

MASTER THESIS DISSERTATION

AN OVERVIEW OF CLIL AND IMMERSION APPROACHES

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the ever-growing demand for English literacy skills owing to its status quo -- “ELF as the *de facto* lingua franca of Europe” (Seidlhofer, 2010: 357), SLE and FLE scholars have been trying to strike the gold mine as far as offering the optimum teaching methodology is concerned. There are some who incline to believe that language immersion programs are most effective (Edwards & Smyth, 1976; Swain & Lapkin, 1982; Lambert & Tucker, 1972) , while others advocate different approaches such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (Jiménez & Ojeda, 2009; Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). This paper offers a quick theoretical overview of the aforementioned approaches. It then provides the author’s interpretation of the questionnaires collected from a language immersion specialist, and Head of Plurinlingual Department.

The objectives of this paper are twofold: (i) describe and compare two similar language approaches, and analyze the main differences between them; (ii) explore the professional experience of some of the language immersion and CLIL experts as well as find out whether there have been any studies done, which tested the target language functional proficiency of the Elian’s British School’ students and the CLIL students of Francesc Ribalta Secondary School.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Defining Language Immersion

The notion of language immersion had already existed prior to Lambert & Tucker’s (1972) contribution to the term “French immersion” during the 1960’s (Cummins, 2009). The main reason for the “early French immersion” was to “redress the failure of

English school programs in Quebec to bring English-speaking children to high level, functional French language proficiency.” (Wesche, 2002)

This approach meant that children (English-speaking children) would be taught to speak, write and read, as well as spoken to and instructed exclusively in French, starting from day one in kindergarten (Johnson & Swain, 1997). It would not be until later (between 2nd and 6th grades) that English “first literacy skills (were) introduced into the curriculum.”(p. 2)

Research and studies carried out on French immersion (Edwards & Smyth, 1976; Lapkin & Swain, 1982; Lambert & Tucker, 1972) report positive results in regards to French immersion students’ satisfaction. As a result, immersion programs would gain terrain and popularity all throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s in Canada (Johnson & Swain, 1997). Likewise, a number of countries would quickly adopt and import the immersion paradigm either to improve students’ L2 proficiency or prevent endoglossic languages from dying out (p.4).

Despite the fact that the immersion programs did yield great results when it came to achieving their linguistic goals, there are some critics who implicate the former in catering to the rich, arguing that “as it has been implemented French immersion has functioned as a service to the elite” (Olson & Burns, 1983:7). Furthermore, there are others who claim that immersion programs only worked with early immersion - -in kindergarten, for instance - as opposed to introducing the latter later in school (Johnson & Swain (1994); Marsh, Hau & Kong (2000).

What is more, Krashen (1982) doubted the effectiveness of language immersion methodology, pointing out that the emphasis was placed on fluency over accuracy. Some even went as far so as to designate the term “immersion dialect” based on the way the immersion student spoke wherein the presence of “fossilization” phenomenon and deviation from the standard forms was observed (Harley & Swain, 1984; Lyster, 1987).

Consequently, and as a reaction to the criticism to the aforementioned approach, other pedagogical methodologies arose. One of them is CLIL, which is defined in the following section.

2.2. Defining CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning is a “dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language.” (Coyle *et al*, 2010: 1) In other words, CLIL is a pedagogical approach -- or rather than simply an approach -- a system that is a content-driven and where the target language is integrated into the educative process: students simultaneously learn the content and the target language in an interlaced way. The system draws on the theories and hypotheses proposed by a number of scholars concerning the development and construction of knowledge and skills.

Among those scholars we may distinguish Vygotsky (1978); Krashen (1985); Pica (1991); Swain (2000). In regards to its implementation, it should be specifically addressed that CLIL is - by far and large - not about simply importing “foreign stuff, foreign ideas, foreign textbooks” as the founder of the term Marsh (2010) explains ; but instead, the basis for successful CLIL lesson is firmly rooted in four underlying principles or 4 Cs model as put forward by Coyle (2008), which involve: (i) content, marked by progression in knowledge; (ii) communication which is manifested in employing interactive verbal and non-verbal strategies or negotiation of meaning , among others; (iii) cognition where adequate conditions are created for developing critical thinking skills, creative thinking skills and problem-solving skills; (iv) culture which refers to the fact that students are presented with opportunities to gain competence in intercultural awareness.

All 4 Cs are meant to work in synergy for CLIL system to thrive, and consequently, to provide students with the optimal learning conditions and scaffolding. In general terms, CLIL sessions are designed in such way in which the units and lessons are balanced and conducive to the opportunities for application of knowledge and the development of communication skills. CLIL methodology implies student-centered environment where students’ role is central and highly participative due to the fact that the latter are required to perform more hands-on work.

Lynch (2015) points out, however, that Coyle, Hood & Marsh (2010) revised the 4 Cs model, distinguishing yet another C, which stands for “context”. Despite the fact that the notion of *context* was outlined, the authors did not convert the latter into the fifth C, but rather proposed the following conceptual framework: 4 Cs + 1, “as context encapsulates the original 4C framework” (Lynch, 2015: 70).

Montalto, Walter, Theodorou & Chrysanthou recommend CLIL teachers to bear in mind the 5 Cs when it comes to lesson planning. The added 5th C represents the concept of *competence*, which refers to “can-do statements” made by the students once they have internalized a new skill or ability (p.219).

2.2.1. CLIL in Spain

By the end of 20th century, CLIL has been gaining popularity and winning every time more proponents of its dissemination in Europe and beyond (Marsh & Langé, 1999). As far as Spain is concerned, despite *La Reforma Educativa* of 1993, which advised for a foreign language acquisition to commence at eight years of age, that is in the third grade of primary school, many mainstream schools have been integrating its teaching from the first year of schooling (De Zarobe, 2008). In order to review CLIL’s application in Spain, the country’s unique linguistic landscape should be taken in account together with its multiple legislative guidelines for the Spanish education system (the Spanish Constitution (1978), the Organic Act on the Right to Education (LODE, 1978) and the Organic Law of Education 2/2006, 3rd May (Ley Orgánica de Educación LOE 2006). The seventeen autonomous communities, in addition to the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, adapt the Organic Law of Education in accordance with their territories (De Zarobe, 2010).

It is precisely due to this linguistic diversity that CLIL’s overall evaluation becomes highly complex, since the spectrum of the latter varies from one region to the next. Nonetheless, the results of one investigation, which was carried out on CLIL in

Spain, may shed light and provide insight, in particular, into whether or not the learning of foreign languages through CLIL approach is enhanced and improved (Gallardo & Martínez, 2013). This investigation centered on assessing the following parameters: specific competence (specific linguistic features) and general competence. As far as the specific competence is concerned, the students involved in CLIL programs showed better results in reading comprehension, vocabulary at the receptive level, certain morphological phenomena and oral and writing fluency, when compared to the results of the students who were not in the CLIL program.

On the other hand, listening skills, vocabulary at the production level, pronunciation, syntax and discursive ability were not found to be improved. Furthermore, the research conducted on the lexical variety of 6th graders in Primary school of the Rioja's Autonomous Community proved that the children of the CLIL programs were outperformed by those who were not taught through CLIL (Jiménez & Ojeda, 2009).

When it comes to the general competence at the level of primary school, CLIL programs students perform better at fill-in-the-gap activities and written comprehension than the students who come from the traditional contexts of learning (Jiménez Catalan, De Zarobe & Cenoz, 2006). The same tendency may be observed in high school CLIL students from the Basque Country and Catalonia, who seem to be superior in their speaking and writing skills when compared to the students of the same age (or older) whose educational background is made up by traditional learning environment (Lasagabaster, 2008).

The results clearly showcase that the general competence of the CLIL students is far superior to that of the students who belong to the more traditional learning environment. On the other hand, the specific competence remains to be addressed. One possible solution to redressing this issue may lie in paying close attention to both aspects at the same time, namely to the content and to the form of the target language. For instance, teachers can monitor their students' formal aspects of the target language while the latter perform communicative-type tasks either through the collaborative peer feedback or through corrective feedback (García, 2009).

2.3. Differences between CLIL and language immersion

Despite the fact that “ The CLIL approach stems from immersion programmes, and the psycho-pedagogical foundation, methodological principles, successful implementation in a wide array of contexts...”(Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009: 373), the terms CLIL and immersion should not be used interchangeably. The authors argue that the language of instruction, teachers, teaching materials and objectives vary in CLIL (pp: 370-372).

Concerning the language of instruction in CLIL, a foreign (not local) language is employed that the majority of students only come in contact with in the formal settings, whereas in immersion the language of instruction may be also in use by minority language communities (Basque, Galician, Valencian, among others). As far as the teachers are concerned, the majority of language instructors in immersion programs come from English speaking countries, and the opposite is true with CLIL teachers.

With regard to material, immersion methodology implies resources geared to native speakers; conversely, in CLIL teaching materials are adapted to suit the students' needs. Finally, the objectives vary: immersion seeks to match its students' target language proficiency to that of a native speaker. In contrast, CLIL aims at developing and improving students' target language skills in accordance with the state curriculum requirements.

2.4. Reasons for choosing CLIL over language immersion methodology

While there will always be a great deal of controversy surrounding the most effective, foolproof methodology for acquiring foreign languages, a language instructor will, however, instinctively lean towards a methodology, which in their view, is most suitable for their students. Notwithstanding, out of the two approaches reviewed, CLIL

appears to be more, since it considers the principles of English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth, ELF) awareness outlined by ELF's scholars (Llurda, 2018; Seidlhofer, 2010). Thus, according to Llurda (2018), we should "look beyond the native-speaker paradigm" (p.520). In other words, as English language instructors we are not to be bound by Anglican culture with its norms and values. Our students should be allowed room for linguistic creativity. Similarly, there are not to be held liable for failing to achieve native-like pronunciation. This in turn will remove the pressure off of our students to strive to match such unrealistic expectations.

In the same vein, Marsh (2010) brings up the fact that CLIL is more culture-sensitive than language immersion education which imposes "foreign stuff and ideas". As an alternative, students are encouraged to respect and value the wide diversity of cultures, ideologies and creeds.

Furthermore, what makes CLIL so appealing and exciting to both teachers and students is its potential to convert studying of the seemingly isolated and disengaged subjects into the learning process where many of the subjects intertwine, resulting in meaningful and significant learning experience.

A case in point, certain curricular contents from ICT subject can be taught through English language as illustrated by Saorín & Bernal (2009). In this class example, the students are to submit three final papers at the end of the assignment. The first paper is a written work on any of the renewable energies in any of the two vehicular languages of the Community (Valencian or Castilian). The second - requires students to design an informative brochure in English on the same topic, and optionally, in another language. The third paper calls for crafting a poster that will serve as visual support to make an oral presentation in English about some aspects of the working process. The content of the three papers is evaluated as part of ICT subject, while the oral presentation will also count towards the final grade of English subject.

It is within this educational realm that we may set highly diverse objectives for our students, which are not limited exclusively to the development of the linguistic skills, but rather encompass well-rounded guidance. In the example of a CLIL class above, for instance, among the set objectives we may distinguish: i) raise students awareness on

environmental issues; ii) inform of the detrimental and devastating effects the certain pollutants can cause; iii) learn the different ways of recycling; iv) search for the right kind of information through adequate technology; v) select appropriate and context-specific information; vi) develop the ability to design a poster and give a presentation in English.

As we can see not only is CLIL respectful with other languages, cultures and traditions, but it also provides ample opportunities for developing and boosting a wide range of our students' skills and abilities needed in the postmodern world. There is just one setback with CLIL, however, that the author encountered during this research on CLIL: some state schools' staff members report that CLIL has not found home there due to the lack of financial aid and time to train new CLIL instructors.

That is why the next section is devoted to interviewing the Head of Plurilingual Department, at a school where CLIL is applied and integrated into the school curricula so as to attain deeper knowledge regarding putting the methodology into practice. Furthermore, the information collected through computer questionnaire for an Elían's British School teacher is included with the purpose of providing a more balanced and fair overall view on immersion methodology.

3. METHOD

3.1. Purpose of the study and instruments

The purpose of this study is twofold: (i) explore the professional experience of the language immersion and CLIL experts involved; (ii) find out whether there have been any studies done, which tested the target language functional proficiency of the Elían's British School's students and the CLIL students of Francesc Ribalta Secondary School.

Concerning the professional experience of the teachers who apply two different approaches, this paper sought to provide additional input and insight from the local experts on the issues that have been raised in the sections above. Thus, three different computer questionnaires have been elaborated for the participants involved, wherein open-ended questionnaire questions were included, as used in qualitative methods. Computer questionnaires (sent by email) were chosen; since it implies time efficiency and minimum pressure on the respondents.

Moreover, the respondents may take their time to carefully craft and formulate their answers to the best of their ability. Among the questions posed to the Elían's British School instructor, whose school's policy calls for an application of language immersion methodology, were several in regard to the concerns such as: a) propagating social segregation and elitism; b) a tendency to recruit native instructors (vs. non-native); c) focusing too much on meaning at the expense of form, when it comes to the final production stage; d) influence of English status quo on current teaching policies.

Bringing up those controversial issues to a knowledgeable teacher, may allow us a glimpse inside the educational microcosms of Elían's British School as well as provide an opportunity for the practicing teacher of immersion approach to speak out. The resulting statements might in turn lend themselves to a more balanced and objective vision on immersion methodology, earlier defined in this paper. Furthermore, in order to find out some tangible proof of efficacy of the approach, an inquiry was made as far as the Elían's British School students' target language functional proficiency test performance was concerned, namely: whether there have been any. The final question presented in the questionnaire elicited a piece of advice from the immersion instructor for the UJI post graduates, who are determined to make a difference in the educational arena.

During the search for the state schools, which implemented CLIL methodology, the author was informed by several state schools staff members that such methodology was too complex for some of the teachers at their schools. They further explained that their schools' teachers were extremely overwhelmed by the workload which CLIL approach implied. In other words, it was not just "copiar un texto de historia y pegarlo

en el google traductor”, as one of the staff member put it. It meant finding additional time and financial resources for training the already existing personnel.

And yet, after having contacted several state schools, the researcher was suggested to look into the staff at Francesc Ribalta Secondary School and ask them to share their experiences in terms of succeeding in their efforts to implant the CLIL system.

The questionnaires for the CLIL teachers, therefore, encompassed several which dealt with the setbacks and challenges that CLIL methodology generally implies for the CLIL teachers. The Head of Plurilingual Department was asked to comment on resolving and overcoming the hardships related to the application and the implementation of CLIL at her institution. The questionnaire also included a question on the importance of fluency over accuracy within the immersion paradigm and whether the same principle applied in CLIL. The expert was also asked about for how long CLIL has been applied at her school and whether or not its implementation has been a success. Ultimately, a piece of advice for those UJI postgraduates who are determined to make a change in an educational arena was sought as a final reflection.

The same questionnaire was elaborated for the CLIL specialists at Francesc Ribalta Secondary School in order to gain deeper knowledge in regard to the following issues: (i) whether or not they are required to attend a certain CLIL course; (ii) availability of suitable teaching material; (iii) support among the staff members in terms of gathering new material and information on CLIL; (iv) positive and negative aspects of CLIL. To view the detailed questionnaire, see Appendix A.

3.2. Settings and participants

The study was conducted at Elian’s British School Castellón, which is located on the Ronda Circunvlación, Castellón de la Plana and Francesc Ribalta Secondary School, situated on the Avenida Rey Don Jaime, Castellón de la Plana.

2 language instructors: Alberto Martin, experienced teacher at Elian's British School, who started teaching in England back in the year 2001, at a school for children with little or no sight; then moved onto mainstream education doing long-term supply in a wide range of schools (mostly schools that struggled to deal with challenging behavior). After doing supply teaching, Martin worked at two schools on permanent contracts, where he passed the threshold barrier as a teacher (upper payscale) before moving to Castellón in the year 2011; Maria Marco, who is currently the Head of the Plurilingual Department at Francesc Ribalta Secondary School. Ms. Marco has been teaching English for 26 years.

3.3. Results

3.3.1. Information obtained from the questionnaire sent to Mr. Martin.

The section includes the information collected from the computer questionnaire that was sent to Mr. Martin.

Question 1. Would you please introduce yourself and describe your professional trajectory in the educational field.

Hi, my name is Alberto Martin and I started teaching in England back in the year 2001, at a school for children with little or no sight, then I moved onto mainstream education doing long-term supply in a wide range of schools, although, mostly, schools that struggled to deal with challenging behaviour. After doing supply teaching, I worked at two schools on permanent contracts, where I passed the threshold barrier as a teacher (upper payscale) with flying colours, before moving to Castellón in the year 2011.

Question 2. What prompted you to join the staff at Elian´s British School?

There was a mix of personal and professional circumstances, but mostly personal. Elian´s was looking for a new teacher that could offer more than one subject, and since in England I had completed a second degree in ICT and had taught Physical Education, history and ICT to a high standard (based on GCSE results), the school decided that I could be an asset to Elian's and offered me the position.

Question 3. Concerning pedagogical approaches and methodologies, would it be safe to say that your institution implements, primarily, the approach which received the term “immersion”? If so, how does it work? Could you comment on the advantages of immersion programs?

Absolutely. We believe that this is the only way forward, the most natural, fastest and most efficient way of learning English. After all, this is how human beings learn a new language.

We support students with extra English lessons, so they acquire the vocabulary needed to follow the lessons and complete the different tasks and meet the learning objectives in the different subjects.

We also make good use of a wide range of resources and differentiated activities in the lessons to accommodate the different needs of our students; whether they have learning difficulties or are gifted & talented.

Question 4. Are native teachers favored over non-native when it comes to hiring a new instructor?

All the adverts posted by the school to recruit new teachers request professionals to have a native-speaking level of English (C2/Proficiency equivalent). It's understandable that the school will look for such a requirement, as this is at the heart of their main selling strategy. Having said this, I have never heard of any British school in Spain or internationally that had refused to employ people of different nationalities.

At the last school I worked at in England, there were teachers from South-Africa, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Australia, and Uganda. I think that in the end what all schools (in England and British Schools around the Globe) look for is quality staff that is well motivated, are great communicators and master the English language.

Question 5. Some critics claim that the immersion realm contributes to further social segregation and encourages elitism. Would you agree?

Not necessarily, we have students from different economic backgrounds and our values encourage kindness towards all people, hence opposing that elitist cliché that private schools have.

This year, some of our students will volunteer at different associations in Castellón for a period of six months. I believe that far from encouraging any form of social segregation, we are trying to make a tangible change in society and our school is a pioneer in this field.

Question 6. Others argue that within the immersion paradigm the emphasis is placed on fluency rather than accuracy (meaning over form). Is there any truth to such assumption?

Learning a new language is a complex process with several stages along the way. Stating that at Elían's we look for the fluency above accuracy, is a bit of an oversimplification. While it's true that students will first become fluent in the use of English while making some grammatical mistakes -this comes with the demands of the immersion programme-; their grammar will improve over time to the point that their English will be flawless in both of those areas.

To put it in layman's terms, our students first learn to communicate in English and then, they polish up their grammar skills, so they are ready to fully meet the demands of universities across the UK, Europe or the USA, therefore proving that the immersion system although costly, pays dividends.

Question 7. Have there been any studies done wherein Elian's British School students' English functional proficiency was measured against that of students whose educational background is made up mainly by state schools' curriculum?

We don't measure our student's command of the English language by comparing it to that existent in state schools. At the end of the day, we need to remember that what our students are acquiring is a valuable set of skills across several subjects that will benefit them in the future and will open many doors in an increasingly globalised world. Having said this, our student's mastery of English is a requirement to pass their final exams and to be accepted at Universities around the world. I would like to add that some of our pupils from the first promotion have just started their university studies in the USA, Holland, Italy, Denmark and the UK.

Question 8. Has English status quo (English as Lingua Franca) affected in any way pedagogical approaches carried out by your colleagues? Or yours, for that matter?

Not at all, we need to remember that although the Lingua Franca at school is undoubtedly English, the pedagogical approaches transcend languages and the excellent existing communication between members that deliver the British curriculum and those that deliver the Spanish curriculum guarantees a wide, effective and proven range of pedagogical approaches to accommodate the different needs of every student.

Question 9. What advice would you give to the UJI postgraduates (as myself), who are determined to make a difference in the educational arena?

That is a very good question that hasn't got an easy answer, after all, we are perhaps before one of the most complex jobs that one can think of and therefore, there will be many people that might not agree with my views as a teacher.

I have been teaching for seventeen years and have seen many teachers coming and going; it has also been a rocky road for myself at times, but this is what I have learnt along the way.

3.3.2. Information obtained from the questionnaire sent to Ms. Marco.

This section includes the responses obtained from the computer questionnaire questions sent by email to Ms. Marco.

Question 1. Would you please introduce yourself and describe your teaching trajectory?

I am Maria Marco. I work in Francesc Ribalta Secondary School and I have been working as an English teacher for 26 years. I am currently the Head of the plurilingual department in my school.

Question 2. As I was looking for a school, which implemented CLIL methodology for my research, I have been informed by some schools staff members that such methodology was not exactly welcomed there. They further explained that their schools' teachers were extremely overwhelmed by the workload which CLIL approach implied. In other words, it was not just "copiar un texto de historia y pegarlo en el google traductor". It meant finding additional time and financial resources for training the already existing personnel. As a result, the majority of them downright refused to invest in CLIL. What was your experience? Have you had to overcome any hardship and setbacks? And if so, how did you cope with them?

Teaching through English is very challenging and time consuming. Fortunately in my school there is a group of 14 teachers who are totally convinced a plurilingual education is the best we can offer our students. We make the effort to meet once a week so that we revise and coordinate all the materials. However, I would like to highlight that we do not receive any financial help from Conselleria nor any reduction in our teaching periods.

Question 3. How long have you been applying CLIL at your school?

CLIL has been applied at Francesc Ribalta Secondary School since 2013.

Question 4. Has it been a success?

It has been a definite success.

Question 5. Sometimes, in the immersion paradigm, fluency is sought at the expense of accuracy. What about CLIL approach? Is there an equal emphasis placed on both criteria?

Fluency is much more important than accuracy in CLIL.

Question 6. Have there any studies been done wherein Castellón CLIL students' functional proficiency is measured against that of Castellón non- CLIL students?

The number of students is not relevant yet. I think the study will be worth being done in 5 years.

Question 7. What advice would you give to the UJI postgraduates (as myself), who are determined to make a difference in the educational arena?

I would encourage you to do so.

4. CONCLUSION

In today's era of globalization and internalization, our world is more interconnected than ever thanks to the common vehicle of universal communication that English language represents. In a world of rapid change English language proficiency is sought after and highly prized. It is precisely due to this increasing demand for

English literacy skills, considering its status quo, students and teachers alike have been looking for the most effective methodology for acquiring the target language.

Unfortunately, learning a new language implies a life-long process where no quick fixes or wondrous tricks will do. There is a myriad of techniques, approaches and methodologies exist today as far as acquiring a new language is concerned. This paper narrowed them down and focused its attention on the two widely-known approaches ESL and EFL: language immersion and CLIL, which to some people seem all too similar if not the same. Thus, it was necessary to review these two methodologies so as to provide a deeper understanding and insight into the similarities as well as the differences between them.

The paper outlines a number of aspects and characteristics of CLIL that makes this particular system stand out as more sensitive and thoughtful in terms of preserving and appreciating other countries' identity, culture and ideology.

To counterbalance and address some of the aforementioned scholars' claims, arguments and statements of either approaches, two experts in ESL field have been asked to provide their input. The results have shown to be slightly different than expected. Specifically, negative evidence that run counter to some of the claims put forward by Lasagabaster & Sierra (2009), have been present in Mr. Martin's feedback.

As a consequence, the information obtained through the questionnaire sent to Mr. Martin has revealed that non-native personal stands a chance to be employed at a British School granted that their English proficiency level matches that of an equivalent of C2 (see Section 3.3.1 Question 4). As per the social concerns on elitism and segregation, the teacher assures that his institution instills humanistic qualities to its students such as engaging in volunteer work (Question 4).

The results have proved, however, to be congruous with the assumptions about language immersion methodology being less sensitive to other cultures and ideologies when it comes to producing adequate adjustments in teaching methodology, considering the status quo of English. Similarly, the results confirm the tendency to place more importance on students' fluency rather than on accuracy in the immersion paradigm.

Regrettably, the information obtained from Mr. Martin has demonstrated to be unproductive regarding gathering any data on studies or surveys carried out on the functional proficiency of English of Elian’s British School students.

With respect to the results collected from Ms. Marco’s questionnaire, the following observations have been made. Albeit the input received was, to a certain degree, expected as far as CLIL being ‘a definite success’ is concerned (see Section 3.3.2. Question 4.); Ms. Marco’s response in regard to fluency, however, was not. The latter indicates that CLIL methodology, implemented at Francesc Ribalta Secondary School, aims primarily – just as language immersion approach does -- at developing fluency, leaving accuracy behind.

As for the question addressing hardships and setbacks linked to CLIL realization, the results affirm the claims made by other state schools’ staff members, CLIL instructors are left to rely on their own financial resources. Moreover, as firm believers in the method, they volunteer their time to “revise and coordinate all the materials” (see Section 3.3.2. Question 2).

The negative feedback has been received on the inquiry concerning evidence on any studies carried out, which would test the target language functional proficiency of the CLIL students at Francesc Ribalta Secondary School due to the lack of CLIL students and time transpired since the implementation of CLIL.

With reference to the non-response received from the CLIL specialists (Appendix A), it may be interpreted in a variety of ways, the most plausible of which might be due to the teachers’ busy schedules and the increase of administrative burdens consisting of a wide range of activities from the overload of paperwork to attending mandatory meetings or seminars.

One of the objections of the study was to find out whether any available data existed in the area of testing or measuring the target language proficiency of either the students of Elian’s British School or the students of Francesc Ribalta Secondary School. The results that have been obtained from the participants failed to supply such evidence

largely because no such studies have been done yet in those two schools. Therefore, no statements or affirmation with respect to the superiority or advantages of one methodology over the other can be made.

As a final reflection, the results of the study have contributed to minor changes with regard to the author's original outlook on the methodologies reviewed. For some of the assumptions made about language immersion approach have been challenged by the local expert in the given paradigm; and yet others have remained intact. Likewise, some of the feedback obtained on the importance of fluency over accuracy in CLIL has raised questions as to the validity of controversy and critique surrounding language immersion; since both of the approaches pursue the same objective: meaning over form. These inconsistencies nonetheless showcase the fact that there is ultimately no a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather we come across the models which are to be researched and evolved further.

5. LIMITATIONS

Despite the fact that the paper's aims have been reached, the author fully recognizes its shortcomings and limitations. On the one hand, difficulties in contacting resource individuals due to the latter's busy school schedule and time constraints. Some of the shortcomings of email questionnaires lie in the fact that sometimes they get ignored. Thus several computer questionnaires sent to Francesc Ribalta Secondary School teachers were left unanswered. Other state schools' curriculum plan integrates neither CLIL nor language immersion approaches, making it thus impossible to carry out any research on this particular topic.

On the other hand, the study remains incomplete due to the unavailability of recent data; since, according to the teachers interviewed, there have not been any studies done comparing English literacy skills of the language immersion students to those of the CLIL students.

Ultimately, the modest number of participants results in biased vision and partial objectivity. Therefore, further research is warranted to shed light and gain a deeper insight into the matter.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire for the CLIL specialists

This section offers the specific questions, which comprised the questionnaire, for the CLIL specialists at Francesc Ribalta Secondary School. The questionnaire was emailed, but no response has been received.

Question 1. Would you please introduce yourself and describe your teaching trajectory?

Question 2. Please tell me about your experience in terms of becoming a CLIL teacher. Was it an easy and smooth transition or rather a bumpy ride? Did you have to attend any course meant for training CLIL instructors?

Question 3. How do you design your classes? What available material can you count on? More importantly, can you count on any of the staff member for support when it comes to gathering and designing teaching material?

Question 4. In your opinion and based on your professional experience, do CLIL students reap most benefits and yield better results when compared to non-CLIL students? If so (if not), would you please explain why?

Question 5. What are the most salient differences between CLIL and language immersion? How would you sum up the positive and the negative aspects of the aforementioned approaches? Which one you find most effective (you can be as partial and biased as you wish to be))))?

Question 6. What advice would you give to the UJI postgraduates (as myself), who are determined to make a difference in the educational arena?

