas, emotions, memories, and values.

The process of acquiring languages is as difficult for children as it is for adults; therefore, the myth which refers to 'the earlier the better' (McLaughlin, 1992) must be avoided. It is thought that children have less difficulties when they are acquiring a language which is different from the mother tongue (MT), but that is not true. The moment when a person starts learning languages which are different from their MT does not matter. Nevertheless, 'according to folk wisdom, the more languages one knows, the easier it becomes to acquire an additional language' (Cenoz, 2009, p.146). In that way, being bilingual would have advantages over being monolingual, regarding the learning process of an additional language.

It is essential to know that a language is learned when the messages can be understood. Consequently, as Krashen and Terrell (1995, p. 91) said, the environment has to deal with the pressure, creating an affective filter in which motivation, self-confidence, and low anxiety play a primary role. Moreover, when a child is learning a language, it is necessary to create functional situations in which the language is used for a purpose. Children must feel the need of using the language, having a variety of comprehensible input examples from adults or peers (Krashen & Terrell, 1995, p. 73). Besides it is recommended to be exposed to the language in different contexts and situations.

Cenoz (2009) describes the 'micro level' and the 'macro level' of a child relating them with the languages that surround him. The more languages one subject knows and uses, the more multilingual the 'micro level' and 'macro level' will be.

The languages a person uses, in the specific social contexts in which he is in contact, are part of their 'micro level'. For referring to each context, Coste (2014) classifies 6 entities: *family* as the initial entity of socialisation; *peer groups*, who generate the adhesion of a person; close *environment*, which defines implicitly the socialization process; *social organisations*, which provide some allegiance in terms of behavioural norms or sociolinguistic conditions; the exposure to the *media* and use of *social media* constitute one of the major vectors of socialisation and individual development; and *mobility* in its most diversified forms that can offer personal experiences.

Once the languages to which a person is linked are clear, in the different contexts previously named, the 'macro level' can be established. For doing that, it is essential to know some variables related to each language characteristics: the number of speakers, the national and international status, and the use in the media or in the linguistic landscape.

In the European Union there is concern about multilingualism, as the European Charter for Regional Minority Languages (ECRML) illustrates, when promoting minority languages which do not have a high status nationally; such as Catalan in Spain. In the charter 148 from the European Treaty Series (ETS), a regional or minority language is defined as a language which is 'traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and different from the official language(s) of that State' (Council of Europe, 1992). Consequently, Europe is considered a multilingual community where many cultures and languages coexist.

A person will be considered plurilingual if he has the 'ability to make use of two or more languages in speaking, reading and writing at varying levels of competence and in varying contexts' (Grommes & Hu, 2014, p. 2). When a person is learning more than one language, all the different communicative competences are linked, because languages create a particular plurilingual and pluricultural competence in each person (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2001).

Although plurilingualism is a concept related to each person, it can appear on the grounds of the context. Focussing in Spain, as an example of multilingual European context, there are certain regions in this country in which students must know the Official Language of the country (Spanish), acquire the language spoken in this particular area of the state (e.g., Basque, Valencian, etc.), and a Foreign Language (usually, English) at the same time; as a result, they are exposed, at least, to three languages. In those particular cases, the population with that knowledge is considered plurilingual, even though they are living in a bilingual place.

This plurilingual situation appears because of the role that English has these days in the European countries, where this international language is gaining the status of *lingua franca* (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000, p. 248). It means that people who speak different first languages, use English as their language of communication.

To conclude, this general introduction will focus on bilingualism, determined as a particular case of plurilingualism according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). Those people who are considered bilingual can 'use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, to accomplish different things' (Grosjean, 2013, p. 7). Although at a certain moment of life one language can acquire more importance for a person than another, both languages are always playing an important role for him. Even more, in the acquisition language process of other languages different from their MT.

2. Theoretical framework

From this point forward the research is going to be focused on a bilingual group of Spanish children. In this European country there are five autonomous communities where more than one language coexists. The communities which are in this situation are Galicia, Basque Country, Catalonia, Valencian Community, and the Balearic Islands. Galician, Basque and Catalan are spoken in these territories. In these specific communities, at least two languages are used daily, Spanish, as a majority language worldwide, and a minority language which is only spoken in specific areas.

These bilingual societies are characterised for being 'very diverse and the sociolinguistic context where each bilingual school is located also has specific characteristics' (Cenoz, 2009, p. 25). What these Spanish schools have in common is that their educational systems give more importance to their respective minority languages (Galician, Basque and Catalan) than to Spanish. This situation occurs because children have quite a lot of exposure to Spanish, in social media or other contexts, for learning the official language of their country without having it as the main language in their education. So, children from these communities have exposure to the specific language of their community, besides Spanish, as the official state language, and at least a foreign language, which is mainly English; because of the need to acquire high levels of proficiency in English in Europe (Eurydice, 2008, as quoted in Cenoz, 2009, p. 192). In other words, all these educational systems are characterised for being plurilingual.

The Basque Institute of Assessment and Investigation of non-university education states, in the Basic Education Curriculum of the Basque Country, that using Basque in the educational system is essential for acquiring effective skills in this minority language. Besides, a research carried out in this community by Cenoz (2009) demonstrates that bilingual children have some benefits when they are learning English as a Third Language (L3). Furthermore, as Garagorri (2002) has confirmed, if this L3 is introduced at an early age, it 'does not hinder the development of Basque and Spanish or cognitive ability' (as quoted in Cenoz, 2009, p. 210). For all these reasons, introducing English at an early age in bilingual societies seems to have some benefits, and neither prejudice in the language acquisition process.

Some researchers from the sixties and seventies started defending the idea that bilinguals could have an advantage over monolinguals when learning a L3 (Cenoz, 2003), and established the first advantages bilinguals could have. Other studies, in which a proficiency level of the L3 has been compared between bilinguals and monolinguals, quoted by Cenoz (2000, p. 45) 'prove that bilingualism favours the acquisition of third languages (see Bild & Swain, 1989; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Thomas, 1988; Lasagabaster, 1997)'.

Following with the theoretical framework, this study is focused on the Valencian Community, where the educational system includes English as a foreign language apart from Valencian and Spanish (which are the official languages from the community and the state, respectively). Having in mind that every child in Spain has the same exposure to Spanish in their respective bilingual communities, the advantages they have in order to learn English as a L3 could be transferred from the Basque country to this bilingual community, because there is no research that demonstrates the opposite.

In the Valencian Community, Decree 127/2013 regulates plurilingualism in non-university education; since pre-school children study in Valencian, Spanish and English. From this year forward the new Decree 9/2017 will derogate the actual Decree, establishing 6 levels; (from *Nivell Bàsic 1* - Basic Level 1 to *Nivell Avançat 2* – Advanced Level 2) in which teaching time in Valencian and Spanish (Appendix A) differs; using both of them adding English (2 - 4 hours weekly) as a foreign language since the age of 4 (2nd Year of pre-school). This foreign language is introduced during pre-school. Further on, in 1st Year of Primary, English is also introduced in a content subject, so English teaching time is increased. The methodology used in these particular lessons is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (see Marsh, 2000).

In order to know in detail the advantages bilinguals from the Valencian Community could have, it is essential to know about the L3 acquisition process, which 'can similarly affect the other languages already known by the learner, as it has been shown by Kecskes and Papp (2000)' (Cenoz, 2003). Each person 'has a unique linguistic system which is influenced by the constant change of those relationships being established among the languages involved' (Safont, 2005, p. 14). It means that, during the language acquisition process, the whole system is constantly being restructured and creating new skills and techniques, linked to the previous language-learning experience (Safont, 2005, p.14).

More specifically, this study is focused on bilingual children who are learning English as a L3. As a result, we have to keep in mind that their linguistic system is still developing and their maturity level is lower than that of an adult. Consequently, their learning language process is in a different level. Between the ages of two and six (pre-school), some language awareness aspects start to appear. Slobin (1978) refers to the following aspects: self-correction and rephrasing in the course of ongoing speech; comments on the speech of others; explicit questions about the speech and language; comments on their own speech and language; and response to direct questions about language' (as quoted in Jessner, 2006, p. 45).

During childhood, children start to speak and learn how to express themselves freely at the same time. They challenge their own speech and the others', make some questions about languages, and are able to answer direct specified questions about language.

In the Valencian Community, during the pre-school stage, literacy skills have not been acquired by the time English is introduced; students are still learning how to read and write in Valencian and Spanish. For this reason, the methodology used during the first years in which English is introduced is based on learning through playing, creating the necessity of using the language in a natural environment for the students. The characteristics of this methodology can be defined as follows, according to the explanation that Björklund and Suni (2000, pp. 207-208) make about *English as a L3 in an Immersion Programme in Vaasa/Vasa*. Thus, in English pre-school lessons from the Valencian Community:

- English is acquired naturally, because students learn about different content in this language;
- the teacher only uses English, but understands the student's first language;
- words and expressions are complemented by facial expressions and gestures;
- the teacher acts as an adviser and expert, and provides students with key words;
- the student can use his/her first language and is even encouraged to use English;
- routines are used for creating a safe and comfortable environment;
- language is always visible in the classroom (flashcards);
- pupils are the centre of the learning process (different activities and efficient communication);
- a wide vocabulary is achieved through natural communication (songs, assemblies...);
- teaching strategies are used (stories, rhymes, song, drama, theatre);
- educational materials (puppets, flashcards, books, songs, cartoons...).

As times goes by and children grow up, the English acquisition process changes. Once they start 1st Year in Primary, they have English as a subject plus a subject taught in English, using CLIL methodology. In addition, some students go to private language schools for improving their English and acquiring a proficient level.

The language acquisition process is already clear now, so we can make reference to some European research that demonstrates the benefits bilinguals have over monolinguals when they are acquiring a L3:

- (1) Some early studies proposed by research from the sixties and seventies reported that bilinguals were better than monolinguals at **phonetic discrimination** skills and **auditory discrimination** tests (Cenoz, 2009, p. 147).

- (2) More balanced bilinguals make **fewer errors** in the L3 Acquisition than less balanced bilinguals. The balanced bilingual concept is referred to those subjects who can switch from one language to another easily and without noticeable effort (Cenoz, 2009, p. 147).
- (3) 'Multilingualism research has shown that it is possible to achieve a high level of ability in more than one language. Moreover, multilingual individuals have available **cognitive advantages** which, compared to monolinguals, facilitate their learning of other languages (Bialystok 2005)' (as quoted in Göbel & Vieluf, 2014, pp. 182-183).
- (4) Monolingual and bilingual subjects have been compared in different countries from the European Union. In Finland, Ringborn (1987) concluded that bilingual learners possessed superior ability in English. In Spain, studies made 'in Catalonia and in the Basque country also revealed that bilingual learners have **superior English language skills** compared to their monolingual peers (Cenoz 1991, Sanz 1997, Muñoz 2000, Sagasta 2003)' (as quoted in Göbel & Vieluf, 2014, p. 183).
- (5) Cenoz (2003) assumes that bilingual subjects are more advanced in:
 - a. **language awareness,**
 - b. **specific language learning strategies,** and
 - c. **communicative abilities** (as quoted in Göbel & Vieluf, 2014, p. 183).
- (6) According to Bialystok's studies (2001) multilingual learners are more capable of using their **attention in selective mode**, which can help to the psychological process of learning languages (as quoted in Göbel & Vieluf, 2014, p. 183).
- (7) Kemp (2001) demonstrated that 'multilingual learners can **comprehend and memorize the grammatical structures** of a language **faster** than monolingual learners' (as quoted in Göbel & Vieluf, 2014, p. 183).
- (8) Lasagabaster's (1997) points to an advantage for bilinguals from the Basque Community (Spanish and Basque) over monolinguals (Spanish) in acquiring English as a L3. This author assumes that bilinguals **solve production and comprehension problems more efficiently** (as quoted in Safont, 2005, p. 41).
- (9) Considering further research, Safont (2005, p. 46) assumes that 'bilingual learners will **acquire an additional language faster and more efficiently**' than monolinguals.

All these benefits that bilingual subjects can have, when we refer to the acquisition of a L3, have been demonstrated from different research done in Europe. Different kinds of groups and different languages have been studied, and all of them have a similar beneficial direction.

The objective of this research is to study a particular case of bilingual pre-schoolers in the Valencian Community, in order to establish the benefits they should have when learning English as a L3. To do this, we make reference to previous research, but we have to deal with the following hypothesis: will the previous research really prove the benefits bilingual have when learning a L3?

3. Methodology

The research carried out by Cenoz (2009) in the Basque Country (Spain) demonstrates that bilinguals have some benefits when the task to which we are referring is acquiring English as a L3. In the Valencian Community there are no studies about this aspect, even though it is located in the same country as the area studied by Cenoz (2009), and has some similarities. Thereupon, Basque Country benefits, as well as the ones from other bilingual areas from Europe, can be transferred to Valencian Community in order to establish which are the benefits that a group of Valencian bilingual children could have in the acquisition of English as a L3. Hence, in order to study a particular case of this bilingual community, this study takes place in Betxí, a town located in Castelló province.

Children from this area are considered bilingual, because they are exposed to Valencian and Spanish daily. However, the increase of immigrant families or the exposure to Spanish in social media promotes the use of Spanish language, while Valencian is used by most citizens in all the public places from this town. In order to know the specific characteristics of every student, a survey (Appendix B) has been carried out. The main objective of this survey is to know which contact each child has with languages, and in which contexts. It is based on the different domains described by Daniel Coste (2014): *environment, family, peer groups, social organisations, social media, and mobility*.

The survey consists of a form, which parents have to fill in with the name and the pre-school year their child is doing, plus 6 questions. It can be answered in Spanish or Valencian, in order to establish the environment to which they are linked in, according to the choice of their families. The survey questions detailed below allow us to know about the languages that each child uses in the different domains in which he is developing and growing:

1st) In the first question families have to place an X in order to specify which is/are the MT of their child.

2nd) In question two, which is related with family context, relatives have to fill out the immediate relatives (parents, brothers or sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents...) and specify which language use with each one of them.

3rd) In the third, families have to write the languages their child uses with friends (peer group context).

4th) If the child goes to after-school activities, question four must be filled in; specifying which are the after-school activities the child does and the language used in each one.

5th and 6th) In the last two questions, relatives have to place an X to: the languages in which their children watch television, in social media context; and the foreign languages to which the child has been in contact, if it is the case, in the mobility context.

All questions have been made in the most visual and practical way possible, in order to facilitate the filling in to the children's relatives. Moreover, before spreading it out, the school headmistress reviewed its elaboration. She is the person who processed all the information to every teacher involved and has done possible that the survey has been held.

The Foundation Stage in CEIP Cervantes-Dualde is organized in three years (Table 1), according to the children's ages; 3, 4, and 5 years old respectively. There are two classes in each year (A and B), so there are 6 classes altogether, which have between 17 and 22 children per class. In total, there are 111 students.

Age 3		Age 4		Age 5	
A	B	A	B	A	B
17	19	19	22	17	17
TOTAL: 111					

Table 1. Number of CEIP Cervantes-Dualde pre-schoolers per class

The survey has been given to all the students' families and has been filled in and returned by 72 of them.

Once the school facilitated the completed surveys, the information was passed to the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows version 22.0 (Armonk, NY: IBM Corp). Each child was assigned a specific number in order to do the analysis objectively, then the languages in which each one of them is in contact with were recorded. A number "1" was assigned to each specific variable. If a language is not used, a "0" was used for representing when there is no contact with it.

The first of all is to identify if there is any survey that must be dismissed, then study the particular case and, if it is the case, eliminate it from the database document. After that, it is the moment to start analysing the data. If everything goes as expected, all children will use Valencian and Spanish in a balanced way in the different contexts. Although, surely in social media context children are going to be more exposed to Spanish than Valencian, because the Valencian Community does not have a TV channel in Valencian.

Lastly, when the results from the survey are clear, and we can observe the use of languages that this group of children do in their normal lives, the expected potential benefits that as bilingual students might have when learning English as a L3 have been described.

4. Results and discussion

The next section is about the description of the results derived from the surveys, and the potential benefits bilinguals might have when referring to the acquisition of English as a L3, in the particular group of children from the Valencian Community.

Results

Once the data from the survey is recorded on the SPSS, it is essential to determine if there are some children who are not Spanish and Valencian bilinguals, because they may use foreign languages at home, instead of Valencian. The first question has been used to determine the MT of each child; there are 6 children who speak Romanian, 1 child who speaks Arabic and 1 child who speaks French. Even though all these children have a foreign language as a MT, they have a high exposure to Valencian and the same exposure to Spanish as the other children from this area; that is why they can be considered plurilingual.

This research is focused only in bilingual children, for this reason the 8 children previously mentioned have not been taken into account. This research has been based in 64 bilingual subjects, to which we are going to refer from now on in the results of the survey's questions, which are going to be described below.

The survey could be answered in Spanish or Valencian, so families had the chance to fill in the survey with the language they preferred. Families can represent the environment to which children are exposed because all of them are bilingual too. As a result, 45'3% have decided to answer the survey in Spanish and 54'7% have answered it in Valencian. We can see that this bilingual society does not have a significant preference for a language. Children's families use Valencian or Spanish equally, having Valencian a slightly higher percentage.

The second question refers to the languages that the family uses with their children at home. The majority of the children, 60'9%, have exposure to Valencian and Spanish at home, the rest are only exposed to one of these languages; 14'076% of the children only have exposure to Spanish and 25'024% only to Valencian. It is clear that most children have exposure to both languages at home and there is only a minority who only has Valencian or Spanish. In this context, Valencian (85'9%) is a bit more frequently used than Spanish (75%) (Figure 1).

Three children have not answered the third question, they represent 4'7% from total and it appears as if they did not have any language in peer group context. Having this in mind, there are 8 children who only use Valencian in this context and 6 who only speak Spanish. The rest, who represent 71'9%, use Spanish and Valencian equally. One of them specified that, apart from these languages, he also uses English, which represents 1'6%. So, most children have exposure to Valencian (85'9%) and Spanish (82'8%) in the peer group context (Figure 1).

The fourth question is related to social organisations, so the statistics can only be made with those children who attend after-school activities; 39 children, who are 60'9% of the total. In this particular case, children go to after-school activities such as: skating, football, sport, gymnastics, dance, English, kick-boxing, swimming, paddle, yoga, tennis and ballet.

In social organisations' context most children, 25 out of 39, are in contact with Valencian, 13 of them are in contact with Spanish, and 15 of them with English. Only 4 of them use Valencian and Spanish, and 1 of them also English. Most of the children do their after-school activities in Valencian (39,1%), followed by English (23'4%) and Spanish (20'3%) (Figure 1).

The fifth question is related to the language children interaction with in social media. 100% of the children have exposure to Spanish and some of them also have other languages in this context. This is the case of 14 children who also have exposure to Valencian (21'9%), 23 who have exposure to English (35'9%), and one particular case who has Portuguese (1'6%) too, apart from Spanish and English (Figure 1). In this context, we can see that the exposure to Spanish language is really significant, as it was expected.

The sixth and last question is about mobility, just for having an idea about which interaction children have with foreign languages. In this case, we can only take into account those children who have been abroad, who are 14'1% from the whole group. This data is not relevant, because this group formed by 9 cannot provide representative data. However, we can consider which foreign languages those 9 children have been in contact with: English (4'7%), French (4,7%), Italian (3'1%), German (1'6%), and Portuguese (1'6%) (Figure 1).

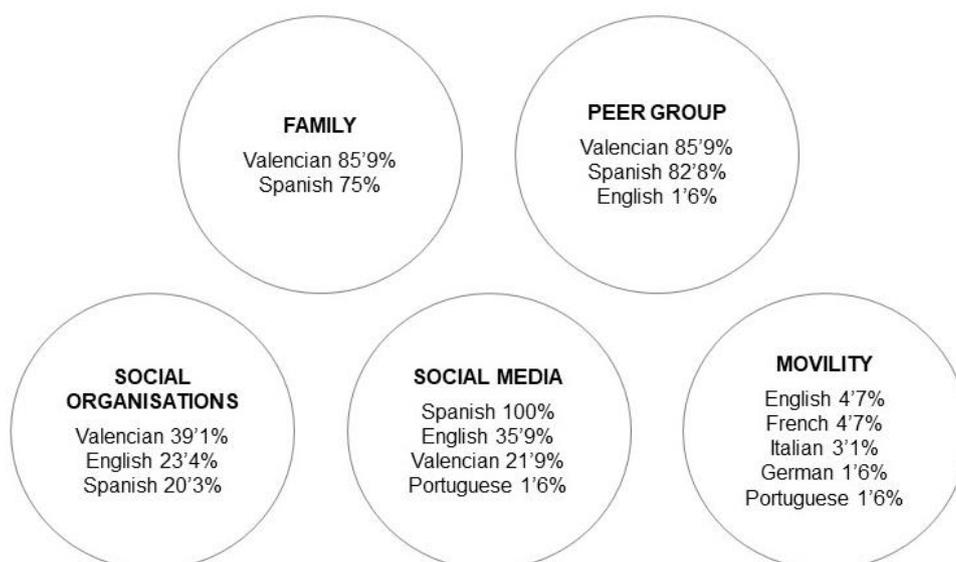


Figure 1. The languages used in each context

With the analysis explained above we can prove that children use Valencian and Spanish in the different contexts, and there is not any predominant language. The difference between the use of Valencian and Spanish in each context is not significant in the most of them. Nevertheless, as it was expected, we can observe that in social-media context everyone is exposed to Spanish, but not all of them to Valencian (only 21'9% of them).

In short, the results show that the 64 bilingual children have approximately the same exposure to Spanish and Valencian; although in some contexts one language acquires more importance (it is more frequently used) than the other.

The main finding of the present survey suggests that the children with whom we are doing this research are bilingual. Moreover, they go to a plurilingual school where they learn mainly in Valencian (*Nivell Avançat 2* - Advanced Level 2 from the DECRET 9/2017; see Appendix A), Spanish, and English. In other words, they are Valencian and Spanish bilinguals and are learning English as a L3.

Discussion

According to some research, the 64 bilingual children from CEIP Cervantes-Dualde of Betxí, who are learning English as a L3, should have some benefits in the foreign language learning process thanks to the fact that they are using Valencian and Spanish in their different domains of life.

The environment where the subjects of this study live is bilingual. The linguistic system of these children, as explained in the *Theoretical framework*, is more complex and developed than it would be if they were monolingual (Valencian or Spanish). Thereupon, in the near future if all these children continue studying in the same plurilingual system in which they are studying English as their L3 now; and everything goes as research demonstrates, these children should:

- (1) be better in phonics and in auditory discrimination English tests;
- (2) make fewer errors in the acquisition of English language (the more balanced bilingual should make fewer errors than less balanced ones);
- (3) have cognitive advantages, thanks to the languages they use, so learning English should be easier for them;
- (4) rise more advanced skills in English than if they were monolingual;
- (5) be more advanced with:
 - a. language awareness (how is the process of acquiring languages for themselves),
 - b. specific language learning strategies (in order to learn English as a L3, and other languages), and
 - c. communicative abilities (in all languages they know);
- (6) be more capable of using their attention in a selective mode, in order to focus in the most important and useful things for them (in the different languages they know);
- (7) comprehend and memorise grammatical structures of English faster;
- (8) solve production and comprehension problems in English more efficiently;
- (9) acquire additional languages (L4, L5, ...) faster and more efficiently.

All these benefits are supported by different research done with L3 learners from different European bilingual regions, explained in the *Theoretical framework*.

5. Conclusions

Nowadays the language learning process has become a daily concern for many people. The European society is living the need that we should learn English, as a *lingua franca*, in order to have a better work, or to be able to interact with people from different nationalities worldwide.

This real need for learning languages is increasingly present in educational systems. Children start learning English as a foreign language since Foundation Stages, when they are still learning how to use their MT. However, unfortunately, minority or minorized languages do not play the same role as English, because society is still not aware of the benefits of learning many languages since early years.

In Spain, Spanish language is more valued, for those who are in the head up of the political system, than Catalan, Basque, or Galician; minority languages that are still used, but tend to be minorized. As an example, the Valencian Community does not have a TV channel in Valencian.

In the Valencian Community, where Valencian and Spanish are used by the most citizens, the educational system and public places should foster the learning process of both languages. Some research demonstrates that being bilingual should have benefits when learning English as a L3. As a result, this bilingual context, as well as other European bilingual regions, should promote the use of the two languages spoken in the area. We are living the need of learning English, and we have the benefit of having a bilingual environment that can give us more skills and tools for our own language learning process.

Similar research should be made in those bilingual areas where minorized languages are playing a minor role. Everyone should know the benefits of learning languages since an early age and focus on them, putting political issues aside. People must promote the culture and the identity of every place, even more in bilingual places where minority languages are used. Because, due to the languages we use, we have a certain lifestyle, a personal way of expressing ideas, emotions, memories, and values. Every minority language, as well as every language, has a wealth that should never disappear.

The educational systems from bilingual regions have the possibility to promote those languages who are less frequently used (minority languages). In every European region with minority languages we should foster the use of them in order to enhance the language learning process. As an example, we can make reference to the new Plurilingual Decree from Valencian Community, which gives the choice to the schools in order to choose between different levels, which indicate the use of Valencian, Spanish, and English. The purpose of this Decree is promoting Valencian use, giving different levels for those specific places who are more or less balanced bilinguals. But all this promotion should not take place only in the educational system. Public administrations are capable of promoting minority languages, as well as in some specific locations it is now a reality. More specifically, in Castelló area,

public places such as Universitat Jaume I, public administrations and local businesses, where everyone promotes the Valencian use.

Despite the fact that the promotion of Valencian in the Valencian Community is real, there is a necessity of increasing community awareness about the benefits of being bilingual. People do not know exactly which the benefits are, because we cannot appreciate them at a glance and it is generally preferred to have more educative hours in Spanish than in Valencian.

Further research is needed in order to prove the benefits for keeping the attention from those who think that they do not need Valencian in their lives, despite they are living in bilingual contexts. Consequently, studies which analyse the benefits bilinguals have when acquiring English as a L3 should be carried out. Everybody must learn at least a foreign language. So, with the clarification of these benefits people could be more aware about the language process acquisition, and have in their minds that the more languages one person knows since an early age the better for this person will be.

In this research, we can only establish possible benefits bilinguals should have according to previous research. It would be interesting to carry out a longitudinal study with the 64 subjects, testing them every year, in order to know if the possible benefits established are successfully fulfilled. In this way, the results would be clearly demonstrated and we could aware citizens of the promotion of minority languages in every bilingual area from Europe.

As a bilingual person who is living in a bilingual community and has started studying English as a L3 when I was four, I have to say that I felt comfortable with English, I did not have many difficulties acquiring this L3 and I feel identified with some of the benefits that the previously mentioned research demonstrates.

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Valencian Community Decrees

DECRET 127/2012, de 3 d'agost, del Consell, pel qual es regula el plurilingüisme en l'ensenyança no universitària a la Comunitat Valenciana.

DECRET 9/2017, de 27 de gener, del Consell, pel qual s'estableix el model lingüístic educatiu valencià i se'n regula l'aplicació als ensenyaments no universitaris de la Comunitat Valenciana.

Appendix

APPENDIX A

Programa d'educació plurilingüe - Plurilingual education program

NIVELL BÀSIC 1 - BASIC LEVEL 1

INFANTIL – PREE-SCHOOL

ENFOCAMENT GLOBALITZAT – GLOBALIZED APPROACH			
	VAL (Valencian)	CAT (Spanish)	ANG (English)
3 A	4 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	
4 A	4 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h
5 A	4 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h

NIVELL BÀSIC 2 - BASIC LEVEL 2

INFANTIL – PRE-SCHOOL

ENFOCAMENT GLOBALITZAT – GLOBALIZED APPROACH			
	VAL (Valencian)	CAT (Spanish)	ANG (English)
3 A	4 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	
4 A	6 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h
5 A	6 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h

NIVELL INTERMEDI 1 - INTERMEDIATE LEVEL 1

INFANTIL – PRE-SCHOOL

ENFOCAMENT GLOBALITZAT – GLOBALIZED APPROACH			
	VAL (Valencian)	CAT (Spanish)	ANG (English)
3 A	8 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	
4 A	8 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h
5 A	8 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h

NIVELL INTERMEDI 2 - INTERMEDIATE LEVEL 2

INFANTIL – PRE-SCHOOL

ENFOCAMENT GLOBALITZAT – GLOBALIZED APPROACH			
	VAL (Valencian)	CAT (Spanish)	ANG (English)
3 A	9 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	
4 A	8 h / 9 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h
5 A	8 h / 9 h	LA RESTA – THE REST	2 h / 4 h

NIVELL AVANÇAT 1 - ADVANCED LEVEL 1

INFANTIL – PRE-SCHOOL

ENFOCAMENT GLOBALITZAT – GLOBALIZED APPROACH			
	VAL (Valencian)	CAT (Spanish)*	ANG (English)
3 A	LA RESTA – THE REST	4 h	
4 A	LA RESTA – THE REST	4 h	2 h / 4 h
5 A	LA RESTA – THE REST	4 h	2 h / 4 h

(*) Els centres amb alumnat majoritàriament no valencianoparlant poden ajornar la incorporació del castellà com a àrea fins al primer curs de l'Educació Primària. – Schools in which most students are not Valencian speakers can incorporate Spanish to the 1st Year of Primary Education.

NIVELL AVANÇAT 2 - ADVANCED LEVEL 2

INFANTIL – PRE-SCHOOL

ENFOCAMENT GLOBALITZAT – GLOBALIZED APPROACH			
	VAL (Valencian)	CAT (Spanish)*	ANG (English)
3 A	LA RESTA – THE REST	4 h	
4 A	LA RESTA – THE REST	4 h	2 h / 4 h
5 A	LA RESTA – THE REST	4 h	2 h / 4 h

(*) Els centres amb alumnat majoritàriament no valencianoparlant poden ajornar la incorporació del castellà com a àrea fins al primer curs de l'Educació Primària. – Schools in which most students are not Valencian speakers can incorporate Spanish to the 1st Year of Primary Education.

APPENDIX B

In Appendix B you can find the survey that pre-schoolers' families have filled in. There are two versions: Valencian and Spanish.



Nom i cognoms _____ com a
 pare/mare de l'alumne/a _____,
 qui està actualment cursant _____ anys en el CEIP Cervantes Dualde de Betxí,
 emplene aquest qüestionari i done el consentiment per tal que les dades contestades
 puguen ser usades per al Treball de Final de Grau d'una alumna de la Universitat Jaume I.

1. Marca amb una X aquella llengua o llengües en les que està en contacte el/la vostre/a fill/filla:

Valencià Romanès
 Espanyol Àrab
 Anglès Francès Altra: _____

2. En quina llengua parleu, els familiars més propers (pare, mare, avi, àvia, germans...), al vostre fill/filla:

Familiar 1: _____ Llengua: _____
 Familiar 2: _____ Llengua: _____
 Familiar 3: _____ Llengua: _____
 Familiar 4: _____ Llengua: _____

3. Quan juga amb els amics, quina llengua utilitza? (podeu posar més d'una, si es dona el cas)

4. Va a alguna activitat extraescolar? SI NO En cas afirmatiu, digues a quina extraescolar assisteix i quina llengua utilitza en la mateixa:

Extraescolar 1: _____ Llengua: _____
 Extraescolar 2: _____ Llengua: _____

5. Quan mira la televisió (dibuixos animats, pel·lícules, notícies...) en quina llengua ho fa? Podeu marcar més d'una llengua.

Valencià Castellà Anglès Altres: _____

6. Alguna vegada el vostre fill/filla ha viatjat a l'estranger? SI NO En cas afirmatiu, marca amb una X la llengua en la qual ha estat en contacte:

Francès Alemany Italià Romanès
 Portuguès Anglès Altres _____

Les dades personals que conté l'imprès podran ser incloses en un fitxer per al seu tractament per la UJI i el CEIP Cervantes-Dualde en l'ús de les funcions pròpies que té atribuïdes en l'àmbit de les seues competències, i es podrà dirigir a qualsevol òrgan seu per a exercir els drets d'accés, rectificació, cancel·lació i oposició, segons el que disposa la Llei Orgànica 15/1999, de 13 de desembre, de Protecció de Dades de Caràcter Personal (BOE núm. 298 de 14 de desembre de 1999)



Nombre y apellidos _____ como
padre/madre/tutor del alumno/a _____,
quien está actualmente cursando _____ años en el CEIP Cervantes Dualde de Betxí
relleno este cuestionario y doy el consentimiento para que los datos contestados puedan
ser usados para el Trabajo de Fin de Grado de una alumna de la Universitat Jaume I.

1. Marque con una X aquella lengua o lenguas en las que está en contacto su hijo o hija:

Valenciano Rumano
Español Árabe
Inglés Francés Otra: _____

2. En qué lengua habláis, los familiares más cercanos (padre, madre, abuelo, abuela, hermanos...),
a vuestro hijo/hija:

Familiar 1: _____ Lengua: _____
Familiar 2: _____ Lengua: _____
Familiar 3: _____ Lengua: _____
Familiar 4: _____ Lengua: _____

3. Cuando juega con los amigos, ¿qué lengua utiliza? (podéis poner más de una, si se da el caso):

4. ¿Va a alguna actividad extraescolar? SI NO En caso afirmativo, di cuál es la extraescolar
a la que asiste y qué lengua utiliza:

Extraescolar 1: _____ Lengua: _____
Extraescolar 2: _____ Lengua: _____

5. Cuando mira la televisión (dibujos animados, películas, noticias...), ¿en qué lengua lo hace?
Podéis marcar más de una lengua.

Valenciano Castellano Inglés Otras: _____

6. ¿Alguna vez vuestro hijo/hija ha viajado al extranjero? SI NO En caso afirmativo, marca
con una X la lengua con la que ha estado en contacto:

Francés Alemán Italiano Rumano
Portugués Inglés Otras _____