



Facultat de Psicologia, Ciències
de l'Educació i de l'Esport Blanquerna

Universitat Ramon Llull

laSalle

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Students and teachers' perceptions on CLIL

Exploring the socio-affective factors and the
diversity in levels of English in a Science CLIL class

ESTUDIANT: Judit Gámez Macías

DIRECCIÓ: Dr. David Soler Ortíz

Educators have taken the next step, namely, to move from focus on language to integration of language. This is the difference between shining a light on an object, and making the object itself create a light.

Díaz Pérez, Fields, & Marsh (2018)

Resum

L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és analitzar les percepcions dels estudiants i els professors envers el mètode AICLE aplicat a l'assignatura de ciència. Concretament, explorar els factors socioafectius i la diversitat de nivells que pot haver-hi a l'aula. També, analitzar les diferents formes d'atendre a la diversitat a classe, així com la importància de col·laborar amb altres professors per preparar els continguts de la matèria. Per aconseguir-ho, s'ha emprat una metodologia basada en la distribució d'un qüestionari als estudiants i una entrevista amb la professora. Els resultats obtinguts conclouen que la franja d'alumnes amb nivell més baix d'anglès és la que considera que el mètode AICLE és un impediment per entendre el contingut de la matèria, i que, per tant, això es veu reflectit a la seva actitud, com per exemple participant menys a l'aula. Com a solució, els professors proposen adaptar el contingut a cada alumne i donar llibertat, als alumnes amb més baix nivell, a l'hora d'utilitzar la llengua materna.

Paraules clau: AICLE, atenció a la diversitat, factors socioafectius, percepció, col·laboració entre professors, diversitat de nivells.

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar las percepciones de los estudiantes y de los profesores ante el método AICLE aplicado a la asignatura de ciencia. Concretamente, explorar los factores socio-afectivos y la diversidad de niveles que puede haber en el aula. También, analizar las diferentes formas de atender a la diversidad en clase, así como la importancia de colaborar con otros profesores para preparar el contenido de la asignatura. Para conseguirlo, se ha utilizado una metodología basada en la distribución de un cuestionario a los alumnos y una entrevista con la profesora. Los resultados obtenidos

concluyen en que la franja de alumnos con nivel más bajo de inglés es la que considera que el método AICLE es un impedimento para entender el contenido de la asignatura y, por lo tanto, esto se ve reflejado en su actitud, por ejemplo, participando menos en clase. Como solución, los profesores proponen adaptar el contenido a cada alumno y dar libertad, a los alumnos de más bajo nivel, para que puedan utilizar la lengua materna.

Palabras clave: AICLE, atención a la diversidad, factores socio-afectivos, percepción, colaboración entre profesores, diversidad de niveles.

Abstract

The aim of the present research is to analyse the students' and teachers' perceptions on Science CLIL. Specifically, to explore the socio-affective factors and the diversity in levels of English in a classroom. Moreover, to analyse the different ways to attend to diversity, as well as the importance of teachers' collaboration to design the subject content. To reach it, the methodology used is based on the distribution of a questionnaire to the students and an interview with the content teacher. The obtained results conclude that the students from the lowest-level range are the ones who consider that CLIL is an impediment to understand the subject content, and, therefore it influences to their attitude, such as less participation in class. As a solution, teachers propose to adapt the subject content to each student and let the students with low-level use their mother tongue.

Key words: CLIL, attention to diversity, socio-affective factors, perception, teachers' collaboration, diversity in levels.

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to Do Coyle (2017, in San Isidro 2018) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an integrated approach where, as their name suggest, both language and content are conceptualised on a continuum without an implied preference for either. Throughout the development of CLIL since the mid-1990s, especially in Europe, there has been an emphasis on the development of language competence (L2, L3) in classrooms where language learning (and using) happens simultaneously with the learning thematic or subject disciplines (Coyle, 2018).

Recent studies such as Saladrigues and Llanes (2014), Bergroth (2006), Ullmann (1999), or Wode (1999) prove that learning through an additional language does not affect negatively to students' academic achievements. In fact, research by Surmont, Van de Craen, Struys and Somers (2014), or Lasagabaster (2011) demonstrates a L2 competence enhancement of CLIL students over non-CLIL students, meanwhile the content results remained the same for both groups. Moreover, some studies such as Lasagabaster (2014), Madrid and Pérez Cañado (2018), or Ball (2018) have focused on how to introduce correctly CLIL in schools and teachers' experience on teaching through CLIL.

However, just few studies have shown students' perception on CLIL, one of them, Salvador-Garcia, Chiva-Bartoll, & Vergaz Gallego (2018) did a research on their first CLIL lesson through different socio-affective factors such as fear to the language, motivation, or class participation. In addition, although many studies have deeply explored the benefits of CLIL on the learning of the additional language (see Dalton-

Puffer, 2008), not much attention has been placed on the impact of CLIL on the acquisition of the subject content.

Therefore, there is a gap on studying the students' socio-affective factors on CLIL and its impact on content acquisition. The present dissertation will precisely explore those concepts through the study of perceptions and beliefs of students and teachers. As it is essential to know the impact of CLIL over them, since they are active agents of the learning process, it is important to take into account their perceptions to determine if CLIL is effective for them.

1.1. Objectives and research questions

The aim of the present research study is to explore the different perceptions the students and the teachers may have on science CLIL, since in a classroom, there might be a wide range of English levels that have to be attended in different ways.

To reach the aims of the present dissertation, the following questions must be answered:

1. Does CLIL entail an obstacle for students to understand the subject content?
2. Does CLIL affect students' socio-affective factors such as class attitude, motivation or participation?
3. Is CLIL an obstacle for students from the low level of English range?
4. Is CLIL more beneficial for students if there is a collaboration between language teachers and content teachers?
5. How can attention to diversity be taken into account on the students from the low level of English range in CLIL?

Therefore, from the previous research questions, these are the main objectives that need to be proved:

1. To explore, according to students' perceptions, if CLIL is an impediment for them to understand the subject content.
2. To analyse students' perceptions on socio-affective factors of CLIL.
3. To explore CLIL experiences and beliefs of students with low level of English.
4. To analyse the importance of teachers' collaboration to prepare CLIL content.
5. To explore different ways to attend different levels of English in CLIL.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. *What is CLIL?*

The acronym CLIL stands from Content and Language Integrated Learning and, according to Lasagabaster (2014), it refers to teaching curricular content in an additional language. Although sharing the same basis, different authors have given various definitions about what CLIL is. For instance, Marsh (1994, in Díaz, Fields, & Marsh, 2018) defines CLIL as an “umbrella” term to refer to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through an additional language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language. As it happens, some authors agree on CLIL as it refers to a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language (AL) is used for the teaching and learning of both content and the AL without a prominent preference for either (e.g. Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008, Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, as cited in Soler, González-Davies, & Iñesta, 2017).

There are different types of CLIL regarding to its aim of learning. According to Marsh (1994), CLIL is a dual-focused term because the objective is both content and language learning. However, CLIL can also be single-focus if an additional language (AL) is used as the medium of instruction, but with no focus on its development, therefore the objective is content learning (see Díaz et al., 2018). Aligned with this idea, Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) also classified CLIL as soft-CLIL and hard-CLIL. Soft-CLIL focuses on language learning, whereas hard-CLIL's focus is content learning (*see also 'weak CLIL' and 'strong CLIL' in Paran, 2013*).

Nevertheless, both types of CLIL use language in such a way that it approaches the natural way of learning much more closely. The natural way of learning basically consists of an interaction between implicit and explicit learning. Implicit learning is learning without realizing it and also learning by doing something in a meaningful context. In CLIL education, students learn the language in a much more implicit way, as they have to use it to understand and communicate about the content of the course. They basically learn the language “along the way” (Surmont, Van de Craen, Struys, & Somers, 2014). Hence, although the focus is on content learning or on language learning, the implementation of programs whereby an additional language becomes the medium of instruction, has a dual focus, as students both learn the content of the subject concerned and improve their additional language competence (Lasagabaster, 2014).

Indeed, integrated learning involves more than learning an additional language as a distinct subject or using it as the medium of teaching and learning. Integration requires that the language itself becomes an integral element of learning (Díaz Pérez et al., 2018). Language is, therefore, not the goal but the means of communication, and students have

to use the language in authentic situations where the language usage is pragmatic and functional. This implies that students practice more in and with the target language (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, in Surmont et al., 2014). Owing to the integration of an additional language CLIL is different from traditional language learning because it combines language learning with content learning. The target language is immediately exploited and used in a meaningful environment, lowering (and even removing) any barriers students may have to use the target language (Coyle et al., 2010, in Surmont et al., 2014).

Traditional language teaching is focused on teaching about the language rather than on using it, whereas in a CLIL context the additional language becomes a working tool and a means for communication about other contents (Halbach, 2014). Consequently, as CLIL is based on language acquisition, rather than on language learning, because language is seen or is used in real-life situations in which students can acquire it (San Isidro, 2018), many studies (e.g. Celaya, 2007, Agustin Llach, 2016, and Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2015, in Jiménez & Adrián, 2019) prove that there is a better improvement in additional language competence of CLIL students over non-CLIL students.

2.2. CLIL expansion in Europe

New communications needs appeared in Europe during the 1990s decade. Globalization heightens the need for communication competences in a context of increasing human mobility and international trade. In this context, it is unsurprising that knowledge of languages has become more and more necessary (Jiménez, Muszyńska, & Romero, 2014). As a consequence, the Department of Education has offered schools the possibility

of taking part in new CLIL projects, providing financial support and teacher training. The aims are to launch CLIL programmes in the school curriculum and improve learners' AL competence (Navés & Victori, 2010, in Soler et *al.*, 2017).

Since 1995, Europe has been promoting multilingual education. The European commission stated that every country should aim for trilingualism at the age of eighteen, meaning that besides the mother tongue(s), people should be proficient in at least two other languages (White Paper, 1995, in Surmont et *al.*, 2014). Moreover, since one of the latest Eurobarometer (2012) showed that 46% of all the Europeans are unable to communicate in another language than their mother tongue. The European Commission, based on the results of immersion programmes in Canada, stated that the best way to reach this goal is to introduce multilingual education, thus it promoted Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as an alternative to traditional language educational (Surmont et *al.*, 2014). For this reason, CLIL has been rapidly adopted in different educational systems (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2013, in Soler et *al.*, 2017).

The innovative thing about CLIL is that it is the first step in designing a language policy at school level, whose main goal is to develop the students' multilingual competence (San Isidro, 2018). Considering that, as previously mentioned, the European Commission's aim is that people should be proficient in at least two other languages besides their mother tongue, according to Kuteeva (2011, in Lasagabaster, 2014) the CLIL approach has undergone an enormous boom on all the rungs of the Spanish educational ladder and in many other countries, as a result of which the number of research studies has also increased significantly. Since CLIL implementation in Europe, many researches have

been conducted, the following studies are examples of the principal investigations that have been developed during those years:

- Peal and Lambert (1962, in Surmont et *al.*, 2014) have initiated a revolution by showing that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals on multifarious tasks.
- Morgan-Short et *al.* (2010, in Surmont et *al.*, 2014) have proved that CLIL, with both its implicit and explicit learning, is one of the most brain-friendly ways of learning. The research showed that the implicit learners were more advanced than the explicit learners. Moreover, brain scans showed that the brains of the implicit learners showed patterns that resembled the patterns visible when using the mother tongue. This means that the brain does not need to work too hard to use the new language and that access to the new language is almost as automatized as access to the mother tongue. This neuronal convergence proves that CLIL can create more effective brains.
- Numerous scholars (e.g. Coyle, Hood, & Marsh ,2010, and Pérez Cañado, 2017, in Madrid & Pérez Cañado, 2018) have also considered CLIL to make bilingual language learning more accessible to all type of learners, as it has been held to afford all students, regardless of social and economic consideration, the opportunity to learn additional languages in a meaningful way.
- Many researchers (e.g. Ackerl, 2007, Dalton-Puffer, 2011, and Pérez Cañado, 2012, in San Isidro, 2018) have shown the positive effects of CLIL on students' attitudes and motivations toward language learning, as well as on additional language learning.

- Researchers (e.g. Washburn, 1997, Nyholm, 2002, and Van de Craen et *al.*, 2009 in Surmont et *al.*, 2014) have shown that no negative effects on mother tongue development have been found when a student goes to a CLIL school.
- In addition, some studies (e.g. Ackerl, 2007, Coonan, 2007, and Wiesemes, 2009, in San Isidro, 2018) have shown teachers' positive views on CLIL implementation.

However, there is still a gap on some studies (e.g. Pladevall-Ballester, 2015, and San Isidro, 2017, in San Isidro, 2018) whose studies on families' perceptions and attitudes have shown positive views, although they have been and still are thin on the ground, or also, such as the study of the present dissertation, the students and teachers' perceptions on CLIL taking into account the socio-affective factors and the diversity in levels of English in a CLIL class.

Considering these gaps, educational systems are still adapting to this situation, seeking to promote language learning and foster multilingual competence by increasing the amount of input students receive in the new language. As a consequence, programmes that integrate content and language learning (CLIL) are now common at all levels of the education system (Jiménez et *al.*, 2014). In such a way, although not everyone is convinced of the benefits of multilingual education, the aim is to continue showing the advantages of CLIL, as, for instance, many researchers (e.g. Van de Craen, Ceuleers and Mondt, 2007, in Jiménez et *al.*, 2014) have been able to show that the academic performance of students in bilingual/CLIL is comparable to that of students in monolingual centres, or that they even attain better results.

2.3. Benefits of CLIL

As previously mentioned, since CLIL implementation in Europe in the 1990s, diverse researches have been conducted. As a result, some of these researches have proved satisfactory outcomes granting CLIL several benefits for the students and teachers.

On the one hand, regarding the language acquisition, studies such as Lorenzo *et al.* (2009, in Surmont *et al.*, 2014), show that students in a CLIL environment speak the additional language better than their traditionally schooled peers. Because the amount of practising time is greater and because the pressure to use the language correctly is lower.

The results examined in the studies (e.g. Martínez-Adrián *et al.*, 2019, and Gutiérrez-Mangado, 2015, in Jiménez & Adrián, 2019) have proved that CLIL minimizes L1 use as a result of a greater proficiency and vocabulary knowledge attained. That is, because of the accumulated hours of CLIL instruction leads to lower L1 use.

Furthermore, children taught in a second language acquire more vocabulary and grammar structures in the additional language. Their production and comprehension skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) generally improve. According to Van de Craen *et al.* (2007, in Jiménez *et al.*, 2014) this is possible due to the greater degree of exposure to the additional language, helped by the fact that its use is more natural and more holistic. Although, researches (e.g. Vollmer *et al.*, 2006, and Llinares & Whittaker, 2006, in Surmont *et al.*, 2014) have shown that CLIL learners obtain better results in oral registers as school lessons are predominantly oral events, meaning that the opportunities to practice writing skills in the CLIL language are not as numerous as one would think.

On the other hand, regarding the content learning Bergroth (2006, in Fernández-Sanjurjo *et al.*, 2019) analysed CLIL programmes in Sweden to conclude that students learning

Mathematics in Swedish and English did not have lower results than pupils studying through Finnish when finishing Secondary Education¹. Similar results were obtained by Ullmann (1999, in Fernández-Sanjurjo *et al.*, 2019) when he explored the performance of students in the United Kingdom and found that pupils assimilating the subject-contents through French showed enhanced subject-matter learning among other language-related attainments. Akin to these investigations, also Wode's (1999, in Fernández-Sanjurjo *et al.*, 2019) study with students of Secondary Education in Germany concluded that pupils in bilingual provisions perform better in Geography and History than those studying in German.

Despite CLIL is mostly related to language acquisition and content learning, when looking for the CLIL advantage, one must look further than the language level only (Surmont *et al.*, 2014). Some researchers (e.g. Naiman, 1995, and Dalton-Puffer, 2008, in Surmont *et al.*, 2014) have proved that CLIL students generally display greater fluency and creativity and are more inclined to take higher risks. More CLIL benefits were found by Huttner, Dalton-Puffer and Smit (2013, in Vázquez & García, 2017) who confirmed that CLIL created an egalitarian atmosphere in which both teachers and students become co-experts in the additional language and cooperate to co-construct language learning and classroom interaction. Aligned with this idea Díaz-Pérez *et al.*, (2018) found that one of the inherent advantages of CLIL is that it can be coherently blended with other emerging integrative curricular practises such as phenomenon-based learning². In addition, according to Surmont *et al.* (2014), the so-called language gifted students can reach high

¹ Swedish and Finnish are the official languages spoken in Sweden and English the additional language.

² Also known as project-based learning.

language levels in both traditional and CLIL education, but the real benefit of CLIL lies in the fact that it is able to stimulate the not-so-gifted students as well in such a way that they also reach a high level.

2.4. *Socio-affective factors on a CLIL environment*

According to Huttner et al. (2013, in Vázquez et al., 2017) research on beliefs and perceptions allows us to gain insight into students' motivation and experience, and into teachers' classroom behaviour. In other words, students' perceptions let the educators know what do they need to take into account when preparing a CLIL subject. As Coyle (2018) asks; do educators really know how to design environments that enable learners to access the kind of language they need to progress and deepen their learning? Are the inherent cognitive, social, psychological, and linguistic processes understood and made transparent by and for participants?

These are the most common socio-affective factors that an educator may deal with in a CLIL environment.

2.4.1. *Motivation*

At classroom level, increasingly teachers have to respond to political and societal demands for raising attainment; a lack of motivation toward language learning per se presents particular challenges (Coyle, 2018). Many authors (e.g. Coyle et al., 2010, and Van de Craen et al., 2007, in Jiménez et al., 2014) emphasize that CLIL methodology is useful to boost both language and content learning because students are usually specially motivated in CLIL subjects, as they find them different from the traditional classroom. However, authors such as Mehisto and Asser (2017 in Madrid et al., 2018) concluded that

addressing the needs of students who lack motivation, pose discipline problems or are academically weak is a challenge for the program at large and requires an organizational response both to help ensure that students' needs are met and that teachers build their repertoire of related skills.

As a possible solution, a socio-affective strategy that teachers can implement during a CLIL lesson proposed by Madrid *et al.* (2018) is that it is important to encourage and motivate students, highlighting their achievements, however small they may be, and minimizing their failures and mistakes.

2.4.2. Communication

It is usual to see a great variety of levels in a class. In a CLIL environment, teachers come across different language levels and it is also a challenge for them to consider it.

Students frequently use communication strategies (CS), which are widely known as all those devices foreign language learners employ when they face certain communication problems because of a deficit knowledge of the additional language lexicon (Poullisse, 1987, in Jiménez *et al.*, 2019). The psycholinguistic perspective considers CSs as the underlying cognitive processes in order to overcome a gap in a communication in the additional language (Faerch & Kasper, 1983, and Poullisse, 1993, in Jiménez *et al.*, 2019).

One of the communication strategies that has been extensively researched is the use of the L1 as a CS during oral and written production in second language learners (Celaya, 1992, Cenoz, 2001, and Navés, Miralpeix & Celaya, 2005, in Jiménez *et al.*, 2019). As a socio-affective strategy, when implementing CLIL, teachers have to face the fact that it is not about teaching language, but about using an additional language to learn content

(San Isidro, 2018). Hence, when evaluating CLIL students, the evaluator has to look at the larger picture and not focus on language results only (Surmont et al., 2014). Thus, switching to the mother tongue could be a solution (Halbach, 2014) to integrate the students into a CLIL environment.

2.4.3. *Fear and participation*

A study done by Salvador-García et al. (2018) found that there are five categories related to the students' perception on their first CLIL class. Among these categories, fear to the language and class participation are mentioned.

According to Salvador-García et al. (2018) one of the principal aspects that requires more attention is knowing the students' perceptions towards a CLIL subject. It is convenient to find out the levels of understanding, their motivation, and the fear regarding the introduction to a CLIL subject.

As a socio-affective strategy it is important to let them know that the additional language is mainly the way of instruction. According to Nikula (2007, in Surmont et al., 2014) because learning the target language is not the main (or only) goal, the pressure on using the language is lower. This does not mean that errors go unnoticed, it means that students do not feel the pressure every time they speak that every word they say is graded. Therefore, the fear of using the additional language diminishes.

2.4.4. *Integration, inclusion and attention to diversity*

Both inclusion and attending to diversity are associated with the phenomenon of integration, which is a consistent response to the diversity of student needs (León et al., 2016, and Stainback, 1999, in Madrid et al., 2018). According to Gándara, 2017, Hunt,

2011, and Lasagabaster, 2011, (in Díaz-Pérez et al., 2018) fundamental principles of CLIL include placing students at the centre of the learning cycle. So, to integrate the students, Halbach (2014) proposes a series of socio-affective strategies that teachers should consider:

- (1) It is important for the content-subject teachers to foresee the language their students will need in order to successfully participate in the teaching activities.
- (2) Make this language available to them through short activities, classroom displays or other visuals.
- (3) Make sure students have the necessary linguistic means to interact as otherwise the limitation inherent in having to communicate in an additional language could lead to frustration in students who may know more than they can express.

Bearing these steps in mind, and considering that nowadays there is a trend to separate the role of the language teacher (who predominantly focuses on language) from that of the content teacher (who predominantly focuses on content) (Gajo, 2011, in Lasagabaster, 2014). It will be another way to considerate students' inclusion to promote content and language teachers' coordination. As many researchers (e.g. Creese, 2010, Davison, 2006, and Tan, 2011, in Vázquez et al., 2017) concur, coordination has been reported to produce positive results when learning additional languages and content-based instruction contexts.

Besides, constant teachers' formation on CLIL would be optimal because each group of students possesses not only diverse levels of motivation, aptitude, and ability to focus on task as a found in any monolingual learning environment, but also differences in language ability in the additional language. Thus, protocols to protect and nurture self-confidence to use the additional language are given special attention to build self-confidence and a positive group learning culture (Berger, 2003, in Díaz-Pérez et al., 2018).

In addition, educators should be aware that implementation without careful planning cannot guarantee that the expected results will take place (Waters & Vilches, 2013, in Soler et al., 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to explore the students and teachers' perceptions on Science CLIL. Thus, to collect data a series of instruments have been used over different participants.

3.1. Participants

The research has been conducted in a semi-private school in Barcelona that covers all the educational stages, from Kindergarten to Baccalaureate. Indeed, in this school is where I have done part of my internship.

The participants are a group of students from 3rd of ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education), and the CLIL teacher. In this grade, the students start learning CLIL Science in English as a separate subject for the first time, as, until then, this subject has been done transversally with Technology and Social Studies (TGI³).

These are the students and teacher's profiles that have participated on the present research:

- A content teacher who has been educating students in Science CLIL for around 10 years, and also, she has been receiving training to prepare CLIL lessons since

³ TGI is the Catalan acronym for Treball Globalitzador Interdisciplinari. This subject consists on studying transversally three subjects or more, the main ones are Science, Technology and Social Studies. There, the students learn different subjects by working on projects.

the school changed to this teaching approach. She teaches Science CLIL in 3rd and 4th of ESO and TGI in 1st and 2nd of ESO.

- 55 students from 3rd of ESO who started learning English at the average age of 5, and 52,7% of them study English outside the school an average of 2,5 hours per week. In the school, English subject is done as a split-classroom and all of them are divided into 4 groups according to their level of English. Thus, in the present research the participants are also divided into the same groups to take into account the different levels of English. In brief, the groups comprise from A2 to B2 level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, being group A4 the lowest-level group, and group A1 the highest-level one. In detail, the present research students are:

- Group A1 comprises 15 students with B2 level. Within that group, 53,3% of the students are studying English outside the school, 66,7% are learning other subjects in English apart from Science, such as TED Talks and Laboratory, and 73,3% studied CLIL Science in TGI in Primary Education.
- Group A2 comprises 15 students with B1-B2 level. Within that group, 53,3% of the students are studying English outside the school, 53,3% are learning other subjects in English apart from Science, such as TED Talks, Drama Workshop and Laboratory, and 66,7% studied CLIL Science in TGI in Primary Education.
- Group A3 comprises 15 students with B1 level. Within that group, 60% of the students are studying English outside the school, 73,3% are learning other subjects in English apart from Science, such as Drama Workshop

and Biology, and 33,3% studied CLIL Science in TGI in Primary Education.

- Group A4 comprises 10 students with A2 level. Within that group, 40% of the students are studying English outside the school, 30% are learning other subjects in English apart from Science, such as Drama Workshop and Biology, and 50% studied CLIL Science in TGI in Primary Education.

3.2. Instruments

In order to collect data to achieve the objectives, two types of instruments have been prepared. First, a questionnaire inspired by the content of some researches (e.g. Jiménez et al., 2019, 2014, and Salvador-García et al., 2018) mentioned on the theoretical framework. It consists of 29 questions, grouped in 20 blocks, where the students can tell their perceptions and experiences on CLIL through some open questions as well as closed questions, in order to obtain the graphics to answer the research questions. And second, an interview with some questions from Vázquez et al.'s (2018) research on analysing teacher's roles regarding cross-curricular coordination in CLIL, as well as other questions inspired by a few studies (e.g. Surmont et al., 2014, and Díaz Pérez et al., 2018) also cited on the theoretical framework. The interview is designed to be answered by the teacher in order to collect the necessary data to give answer to other objectives of this research study. In addition, a third instrument was expected to be implemented, but due to Covid-19 pandemic, that forced the schools to close, observation process has not been possible to carry out.

3.3. Data collection process

In order to collect data, I have analysed and obtained the graphics from the students' answers on the questionnaire that they did online through *Google Forms*. Furthermore,

the teacher sent me the interview with the answered questions so that I could analyse her responses.

It is important to mention that due to Covid-19, both questionnaire and interview were sent to the Science teacher by email so that she could send the questionnaire to the students. For this reason, just 55 students have been able to answer the questionnaire rather than the approximately 90 students that there are in 3rd grade. In addition, the interview was carried out via email instead of face-to-face interview. Hence, the results obtained from the data collected might not be the most reliable ones. However, the graphics have been adapted to the number of students that could answer the questionnaire, so that some results could be obtained.

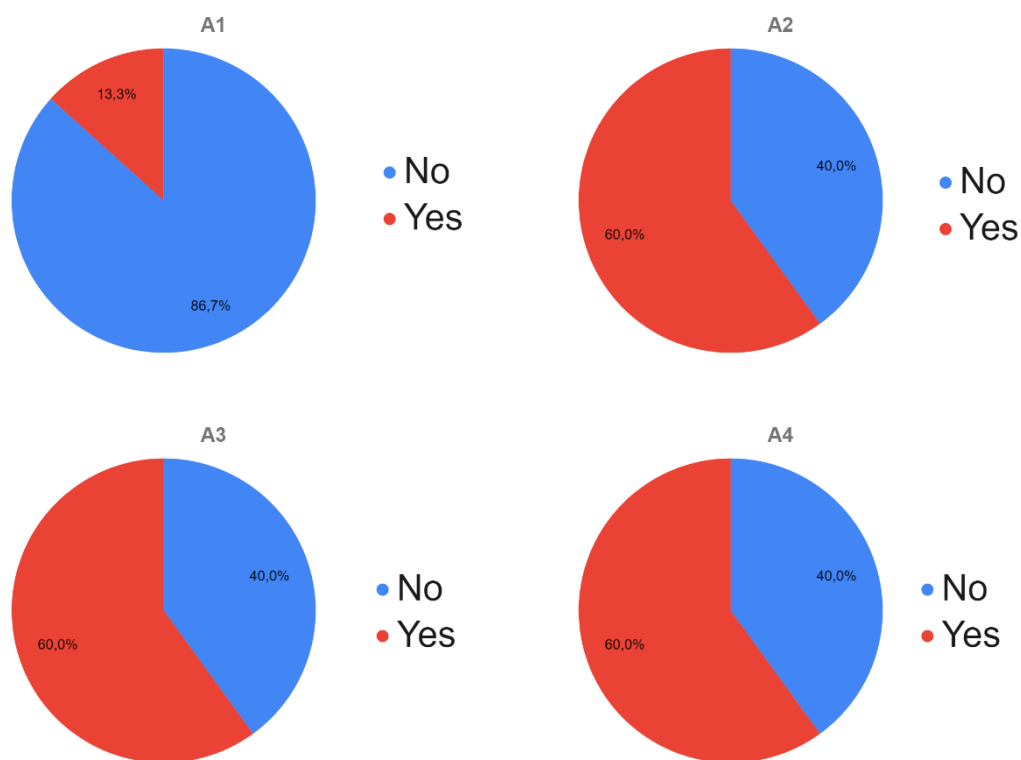
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained have been grouped and presented according to the aims of the present research. Therefore, the following order is: 1. CLIL as a possible obstacle for the students to understand the subject content, 2. Student's perceptions on socio-affective factors in CLIL, 3. CLIL and the different levels of English, 4. Teachers' collaboration to prepare CLIL lessons, and 5. Teacher's attention to diversity in CLIL.

Also, the results have been obtained taking into account the 4 groups of English in order to interpret the results considering the students' perceptions regarding the different levels of English that they have. This way it can be possible to analyse if the highest-level groups' perceptions are different from the lowest-level groups' ones.

4.1. Objective 1: CLIL as a possible obstacle for the students to understand the subject content

a) Do you think that learning Science in English is an impediment for you to understand the subject content?

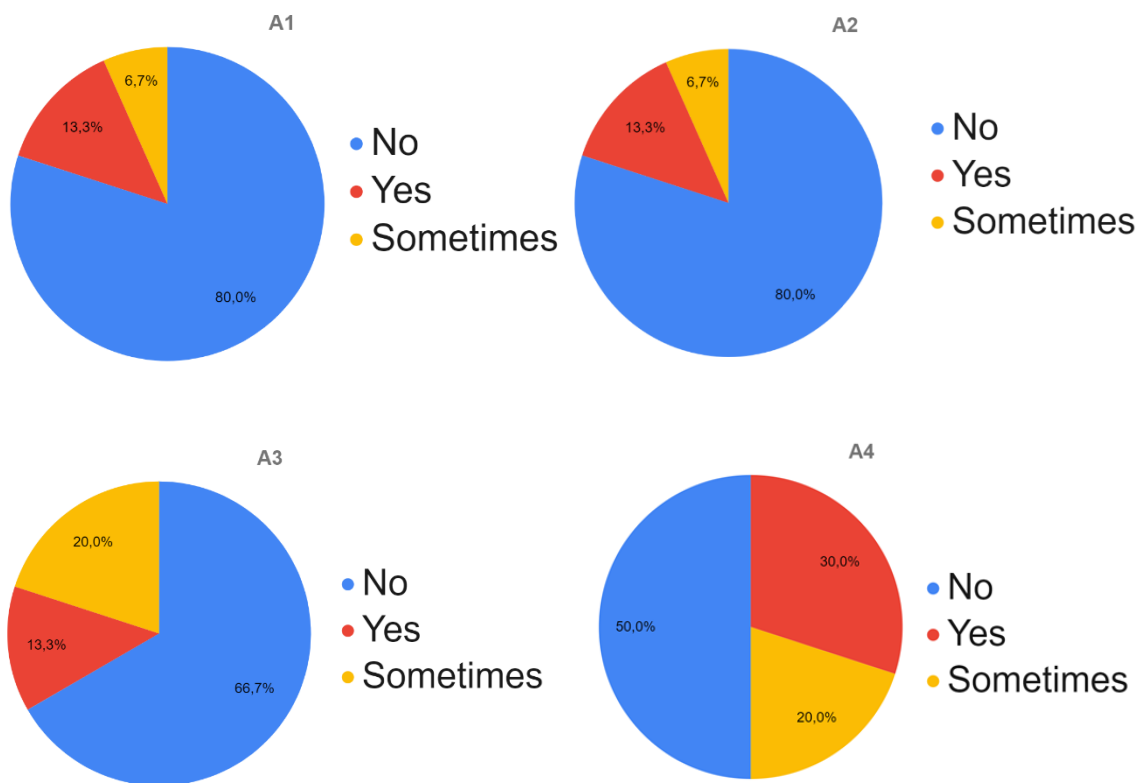


Just in group A1, the highest-level group, 86,7% of the students consider that learning Science through CLIL approach is not an impediment to understand the content of the subject. Some of the reasons they gave were that “*I don’t think that the fact of doing it in Catalan would let me learn more*”, “*they both have the same content, the only thing that change are the names*”, and “*for me, it’s a good way to avoid getting my pronunciation rusty*”.

However, the rest of the classmates belonging to groups A2, A3 and A4, whose level is lower than group A1, consider that learning Science in English is an impediment for them to understand the subject content. Some of the reasons they gave were that “*we live in a country where we speak Spanish, if we learn the vocabulary in English, when we talk with*

friends or family in Spanish there are certain parts of the subject that we don't know how to explain", or "en el meu cas, l'anglès és un idioma difícil, i haver de fer Science, que és una assignatura que no he fet mai, en anglès és molt difícil, ja que si ja em costa entendre algun concepte en català, l'anglès encara em dificulta més a entendre el contingut de la matèria⁴".

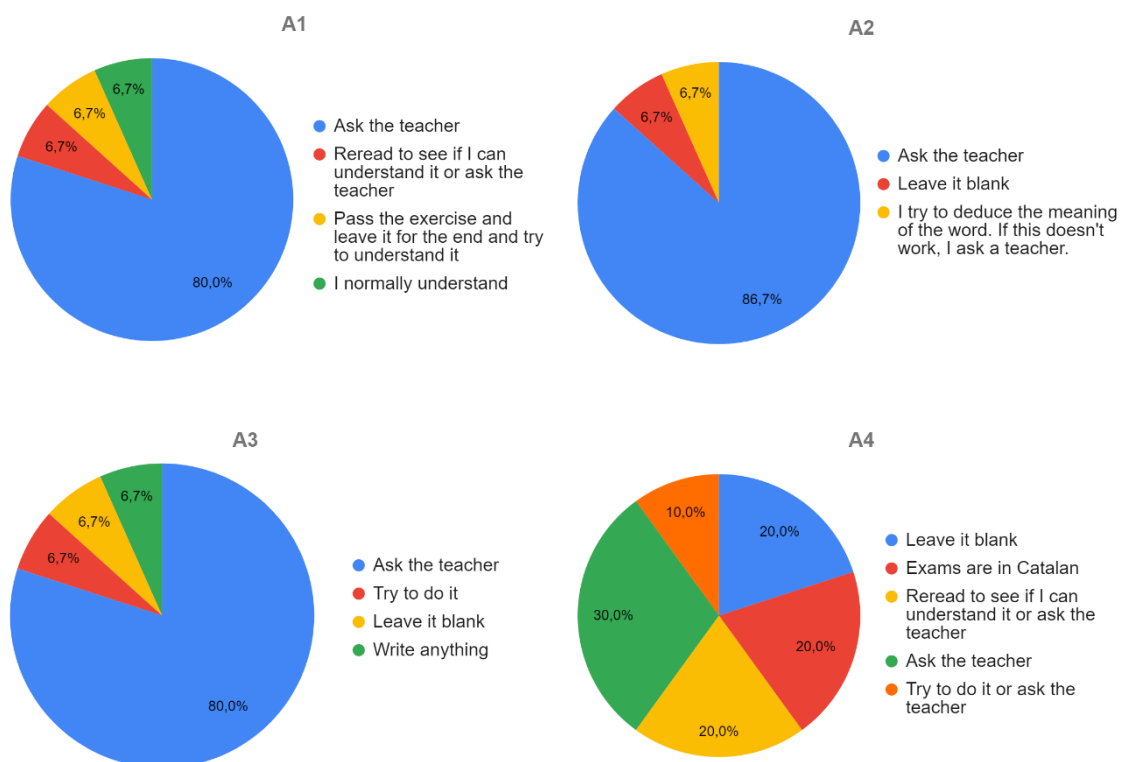
b) Do you think your marks are negatively affected because the subject is in English?



⁴ In my case, English is a difficult language. Therefore, as it is a subject that I have never done before, doing Science in English is very difficult. Besides, it's already hard for me to understand some content in Catalan, hence in English is more complicated.

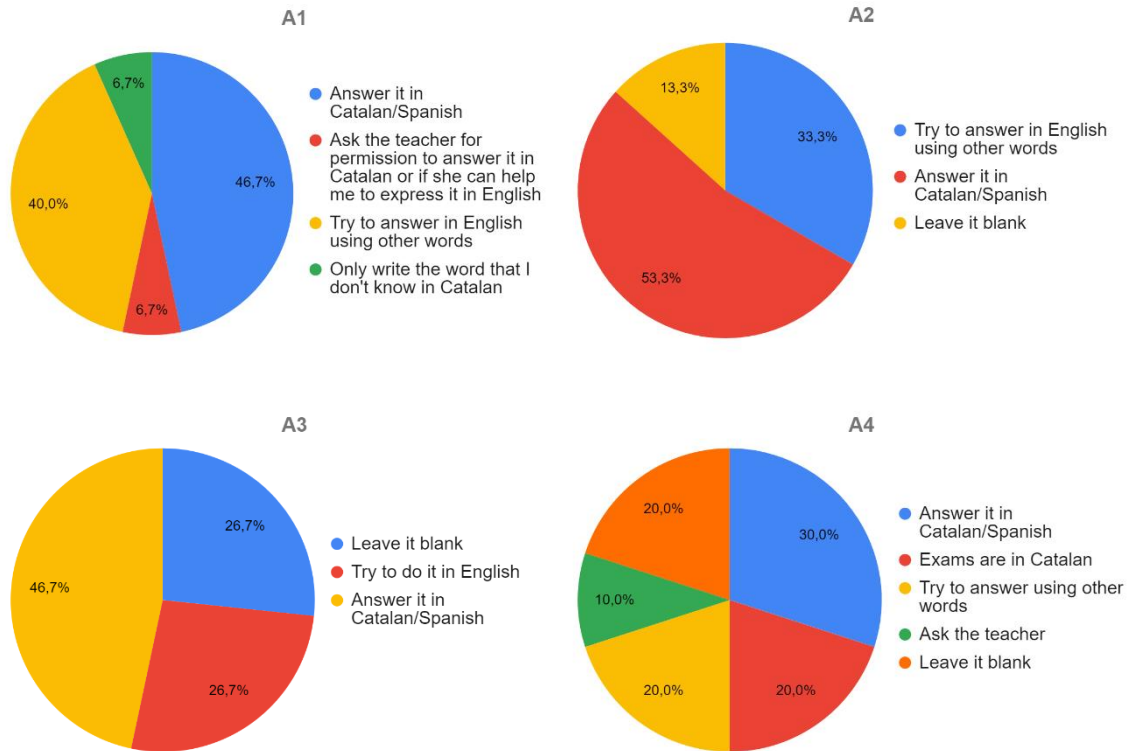
The 80% of students in groups A1 and A2 consider that their marks are not negatively affected by the fact of learning Science in English. However, the results are different in groups A3 and A4. Specifically, in group A4, 30% of the students believe that their marks are negatively affected, and 20% of them consider that just sometimes their marks are impaired. Thus, 50% of students consider that CLIL influences over their marks.

c) *During an exam, what do you do if you don't understand an exercise because it is in English?*



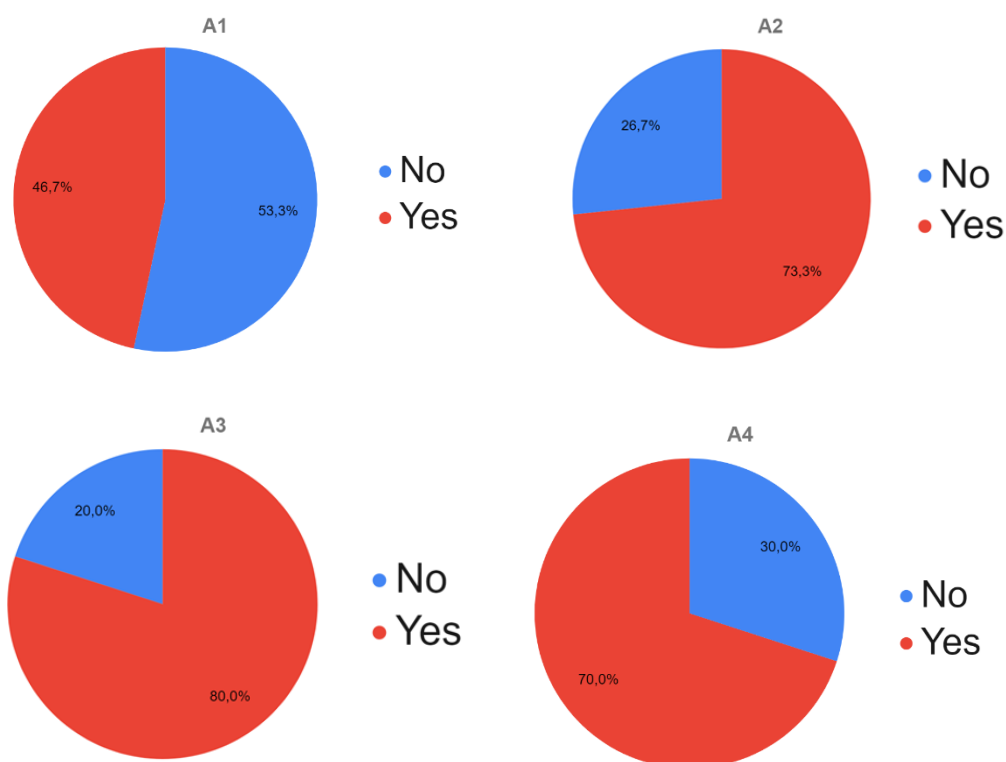
The aim of this question was to see in what group there would be more students who could leave the exam in blank because they do not understand the exercise. Hence, considering the above results, in group A1 no students contemplate the idea of leaving an exercise in blank, but in group A2 and A3, 6,7% of students could do it, and particularly in group A4, 20% of students would leave an exercise in blank.

d) During an exam, what do you do if you don't know how to give your answer in English?



Similar to the previous question, here the aim is to see how the students would give their answers during an exam. In all the groups, most of the students would give their answers in Catalan/Spanish in case they do not know how to express themselves in English, but meanwhile the number of students who would try to answer in English diminishes as the level of English is lower, the students who would leave it blank increases being group A3 and A4 the ones with more students who would not answer the exercise.

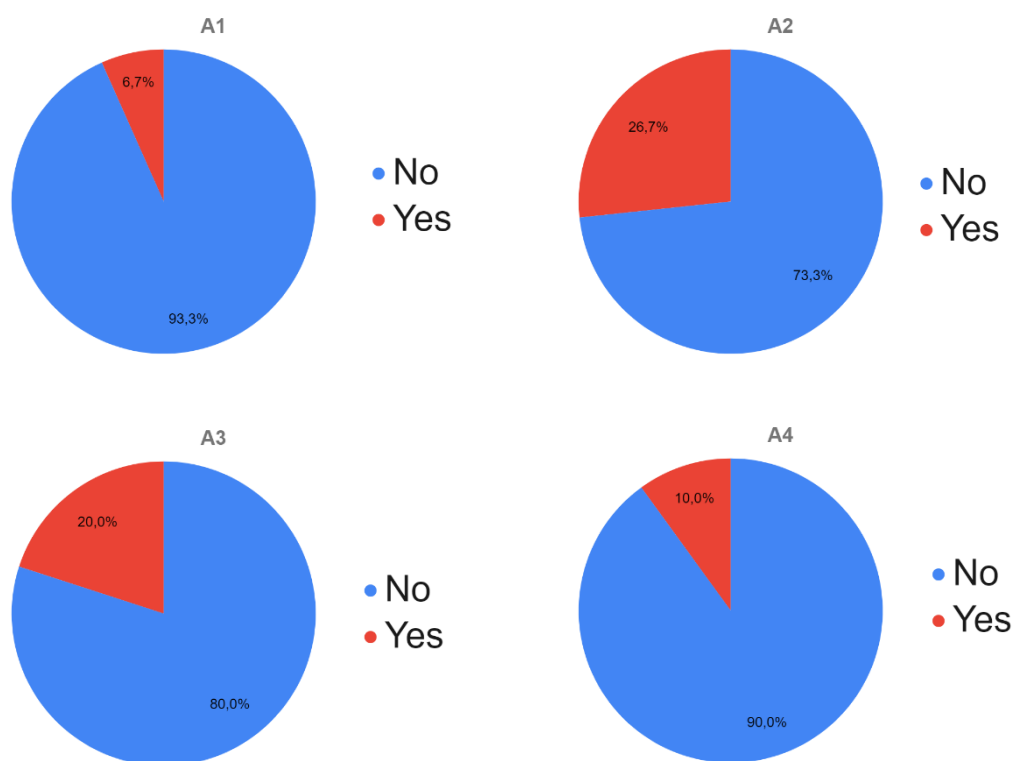
e) Have you ever been unable to say something because you did not know how to say it in English? (e.g. participate in a debate, ask questions, say the answer, etc.)?



Again, groups A2, A3 and A4 are the ones with more students who have not been able to say something because they did not know how to say it in English. In this question, the students could tell what did they do when this happened to them. Most of the students have answered that they would say it in Catalan/Spanish or would find synonyms in order to try to say it in English, but some others would opt for keep silent. The major number of students who would choose to keep silent are from group A3.

4.2. Objective 2: Students' perceptions on socio-affective factors in CLIL

a) Do you think the fact that Science is taught in English concerns your attitude in class?

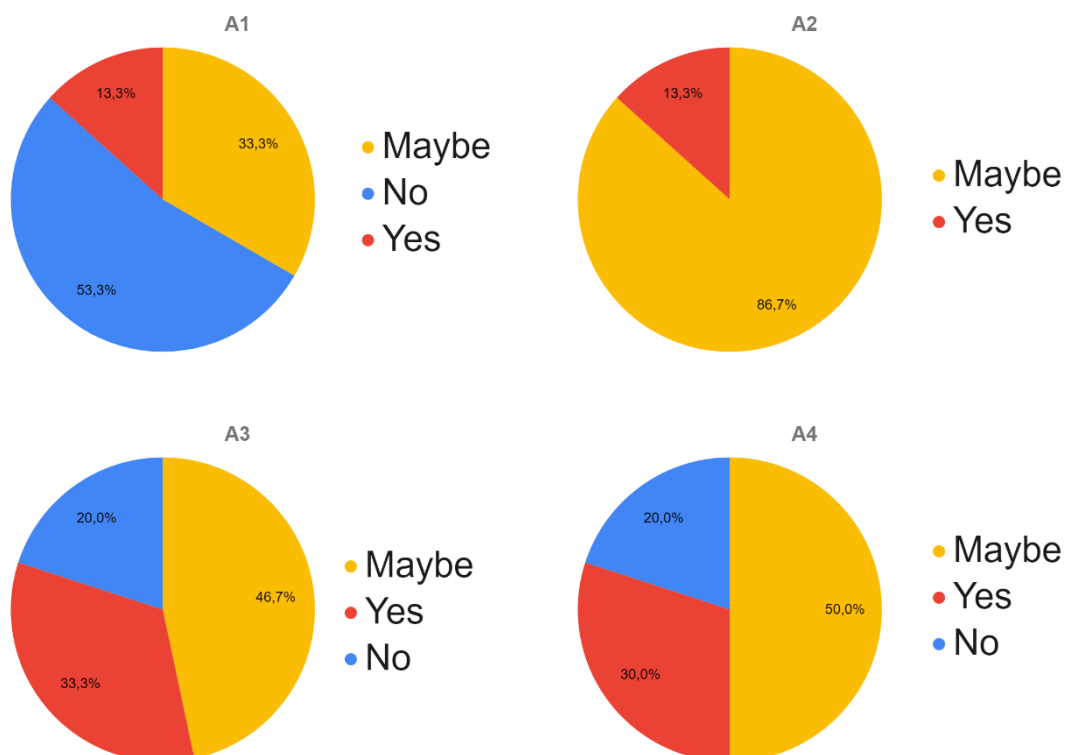


In all the groups the majority of students consider that the fact of learning Science in English does not affect to their attitude. The 8 students who have recognized that the language affects to their attitude in class had the option to choose how they consider that their attitude is affected. The most chosen options have been:

Lowly motivated	17,6%
You often get distracted	11,8%
Passive attitude towards learning	11,8%
Frustrated	11,8%
You give up and drop the subject	11,8%
You avoid participating	11,8%
Bored	11,8%
You feel self-conscious	5,9%
Highly motivated	5,9%

Other options given by them have been that “*I have to be concentrated to understand all*”, “*I try to be more attentive*”, or, even someone considers that “*the class gets longer*”.

b) If Science were in Catalan or Spanish, do you think that you would participate more in class?



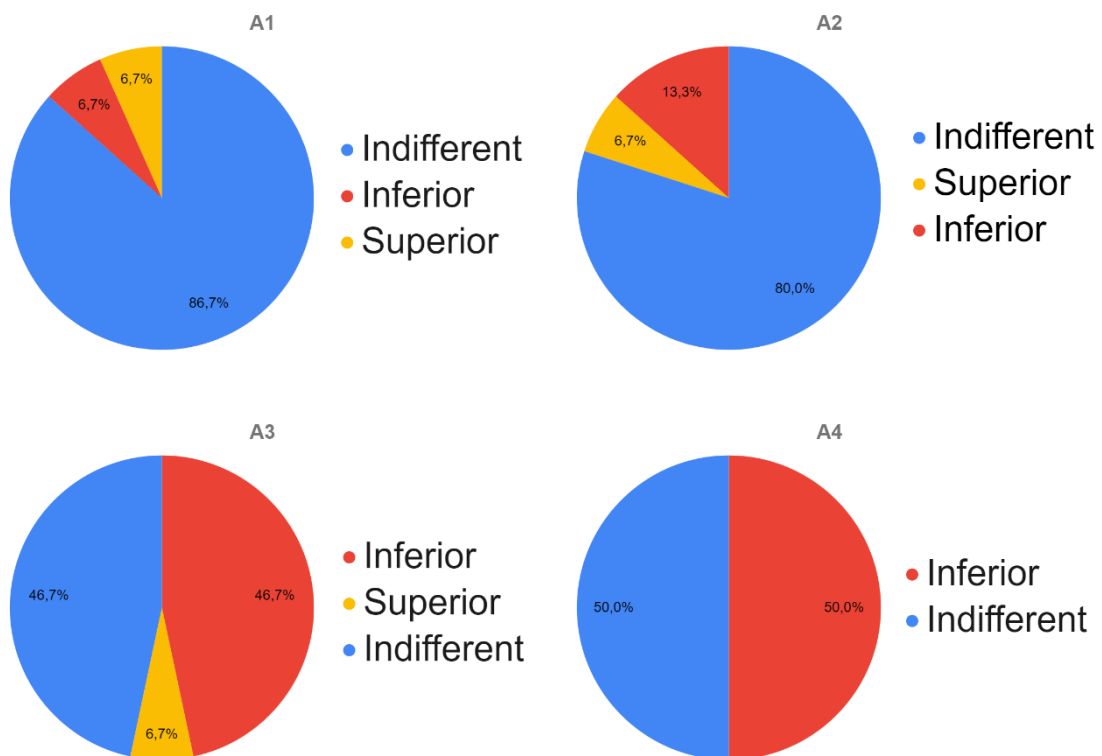
The number of students who consider that they would participate more in class if the subject were taught in Catalan/Spanish is higher in groups A3 and A4. However, the option “*Maybe*” predominates in all the groups, except in group A1. Some of the reasons that the students have given are that maybe they would participate more “*because it would be easy to participate if the subject is in my language*”, “*because when I speak English, I’m more insecure and ashamed. Instead, with Catalan and Spanish I would participate more because I speak those languages much more*”, and because “*potser seria més ràpid entendre el tema i aleshores participar seria més fàcil⁵*”.

⁵ Maybe I would understand the content faster, hence participating would be easier.

In addition, those students that think that they would not participate more in class have stated that it is because “*I feel that I will participate the same as I do now because I don’t mind to say it in English than in Catalan or Spanish*”, and “*because I don’t think that the language interferes in my quantity of participation*”.

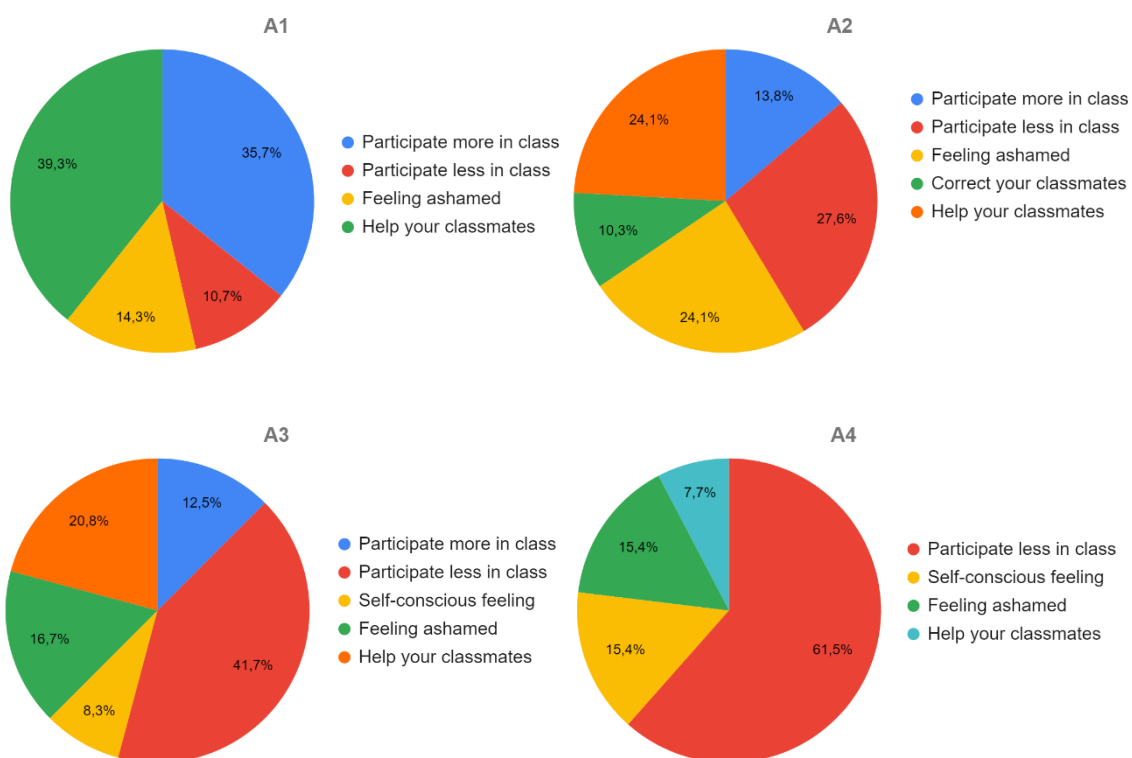
4.3. Objective 3: CLIL and the different levels of English

a) Does, the fact that there are classmates who have a higher level of English than you, make you feel inferior/superior?



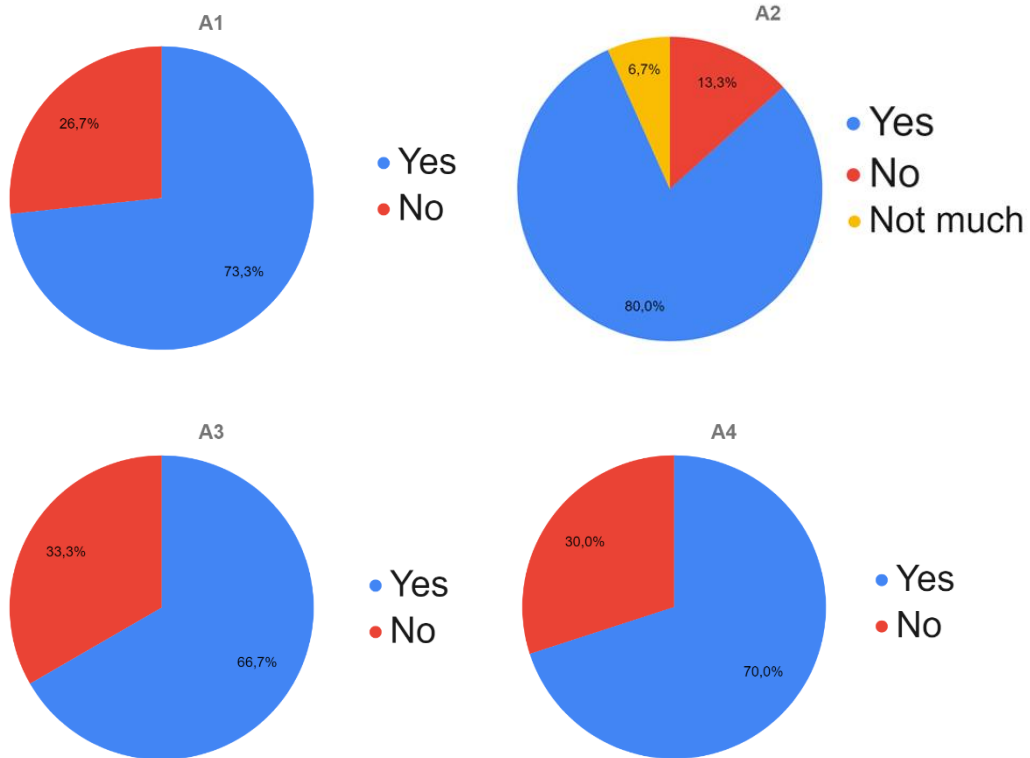
The aim of this question was to explore how the students from the lowest-level groups could feel concerning the presence of students who have a higher level. When answering, most of the students consider that the fact of having a lower level makes them feel indifferent, but when focusing on group A3 and A4, half of the group feel inferior. This, leads to focus on the results of the following question.

c) How does it affect to your attitude in class?



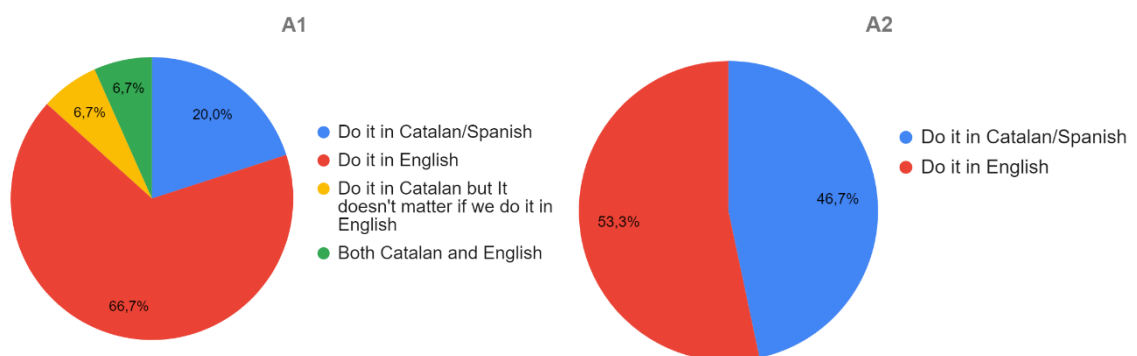
Considering the results of the previous question, it was in groups A3 and A4 where half of the students stated feeling inferior due to its lower-level of English. Hence, that has been reflected on how their attitude in class has been affected, showing that in groups A3 and A4 predominates less participation in class, whereas in group A1 the students participate more and help their classmates.

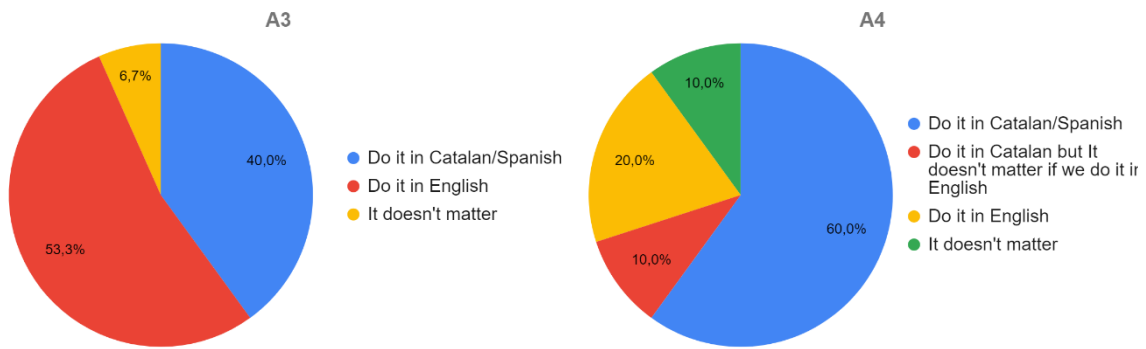
d) Do you think that doing Science in English improves your level of that language?



As an overall opinion, almost all of the students consider that learning Science through CLIL approach improves their level of English. However, when asking for their preferences, the results change concerning the lowest-level group.

e) Would you prefer to do Science in Catalan/Spanish, or would you continue doing it in English?





As previously mentioned, although almost all the students consider that Science CLIL improves their level of English, 60% of students in group A4 would prefer to do Science in Catalan/Spanish, whereas in the rest of the groups predominates the idea to continue doing Science in English.

4.4. Objective 4: Teachers' collaboration to prepare CLIL lessons

When asking the content teacher about collaboration with other teachers, she answered that in the school they coordinate with the rest of the Science teachers to prepare CLIL lessons, and, in addition, the language teachers revise and adapt the materials to the students' level. Hence, the content teacher is aware of the variety of levels among the students and considers that it is better for them the collaboration between language and content teachers in order to be conscious of the vocabulary and grammar that students have acquired to adapt CLIL lessons to their level.

4.5. Objective 5: Teacher's attention to diversity in CLIL

In the interview the content teacher was asked about several factors related to attention to diversity. The first factor was about the different levels of English that the students have. Of course, she was aware that the students were divided into groups when they do English subject and she takes into account the different levels by giving the students reference

books, activities, exercises and test papers in both languages so that those students with lower level can decide the language they want to do their tasks, while the most competent ones must do them in English. For this reason, although she tries not to use the mother tongue in class, and the students are used not to translate anything because they want to create a real immersive environment, she considers that she can use the mother tongue only in a case of complex procedures or concepts or for some particular students. In addition, and in order to promote self-confidence to use English, the students can use either English or Catalan to make or answer questions in class, but she always encourages and pushes them to use English. In brief, the idea is that language cannot be a barrier to communication. Thus, for the content teacher is more important having a solid knowledge of the content as she understands English as the vehicle, but also, although it is not the basic aim, she wants the students to increase their language competence.

Furthermore, she is aware of the difficulty that students with lower-level of English may have to access to some of the contents, but she provides them with different tools and strategies to help them overcome that, such as materials and tests provided in Catalan and most of the tasks are done in group so they can help each other with language. Also, the teacher is always there to help.

Finally, when evaluating the students, she gives them feedback about the content and the use of English and also, give them the opportunity to revise and correct but she never punishes or reflects this in the mark. As mentioned before, English is the vehicle and language cannot be a barrier to knowledge and communication.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to explore the students' perceptions on CLIL and the results have shown that the percentage of students who consider CLIL as an impediment to understand the subject content is higher in the low-level range. In addition, some of these students consider that their attitude is affected by the fact of studying Science in English and that they prefer to do it in Catalan or Spanish.

Nevertheless, the results have also shown that above the students who consider CLIL as an impediment, others believe that it does not negatively affect to their marks and they do not consider English as an impediment to understand the content because they can use their mother tongue, as it was corroborated by the content teacher.

Hence, regarding the first research question, whose objective was to explore, according to students' perceptions, if CLIL is an impediment for them to understand the subject content, as previously mentioned, this perception is mostly done in students from the lowest level range, but the great majority think that CLIL does not negatively affect to their marks and they can always ask for help to the teacher or use their mother tongue. Therefore, it could be possible that the students believe that it is an impediment because it is the first time that they are doing this subject separately and, as some students stated "*Science is a difficult subject*".

Regarding the second research question, whose objective was to analyse students' perceptions on socio-affective factors of CLIL, the results have shown that most of the students consider that their attitude in class is not affected by the fact of learning Science in English, but the great majority thinks that they would participate more if the subject were in Catalan or Spanish.

Regarding the third research question, whose objective was to explore CLIL experiences and beliefs of students with low level of English, the results have shown that the students

who feel inferior due to the low-level of English, considered that this affected to them and they participate less in class or they felt ashamed. However, almost all the students considered that CLIL improves their level of English and all the groups would like to continue learning Science in English, except for group A4 who preferred to do it in Catalan or Spanish.

Regarding the fourth research question, whose objective was to analyse the importance of teachers' collaboration to prepare CLIL content, the teacher supported the idea and stated that in the school she coordinates with other content teachers to prepare the lessons and that language teachers revise the content to adapt it to the students' level of English.

Finally, regarding to the fifth research question, whose objective was to explore different ways to attend to different levels of English in CLIL, the teacher gave many options such as to allow the students from the low-level range to do the tasks and exams in their mother tongue, to use the mother tongue when it is necessary, such as to clarify some content, or also, give feedback to the students and not reflecting the language use in their marks.

To conclude, it is important to mention again that due to Covid-19, not all the students have been able to answer the questionnaire, and that could have been reflected on the results. Hence, it would be possible that if the same research is given under other circumstances and all the students could respond to the questionnaire, besides the observation process, the results could be clearer. This has been a restriction and it will be nice to conduct the same research in a future to see if the results are on the same line.

In addition, for further research it will be interesting to investigate a fact found when analysing the results of the questionnaire, as I realized that most of the students from the highest-level groups (A1 and A2) had studied Science in English in Primary Education, whereas those from the lowest-level groups (A3 and A4) did not. Hence, it could be

possible that the fact of studying through CLIL approach since Primary Education has influenced over the students by improving their level of English and leading them to the highest-level groups.

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7. ANNEX

7.1. *Students' questionnaire*

Students' perceptions on Science CLIL

Percepció de l'alumnat sobre AICLE a biologia

* **Obligatòria**

- Please, read carefully the questions
· Si us plau, llegiu detalladament les preguntes

- Preferably, answer in English. But if you don't know how to respond in English, you can do it in Catalan
· Preferiblement, respon en anglès. Però si no saps com respondre en anglès, ho pots fer en català

- This questionnaire is for academic research. No names will be published.
· Aquest qüestionari és d'ús acadèmic. Cap nom serà publicat.

1. Name and Surname: *

Nom i Cognoms:

2. Group and English teacher: *

Grup i professor/a d'anglès:

Maqueu només un oval.

A1 -

A2 -

A3 -

A4 -

3. Do you think your level of English is adequate for your group? *
Creus que el teu nivell d'anglès és adequat pel teu grup?

Maqueu només un oval.

Yes *Ves a la pregunta 5*

No *Ves a la pregunta 4*

4. Do you think you should be in a lower or higher group? Why? *
Creus que hauries d'estar en un nivell inferior o superior? Per què?

5. At what age did you start learning English (approx.)? *
Amb quina edat vas començar a fer anglès (aprox.)?

6. Do you study English outside the school? *
Fas anglès extraescolar (acadèmia, professor/a particular, etc.)?

Maqueu només un oval.

Yes *Ves a la pregunta 7*

No *Ves a la pregunta 8*

7. How many hours per week? *
Quantes hores a la setmana?

8. Apart from English and Science, do you do any subject in English too? *

A part d'anglès i biologia, fas alguna assignatura més en anglès?

Maqueu només un oval.

Yes *Ves a la pregunta 9*

No *Ves a la pregunta 10*

9. What subject(s) do you do in English too? *

Quina assignatura(es) més fas en anglès?

10. Did you learn Science in English in Primary Education? *

Vas fer biologia en anglès a Primària?

Maqueu només un oval.

Yes *Ves a la pregunta 13*

No *Ves a la pregunta 13*

11. Did you learn other subjects in English in Primary Education? *

Vas fer altres assignatures en anglès a Primària?

Maqueu només un oval.

Yes *Ves a la pregunta 12*

No *Ves a la pregunta 13*

12. What subject(s) did you do in English in Primary Education? *

Quina assignatura(es) més vas fer en anglès a Primària?

13. Do you think that learning Science in English is an impediment for you to understand the subject content? *

Creus que fer biologia en anglès és una dificultat per tu a l'hora d'entendre el contingut de la matèria?

Maqueu només un oval.

Yes

No

14. Justify your previous answer *

Jusitfica la resposta anterior

15. Do you think the fact that Science is taught in English concerns your attitude in class? *

Creus que el fet que biologia es faci en anglès afecta la teva actitud a classe?

Maqueu només un oval.

Yes *Ves a la pregunta 16*

No *Ves a la pregunta 17*

16. How does it concern your attitude? (You can choose more than one option) *

Com creus que afecta la teva actitud? (Pots escollir més d'una opció)

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- You often get distracted [Et distreus sovint]
- Passive attitude towards learning [Mostres passivitat per aprendre]
- Frustrated [Sents frustració]
- You give up and drop the subject [Et rendeixes i abandones l'assignatura]
- Lowly motivated [Et sents poc motivat]
- Highly motivated [Et sents motivat]
- You feel self-conscious [Et sents cohibit]
- You avoid participating [Evites participar]
- Bored [Avorrit]

Altres: _____

17. If Science were in Catalan or Spanish, do you think that you would participate more in class? *

Si biologia fos en català o castellà, creus que participaries més a classe?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe [Potser]

18. Why? *

Per què?

19. Have you ever been unable to say something because you did not know how to say it in English? (e.g. participate in a debate, ask questions, say the answer, etc.) *

Algun cop has sentit que no podies parlar perquè no sabies com dir-ho en anglès? (p. ex. participar en un debat, preguntar dubtes, dir respostes, etc.)

Maqueu només un oval.

- Yes *Ves a la pregunta 20*
 No *Ves a la pregunta 21*

20. What did you do? *

Què vas fer?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Say it in Catalan/Spanish [Ho dius en català/castellà]
 Keep silent [Et quedes callat]
 Altres: _____

21. What do you do when you don't know something related to the content because it is in English? (e.g. while doing an activity, reading Science bits, etc.) (You can choose more than one option) *

Què fas quan no entens el contingut de la matèria perquè és en anglès? (p. ex. mentre fas una activitat, llegint el Science bits, etc.) (Pots escollir més d'una opció)

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- Ask the teacher [Preguntar al professor/a]
 Ask a classmate [Preguntar a un company/a]
 Look for the concept on the computer/dictionary [Buscar-ho a l'ordinador/diccionari]
 Nothing [Res]

Altres: _____

22. During an exam, what do you do if you don't understand an exercise because it is in English? *

Durant una prova, què fas si no entens un exercici perquè està en anglès?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Ask the teacher [Preguntar al professor/a]
- Leave it blank [Ho deixes en blanc]
- Altres: _____

23. During an exam, what do you do if you don't know how to give your answer in English? *

Durant una prova, què fas si no saps contestar la resposta en anglès?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Answer it in Catalan/Spanish [Contestar en català/castellà]
- Leave it blank [Ho deixes en blanc]
- Altres: _____

24. Do you think your marks are negatively affected because the subject is in English? *

Creus que les teves notes es veuen afectades negativament perquè l'assignatura es fa en anglès?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Yes
- No
- Altres: _____

25. Do you think that doing Science in English improves your level of that language? *

*

Creus que el fet de fer biologia en anglès millora el teu nivell d'aquesta llengua?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Yes
- No
- Altres: _____

26. Would you prefer to do Science in Catalan/Spanish, or would you continue doing it in English? *

Preferiries fer biologia en català/castellà, o seguiries fent biologia en anglès?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Do it in Catalan/Spanish [Fer-la en català/castellà]
- Do it in English [Fer-la en anglès]
- Altres: _____

27. Do you think that there are classmates who have a higher level of English than you? *

*

Creus que hi ha companys/es que tenen més nivell d'anglès que tu?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Yes
- No
- Altres: _____

28. Does this make you feel inferior/superior? *

Això et fa sentir inferior/superior?

Maqueu només un oval.

- Inferior
- Superior
- Altres: _____

29. How does it affect to your attitude in class? (You can choose more than one option) *

Com afecta la teva actitud a classe? (Pots escollir més d'una opció)

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- Participate more in class [Participo més a classe]
- Participate less in class [Participo menys a classe]
- Self-conscious feeling [Em sento cohibit]
- Feeling ashamed [Em fa vergonya]
- Correct your classmates [Corregeixo als companys]
- Help your classmates [Ajudo als companys]
- Laught at someone [Em ric d'algú]

Google no ha creat ni aprovat aquest contingut.

Google Formularis

7.2. *Teacher's interview questions*

1. How many years have you been teaching CLIL lessons?
2. Did you receive any training to prepare CLIL lessons?
 - a. [If NOT] Do you think it could have help you?
 - b. [If YES] Do you think it was helpful?
3. Do you create your own material or you use already prepared content (e.g. books)? Why?
4. Do you coordinate with other teachers to prepare your CLIL lessons? [If YES, What teachers and how?]
5. Do you coordinate with language teachers the vocabulary and the grammatical structures that students have acquired?
6. Do you think CLIL programs would be better for students if there is a collaboration between language teachers and content teachers?
7. In your opinion, what is more important for learners: exhibiting a high command of foreign language or having a solid knowledge of content? Why?

8. When evaluating the students, do you focus on content and language acquisition (dual-focused CLIL), or you only take into account content acquisition (single-focused CLIL)? Why?
9. May teaching through a foreign language affect the assimilation of academic content negatively? Do you think that learning through English will benefit or harm the students' intellectual and academic development?
10. What is your opinion about using the mother tongue in the bilingual class? Do you use the mother tongue at some point? When?
11. What do you do when the students don't understand the content because it is in English?
12. There might be students who don't participate in class because they feel self-conscious when speaking in English, or because of their low level of English, they don't know how to say it in that language. What do you do to motivate those students?
13. Do you promote self-confidence to use English in class? How?
14. In English subject, the students are divided in groups according to their level. Do you take into account those different levels when teaching? How?