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THE USE OF CLIL METHODOLOGY AS A TOOL TO TEACH ENGLISH IN INFANT EDUCATION BY TEACHERS IN OSONA

Final year project in Early Childhood Education with specialisation in the English Language

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Abstract

This study is based on CLIL methodology as a tool to learn English as a foreign language giving a special look in infant education. This research presents a detailed explanation of the methodology and its characteristics. Furthermore, it also presents real data collected in 39 schools from Osona by using an online questionnaire in order to analyze the relationship that English teachers have in this area with the English subject and the CLIL methodology. Most of the schools do not teach English in infant education, some of them use CLIL methodology, and the main reason of not using it is the lack of information that they have about the approach.

 Key words: CLIL methodology, foreign language, infant education, schools in Osona.

Resum

Aquest estudi està basat en la metodologia CLIL com a eina per a aprendre l'anglès com a llengua estrangera, donant una visió més centrada en l'Educació Infantil. Aquest projecte presenta una definició detallada de la metodologia i les seves característiques. A més a més, també presenta les dades de 39 escoles d'Osona, recollides a través d'un qüestionari online per tal d'analitzar la relació que els mestres d'anglès d'aquesta àrea tenen amb la metodologia CLIL. La majoria de les escoles no imparteixen anglès en l'Educació Infantil, algunes usen la metodologia CLIL, i la principal raó per no utilitzar-la és la falta d'informació sobre la metodologia.

Paraules clau: metodologia CLIL, llengua estrangera, Educació Infantil, escoles d'Osona.

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1. Introduction

A lot of different methodologies exist to teach a foreign language and some of them are more used than others. At the same time, there are also a lot of foreign languages that we can learn but English is, nowadays, the most used language in the world.

In this project, I have focused on CLIL and O'CLILS as the methodology to teach English as a foreign language. Through this research I aim to get a more detailed definition of the methodology, see the reality of teaching the English subject in the schools from Osona and their relationship with CLIL methodology.

In the first part of the project, I present a theoretical framework in which the basics of CLIL are outlined by looking at the different explanations that have been used to explain such methodology, the advantages and disadvantaged of the approach, and finally the strategies and materials that makes a CLIL session successful.

The second part of the project is the practical one. I present the study that I carried out in order to know the reality of the schools in Osona about the English subject and CLIL methodology. I designed a questionnaire and sent it to all of the schools, in order to collect all the data needed. This questionnaire has been the basis of my study because I analysed the responses of all of the participants and I extracted the conclusions.

2. What is CLIL?

The simplest definition of all, stated by the European Commission, states that in CLIL pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language. Furthermore, it adds that CLIL "provides exposure to the language without requiring extra time in the curriculum" (Relations, 2012, p.8).

David Marsh founded Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in 1994 and he is still fully active in the issues of CLIL.(Biçaku, 2011) He claims that CLIL is not a new methodology. On the contrary, it has been used for centuries to ensure that certain youngsters get the ability to use more than one language(Marsh, 2000). Lightbown (2014, p. 13) quoting (Dalton-Puffer, 2011) states: "This approach responds to the increased integration of the European community and the desire to equip young people with the language skills needed to move easily from country to country for work, personal enrichment, and for further studies abroad."

According to Navés (2011), CLIL has a long history and there have been different reasons of using that approach. For example, CLIL methodology was, and it still is, really useful in the United States when the schools had to guarantee that all of their multilingual students from primary school could be effectively educated in English.

If we think about this methodology in order to learn the English language, we can point out that, as Relations (2012) claimed, linguists and methodologists view English as a core skill due to the social changes that have taken place since the development of the Internet and globalization. They conclude that nowadays English is a subject that children learn as a tool to do something else.

A more detailed description about CLIL methodology is the one that Oller (2012) exposes saying that CLIL is about learning content in another language and they both have the same importance. In order to use the methodology efficiently, she claims that we need teachers to be prepared in language and contents, appropriate materials, good planning and organization, and finally enough time for immersion. She adds that we have to promote the use of the

language in different contexts in order to acquire different specific vocabulary and realise the importance of learning English.

CLIL methodology presents interesting and relevant points about the way we learn a new language as the one that Marsh (2000), exposes claiming that CLIL gives the opportunity to use the language naturally, as native speakers do, and thus they focus on the content and forget about the language. As Oller (2012) exposes, we have to try to change the methodology focused on learning English, and try to use the foreign language as a tool to learn the content. According to Navés (2011), we have to give the students a need to use English in order to achieve their goals.

As Marsh (2000) exposes, good results have been obtained using the CLIL approach. This methodology tends to improve the motivation to learn of the students and the opportunity to acquire a foreign language.

Despite the good reviews of that methodology, Biçaku (2011) claims that CLIL is not easy to apply and it requires considerable effort to do it. One of the most challenging aspects that the methodology presents is the collaboration between subject teachers and English teachers that it requires. Furthermore, a lot of different activities are needed in CLIL lessons, the materials have to be well designed. For this reason, the preparation of CLIL sessions is time consuming.

2.1. CLIL in early years

In infant education (3 to 6 years old), we call students young learners. These young learners present different characteristics, development processes and learning strategies from the older ones. David Nunan (2011) named some of the characteristics that these children present:

- Children are at pre-school.
- Generally, they cannot analyze language yet.
- They have lower levels of awareness about the process of learning.
- They hardly can read or write some words, even in their first language.
- They are more concerned about themselves than others.
- They have little knowledge about the world.
- They enjoy fantasy and movement.

Due to these different characteristics, there exists a variation on CLIL in order to teach a foreign language to young learners called O'CLILS (Outdoor CLIL at School).

According to Corcoll & Flores (2011) the concept of Outdoor CLIL at school (O'CLILS) tries to implement the basis aims of CLIL in other contexts. Infant Education seems to be a really good moment to develop O'CLILS due to the huge quantity of educational moments that take place in and out of the classroom. That aspect seems to be really positive in order to increase the immersion time.

Furthermore, Corcoll & Flores (2009) believe that, in this stage, CLIL methodology becomes more natural and effective to work in real contexts. In early years we need to apply a global content-linked; for this reason, it is said that the foreign language can be acquired and lived, rather than learned.

Corcoll & Flores (2009) add that we can find a lot of situations that promotes the interaction among children and teachers apart from the classroom. Some examples could be the playground, the corridor, the dining room or the

bathroom. In these types of contexts they play or work in their habits and, for this reason, these contexts promote the use of the language in a natural way. Corcoll & Flores (2009) believe that, in this way, children will start using words and expressions due to their real interactions. As Marsh (2000) mentions, CLIL can offer youngsters a natural situation for language development that can motivate them to learn the language.

Sometimes people can believe that applying O'CLILS in early years can be a difficult task. However, Lightbown (2014) claims that language learning in early years starts when children get comprehensible input from people and instructional materials. The interactions that the students have with the others and the instructional material improve their learning. Lightbown (2014, p. 74) states: "young children can give the impressions that they understand the teacher's language by imitating the actions and words of others. As school routines become familiar, they will know when to line up at the door, sit on the "reading rug" or take out the pencils." She claims that these opportunities of interaction allow them to make connections between the actions and the language that accompanies them.

Lightbown (2014), quoting Tabors & Snow (1994), points out that when children are not able to speak English, they use "spectating" and "rehearsal" as strategies to learn the language. In spectating, children remain silent while they observe the facial expressions and the movements of the ones that are speaking the new language. In rehearsal, children try to repeat the words of another speaker, whispering it or mouthing what they have seen and listened.

In conclusion and according to Lightbown (2014), young learners should focus on getting comprehensible input, by listening to a picture-book story read by the teacher, for example. The role of the children in early years consists of observing, listening, and seeking to understand the language in their environment.

3. Advantages of CLIL

There have been some researchers, experts and linguistics who have analyzed the methodology and they have found the advantages that this approach presents.

According to Relations (2012), the main advantage is that the approach focuses on one topic and students learn the foreign language through the content related to that topic. If the content is interesting and meaningful for them, they feel more motivated to learn.

Focusing on the motivation, Biçaku, (2011) also claims that students feel hungry to learn when the language is used to achieve their real purposes. Klimova (2012) adds that CLIL, apart from increasing learner's motivation, it also provides them more confidence in both the language and the subject being taught. Oller (2012) comments about this methodology and the motivation factor too, by confirming that it has proven to be really efficient in improving learner's language skills and their motivation, as well as to learn the language and the school subjects in general.

Furthermore, on the one hand, Relations (2012) exposes that teachers do not have to present a really high knowledge about the topic that it is worked in CLIL lessons because the teacher can learn about the topic while the students do it as well, and they can explore new things together. On the other hand, Relations (2012) adds that students do not necessarily need a particularly high level of English to be able to follow CLIL lessons. Marsh (2000) also comments about this aspect by saying that all children can take advantage from CLIL methodology, and not just only the ones that tend to present a huge facility for learning new languages.

The main characteristic of CLIL methodology is the fact that students are learning something through a foreign language, and this aspect is seen as positive too. For example Oller (2012), and Biçaku (2011) believe that CLIL give the students more exposure to the language, more immersion time, and thus,

more possibilities to be in different communication situations meaningful for them.

Another interesting characteristic that CLIL methodology presents and that seems to be beneficial for the children is, as Klimova (2012) says, that it makes students learn the foreign language in the same way as native speakers do. Biçaku (2011) exposes that in CLIL lessons, students do not think about studying a foreign language and they focus on the content. In this way, they acquire the language unconsciously and naturally and this aspect helps them to raise their long term memory. In addition, the fact that they focus in the content, helps provides them of not feeling stressed or anxious by the barriers that the foreign language presents. It is believed that presenting an appropriate well stimulated environment, free of anxiety, helps students in their learning improvement. Marsh (2000) also adds that in CLIL lessons children learn to think in different languages. He affirms that this capacity can help us to understand the concepts and the associations between them, as well as to introduce them in a more sophisticated level on English.

Biçaku (2011) talks about the advantages of mixing two disciplines exposing that by integrating these two disciplines we have the opportunity to work with different teaching methods, activities and resources. Klimova (2012) adds that integrating two disciplines provides opportunities to study the content through different perspectives.

In CLIL methodology, students do a lot of collaborative work and Lightbown (2014) claims that this collaborative work gives students opportunities to practice the foreign language in ways that we are not able to see in a teacher-centered activity. In Lightbown's (2014, p. 55) words, "practicing language patterns in decontextualized drills or exercises will not prepare learners to use those language patterns in conversation." Lightbown (2014) affirms that some of the most common language features that are present in our daily lives are not worked in content-based lessons. Furthermore, she believe that the cooperative activities thy students do in their CLIL lessons engages them use these more

common language features that appear in real life situations, and thus, it multiply opportunities for students to use language meaningfully. Finally, Roadshow & Hafenstein (2008) expose that CLIL methodology gives the students the opportunity to experiment and take risks with the language, while they improve their speaking skills.

A summary of all the advantages of the CLIL approach is presented below:

- Students learn the foreign language though the content related to a topic, if the topic is interesting for them they may feel motivated to learn.
- Language is used to achieve their real purposes.
- CLIL provides them more confidence in both the language and the subject being taught.
- Teachers can learn about the topic while the students do it as well.
- All children can take advantage from CLIL methodology.
- CLIL gives more exposure to the language and more immersion time.
- Students learn the foreign language in the same way as native speakers do, thus they acquire the language unconsciously and naturally.
- Students do not think about studying a foreign language and they focus on the content. For this reason, they do not feel stressed or anxious about the language barriers.
- Children learn to think in different languages.
- In CLIL lessons we can work with different teaching methods, activities and resources.
- Students do collaborative work so they practice the most common language patterns and features of the real daily life conversations.
- In CLIL sessions they use the language meaningfully because they are in different real communication situations.
- They have the opportunity to experiment and take risks with the language.

4. Disadvantages of CLIL

Despite all the advantages that we have seen in the previous point, researchers have also found some negative aspects of CLIL methodology.

A negative characteristic that CLIL presents is related to the fact that the teachers have to teach the subject in a foreign language and children have to understand it in order to success in their studies. According to Maza (2013), if a CLIL lesson is not well prepared and implemented, it can cause some difficulties for the students in order to understand the subject and acquire the new language. Klimova (2012), claims that it might be difficult to carry on with those CLIL sessions where the children present a low knowledge of the language.

As Relations (2012) pointed out, one of the things that English language teachers often consider to be a disadvantage is the lack knowledge of the subject that they have to work with CLIL methodology. In addition, Klimova (2012) agrees that language teachers might find it difficult to teach other subjects. Furthermore, Maza (2013) exposes that the minimal knowledge of the foreign language that other teachers present can be a problem too when they have to collaborate in CLIL sessions with the English teachers.

Another aspect that seems to be a problem in that methodology is the one that Klimova (2012) presents as the lack of suitable learning materials for CLIL sessions. Furthermore, Šulistová (2013) points out the high level of time consuming that the preparation of this material presents. Maza (2013) believes that this extra time consuming can overload teachers. They would need to personalize them to suit their learner's needs.

Another main concern is assessment. As Oller (2012) claims, it is difficult to assess oral language. In order to do it, we have to listen to each child and we usually do not have the sufficient quantity of time.

Related with the role of the teachers, Maza (2013) thinks about the possibility that most of them do not have enough information about the methodology and this could cause the lack of motivation to use this approach.

A summary of all the disadvantages of the CLIL approach is presented below:

- If a CLIL lesson is not well prepared or implemented, it can cause some difficulties for the students in order to understand the subjects and acquire the new language, especially when the students present a low level in the knowledge of the foreign language.
- Language teachers might find it difficult to teach another subject, or the other teachers may present a low level of English in order to collaborate in CLIL sessions with the English teacher.
- Because the lack of suitable CLIL learning materials, teachers have to spend a lot of time designing and personalizing their materials.
- It is difficult to assess oral language.
- Most of the teachers do not have enough information about CLIL and it can cause a lack of motivation to use this approach.

5.   What is necessary to make CLIL successful?

In the previous section, the possible disadvantages of this approach were exposed according to some experts. This section presents the necessary tools to make a CLIL session successful by dividing it into effective strategies and quality materials:

5.1.   Strategies

One of the most important strategies in implementing CLIL is the <u>use of functional language</u>, such as: asking for necessities, asking for help, asking for opinions, etc. Thus, we have to create these communicative situations and make sure that all the children participate in them (Oller, 2012).

Another useful strategy is <u>language repetition and recycling</u>. It is important to find different strategies, different times and different contexts where the use and repetition of language is meaningful for the children. Through the repetitions, children acquire the language, and it is for this reason that teaching English through routines can be a good strategy (Corcoll & Flores, 2011).

<u>Creating meaningful learning contexts</u> and <u>promoting global learning</u> is really important too. And it is for this reason that teaching though routines seems to be the most effective way to develop CLIL with very young learners. We use the language in their daily life situations and furthermore, we can go outside the classroom and create the opportunity to live new experiences (Corcoll & Flores, 2011). As Meyer (2010) says, in early stages we should focus on global problems mankind faces while connecting with the daily lives and interest of the children. He also adds that it is really important to create these meaningful contexts where students can link new input to previous knowledge and experiences

Another relevant strategy is <u>integrating children's oral production</u>. We have to try to change the learning contexts in order to bring more possibilities of interactions with children. We have to know about children's interest and adapt to them by searching for new motivational situations for them (Corcoll & Flores,

2011). In addition, related to the interests of the children, Meyer (2010) adds that creating connections with student's experiences and knowledge is crucial for their improvement. He also believes that it is important to focus on the input that students can understand, help them express their thoughts, and give them positive feedback to feel proud of their progress instead feeling insecure and anxious.

Rephrasing and recasting is a good strategy to correct the oral mistakes from the children. Rephrasing is based on providing the word or words in English that the child wanted to express correctly, while in recasting, the child has said something in his/her L1 and the teacher repeats it in English. We can correct these words in Catalan that children say in class but, especially with the very young learners, they will use their L1 really often (Corcoll & Flores, 2011).

Another strategy that most children use is codeswitching and the use of their L1. They expose that in O'CLILS children will use their L1s and the teacher has to accept it because the children will start using codeswitching. In codeswitching, children are developing their own interlanguage, that shows that there are acquiring the foreign language in the same way that they have acquired their L1, but they mix both languages. Letting the children use their L1 at the beginning and do their codeswitching is a good strategy in order to let them express themselves (Corcoll & Flores, 2011).

Using visual aids is a really important strategy in order to give comprehensible input to the children. Visual support in the class is necessary to give comprehensible input. We can use flashcards, photographs or toys, however real objects, or "realia", are probably the ones that interest children the most. Talking about the realia, we can think about the sand in the playground or a mirror in the bathroom as examples of it. Related to the comprehensible input too, modelling is another good strategy to use in order to support the linguistic messages (Corcoll & Flores, 2011).

Another strategy that is known to be helpful for teaching a new language is scaffolding. Cameron (2001), following Brunner, exposes that in experiments with American mothers and children, parents who scaffolded tasks effectively for children did the following:

- They made the children interested in the task;
- They simplified task, often by breaking it down into smaller steps;
- They kept the child on track towards completing the task by reminding the child of what the goal was;
- They pointed out what was important to do or showed the child other ways of doing parts of the tasks;
- They controlled the child's frustration during the task;
- They demonstrated an idealised version of the task.

He adds that "good scaffolding was turned to the needs of the child and adjusted as the child became more competent. Scaffolding has been transferred to the classroom and teacher-pupil talk". (Cameron, 2001, p. 9)

Oller (2012) also exposes that in order to help students to create language, they need to have some language support that can work as scaffolding. We can retire this support little by little depending on the progress that each student presents. Some examples of that language support are symbols or drawings, language posters or plasticized cards on the tables. Meyer (2010) also points out that students need scaffolding in order to deal with the language input and improve day by day.

Finally, Nunan (2011) talks about <u>motivation</u> as a key strategy to make a CLIL session successful. He presents four concepts to considerate in order to work on the motivation of the children:

1. Clear objectives: there is proof to say that if we are told exactly what is expected from us, we will be more successful in achieving those goals.
2. Use of familiar contexts: selecting topics that create situations which the learners can identify with promotes new neural connections in the brain. These connections improve learning and enhance motivation.
3. The steps of the learning process: One way of teaching is building up a series of skills to aid in the learning of a topic. For instance, providing relevant vocabulary before a reading or listening lesson or making use of visual cues in a conversation to help learners understand it faster.
4. Importance of each individual: the content of a lesson becomes more attractive to learners when they can give their own contribution to it by

expressing their ideas, feelings or opinions in relation to the topic exposed in that lesson.

5.2. Materials

There have been some researchers such as Klimova (2012), Maza (2013) and Šulistová (2013) who have pointed out the lack of suitable materials for CLIL lessons and the high level of time consumption for material preparation.

Quoting Navés and Muñoz (1999), Navés (2011) exposed how important it is to have materials available for CLIL teachers and how the majority of them have to prepare them themselves while the creation of materials is highly complex and time consuming.

Gondovà, (2015) argued that CLIL teachers need to select CLIL materials from some resources, adapt them in order to fit with the needs of their students, or they even have to design and create. For this reason, these become important competences that CLIL teachers have to deal with. However, Generalitat Valenciana (2016) points out that this supposes an opportunity to personalize the materials for each particular case.

In order to design and select these CLIL materials, Mehisto (2012) has exposed the characteristics that quality learning materials for CLIL lessons have to present to help students to build their learning skills:

- He points out that it is important that learning materials help students to understand their role in the family, other groupings and in society in general in order to help them act appropriately in those contexts.
- These materials have to encourage students to treat others with respect, and promote a responsible behavior.
- Furthermore, it has to make students feel more secure while experimenting with language, content, and the management of their own learning.

- They have to help students create relational links between intended learning, students' lives, the community, and various school subjects.
- They have to help students understand how the learning process is and its usefulness applied in and outside of school.
- Quality learning materials have to build the motivation on children to solve problems and learn.
- These materials have to guide students to use them or other resources for learning.
- Quality learning materials have to promote critical and creative thought, discussion and learner autonomy.

Generalitat Valenciana (2016, p. 2) summarizes these characteristics by presenting a list of ten criteria for CLIL-specific learning materials:

1. "Making the learning intentions (language, content, learning skills) & process visible.
2. Systematically fostering academic language proficiency
3. Fostering learning skills development and learner autonomy
4. Including self, peer and other types of formative assessment
5. Helping create a safe learning environment
6. Fostering cooperative learning
7. Seeking ways of incorporating authentic language and authentic language use
8. Fostering critical thinking
9. Fostering cognitive fluency through scaffolding of a) content, b) language, c) learning skills development.
10. Helping to make learning meaningful."

Considering all these requirements that quality CLIL materials have to present, Generalitat Valenciana (2016), points out some examples of these materials claiming that those real objects, instruments and manipulatives can reach all learning styles to include spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. In addition, children learn best from first-hand experience, when they explore things around them.

However, videos, songs, picture flashcards, Power Point presentations with demonstrations, pictures… are quality materials for CLIL too.

In sum, after collecting all the information about the methodology, we can see how CLIL methodology is used around the world in order to learn English as a foreign language. Linguists view English as a core skill due to the social changes and the globalization. For this reason, schools are using CLIL approach to teach the language in the most similar way as the native people do. In CLIL, students can focus on interesting topics for them while their use the language as a vehicle to learn. Thus, children use the language for their real purposes, they use it in meaningful contexts and they see its importance. Focusing on early years, we see how English can be used in their daily routines so they see the use of the language in meaningful contexts and situations, they listen to the most common language features and they can acquire the language naturally I the same wat native speakers do. They repeat the same situations or similar situations almost every day, for this reason, they can connect the language with the actions or objects, and they can start using the language by imitating the verbal productions of their peers or teachers.

We can realize that CLIL methodology seems to have more advantages than disadvantages. Furthermore, there are a lot of interesting strategies to make a CLIL session successful. We have to make sure that we promote the use of functional language by creating meaningful contexts and situations, we have to adapt our sessions depending on the interests of the children and try to increase their motivation. Moreover, visual aids, repetition and modeling are really important strategies in order to give comprehensible output for the children. And finally, one of the most important strategies is scaffolding in order to give them some kind of language support.

The creation of quality materials is crucial for the success of a CLIL session too. However, there is a lack of suitable CLIL materials and teachers have to design and prepare their own materials. We can find some specific characteristics that CLIL materials have to present and it can be time consuming and difficult for teachers to create in their own.

6. Study

6.1. Research questions

The first part of my project focused on the theoretical framework. After defining CLIL, how this approach was lived in early years (O'CLILS), as well as seeing the advantages and disadvantages that this methodology presents and considering the best strategies and materials to use in order to make a CLIL lesson successful, this second section of the project focuses on my research.

In my study, I wanted to know the reality of the schools in Osona about their way of teaching English, if they teach lessons in infant education, and why they use or do not use CLIL methodology. Osona is an area (*comarca)* in central Catalonia (Spain), and its capital is Vic. A *comarca* is a group of municipalities, approximately equivalent to a UK *district*, and its population is about 154,599 people. First of all, in order to get the information, I asked myself the following three research questions:

1. Do schools in Osona teach English in infant education?
2. Do teachers in Osona use CLIL methodology to teach English in infant education?
3. What are the reasons why schools in Osona do or do not implement CLIL methodology in infant education?

Additionally, I tried to give an answer for each question before starting my research in order to set my hypothesis:

1. Most of the schools in Osona do not teach English in infant education.
2. Most of the teachers in Osona prefer other methodologies to teach English rather than using a CLIL approach.
3. Most of the schools in Osona think that CLIL methodology will not work in their schools or believe that they do not have enough time to prepare the materials, plan the activities, etc.

My hypothesis were based on my own experience learning English at school when I was younger and my experiences in visiting some schools as a university student. I thought that, although English is an important language to learn in order to prepare children for a better future, most of the schools do not teach English in infant education, or they spend very little time teaching it. Furthermore, I thought that in most of the schools, teachers use methodologies to teach English where children are not able to see the use of the foreign language, or they do not learn the most common language features that are really useful in the daily life. Moreover, I thought that the main reason for not using CLIL methodology that teachers have is the lack of information or preparation.

6.2. Methodology

6.2.1. Data collection method

In order to carry out my study, I decided to design a questionnaire addressed to the English teachers from the different schools of Osona.

A questionnaire is a tool that consists of a set of questions used to collect information from individuals. You can complete the questionnaires by telephone, sending them by post, doing face-to-face interviews, giving handouts, sending them by e-mail, through a webpage, etc. Questionnaires are useful when you need to collect data from many people, know about people's knowledge and beliefs. Moreover, they are an efficient tool to protect the privacy of the participants because the responses can be anonymous or confidential.

The questionnaire that I designed with "Google Forms" to carry out my study was created in order to find the answers to my research questions and see how CLIL methodology is seen by the English teachers. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) consisted of 13 questions. The first four

questions focused on knowing some characteristics about the respondents like the date of birth, how many years of experience they have in teaching English, their native language and their level of English. In this way, I could know about some facts that can influence their teaching methods. The next 4 questions focused on their English teaching at the school. Finally, 5 questions were asked to determine how CLIL methodology has been implemented, or not, in English teaching.

I tried to design a questionnaire which was easy and quick to answer for the English teachers, while there were giving me the appropriate information that I needed for my study. For this reason, I tried to focus on the really relevant information that I wanted to collect. I presented questions which the teachers had to answer by choosing one or multiple options that were presented to them. Examples of these questions were "In what grade do you teach English?", "How many years of experience do you have in teaching English?", "What methodology do you usually use in your English sessions?" etc. However, to achieve a more detailed answer, I asked the respondents to explain briefly the methodology or methodologies that were used their English sessions.

6.2.2. Participants

The participants of my study were the English teachers from the different schools in Osona. I decided to carry out the study with the schools from my area because doing the research with a higher amount of participants is beyond the scope of this study.

I searched the schools that can be found in Osona and obtained their contact details from their websites. Unfortunately, I was unable to find all the e-mails, so my tutor helped me to collect the missing contacts information by visiting the website of the Department of Education of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

When I had all the emails, I sent the questionnaire to all of the schools introducing meself and the aim of the email that I was sending to them. I explained briefly the topic of my project and I asked them if they could give the questionnaire to the English teacher of the school in order to respond the questions.

I gave them approximately a week to respond to it. The total number of the schools in Osona that teach infant and primary education is 69 schools. I sent the mail to each school and only 25 of them answered the questionnaire so I sent another mail to the schools to remind them that they were still able to answer the questionnaire if they had not done it yet.

Finally, I received 39 answers to the questionnaire. Thus, one English teacher from each of these 39 schools took part in the study. These teachers were born between 1958 and 1991. Only a few of them have 5 years or less than 5 years of experience in teaching English, 7,7% of them have been teaching English for 5 to 10 years. Finally, the remaining 79,5% of the teachers have more than ten years of experience in teaching English. Almost all participants (94,9%) have Catalan as their native language and 7,7% have Spanish. Moreover, approximately 85% considered having a high level of English, while others have a general degree and are specialized in teaching English in school levels.

6.3. Results and discussion

Before analyzing the results, I have to say that not everybody has answered all of the questions so for this reason the data may be incomplete.

Focusing on the responses of the questions based on the teaching methods of the participants, I can say they teach English in primary education, and approximately 38% of them teach English in infant education (Figure 1). Out of 38%, all of them teach English in P5, approximately, 62% also teach in P4, and only about 30% of them teach English in P3 (Figure 2).

Most of them teach 45 minutes per week in P3 for each P3 group. On P4 lessons, approximately, 33,33% of the schools teach 1 hour of English per week, another 55,55% of them teach 45 minutes per week, and finally 11,11% of them teach 30 minutes of English per week. Focusing on P5, approximately 28,57% of the schools teach English during 120 minutes per week, 14,28% dedicate 90 minutes per week to the English subject, 21,42% spend 60 minutes per week teaching the subject, 28,57% of the schools spend 45 minutes per week, and finally 7,14% of them dedicate 30 minutes per week in teaching English to children from P5.
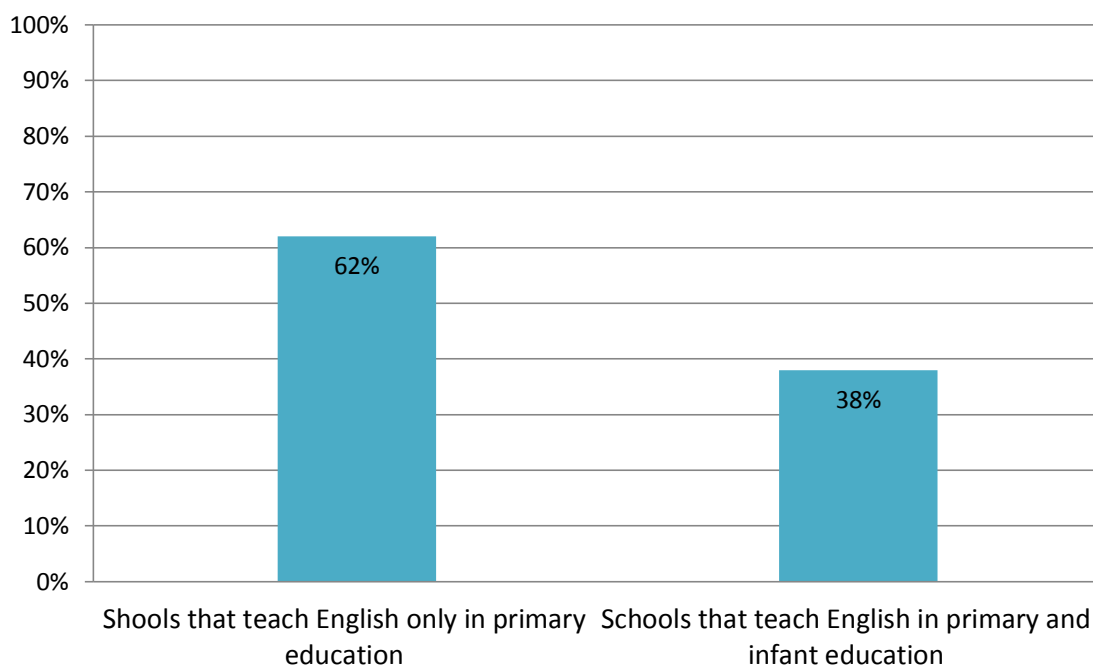

Figure 1: Percentage of schools that teach English in infant education and the ones that teach English only in primary education.
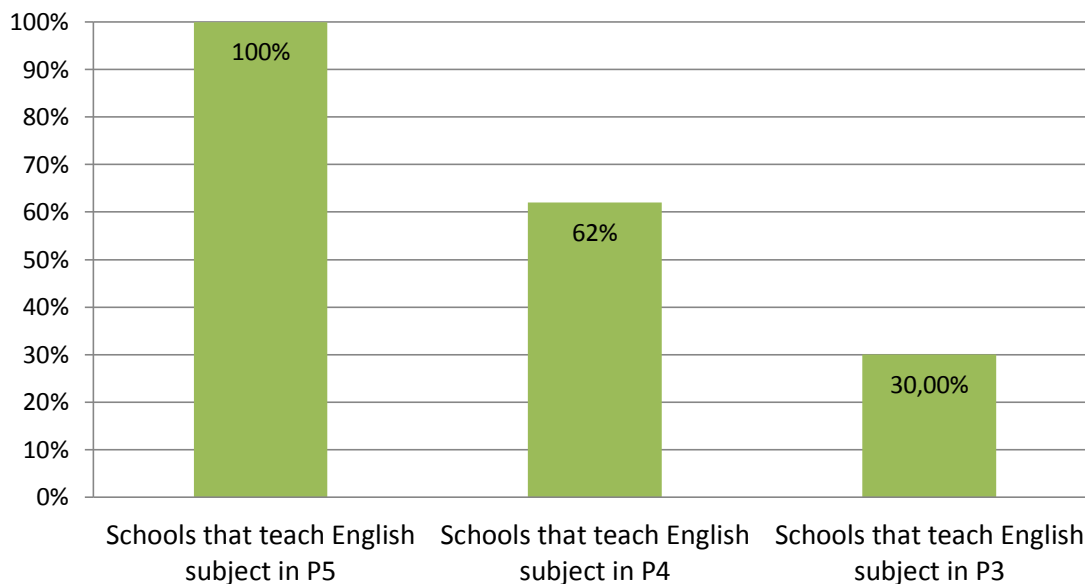
Figure 2: Percentage of the schools that teach English in P3, the ones that teach it in P4 and the ones that teach it in P5.

By observing the results, I can say that most of the schools in Osona do not teach English in infant education. Moreover, if they do, they spend little time teaching the foreign language and most of them only teach it in P5.

In relation to the methodology that they usually use in their English lessons, I gave them the possibility to choose between: storytelling, songs, games, TPR, following a book, or "another methodology". The results showed that 22,2% of them recognized that they follow a book in order to plan the English sessions, 2,8% of them usually use games to teach English, 2,8% use storytelling, and finally 72,2% of them manifested that they usually use another methodology (Figure 3).

The next question that they had to response was: "Explain briefly the methodology or methodologies that you use in your English sessions." In this way, I could get a more detailed answer. The summary of all the responses is that most of them use songs, videos, rhymes, games and story books. Some of

them also claim that they also use TPR activities, theatre plays, murals, and interactive digital boards. The majority of them tries to combine different methodologies to work with and related them to a topic. An example of one of the answers is: "I try to use as many methodologies as possible taking into account the multi intelligences". Furthermore, the majority of those who follow a book to prepare their English sessions also confirm that they try to work with other methodologies too. Some examples of these responses were: "I combine book lessons with games, role plays, songs and TPR", "We use a book but we also do projects, songs, theatre, murals, English day, games...", "We follow a book as a support but we also do different projects". Two of the teachers explained that they teach the English subject through symbolic play corners where the children can listen to the language and use it in a context very similar to a real one. Moreover, they use most of the methodologies mentioned above combined with the playing sessions. Some teachers said that they try to match the activities with real life situations to create meaningful contexts. Others pointed out that they only speak in English during the sessions, others affirmed working with CLIL methodology, making students work in pairs or groups, or doing psychomotricity in English.
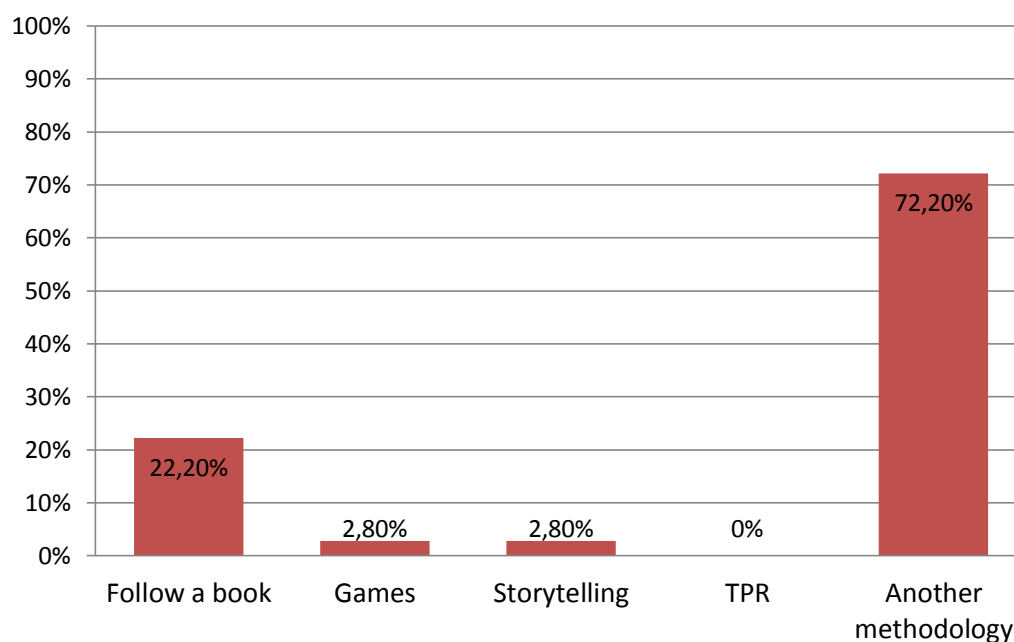

Figure 3: The methodologies that the participants usually use in their English sessions.

By observing their responses, I can say that the majority of the teachers try to use as mny methodologies as they can. They usually use videos, games, story books or songs, for example. Furthermore, others claim that they use CLIL methodology or try to use the English in meaningful contexts.

After this set of questions, I presented them five questions focusing on the CLIL approach. In the first one they only had to answer if they used CLIL methodology saying "yes" or "no". In total, 72,5% of them answered that they use CLIL methodology, while 27,5 % did not (Figure 4).

The following question was made for the ones who use the methodology. I asked them: "If you answered yes, why do you use it?" I gave them five possibilities to choose: "Children learn and use the language in a real context." "Children acquire the language unconsciously and naturally." "CLIL provides more exposure to the language." "We can work on two subjects at the same time." "Students learn the language through the content. If the content is interesting and relevant to them, they may be more motivated to learn English." The teacher's responses show that 40% of the teachers chose the first option, so the results show that the reason why more teachers use the methodology is because they believe that children learn and use the language in a real context. The second most common answer was "Students learn the language through the content. If the content is interesting and relevant to them, they may be more motivated to learn English", 23,3% of the teachers chose this option. The third most marked option was "Children acquire the language unconsciously and naturally". 13,3% of the teachers chose the option: "CLIL provides more exposure to language." And finally, the remainder 3,3% of the teachers said that they use the methodology because "We can work on two subjects at the same time" (Figure 5).
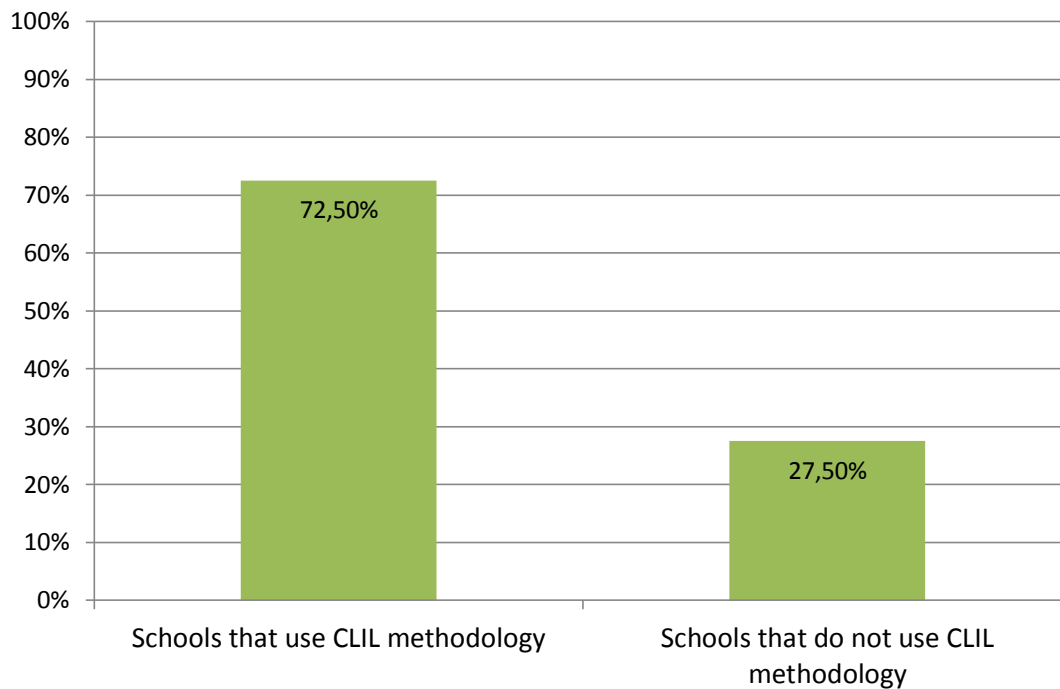
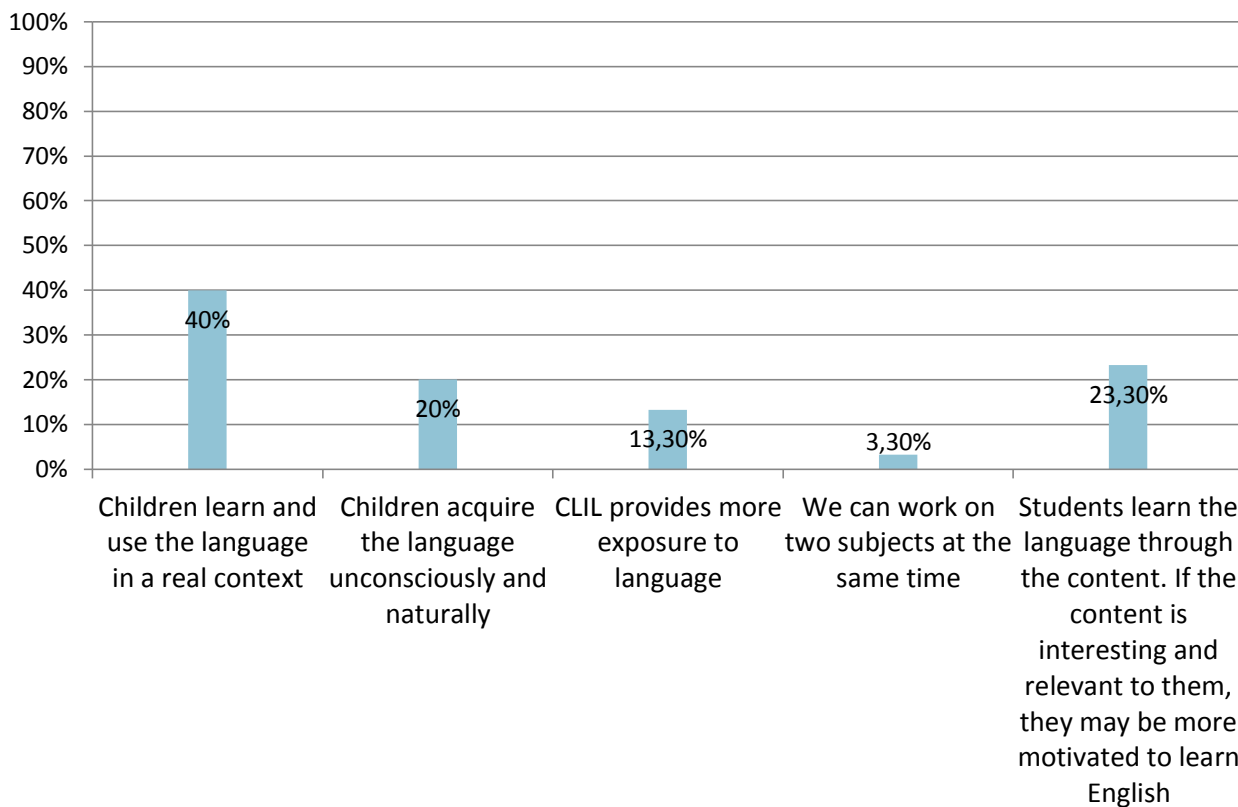**Figure 4**: Use of CLIL methodology of the participants.

Figure 5: Reasons for using CLIL provided by the participants.

By observing the responses, I can say that the majority of the teachers use CLIL methodology and the main reasons for using it is because children can learn and use the language in a real context, and they feel motivated to learn if the content is interesting for them. I believe that it is important to motivate the children in order to create a successful lesson. For this reason, I think that teachers choses this option because they can work the children's interests using CLIL methodology and they are achieving good results in their sessions.

I presented another question for the teachers who mentioned not using CLIL methodology: "If you answered no, why don't you use it?" As in the previous question, I gave them some possible responses to choose: "I prefer other techniques", "I do not have time to prepare the sessions", "I would have to create most of the materials to do it", "It will not work in my class because there are a lot of different levels", "It would be too difficult to do it with my group", "I have a lack of knowledge on this technique", "I have never considered this possibility". By analysing the results obtained, I can see that 25% of the teachers prefer other techniques. 25% of the educators think that CLIL methodology would not work in their classes because of the different levels that children present. 12,5% of the teachers do not use the approach because they would have to create most of the materials to do it. 12,5% of them think that it would be too difficult to do with my group. 12,5% of them confirmed having a lack of knowledge on this technique. And finally, 12,5% of the teachers have never considered utilizing CLIL methodology. None of the teachers have marked the possibility of not having enough time to prepare the sessions (Figure 6).
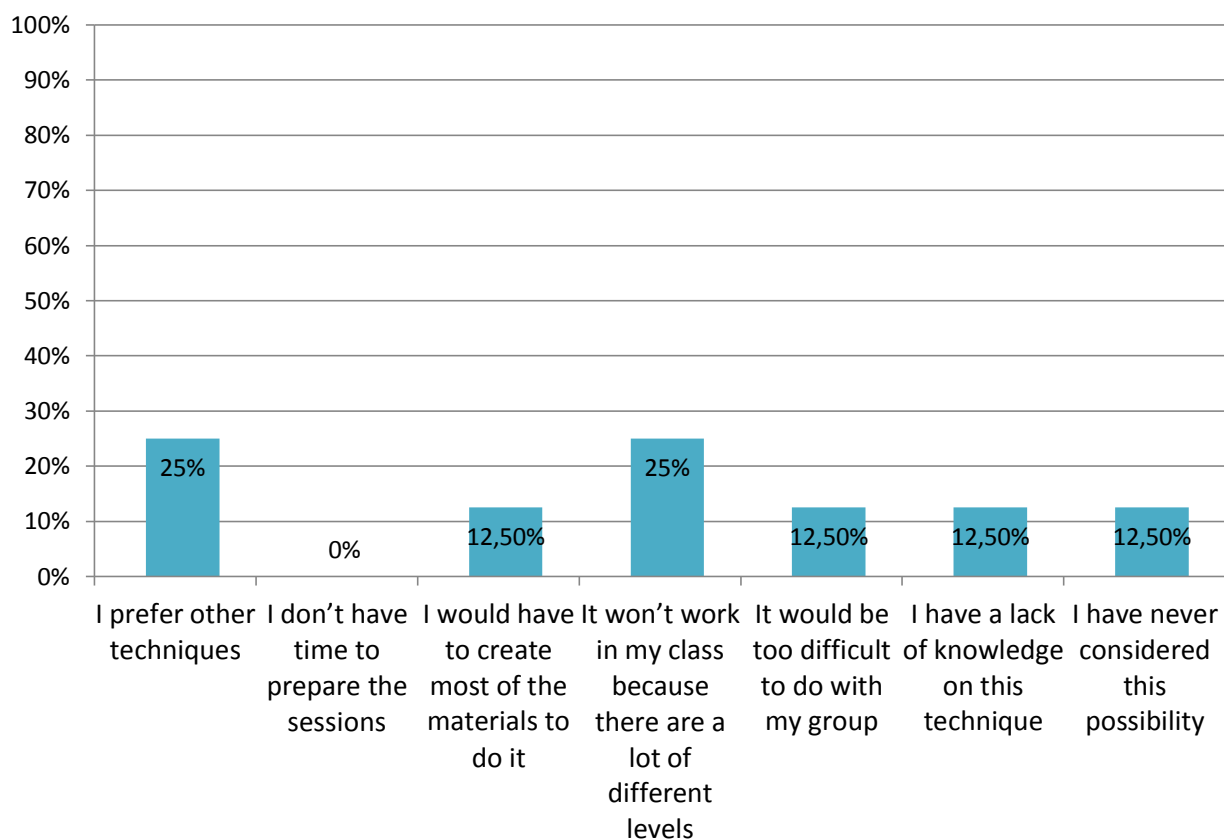
Figure 6: Reasons for not using CLIL provided by the participants.

In order to get a more detailed response, I asked them two more questions: "What advantages do you think CLIL methodology presents?" and "What disadvantages do you think CLIL methodology presents?" These were both open questions in which teachers had to give a brief answer. After reading all the explanations, I can give a summary of them:

Focusing on the advantages, the main four advantages that the participants of the questionnaire describe were that CLIL methodology increases the motivation of the children to learn, the fact that they get more exposure to the language, children use the language in different contexts, and also in real contexts. Some examples of the responses are:

- "It is language used in a real context, they need the language to learn the contents and they need to learn the contents to use the language. It's usually motivating".

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- "Children are exposed to the real language a higher amount of time".
- "More time of language exposure, the language is used to learn the content and it is more contextualized".
- "They learn the language through interesting contents".
- "They learn the language using it".
- "CLIL give real language use to children, I mean a real purpose to use it".

Some of them also pointed out that CLIL promotes communication and helps children learn to express their knowledge in English. Others claimed that CLIL improve their listening and speaking skills, they learn the language without focusing on it, and they get more confident and fluent. Some examples of these responses are:

- "It helps to get fluency and security".
- "They get fluency and improve their listening and speaking".
- "It is the best way for children to acquire a language without focusing on the language itself. English learning becomes wider and more natural".
- "It enhances communication and enriches language".

Furthermore, two of the participants mentioned other advantages of the methodology: "So CLIL methodology develops all key competences and scaffolding helps diversity", "It is fun for teachers to prepare it and gives you, as a teacher, something different to deal with apart from the pure language content that you have to give in each level".

Finally, the last question focused on the disadvantages and the results of the questionnaire showed that eight of the participants could not find any disadvantage to that methodology, while the others pointed out some of the possible ones. The main two disadvantages that most of the teachers found were: the hard work and time that it takes to prepare the materials and the sessions, and the lack of teachers in the school with a suitable level of English and well prepared/trained to teach the methodology. Some of the examples of these responses of the teachers were:
- "Sometimes there aren't enough teachers with a suitable English level".
- "Not enough prepared teachers".
- "We aren't enough English teachers in the school".

- "It needs a lot of material, and time to prepare".
- "It is very hard to prepare the activities".

The other disadvantage that some of the teachers mentioned is the difficulty that applying CLIL methodology supposes for the schools. Some of the answers of the participants were: "The difficulties for the schools to organize it", "Sometimes, schools are not ready for it. Before implementing CLIL you need to "convince" the rest of your mates for different reasons. Sometimes parents do not see the importance and are afraid of their children to lose contents"

Another disadvantage was also related to the difficulty of learning content through a foreign language. Some of the teachers believe that contents are learned more slowly or even the possibility of causing children's frustration. Some examples of these types of responses were: "Sometimes it is difficult for the pupils to get motivated if they don't understand the language. They can become frustrated", "The subject takes more time to be acquired", "Content-learning sometimes could be more difficult". Furthermore, a pair of the teachers pointed out to the difficulty to deal with the different levels and characteristics of the children while using CLIL: "The different levels of the students", "Special needs pupils have problems to follow". Finally, one of the teachers exposed that he/she tries to apply CLIL methodology and motivate children to speak all the time in English but they end up talking in Catalan all the time.

By observing these final responses, I can say that the main reason for not using CLIL methodology is because the teachers think that this approach will not be successful in their group of children because of the different levels that they present. Moreover, the lack of preparation and suitable materials are the other important reasons for not using the approach. Teachers think that the majority of them are not well prepared to use CLIL methodology or they are not able to spend so much time preparing the sessions and materials. Thus, I think that the lack of information about this approach, is the main problem of not using this methodology.

7. Conclusions

It is said that the best way to learn a language is through immersion, using the language for a real purpose, in different and real contexts. Furthermore, some experts believe that the acquisition of a language is easier when we are young. We can find a large amount of teaching techniques focused on teaching a foreign language; however, CLIL methodology seems to be the most similar to immersion.

The aim of this study was to get more information about the CLIL approach: how it is used in early years, the advantages and disadvantages and what is necessary to make a CLIL lesson successful. For this reason, in my theoretical framework I exposed the information that I collected from different resources and experts, and I can draw a conclusion about CLIL methodology: this approach is not new but nowadays its use is increasing due to the need to learn English as a core skill. English has had a huge global impact in the world; it has become the language of Internet and interactional business. Thus, knowing English increases your chances of going to study abroad or having more chances to find a good job if you can look for it in other countries. CLIL methodology gives the opportunity to the learners to get more exposure to the language and use it in a real context using meaningful language and situations in which they can improve their speaking and listening skills in order to communicate their thoughts. They understand the importance of that language using it as a "vehicle" to learn content from another subject. Focusing on early stages, CLIL also seems to work perfectly with the children as they use it in routines that they repeat each day and thus it gets familiar to them. In the routines, they understand the language of the teacher while they see him/her doing the actions, they imitate the actions and the words, and finally they make a connection between the language and the actions.

Although CLIL methodology presents benefits, it has some disadvantages too. The main concern is the lack of suitable materials designed for this methodology. Most of the teachers have to create or search for them and it is time consuming because qualitative materials have to foster cooperative

learning, the autonomy of children, make the learning meaningful, etc. in order to achieve good results in a CLIL lesson.

In the study that I designed for the project, I asked myself three research questions to investigate the reality of the schools in Osona about English learning and CLIL methodology. The questions that I asked myself were: 1) "Do schools in Osona teach English in infant education?", 2) "Do teachers in Osona use CLIL methodology to teach English in infant education?", and 3) "What are the reasons why schools in Osona do not implement CLIL methodology in infant education?" Furthermore, I tried to give an answer for each question before starting my research in order to set my hypothesis: 1) "Most of the schools in Osona do not teach English in infant education", 2) "Most of the teachers in Osona prefer other methodologies to teach English rather than using CLIL approach", and 3) "Most of the schools in Osona think that CLIL methodology will not work in their schools or believe that they do not have enough time to prepare the materials, plan the activities…" After collecting all the information, I could see how my vision of the English subject in Osona and especially CLIL methodology was similar to the results obtained.

A total of 39 schools (out of the 69 schools from Osona) participated in the study. Analyzing the results of all their answers of the questionnaire, I can observe that the majority of them confirmed having a high level of English, and having around 10 or more than 10 years of experience in teaching English. As I expected, only 38% of the teachers teach English lessons in infant education and most of this 38% teach English in P5. Furthermore, children of infant education spend very little time in the English sessions, especially in P3 and P4. These results about the reality of our schools suggest that although our society is conscious about how important learning English is as a tool to improve our future, the schools are not devoting enough time and effort in it at early stages, when children could start getting used to the foreign language in a natural way.

Focusing on CLIL methodology, 72,5% of the teachers affirmed that they use or sometimes use the methodology. The other ones usually work with songs, games, storytelling or they follow a book. By observing this data, we can say that at least more than half of them have tried the CLIL approach in order to

teach English. The main reasons that they present in favor of CLIL are related to their belief that children learn the language in a real context and they feel motivated if the content is interesting for them. Regarding the other group of teachers who claimed that they do not use the methodology, they confirmed preferring other methodologies to teach English. The other main reasons that they presented for not using CLIL were the lack of knowledge and preparation to give CLIL lessons, the lack of English teachers in the school, and that they thought it would not work with their groups of children and their different English levels. Considering these responses, I conclude that although the majority of the teachers have around 10 or more than 10 years of experience in teaching English in the schools and have a high level of English, many of them do not feel prepared to give CLIL lessons or they do not have enough English teachers at the school I believe that teachers' opinions could have been influenced by the lack of training opportunities for them to know more about the methodology. We can realize it by observing some of their responses claiming that the methodology would not fit in their groups of children because of the different levels that they present. However in my theoretical framework I exposed that some specialists present this methodology as a good one work different skills and, in this way, work with different abilities.

Finally, despite all the data collected, the number of the participants is relatively small. Thus, we can only have an overall analysis of the reality of the schools about the English teaching and CLIL methodology in Osona. Moreover, not all the participants answered all the questions and in some cases it was difficult to interpret their responses. Another more detailed study about the English teaching and CLIL methodology around the country would be really interesting.

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9. Appendix: Questionnaire

Benvolguts,

Sóc l'Iris Salvans, estudiant d'Educació Infantil a la Universitat de Vic. Actualment estic cursant l'últim any de carrera i realitzant el meu Treball Final de Grau que tracta sobre l'ensenyament de la llengua anglesa a partir de la metodologia CLIL.

Per tal de poder realitzar la part pràctica del treball, us faig arribar aquest correu a la majoria d'escoles d'Osona per demanar-vos si podríeu participar en el qüestionari que us adjunto a continuació. Les vostres respostes m'ajudarien en la investigació sobre l'ensenyament de la llengua anglesa en les escoles de la comarca.

Per aquesta raó, us agrairia que féssiu arribar el qüestionari al/la mestre/a d'anglès del vostre centre. El qüestionari és totalment anònim i consta de preguntes senzilles i ràpides de respondre. Us agrairia que el responguéssiu abans del dia 14 d'abril.

Moltes gràcies per la vostra ajuda.

Cordialment,

Iris Salvans

My name is Iris Salvans and I am sending this questionnaire to most of the schools in Osona in order to carry out my study about CLIL methodology for the "Treball final de grau" at the University of Vic. Below you will find a short questionnaire and it is totally anonymous. I would appreciate if you could answer it before April, 14. It will take you about five minutes to complete it.

Please, answer the following questions:

1. Year of birth

   Text d'una resposta breu

2. How many years of experience do you have in teaching English?

   ☐ 0 to 2 years

   ☐ 2 to 5 years

   ☐ 5 to 10 years

   ☐ More than 10 years

3. What is your native language?

   ☐ Catalan

   ☐ Spanish

   ☐ English

   ☐ Altres...

4. What is your level of English or what English certificate do you have?

Text d'una resposta breu

5. In what grade do you teach English?

○ P3

○ P4

○ P5

○ Primary education

6. If you teach English in infant education (3 to 6 years old), how many hours per week do you teach it?

Text d'una resposta breu

7. What methodology do you usually use in your English sessions?

○ Storytelling

○ Songs

○ Games

○ TPR

○ I follow a book

○ Altres...

8. Explain briefly the methodology or methodologies that you use in your English sessions.

Text d'una resposta breu

9. Do you use CLIL methodology?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. If you answered yes, why do you use it?

○ Children learn and use the language in a real context

○ Children acquire the language unconsciously and naturally

○ CLIL provides more exposure to language

○ We can work on two subjects at the same time

○ Students learn the language through the content. If the content is interesting and relevant to them, they may be more motivated to learn English

11. If you answered no, why don't you use it?

○ I prefer other techniques

○ I don't have time to prepare the sessions

○ I would have to create most of the materials to do it

○ It won't work in my class because there are a lot of different levels

○ It would be too difficult to do with my group

○ I have a lack of knowledge on this technique

○ I have never considered this possibility

12. What advantages do you think CLIL methodology presents?

Text d'una resposta breu

13. What disadvantages do you think CLIL methodology presents?

Text d'una resposta breu