

**Trabajo Fin de Grado**

**Optimising the Use of a Native English Speaker as a Language  
Assistant in CLIL Contexts.**

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## Summary

This project looks into the growing phenomena of bilingual education, both in Spain and in Europe, and more specifically at the adoption of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) as the teaching methodology employed *par excellence* in bilingual schools. The project focuses on the implementation of such programmes within the region of Murcia and also the role played by native speaking language assistants as part of these initiatives. The main aim of the project is to suggest ways in which language assistants can be used effectively, to aid pupils in the development of not only Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), but also Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

Keywords: CLIL, Bilingual Education, Native Language Assistant, Activities, CALP

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## 1. Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, Spain, along with other European countries, has been experiencing something of a revolution in education. Increasing awareness of the importance of languages internationally has led to generalised changes in education policy which have placed languages in a far more prominent role. Exponential growth in what policy makers have termed 'bilingual education' is currently in progress throughout Spain, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been designated as the methodology to follow. In these CLIL programmes, a part of the syllabus is taught entirely through the medium of a foreign language, which in most cases, due to its position as international *lingua franca*, is English. Having said this, such programmes are also in operation with other languages such as French, German and often minority or heritage languages. In certain cases, two different foreign or second languages as well as the native tongue, may be used as languages of instruction within the same school. In all cases, content subjects such as natural science, social science, physical education, art, history and mathematics, among other subjects, are taught by subject experts with a working knowledge of the foreign language. At the root of these changes lies the realisation that foreign languages are more than simply one among many other school subjects, rather they are tools for communication that are becoming ever more important as the worlds of work and education become ever more globalised.

Usage of another language as a medium of instruction for content lessons has several advantages. Increased exposure to L2 allows far greater opportunity for language acquisition to take place. Furthermore pupils may become more proficient in L2 because they are using it to do something authentic – the language and the situation are real, so real communicative interaction is taking place. This is far more motivational than more traditional language lessons which provide artificial situations for language practice, and often have too prominent a focus on metalinguistic analysis, and too few opportunities for true language use. CLIL methodology, used alongside foreign language instruction, provides pupils with necessary opportunities for practice which can greatly improve their knowledge of L2, and help them to feel comfortable in multilingual environments, a context within which many young people will have to operate in their future studies and professional lives.

This project provides an overview of bilingual education from a historical perspective and describes in some detail the changes that have been taking place both in Europe as well as in Spain. More specifically, a closer analysis is provided of legislation passed with regard to bilingual education programmes in the region of Murcia . The general rationale behind content and language integrated learning is explored in addition to the reasons behind its adoption. Additionally, and from a more practical perspective, this project looks more closely at the role of the native speaking language assistant. Language assistants can provide pupils with extremely useful opportunities for language practice in bilingual schools and are far more widely available than in the past. A summary of the tasks the language assistant is expected to perform is offered in addition to suggestions on how to make best use of language assistants. They are a valuable resource, not only in the language classroom, but also as important collaborators in other lessons where CLIL methodologies are in use. It is proposed that the language used in content lessons is generally of a more academic nature than that found in language lessons, and that pupils may benefit greatly from the opportunity to practice this type of language, described as cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), with native speakers.

## **1.1 Objectives**

The general objectives of this project are as follows:-

1. To review existing literature on the topic of bilingual education in general, and more specifically on the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning programmes (CLIL).
2. To carry out investigative research in order to establish the nature of current local legislation with regard to bilingual schooling.
3. To outline the general role native English speaking language assistants could perform at bilingual school and to give examples of specific tasks they could fulfil.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Historical Background

Bilingualism and multilingualism are at the forefront of modern educational concerns, but nonetheless are far from being new phenomena. Bilingualism is thought to have existed for as long as there has been any kind of prolonged contact between different cultures and long before the existence of any kind of written language. Throughout history, knowledge of more than one language has made possible diverse interaction and cooperation between societies of different languages, from trade and marriage to the diffusion and development of new ideas and concepts. Education in L2 is not a new concept either, to which natives of the former colonies schooled in the languages of their colonisers could attest, as could ancient Romans schooled in Greek. In Canada in the mid 1960's however, an innovative new approach to the learning of a second language by means of immersion in the classroom was developed. This bilingual programme was developed in response to a local need. Due to both historical and political factors, in the area of St. Lambert in Quebec, a linguistic situation had developed where two distinct speech communities were living in the same geographical area. There was little mixing between the two speech communities, and the English speaking community, living in this predominantly French speaking area, felt the need to address the situation. The group of native English speakers responsible for the organisation of the programme felt that despite receiving tuition in French as a foreign language throughout their own schooling, they were still essentially incapable of using French above a very basic level. This group approached experts at the University of Montreal to seek assistance in the development of a programme to help their children acquire a better knowledge of French.

The programme they initially devised was termed 'Early Total Immersion'. In addition to ordinary classes in French language, pupils enrolled on the programme also received tuition in other curricular subjects through the medium of L2, French rather than their L1, English. These children undertook 100% of their first 3 years of schooling through the medium of French. This was gradually reduced to 40% in French and 60% in English by the 6<sup>th</sup> year of primary and subsequently continued at this rate throughout secondary education.

The importance of this programme was not confined to innovative classroom methods. Another element which made the programme an important landmark in bilingual education

was the careful collection of data on the progress of the pupils, both in L1 and L2, accompanied by the comprehensive analysis of the results obtained. The linguistic abilities of students participating in the immersion programme were compared with control groups schooled in their own native languages, English and French. When compared with pupils schooled only in English, matched for IQ and socioeconomic status, no significant differences in L1 ability were found except in the first 3 years of the programme when schooling was 100% French. This suggests that skills learned in L2 are easily transferred to L1. Furthermore, results showed that the receptive skills in French of the immersion students were comparable to those of francophone French students. Productive skills however, did not reach the standard of native speaking pupils, but nevertheless were considered to be satisfactory and far above the abilities demonstrated by students only receiving tuition in French as a foreign language. Since the initial study conducted in the 1960s, Multiple studies have been conducted on this kind of second language immersion programmes, and many variations upon the original have been explored. These programmes, where immersion has been introduced at later stages in the educational process and in different proportions, have all been deemed both efficient and economical as means of learning a foreign language, nevertheless, Early Total Immersion programmes have been shown to be more effective than Late or Partial Immersion varieties. Genesee, Lambert and Holobow list the advantages for pupils participating in Immersion programmes as follows:-

- development in L1 is not impaired.
- linguistic skills and academic content learnt in L2 are transferred to L1.
- general linguistic skills are improved.
- positive effects have been shown with regard to cognitive development in addition to academic development.
- appreciation of other cultures is encouraged, especially of the culture of the language through which schooling takes place.

From the 1960's onwards, immersion programmes continued to be developed in Canada and in areas of the United States such as Miami or Texas where immigration of hispanics created a need for greater bilingualism among the population. In the UK and Ireland, as in other parts of the world, increased concern for the revitalisation of heritage

languages also led to the development of immersion programmes. In 1978 the first Welsh language secondary school was established in the Welsh capital of Cardiff, and today more than 20% of all children the country are schooled through the medium of Welsh. Immersion programmes have also been in present for some time in Spain, but during the 70s and 80s, were the privilege of pupils involved in elite private education. Outside the sphere of non-government regulated private education, with the exception of heritage language programmes in the Basque Country for example, it was not until the 1990's that bilingual programmes began to appear in state schools across the country. Since then, there has been an exponential growth in this kind of education, and since the turn of the millennium, a new approach to education through the medium of other languages has arisen - Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

## **2.2 Content and Language Integrated Learning**

CLIL is an approach by which content lessons such as geography, maths, biology, history, environmental science for instance, are taught through a second language by non-native subject experts with a suitable level in this language (mostly considered to be B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages CEFR). In these classes, L2 is not explicitly taught, rather it is acquired, as the pupils use it to take part in real and meaningful communicative interaction. Group work, cooperation, investigation and experiential learning are the cornerstones of this methodology. One obvious benefit of this system is the increased contact pupils have with L2, but additionally this method gives language a level of authenticity more traditional approaches to language teaching could not provide. Students now see for themselves the communicative potential of language. As they become gradually more proficient in their language usage, they are provided with further motivation to learn. Students apply their practical knowledge on a daily basis, and can see language for what it actually is, a tool for communication, rather than just one among many academic subjects where the only obvious reason for learning is success in academic examinations.

CLIL is a European and worldwide phenomenon which has developed in response to diverse linguistic necessities. On the one hand, the globalisation of trade and industry has led to an increased demand for linguistic competence, especially in English, due to its position as worldwide *lingua franca*. Nevertheless, CLIL is certainly not confined to the teaching of English. An increase in worldwide immigration has led to unfamiliar classroom

demographics where students of various mother tongues may be present in any one classroom. In some cases this has made necessary the use of more than one language of instruction. Furthermore, the advent of a new globalised culture has also been the catalyst for a re-evaluation and a new sense of worth being attached to local culture and customs. Within this trend, concern for the survival of minority and heritage languages has led to an increased awareness in the potential of education through the medium of these languages. In addition to this, CLIL is also present in anglophone countries, where other languages such as French, German or Spanish are taught. All over the world, people are becoming more and more aware of the importance of languages in our new global society.

CLIL has also responded to disappointing results of traditional language learning. There may be many reasons which explain the failure of language teaching to bring about real competency in the languages studied. One may be insufficient number of hours allocated to language teaching within the general curriculum, another may be large student numbers in the classroom reducing possibilities for the use of language as a tool for communication within the classroom. A further factor may be a disproportional focus upon grammar. While task based, and communicative approaches to language learning have done much to address this, nevertheless, issues of time and authenticity remain. As Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) point out:-

it is challenging for language teachers to achieve appropriate levels of authenticity in the classroom (...) even if 'authentic' texts are used, and the subject matter is highly relevant to the lives of the learners, the predominant reason for these texts being there remains language learning [and] the real focus of the lesson will be the language itself (11).

CLIL has emerged as an educational approach which provides solutions to both questions of exposure and authenticity. Where CLIL is used, ordinary language instruction is not dropped from the curriculum, rather, it is complemented by the teaching of other subjects through the medium of L2. In the CLIL classroom, with the necessary support in place, pupils are required to use L2 in real life communicative situations. Authentic language use is taking place and an opportunity for true language acquisition has been provided. The pupils are able to see the immediate practical application of the skills developed in the language classroom, which provides motivation and a sense of purpose. Lorenzo (2007) comments that, in the CLIL classroom, "By combining meaningful



activities and meaningful academic content, authenticity has made itself present and students have found a reason to struggle with new language in the classroom” (28). In this context, language lessons provide the structure and content lessons provide an arena for real communicative use of L2. CLIL thus, is an integrated approach which focuses on both content and language. According to Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) “CLIL is not a new form of language education. It is not a new form of subject education, it is an innovative fusion of both... [and provides] a more holistic educational experience than may otherwise be commonly achievable” (1).

Yet another important factor in the success of CLIL programmes are their suitability for the pupils of the modern world. The technological developments which have occurred from late 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day have had a profound effect on our lives. Technology now forms a part of almost everything we do, to such an extent that it is believed that children born into this technological age have developed a different manner of perceiving it and even different forms of cognition. One differentiating characteristic of our modern world has been termed 'immediacy of purpose'. The advent of internet means that unlimited information is now available to us at any time. When we need to learn to do something, online tutorials or other forms of information are accessible at the click of a button. More and more we learn by doing when confronted with a need. This is in stark contrast with only a few decades ago where learning tended, by necessity, to be preplanned and people chose to learn things they supposed they would need in the future. This change clearly has implications for education, which still, in many ways, follows the old model of 'learning for possible future use'. Outside school, pupils are accustomed to experiencing the immediate applicability of their learning, through video games, or new applications for mobile devices and so on, and if school subject matter is to seem relevant to them, it should also offer them the opportunity to make practical usage of whatever it is that they are learning. This is something much traditional language teaching has failed to do, and while some teachers have striven to offer their students relevant and communicative activities as part of their language classes, these remain essentially simulated situations. What is more, the ultimate goal of language teaching in schools has not been communicative competence, but rather, success in language exams, which in most cases have had a disproportionate focus on grammatical accuracy. CLIL classes however are much more in line with the needs and experiences of modern students, learning language for immediate usage in a real communicative situation. This is much more suitable training for the situations where students are likely to require their L2 in the

future in both work and study. Accuracy is no longer the most important factor in language learning, in the globalised modern world, communicative competence has taken a far more important role and within this context, other languages are as much acquired as they are learned.

### **2.2.1 - CLIL in Europe**

The following quote from a fact sheet on European Union language policy sums up the degree of importance given to languages in the EU:

Languages are an important priority for the EU. Language is an integral part of our identity and the most direct expression of culture. In Europe linguistic diversity is a fact of life. In an EU founded on 'unity in diversity', the ability to communicate in several languages is a must for individuals, organisations and companies alike. (EU Language Policy)

In recent years, and increasingly since the turn of the millennium, there has been an evident national and European shift towards bilingual education programmes. National and European language policy has reacted to an ever increasing necessity for multilingualism both at European and global levels. The early 21<sup>st</sup> Century has seen an exponential growth in economic and political cooperation in addition to increased labour mobility both inside and outside the eurozone. This mobility has been in part due to increasing international operation of companies and in part due to the global economic crisis and the need to seek employment opportunities beyond national borders. In this context, bilingualism, or indeed multilingualism is becoming essential for success in a great many work and study environments. The EU currently has 24 working languages, and many of its member states, such as Spain, also have several minority languages in common usage, adding a further 60 languages to this total. Against this backdrop it is clear why increasing proficiency in additional languages is at the forefront of current European concerns. Notwithstanding, an awareness within Europe of linguistic and cultural diversity as well as the importance of multilingualism as the cement that binds the European super-national state goes back as far as its inception with the establishment of the EEC in 1957. Shortly after the creation of the EEC, French, German, Dutch and Italian were designated as official languages. As more nations were incorporated and the EEC

became the EU, language diversity grew.

This increased diversity demands proficiency in other languages to such an extent that current EU language policy now states that “every European citizen should master two other languages in addition to their mother tongue...[and that] children are to be taught two foreign languages at school from an early age” (EU Language Policy). Undoubtedly, multilingualism is now seen as a basic skill required for education as well as trade and industry in Europe, both by policy makers and ordinary citizens. A 2012 Eurobarometer survey indicated that 72% of Europeans were in agreement with the 1+2 principle, 98% of respondents were of the opinion that gaining proficiency in a foreign language would be beneficial to their children and 88% held the belief that a knowledge of other languages is extremely useful. Leonard Orban, former European Commissioner responsible for Multilingualism, quoted in Lorenzo (2007) underlines the importance of multilingualism in Europe as follows: “Multilingualism touches the very substance of European identity, its values and challenges ahead: Integration, competitiveness, inclusiveness, cohesion, mobility, transparency and democracy are all intimately linked to multilingualism” (29).

The sheer dimension of what has been referred to as 'the language problem' has unsurprisingly led to a rise in the popularity of bilingual education in Europe. Clearly, the position of English as a worldwide *lingua franca* means that it is an extremely popular language in these bilingual programmes, nevertheless it is far from being the only possibility. Other dominant European languages such as French and German are popular, as are many minority and heritage languages. Within the European panorama, CLIL has become synonymous with bilingual education where it is viewed as both an economical and effective approach which meets the multi-linguistic demands of contemporary European society. In 2005, the European Council recommended that CLIL be embraced as a standard educational practice throughout the whole Eurozone. This seismic change towards universal bilingual education in Europe is underway. It is visible in educational practices, and perhaps more importantly, is in the forefront of public consciousness. Lorenzo (2007) makes the important observation that education through only one language is being seen more and more as 'second rate education' (35). Similarly, Graddol is quoted in Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015) as follows: “English has ceased in many ways to be a language and has become a 'core skill' instead, without which people are 'disabled' in terms of their job prospects” (26). Educational policy makers now have little choice but to embrace CLIL and work towards its universal implementation.

## 2.2.2 - Practical and Theoretical Considerations in CLIL.

As Lorenzo (2007) points out, CLIL is neither overtly nor officially connected with any specific linguistic theory, nevertheless, he draws attention to strong links with Halliday's Systemic Functional Approach. Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015) have also expressed links between CLIL and social constructivist approaches to education. The EU endorsement of CLIL as an educational approach has gone hand in hand with the development of the CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for language teaching, learning and assessment. Both CLIL and CEFR articulate similar standpoints with regard to the desired outcomes of language learning. The CEFR presents a comprehensive list of abilities required at six different levels of proficiency. These lists, known as can-do abilities lists, focus on each of the 4 skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and state what an individual is able to do with language at different levels. Within these levels, greater emphasis is placed on communicative competency than grammatical accuracy. Learners of all levels are assumed to be capable of participating in real interaction (albeit limited) as members of a language community. In CLIL, pupils are using language as a resource for doing things, rather than analysing it as a system of rules and metalinguistic concepts. Both CEFR and CLIL are essentially focused on learning by doing rather than learning to do.

Students play a leading role in CLIL classrooms and of all the skills used, talk is of primary importance. This talk may be between student and teacher, student and student, plenary in peer groups or pairs. Articulating learning through language plays a crucial role in both the content and language aims of the lesson. Met is quoted in Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) as saying "If learning is to be retained and readily available for use then learners must make their own construction of knowledge – make it their own" (30). Similarly, Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015) mention Swain's output hypothesis: "learners are not convinced that they understand a concept until they have expressed it in their own words" (136). This draws our attention to a key link between cognitive development and self expression. In the same text, Clegg is quoted as follows "talking about something one is learning is important, because it is when we express a concept linguistically that we gradually develop it" (136). The concept is not fully understood until we have to communicate it using language. In an L1 content lesson, spoken language is likely to be given far less importance than the concepts themselves. In CLIL however, talk is of the utmost importance, not only in terms of attaining language goals but also in the

understanding, retention and development of content.

While priority is given to communicative competency and formal accuracy is seen as secondary and while learning by doing is believed to lead to good levels of L2 acquisition, it does not necessarily follow that there should be no attention given to form within these approaches. As we have seen above, one of the areas where the Canadian immersion students were unable to reach the level of the ordinary francophone students was in their productive skills. Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) point out that while “these students could communicate effectively, they were not able to demonstrate first language fluency or consistent grammatical accuracy” the writers argue that “language is as much about meaning as form...[and that] too little attention paid to form will have negative consequences” (34). They suggest that, in the Canadian context, a desire not to discourage students' language production through overcorrection prevented some language goals from being achieved. While perfection is not the goal of CLIL, being able to do things *effectively* through the medium of L2 in class does require a working knowledge of the language forms typically used to do these things, such as; describing, predicting, hypothesising, cooperating, reporting, comparing and so forth. Clearly this has implications for the way in which language is focused upon in content lessons as well as in language lessons. To achieve effective outcomes it is crucial to focus on form in addition to meaning, and furthermore, it is necessary for content and language teachers to cooperate, sequencing their syllabi strategically to provide maximum support for their pupils. If in content classes for instance, pupils are looking at a topic such as global warming, this could be supported in language lessons by focusing on the use of the passive voice to describe cause and effect relationships, or perhaps modal verbs such as may, might, will etc. to talk about scientific predictions for the future. Language teachers support content teachers by giving pupils the linguistic tools required to achieve content goals, content teachers provide language teachers a context for authentic use of the language functions they are teaching. This level of cooperation will undoubtedly require teachers to have clear content and language objectives in order to ensure that support is provided when and where needed.

In addition to the support the language teacher may offer students enrolled in CLIL programmes, language support will also be required in the content lessons themselves. Teaching content through L2 is not just a matter of doing what one would in L1 and simply switching languages. Learners need *in situ* support in order to be able to cope with the linguistic demands of their lessons. Teachers must identify these language demands and

prepare for them. As Clegg (2007) warns, “subject teachers need to be aware of the demands their lessons make on the L2 abilities of their learners; and where the demands exceed those abilities, they need to provide language support. Where language support is required but not given, learners may learn less than they would if they were learning in L1” (114). The argument here is simple, during lessons students need to make use of productive and receptive skills, in L1 students do this automatically, and can focus all their attention on the content of the lesson. When students are required to do the same in L2 however, if language demands exceed learners' language ability, then they will not be able to give the content their full attention and content learning will be influenced. As a result of this, according to the L2 ability of students, and in response to the complexity and requirements of the tasks students have to perform in any given class, it will be necessary to provide different levels and different types of language support. This support in CLIL has become commonly referred to as scaffolding, and is thought of as the foundation of good practice in CLIL. Scaffolding may take many different forms according subject area and learner requirements. The first step in putting the appropriate scaffolding in place is identifying the language for which support is required.

Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) identify 3 different but interrelated ways of looking at language in CLIL contexts. These are: language *of* learning, language *for* learning and language *through* learning. Related to the Systemic Functional Linguistic notion of genre, language *of* learning represents the language concepts and functions students will need to use in order to be able to fully engage with the content of a specific lesson or topic. This goes beyond content-obligatory vocabulary, and includes language required to deal with the topic both at sentence level and above. Language *for* learning refers to more general language skills necessary for coping with an L2 learning environment. Pupils must be able to “use language which enables them to learn [...] developing a repertoire of speech acts which relate to the content, such as describing, evaluating and drawing conclusions, is essential for tasks to be carried out effectively” (37). The third category identified is language *through* learning – language forms which manifest themselves during the process of learning. As we have seen, it is widely written that CLIL lessons should not be teacher centred, and rather, that there ought always to be a good deal of dialogic activity where students are actively engaged in the learning process. As students play an active role in their learning, there will inevitably be occasions where pupils wish to communicate ideas which have not been planned for in advance. These situations provide opportunities to develop new language as and when it is called for. This language may then be recycled

and added to the student's repertoire for future use. These authors hold that planning and providing for these different language needs will encourage a more solid and constant language progression, far more than the typical grammatical progression we are so accustomed to in language classes. Furthermore, it is imperative that these forms be recycled in authentic, communicative tasks for the most effective language learning to take place.

Forms of scaffolding to support these different aspects of language may include some of the following:-

- Posters – may be useful to support language *for* learning, the kind of general classroom language students frequently need to produce. Posters constitute a semi-permanent feature of the classroom, which can be made by the pupils themselves, and referred to easily when required. Once the language form has been successfully internalised, they can be replaced.
- Substitution charts – are very useful to support oral and written production. Pupils will be able to focus more easily on the content thanks to this support which can easily be reduced or removed as students become more proficient in the scaffolded forms.
- Sentence starters – give students a starting point for their spoken and written interventions and will allow teachers to guide the students towards the target language.
- Realia, images and gestures – will be extremely helpful to the content teacher in conveying meaning. Where students struggle with L2, meaning can be more easily clarified using objects, pictures and gestures.
- Annotated visuals – may be also useful for both to ensure meaning is conveyed, but also can offer pupils a visual record of vocabulary or other language forms which can later be referred to in spoken or written tasks.
- Models, notes and word lists – each of these can provide learners with raw materials from which to build their interactions.

Far from being an exhaustive list, these forms of scaffolding illustrate the manner in which L2 can be supported. While some of these techniques may well be present in an L1 classroom, they become absolutely essential in a CLIL environment.

### 3. - Details of an Educational Context.

#### 3.1 Regional Legislation.

This project will centre on the current educational context of the region of Murcia in Southern Spain. Like many other areas in Spain and indeed Europe, the past few years have seen a conscious drive towards universal bilingual education. The BORM (Boletín Oficial de la Región de Murcia) clearly states the reasons behind this drive:-

El dominio de una segunda o, incluso, una tercera lengua extranjera se ha convertido en una prioridad en la educación como consecuencia del proceso de globalización en que vivimos, a la vez que se muestra como una de las principales carencias de nuestro sistema educativo. La Unión Europea fija el fomento del plurilingüismo como un objetivo irrenunciable para la construcción de un proyecto europeo (BORM, 2015, número 139, pp. 24790).

Regional government have termed this drive '*estrategia +Idiomas*'. The aims of the regional bilingual education programme which forms and integral part of this drive have been explicitly stated as follows:-

- To promote communicative competence in each of the 4 skills in English by means of CLIL methodology.
- To attain a basic user competency which will enable pupils to communicate in familiar situations using frequently used expressions along with basic grammar and vocabulary.
- To increase exposure to the foreign language outside classroom contexts.
- To encourage students to participate in activities where the foreign language must be used as a means of communication.

In the same legislation, published in June 2015, the Ministry of Education ruled that, before the 2020 – 2021 academic year, all primary schools in the region must provide bilingual education through immersion in English. It was further established that primary schools will be required to operate a bilingual system at one of three specified levels. A



fairly limited Initial level, Intermediate level, where up to 50% of the curriculum may be taught in English, and Intensive level, where more than half of all schooling will be conducted through the medium of English. Each of the levels will include ordinary tuition in English language, in addition to a variety of content subjects taught through the medium of English. The only subjects in the programme not applicable for English medium teaching will be those relating directly to Spanish language, literature and comprehension. The structure of each level will be as follows:-

- Initial level – In addition to regular English Language tuition, the subject of Natural Science will be taught through the medium of English.
  
- Intermediate level – In addition to regular English Language tuition and the subject of Natural Science, at least one other subject will be given in English. The total input in English at this level will account for up to 50% of the curriculum. Centres may opt to include the following subjects in their bilingual programmes:-
  - Physical Education
  - Art or Music
  - Religious Education or Social and Civic Values
  - Regional elective subjects
  
- Intensive level – At this level, total input in English will exceed 50% of the curriculum. In addition to the subjects taught in previous levels, the following subjects may be included in the bilingual programme at this level.
  - Social Science
  - Mathematics

Within the legislation, CLIL is singled out as the methodology to be followed in the entirety of the bilingual system: “Los principios del aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lengua extranjera (AICLE) constituyen el marco conceptual y de referencia de todo el sistema” (BORM, 2015, numero 139, pp. 24790). As we have seen, in CLIL (AICLE) special emphasis is placed on cooperative, communicative tasks in the classroom, where pupils play an active role in their learning. Subjects will be taught entirely in English, and teachers giving classes in English will be expected to use English exclusively both inside

and outside the classroom, in all contexts within the school, recourse being made to L1 only in *necessary* cases. (my emphasis). This legislation, while naming CLIL as the only methodology for use, does seem at odds with some key CLIL principles, as it states: “los aspectos léxico-gramaticales de la lengua serán trabajados, fundamentalmente, en el area de inglés” (BORM, 2015, numero 139, pp. 24793). We have seen above the importance of scaffolding in CLIL methodology, and the necessity to provide *in situ* language support in content lessons. CLIL experts argue that providing support for lexis and grammar as a part of content lessons is fundamental. Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015) clearly state that “what distinguishes CLIL is a certain concern with language in the subject classroom and a distinct subject pedagogy which allows the subject teacher to deploy a range of language-supportive strategies which are unfamiliar in conventional teaching” (19). While CLIL will always favour fluency over accuracy, and its main goal is communicative competency, focus on lexis and grammar should certainly not be mostly confined to specific English language lessons, as the legislation suggests it should be. This does not of course mean that the content classroom is the place for metalinguistic analysis of verb tenses and the like, rather, that models, substitution tables and word lists among many other language supportive strategies, which do indeed focus on grammar and lexis, constitute an integral part of good CLIL practice. It is necessary to work with language in order to better understand and express content, furthermore, if this support is not provided, learning will be negatively affected. As we have mentioned, when pupils are required to consciously attend to language in the classroom, they will not be able to focus fully on the subject content. In L1 lessons, pupils pay hardly any attention to language and can give their full attention to the content. When teaching in L2, scaffolding, based around grammar and lexis, lessens the burden of language difficulty and allows pupils in an L2 environment to focus more fully on the content. If the scaffolding is not in place, content learning may well be deficient.

The BORM bulletin laying down the legislation for the bilingual programme in Murcia also promises to encourage contact with native English speakers in schools, in addition to promoting school trips where language immersion will be the main goal. With regard to classroom support for content teachers, the legislation states that schools will be provided native English speaking language assistants. “Para la práctica de las destrezas orales del alumnado y ampliar su conocimiento de los países de habla inglesa los centros públicos contarán con auxiliares de conversación” (BORM, 2015, numero 139, pp. 24794). It does not however, specify the amount of time these assistants will be made available to content

teachers, or give any information as to the specific activities they are expected to perform in the classroom. This matter will be the responsibility of each individual centre. Other factors outlined as the responsibility of individual centres are the provision of extra-curricular English classes, incorporation of English language materials into school libraries, encouraging use of English in everyday situations, for example, by replacing informative signs, posters, canteen menus and the like with English language versions, in addition to the organisation of school wide extra curricular activities in English such as cinema, theatre, storytelling, musicals and so on. All of these measures will most certainly be effective in creating a multilingual learning environment. Such an environment will encourage L2 acquisition and help pupils to feel more at home with other languages, as well as enabling them to see real life practical uses for their learning. Local government promises funding for schools participating in the programme in addition to linguistic and methodological training for teachers participating in the programme.

In the current academic year, 251 primary schools from a total of 523 centres in the region have adopted bilingual programmes, and many either have adapted, or are in the process of adapting to one of the three levels of bilingual education outlined above. As a result, more than 35,000 pupils of primary school age in the Region of Murcia are now receiving part of their education through the medium of English.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Universities is currently in the process of drawing up a new model to standardise bilingual secondary education in the region in line with the primary programme outlined above. At present however, bilingual programmes are reasonably widespread within the region and are organised into various configurations regulated by legislation published in May 2013. The objectives laid out for the bilingual secondary programme are:

- to improve communicative and linguistic aspects of the learning of foreign languages in line with the CEFR.
- to enhance the development of skills and competencies outlined in the curriculum.
- to encourage respect and tolerance
- to reinforce a sense of European identity

Secondary bilingual programmes are currently in place, not only in English, but also

in French, German and Italian, in addition to a 'mixed' model, where 2 foreign languages are adopted. The language in which content subjects are taught will be the primary foreign language taught at these schools, and all will also include an obligatory second foreign language. As with the intensive level primary programme, subjects related to Spanish language and literature may not be taught in other languages, but in all cases, at least two subjects must be taught in the foreign language or languages to which the programme is ascribed, and total foreign language input must account for at least 50% of the curriculum.

### **3.2. The Native Language Assistant.**

According to the language assistant's guide (Guia del Auxiliar), published annually by the Ministry of Education, language assistants are typically employed for a whole academic year, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October through to the 31<sup>st</sup> of May. They will normally be expected to teach twelve hours of class weekly, although this may vary in line with different regional legislation. Language assistants are not permitted to teach classes on their own and are limited to assisting the subject teacher. In 2012, the Ministry of Education outlined the functions of a native speaking language assistants as follows:-

- to assist the teacher.
- to assist fundamentally, in the support of pupils' oral skills; essentially to develop students' speaking and listening skills
- to teach aspects of their culture
- to assist with information technology and audiovisuals
- to participate, if desired, in extracurricular activities involving, culture, sports, school trips etc.
- possibly, to assist with the language formation of teachers at the centre.

The Ministry also stated the following as functions which language assistants should not be expected to carry out:-

- to take full responsibility for teaching, the development of the syllabus, lesson planning, and evaluation

- to prepare or correct examinations, tests etc.
- to take responsibility for evaluation, discipline or supervision of pupils.

Essentially then, the role of the language assistant is to represent their country, their culture and their language. It is expected that their presence in class will be novel and motivational for pupils, and their presence in the school environment in general is intended to make students feel comfortable and become adept in multicultural and multilingual environments. As we can see, this is very much in line with the needs of today's multilingual Europe as outlined by the EU. Typically, language assistants will normally be closer in age to the pupils than their teachers, which will make them easier for students to relate to. It is probable that they will share interests in elements of popular culture such as films, music, TV series and so on, much of which will originate from English speaking countries. As such it is most likely that pupils will be motivated to speak to their language assistants about these and other topics. In order to do so, pupils will need to rely on L2, intrinsically building communicative competency. The language assistants should also talk about themselves, their families, their lives and experiences and their culture, and should likewise, ask the pupils about the same aspects of their own lives. Generally speaking, their role is to encourage dialogue and assist pupils in the development of communication strategies in L2. Language assistants are defined in the regional legislation of Murcia as:-

...un colaborador lingüístico nativo de un país en el que se habla este idioma, que contribuye a favorecer y mejorar el aprendizaje de los aspectos comunicativos, en especial de las destrezas orales, de la lengua extranjera que se estudia. Los auxiliares de conversación, además, constituyen un nexo de unión con la cultura y forma de vida de sus países de origen, incrementando la motivación para el aprendizaje de las lenguas (BORM, 2015, numero 36, pp. 5889).

Prerequisites in order to apply for the position of Language assistant in the region of Murcia were detailed in the same legislation as follows:-

- to be over 18 years of age
- to be a native of a country whose official language is being taught
- to be a university graduate or to be in the final year of a university degree course

- to have a sufficient level of Spanish

Candidates are selected according to a merit system, where points are awarded according to the following criteria; previous experience as a language assistant, experience as a language teacher, university studies related to teaching or languages, additional training related to foreign language teaching and also knowledge of Spanish. The region of Murcia currently employs 218 language assistants.

#### **4. Development of Scenario.**

##### **4.1 Details of Scenario.**

The scenario the present project will focus on is one typically found in Bilingual primary schools within the region of Murcia. As outlined above, in addition to regular English classes, all levels in the primary immersion programme in the region of Murcia will offer natural science classes through the medium of English. For that reason, it will be this subject that this project takes as its primary focus. For the purposes of this project, a typical class size is assumed to be of 30 students. It is also assumed that each class will have the language assistant at their disposal for 2 hours per week from the beginning of October through to the end of May, a period of 30 weeks. In order to offer pupils language support in different situational contexts, the language assistant will provide teachers with support in both language and content lessons. The proposed tasks and activities will be devised for 6<sup>th</sup> year primary students. The general English level of the students is assumed to be near the A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, given that this is the minimum level that the Ministry of Education expects pupils in the bilingual programmes to achieve by the end of their primary studies.

##### **4.2 – Optimising the Use of the Native Language Assistant**

In order for bilingual schools to take full advantage of their native language assistants, this project suggests that attention should be paid to the different types of language used in different educational settings. Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015) discuss in some depth the distinction between the types of language which teaching expert Jim Cummings has termed BICS and CALP. BICS refers to 'basic interpersonal

communication skills'. This is the type of language used by pupils in informal everyday settings such as home or the playground. It is a basic level of fluency achieved by all native speakers of a language and typically takes learners of a second language between 1 and 3 years to acquire in an immersion context. CALP on the other hand refers to 'cognitive academic language proficiency'. This describes the more abstract language used to describe complex concepts. It is the academic discourse of the classroom and takes at least five years to acquire. According to Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015), CALP:

“comprises the ways in which we listen, read, speak, and write academically. It includes the vocabulary of subjects and of academic learning in general [...] and it includes the crucial thinking skills which academic learning requires learners to engage in, and how those are expressed in language terms. These academic language skills are clearly different from the ways in which we use language in informal social interaction” (66).

It is evident from both regional legislation and literature published by the Ministry of education, that these different kinds of language have not been considered with regard to the role of the language assistant. As we have seen, language assistants' interactions with students are expected to concern their own lives and personal experiences as well as those of their students, their families, their culture etc. All of this interaction requires talk that can be clearly categorised as BICS. However, if we return to Swain's output hypothesis; “learners are not convinced that they understand a concept until they have expressed it in their own words” (Ball, Kelly and Clegg, 2015, pp136), and Clegg's comment that “talking about something one is learning is important, because it is when we express a concept linguistically that we gradually develop it” (136), we find ourselves asking whether language assistants would not also be extremely valuable collaborators in content lessons, assisting teachers in tasks that require pupils to express their new subject knowledge by means of more CALP-rich language. Not only would this be advantageous to pupils in developing their understanding of topics, as the above quotes suggest, but it would also give pupils L2 practice in situations more akin by far to those where they are likely to make use of L2 in the future, that is, in CALP-rich educational and work environments. As it stands, the only reference to language assistants intervening in content lessons comes from the BORM legislation on the secondary bilingual programme in Murcia. Here, in passing, it is suggested that the language assistant may be asked to

assist subject teachers working in L2 with the preparation of materials.

The central premise of this project, is that the current system does not take full advantage of the language assistant in CLIL settings. It is proposed that the native language assistant can be far better employed in bilingual schools, offering the pupils and content teacher valuable support in content lessons where CALP plays a significant role in classroom interaction.

#### **4.2.1 - General Role and Tasks of the Native Language Assistant (LA) .**

In general terms, this project does not take issue with the role and tasks expected of the language assistant in language classes as well as around the school. As the ministry of education and local legislation has suggested, the language assistant's primary aim is to assist in the development of pupils' communication skills, with a specific emphasis on speaking and listening skills. There are many ways in which this objective can be achieved. On a day to day basis, both inside and outside the classroom, the language assistant should attempt to engage students in conversation at every possible moment. They might ask students about their weekends, about their results in exams or tests, about family and friends, films, sporting events, television programmes and the like. This will contribute towards the creation of a language diverse environment in all parts of the school. In addition to this there are a substantial number of tasks within the language classroom where the participation of the language assistant is of great value. As can be seen from the textbook overview presented in the appendices, the language classes are both topic and grammar based. Many of the topics covered, such as TV and film, food, shopping, sports, jobs, hobbies, holidays, seasonal celebrations and so on, provide the material for interesting classroom interactions. Typical tasks for the language assistant may include presentations on certain topics. For instance, a half an hour presentation of the typical TV shows and viewing habits of the British and how these differ from those of the Spanish would offer the students good practice in listening skills in addition to an opportunity for revision of topic vocabulary and grammar, but in a context of authentic communication, rather than in the form exercises in a textbook. Similarly, on any given topic, the pupils and language teacher together could pre-prepare a number of questions to ask the language assistant. Then, when the language assistant is present in class, the pupils could use their questions to interview the LA, either in plenary or in smaller groups.



This approach would be motivational for the students as they would be using their own language abilities to find out things they want to know about the LA and their experiences, interests and opinions. In this activity, there is a greater opportunity for student talk, especially if done in smaller groups.

Similarly, any time students are working in groups in class, both the LA and the teacher can be moving from group to group, both monitoring students' progress as they complete their activities, and also asking students more personalised questions about the topic in question. Personalising tasks in this way and making them more relevant for the students is both motivational and again provides an opportunity for real meaningful communication as opposed to traditional classroom exercises. These, and many more activities make the presence of language assistant an extremely useful addition to school and classroom environments.

#### **4.2.2 - The Role of the Language Assistant in Content Lessons**

As we have seen, both in English classes and indeed around the school in general, the language assistant can afford the pupils a number of opportunities to develop their basic interpersonal communication skills in L2. Opportunities to develop communicative academic language proficiency however, will for the most part, be limited to the lessons where this kind of language is naturally used. Usage of this variety of academic language would be extremely artificial and stilted in situations where it is not expected, and could even be counter productive, as it would demonstrate usage in inappropriate contexts. For these reasons, the language assistant can be of great value as a participant in content lessons, providing pupils with new opportunities for this type of communication to take place in a context where this register is both appropriate and expected.

In the content classroom, as in other areas of the school, the LA should seek to engage pupils in conversation at every possible opportunity. In content lessons however, it should be CALP type language that these interactions seek to elicit. One proposed strategy is that the LA should not, for the most part, be present in class when explanations are being given by the content teacher to the class as a whole. This will place the LA in a position of non-expert for the pupils, in other words, a person who needs things to be explained to them. The LA's apparent lack of subject knowledge can then provide a great many authentic opportunities for pupils to use L2 CALP. When pupils are engaged in

individual work, group work, experiments, projects and so on, the LA could be present in class, and should take every opportunity to ask pupils to explain what it is they are working on, to clarify concepts, to define words and concepts and so on. In doing this, the LA is, of course, eliciting authentic usage of CALP type language from the pupils. Returning once again to Swain's output hypothesis; "learners are not convinced that they understand a concept until they have expressed it in their own words" (Ball, Kelly and Clegg, 2015, pp136), we can see the value of this strategy which provides ample opportunities for pupils to explain concepts as they understand them. It will also be highly motivational for pupils to see that they are able to use L2 to transfer their subject knowledge to a native speaker of this language. The level of perceived authenticity of the interactions in this situation is undoubtedly greater than in a situation where the very same questions being asked in class by the subject teacher, who, as pupils are fully aware, already knows the answer. Lessons could continue in this manner throughout the school year with the LA apparently learning alongside the pupils.

While LAs are not experts in the material being taught in content lessons, they are nevertheless language experts, and can be effectively employed in the classroom to provide pupils with necessary language support. As can be seen from the textbook overviews provided in the appendix, many of the language structures used in the Natural Science textbook go well beyond the A2 level of the CEFR which is outlined by the ministry of education as the level expected of 6<sup>th</sup> year primary students in bilingual programmes. The language used is also considerably more complex than that found in the English language textbook the same students are using in their English lessons. Consequently, the language used in content classes will be quite challenging for these pupils, and is almost certain to make their comprehension of lesson content more problematic. The practical benefits and indeed the necessity for language support, or 'scaffolding' have been previously discussed. It is clear that CLIL experts such as Ball, Kelly and Clegg view such scaffolding an essential part of CLIL methodology. In this project, It is proposed that this scaffolding can be, at least in part, provided by the LA.

This scaffolding may include for example the elaboration of posters or other classroom decorations, to assist students with some of the more challenging linguistic structures they will encounter. This can be done with the students as a form of project, or prior to lessons, for teacher and students to refer to during classes. This kind of support

will not only help pupils to express themselves better in L2, but also aid in their understanding of texts. This type of support material may include substitution charts, annotated visuals, sentence stems, models and so on.

One characteristic of academic language is a high frequency of passive constructions. This is a grammar point which is not covered in the language textbook, and for which pupils would surely benefit from support. A simple substitution chart on a poster can help pupils to recognise and use this form without ever analysing it from a metalinguistic perspective. Such posters should be decorated with colourful images to make them more attractive, and to draw pupils attention to them. An example could be as follows:-

What happens in our bodies?			
Our body		protected by	our skin
Food		digested in	our stomachs
Our Blood	is	made up of	cells and plasma
Information	are	collected by	sense organs
Waste		removed by	the excretory system
Vaccines		used to	prevent illnesses
The ribs		connected to	the spinal column

This kind of poster is not teaching pupils the form, rather it is providing a group of examples of the same form which are easily accessed and can guide acquisition. The human body is a topic covered in the first weeks of the course. The poster however, could be left on the wall throughout the year as more permanent reference material.

Similarly, as evidenced by the textbook used, conditional type constructions are frequently used for expressing hypotheses. A useful poster to aid acquisition of their form and function could be as follows:-

<p><b>We have a hypothesis!</b> We think that...</p> <p><b>If</b> ice lollies are left at room temperature, they <b>will melt</b>. Apple pieces <b>will oxidise if</b> they are in contact with the air. A glass of milk <b>will ferment</b> if it is left at room temperature. <b>If</b> water is heated, it <b>will evaporate</b>.</p>
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Again, such a poster would be much improved if colourful illustrations were included. It is based on the work on matter in unit 6 of the textbook, but as with the previous example, the forms used would make useful reference material throughout the remainder of the course.

Helping the content teacher to produce language supportive materials such as these is an extremely useful role the LA could fulfil, as is monitoring written work, assisting with experiments and engaging pupils in conversation to elicit academic language forms. There are however, several other ways in which the LA can promote more effective language usage among pupils, where the LA takes a more leading role in the classroom. These are mainly in revision and practice activities, example of which are outlined below.

#### **4.2.3 - Examples of Specific Activities Led by the Language Assistant.**

##### **Task 1 – 'Bingo' Vocabulary Revision Game – The Human Body.**

As we can see from the overview provided in the appendix, the first unit of the course deals with the human body, including bones, muscle groups, internal organs, sense organs and different parts of the brain. There is a great deal of vocabulary in this unit, and any activity designed to recycle this new lexis will be of benefit to the pupils. Bingo is an activity well suited for this.

The specific aims of the activity are as follows:-

- to revise topic vocabulary from unit 1
- to give pupils practice in the language of definition
- to engage all four skills, especially speaking and listening
- to provide ample practice in question forming (with inversion)

The first part of this activity will be conducted in plenary. The LA and teacher divide the class into 6 groups, each group is given a bingo card with 6 vocabulary items from a possible 12 items chosen from the syllabus. The LA then reads the definitions one at a time, “this is a long bone, it is connected to the patella, it is next to the fibula – what is it?”

or “it is a muscle group found on the lower back part of the leg – what is it? The class attempt to identify what is being described and ask: “Is it the tibia?” or “Are you describing the calf muscles”. Teacher and LA ensure pupils use correct question forms to reinforce auxiliary and subject inversion in question forming. Groups whose cards show these items cross them out. The procedure is repeated until the winning team have crossed out all the words on their card.

In the second part of the activity, each group is given a set of blank bingo cards and an empty definition list. The groups must then choose 12 different words from the textbook to make their own bingo game. Then, as a group, and with the support of teacher and LA, they write their list of definitions.

In the third stage of this activity, the games each group have prepared are passed to a different group to be played. In the groups one pupil takes the role of question master, and the others play the game. Teacher and LA monitor the groups to ensure the games are being played correctly. Games can be passed around several groups, and each time a game is played, a different pupil takes the role of question master.

## **Task 2 – 20 Questions – Plant and Animal Kingdom**

As we can see from the textbook overview in the appendix, between weeks 13 and 16, the class will be looking at plant and animal kingdoms, and the system by which all living things are classified. The ideal time to carry out this activity would be towards the end of this period. The specific aims of the task are as follows:-

- to provide ample practice in question forming.
- to review different concepts involved in plant and animal classification.
- to revise new topic vocabulary learned throughout this unit.
- to engage listening and speaking skills.

### **Procedure**

This activity has 2 stages, a plenary stage and a group stage. In the initial plenary stage,

the language assistant first elicits a number of organisms from each different kingdom from the class and records them on the board. They then review the main characteristics of each group. Following this, the LA explains the game to the class. After having briefly explained the game, the LA's talk would be as follows:-

I am thinking of an organism. Maybe it is a plant, it could be an animal, perhaps it is a fungus, or it might be a protist or a monera.

You have to ask me questions to find out which organism I am thinking of.

I can answer only 'yes' or 'no'.

Both teacher and language assistant then encourage pupils to ask questions to identify the organism, based on the characteristics they have been studying, for example:-

Is it multicellular?

Does it have organs?

Is it parasitic?

Does it reproduce using spores?

Is it a fungus?

Is it poisonous?

The game is repeated 3 or four times in plenary, before the class is split into groups of 4 -6 pupils to continue playing the game. Both teacher and language assistant then move around the classroom monitoring the groups, providing pupils with the necessary support.

### **Task 3 – I Spy an Object which...**

This activity, based on the traditional children's game of 'I spy', is devised to revise and reinforce understanding of the material covered during weeks 21 to 24 on different forms of matter, their characteristics and the physical and chemical changes they undergo. Diverse objects found in a typical classroom environment can help pupils to understand the concepts they have been learning in relation to real, tangible objects. For the purposes of the activity, a few other objects could be unobtrusively placed around the classroom prior to the lesson. Again, as in task 2, this activity can be demonstrated with the whole group, before the class is separated into smaller groups to continue the activity.

Conducting several activities at once will greatly increase student talk and ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to participate fully in the activity.

The specific aims of the task are as follows:-

- to review different concepts involved in unit 6.
- to revise new topic vocabulary learned throughout the unit.
- to engage listening and speaking skills.
- to provide practice in question forming and definition.

### **Procedure**

Before beginning this activity it will be useful to review some of the concepts that will be used, namely, the properties and characteristics of different objects and materials. A few examples will remind pupils of these concepts and make the activity easier to carry out. Simply identifying a few objects in the class and talking about whether or not they are waterproof, flexible, biodegradable, absorbent, whether they would float or sink in water, whether or not they conduct electricity or heat, or whether or not they burn, oxidise or melt and so forth will be ample preparation for the exercise. Making a note of these properties on the board will be useful for pupils to refer to during the exercise.

The LA's intervention may be as follows:-

I spy an object which floats.

I spy an object which floats and burns.

I spy an object which floats, burns but does not bend.

I spy an object which floats, burns, but does not bend or transfer electricity.

I spy an object which float, burns, repels liquids, but does not bend or transfer electricity.

At each stage, the pupils are encouraged to guess what object is being described. In this case it a wooden desk. The LA takes a few turns to demonstrate the game to the class as a whole before they are separated into smaller groups to play the game themselves. As

always, pupils should be encouraged to use question forms, 'is it a \_\_\_\_\_?' or, 'could it be a \_\_\_\_\_?' rather than simply saying the name of the object.

## **5. Discussion.**

This project has viewed the current shift towards bilingual education from a historical perspective. We have seen that immersion programmes go back to the 1960s in Quebec, where such programmes were developed in French to meet a local need for bilingualism. Nowadays however the need we are faced with is worldwide. Education, business and commerce are becoming increasingly globalised, as such, bilingualism or multilingualism have become key for success in these areas. European language policies are being formulated with this implication clearly in mind. The 2+1 principle discussed is testament to this. The EU believes it necessary for citizens of the union to have a working knowledge of 2 other languages in addition to their own and public opinion has been shown to strongly agree. This requirement for multilingualism has had direct repercussions in Spain's language policy, particularly with regard to bilingual education. In the space of only two decades, bilingual education, which was an element of only the most privileged private education, is becoming universal. We are currently going through a phase of important change in education, and, as experts such as Clegg and Lorenzo have suggested, changes are occurring so quickly that there is a generalised need for more educational materials and more research into the results and effects of these new educational programmes. CLIL has been designated exclusively as the methodology for use in these new educational programmes. The EU and local government likewise, see in CLIL an efficient and economical educational strategy to address the 'language problem' within Europe. We have seen the potential CLIL offers as a methodology, and also have looked at notions of good practice within CLIL education.

Nevertheless, observation of the local panorama raises several concerns with regard to the implementation of CLIL, many of which would provide interesting topics for future research.

Firstly, looking back to the information on immersion programmes in Canada, we can see that the most effective type of programme discussed was 'early total immersion' (E.T.I.) In this model, pupils received 100% of their first three years of schooling in L2. This model



was shown to be more effective than late and partial immersion varieties. E.T.I. indeed constituted a solid base on which to build L2 proficiency, and is in stark contrast with the model Murcia has to offer which is both late and partial. In many cases only physical education, where arguably little language is required, and the subject of natural science are taught in English. It is questionable whether this contact with L2 is sufficient to have any valuable effect. On the one hand, it is certainly providing increased contact with L2, which is undoubtedly good for acquisition of L2, but what effect does this have on the learning of the content material in question? Is such limited contact with L2 enough, even when language-supportive strategies are in place, to allow effective content learning to take place? Do pupils have the linguistic tools necessary to express concepts for themselves and make them their own? These are questions which could be usefully addressed in future projects.

Secondly, as we have pointed out, CLIL methodology has been chosen because it is said to be both effective and economical. Local government does not have to invest in additional language teachers or spend a great deal of money on further resources in order to put it into practice. It has been suggested that policy makers simply demand that existing or potential teaching staff learn enough English to be able to teach their subject through this language, often without providing additional support. It should be noted that acquiring a sufficient level of a foreign language is quite a large undertaking for a working adult. Furthermore, it seems that in many cases possession of a B2 certificate is deemed sufficient to become a bilingual teacher, despite the fact that, as we have seen, there is a lot more to CLIL than simply teaching one's subject through the medium of L2. To refer back to an earlier quote from Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015) "what distinguishes CLIL is a certain concern with language in the subject classroom and a distinct subject pedagogy which allows the subject teacher to deploy a range of language-supportive strategies which are unfamiliar in conventional teaching" (19). Surely a good deal of training in CLIL methodology is required in order for professionals to make an effective transition from their positions as L1 subject teachers to CLIL teacher. This conjecture would also provide interesting research material for future projects. It would be of great interest to interview teachers working within bilingual education programmes to find out how much support they have received both in terms of foreign language and in CLIL pedagogy, and to see how this relates to pupils' achievement in subjects which have been taught in English. Naturally, when putting in place bilingual systems such as these, we assume that

adequate training has been provided, new research would tell us if this is the case. It would also be extremely useful to ascertain teacher's opinions on the bilingual programmes as a whole, both positive and negative, to find out the types of problems they have encountered in the process of implementing these programmes and to note suggestions for improvements that could be made in the future.

This brings us to a third concern with the system currently being put into place. How universal is this bilingual system? As mentioned above, certainly at the initial level of Murcia's bilingual programme, it is unclear whether or not there is sufficient contact with L2 for CLIL to be effective. It would be interesting to conduct a study to investigate the amount of extra curricular L2 input pupils receive. It is certainly plausible that some pupils in bilingual education may require additional help to be able to cope with the linguistic demands of curricular subjects in L2. In many cases extra curricular English lessons are organised and take place within schools themselves, but it is the students' families who have to pay for these courses. This brings us to a situation of inequality where pupils from families with insufficient resources to enrol their children on these courses may be at disadvantage when compared with classmates from more affluent backgrounds. Similarly, pupils with learning difficulties of different types may conceivably be placed at a disadvantage in certain settings. These reflections could provide a basis for useful future investigations.

Finally, another concern that has come to light during the course of this project is the apparent discrepancy between levels of the material used in English language lessons and in content lessons. A simple glance at the English language and natural science textbooks referred to in this project is enough to detect the differences in language level. This in part is due to differences between BICS and CALP as discussed above, but nevertheless, the added complexity of the language used in the natural science textbook seems clear. The CLIL literature reviewed underlines the necessity for cooperation between language teacher and subject teacher to aid pupils in their understanding of the subject material. It would be of interest to determine the extent to which this cooperation takes place, especially given the rigid nature of subject syllabi within the national curriculum. Are English language syllabi and the syllabi of subjects taught in English adapted to be mutually supportive? Are teachers given enough freedom to adapt their syllabus for this kind of cooperation to take place? These questions also open up avenues for future

research.

These issues aside, the practical part of this project has attempted to provide guidelines and ideas on how to make best use of a language assistant in CLIL settings. The material has been devised with the support and training of CLIL professionals in mind. The ideas on the role of the language assistant in the different settings discussed and the specific tasks and activities described could provide a useful basis for teacher training sessions. Throughout this section, activities have been designed to maximise communicative interaction, to provide ample opportunity for student talk, to provide increased exposure to new vocabulary and to consolidate understanding of concepts. In all interactions, the language assistant additionally provides the pupils with a model of correct pronunciation which will help pupils to improve both listening and speaking skills. It is clear that the language assistant can be a great asset to content teachers in their lessons. Based on the ideas provided and with a little expansion, an interesting and engaging training session could be developed, providing a forum for teachers to discuss and share ideas for different ways to use their language assistants. Furthermore participation in the some of the games and activities described, could help teachers to see their potential. Such an activity would also raise awareness among content teachers of the need for scaffolding and other language-supportive strategies in their lessons, and bring to their attention the potential of the language assistant in helping to provide for than need. Similar training sessions for new language assistants could also be provided, in part, to give them ideas for activities, but more importantly, to encourage a recognition of the importance of their interactions with pupils and to provide an understanding of how to make the most of these interactions for the pupils' benefit.

### **5.1 - Self Evaluation.**

As the above comments have suggested, the limited nature of the present project means there are a great many areas left unexplored and a great many opportunities for further investigation to take place. Not least among these would be the opportunity to put the tasks and activities outlined to the test in a real school environment. Nevertheless, on the whole the project has been successful in doing what it set out to do, which was to place the current boom in bilingual education in a historical and methodological context, to look at the factors which are driving this boom at local and European levels, and to present a

practical scenario where these methodological and sociolinguistic factors are taken into account.

## **5.2 - Conclusions**

To conclude, it seems apparent that the potential benefits of the bilingual CLIL programmes we have discussed are great. They represent in part, a solution for the educational needs of contemporary society. Maximising our pupils' potential as European citizens of the future is an objective which cannot be ignored. If Spain is to be competitive both in Europe and worldwide, the formation of young professionals with language skills is indispensable. Certainly, when such monumental changes in education take place over a relatively short period of time, it is to be expected that certain problems arise, as we have discussed above. Nonetheless, it also seems likely that these problems will be addressed and resolved as a matter of course, as this new methodology becomes more widespread.

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## 7. Appendices.

The following tables present an overview of two textbooks used by 6<sup>th</sup> year primary students at a typical primary school in Murcia where the bilingual programme is in place. The English language textbook, 'Find Out 6' and the natural science textbook, 'Natural Science Primary 6' have been mapped out against a chronological weekly progression throughout a school year.

Find Out – 6 - School Year – 36 weeks – (approx. 4 weeks per unit).

Unit	Vocabulary groups	Grammar	weeks
1 – TV and Cinema	TV programme and film genres	Adverbs of frequency The time	1
			2
			3
			4
2 – Food from around the world	Food and cooking Prices and shopping International food	Have got Some and any Present continuous	5
			6
			7
			8
3 – Wonders of the world	Geographical features Man made constructions Adjectives to describe them	Comparative and superlative adjectives	9
			10
			11
			12
4 – In space	Space, planets, space exploration	There is / are Superlative adjectives Prepositions of movement	13
			14
			15
			16
5 – People and professions	Jobs	Past simple (regular verbs)	17
			18
			19
			20
6 - Friends	Free time activities Technology / means of communication	Past simple (irregular verbs)	21
			22
			23
			24



7 – Changing school	School subjects Sports Holidays	Going to future Can	25
			26
			27
			28
8 - Sinbad the dragon and the genie	Stories and legends Mythical creatures Weather	Contracted forms Revision of previous forms	29
			30
			31
			32
EXTRA – seasonal lessons	Halloween Bonfire night Christmas		33
			34
			35
			36

### Natural Science - Primary 6

Unit	Content	Salient vocabulary and grammar	weeks
1. Interaction	The nervous system The senses How we move	Body parts, organs, bones and muscle groups, parts of brain and sense organs. Present / Past simple Frequent use of passive	1
			2
			3
			4
2. Nutrition	The digestive, circulatory, respiratory and excretory systems	Elements forming parts of the 4 systems. Heathy foods and activities Should, can Frequent use of passive	5
			6
			7
			8
3. Reproduction	Female and male reproductive systems Pregnancy and birth	Life stages, stages in pregnancy, parts of reproductive systems Present simple active and passive	9
			10
			11
			12
4. Living things	Monera, protists and fungus kingdoms Animal and Plant kingdoms	Vocabulary involved in clarification of life on earth Mostly present simple	13
			14
			15
			16
5. Ecosystems	Description of Ecosystems, types of ecosystem and	Different ecosystems, plant and animal life, climate and	17
			18

	habitats, food chains and food webs	other other environmental characteristics	19
			20
6. Matter	Physical changes, chemical changes Separating mixtures	Different materials and their properties, verbs describing processes Present simple in active and passive forms Imperative and conditionals	21
			22
			23
			24
7. Energy	Forms of Energy Light Heat	Energy sources, side effects of energy production. Forms of energy and their characteristics. Present simple passive	25
			26
			27
			28
8. Electricity and magnetism	Electricity Magnetism Magnets and electromagnets	Materials / metallic objects electrical devices Properties types and uses of magnets Passive / conditional phrases	29
			30
			31
			32
9. Using Technology	Scientific and technological advances Computers, communication and the internet	Technological devices Computers and communication Imperative, should, passive	33
			34
			35
			36