



**Universidad Internacional de La Rioja**  
**Facultad de Educación**

**Trabajo fin de máster**

**Integration of CLIL**  
**Fundamentals and Principles**  
**in the Initial Cycle at San**  
**Bonifacio de las Lanzas School**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation analyzes the integration of CLIL fundamentals and principles in the Initial Cycle at San Bonifacio de las Lanzas School in Ibagué, Tolima. This study provides a better understanding of effective bilingual education at preschool and primary school level. Even though, CLIL is not one of the mainstream approaches in the National Bilingual Programme, its fundamentals and principles are crucial for understanding pedagogical aspects of bilingual education in this research project. This study was carried taking into account theoretical aspects from the 4 Cs Framework described by Coyle (2006), who explains the integration of language and learning, in terms of content, communication, cognition, and culture. Other important theoretical aspects were taken from the core features of CLIL proposed by Mehisto, et al. (2008), who presented six different elements that are essential in CLIL: multiple foci, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding and co-operation. The results of this research study, obtained through the triangulation of data from surveys and interviews, and the analysis of two lesson plans, let us describe the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers, their evidence in teaching practices, and the participants' reactions and opinions towards bilingual education. These findings offer enough information about the CLIL fundamentals and principles that are immersed in the teachers' lessons plans and teaching practices. Thus, the teachers had some common ideas in relation to the way they develop the CLIL 4 Cs and core features in their classes; additionally, the research participants recognizes some benefits and challenges of bilingual education.

**Keywords:** CLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning, bilingual education, 4 Cs framework, and CLIL core features.

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will first find the description and justification of the research problem we are concerned in this dissertation. Then, a brief analysis of the state-of-the-art is presented, in which some relevant authors from the literature review are highlighted in this sub-section; the research aims are shown afterwards. Finally, the chapters, or how the dissertation is structured and organized, are introduced in the methodology.

## 1.1 Justification

The Colombian government is carrying out a program called “Colombia Bilingüe” which aims to improve student proficiency level of English by the end of 2019. According to the Ministry of Education, only 1% of 11th graders from public schools achieve pre-intermediate level B1 based on the CEFR. Subsequently, “Colombia Bilingüe” was designed because of the learners’ low level of English when finishing high school. Nevertheless, some English teachers think that this program does not fulfill the needs of the school in relation to foreign language learning and teaching, and consequently the students will not be able to get the level of English expected by the government. In contrast to this situation, we have the case of different bilingual schools which are recognized as some of the best schools in the country. Corporación Colegio San Bonifacio de las Lanzas, as other bilingual schools in Colombia, has been developing a pedagogical model for fostering effective content and language learning; these attempts to successful bilingual education have produced the expected results, as most of their students are able to get very good scores in the ICFES exam (Colombian general exam for 11<sup>th</sup> grade) and EILTS test.

CLIL is an approach to learning that stands out for its benefits in education. For that reason, it is relevant to carry out a study in order to analyze the impact that CLIL has on San Bonifacio de las Lanzas School, especially in the first school years. The results from this study play an important role for the improvement of English teachers’ practices, offering information about the way schools can handle a project that aims to develop of content subjects through English. Conducting this research project will allow me, as an in-service bilingual teacher, to have a comprehensive understanding of the CLIL fundamentals and principles, drawing conclusions and

implications that will help me in the development of my classes. In addition, this study can be useful for other in-service and pre-service bilingual or English teachers, who will find some ideas that could help them to develop and support their teaching methodologies. Finally, the results of this project can be useful for some school administrators who need to understand how the implementation of CLIL can contribute to the improvement of language and content their schools, and, consequently, support teachers with the development strategies aiming to integrate a foreign language and content in their classes.

This study intends to analyze the integration of CLIL in a Colombian School, by answering the following research question: How are CLIL Fundamentals and Principles integrated in the Initial Cycle at San Bonifacio de las Lanzas School?

## **1.2 Brief analysis of the state-of-the-art**

The theoretical framework for this research was mainly built on the basis of the fundamentals and principles of CLIL and Bilingual Education.

CLIL is the acronym for Content and Language Integrated Learning. This is an approach to teaching whose main focus is the development of students' content knowledge and language skills (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010) in a process in which content is taught through a foreign language Eurydice (2006). Therefore, CLIL is considered as challenging, motivating and authentic (Marsh, 2002).

There are two forms of CLIL (Bentley 2010). The first one is the soft form of CLIL, where the learning objective is totally focused on the language; the second form is the hard form of CLIL whose learning objective is mainly focused on the content taught through a foreign language.

The 4Cs Framework (Coyle, 2006) aims to explain the integration of learning in CLIL, considering four aspects as essential in any CLIL programme: content, cognition, communication and culture. These elements are part of the CLIL fundamentals.

The CLIL principles are also presented in the core features of CLIL ((Mehisto et al., 2008), which contain six different aspects that are essential to foster effective bilingual education. Those features are: multiple focus, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding and co-operation.

As CLIL is an approach to support bilingual education, it is important to understand the term “bilingual education” which involves the use of two languages in educational programs, and refers to the forms of provision for bilingual learners (Martin-Jones, 2007).

Certainly, we can relate CLIL to bilingual education, but not bilingual education as exclusive to CLIL because bilingual education is used in a variety of complex contexts classified in transitional programs, maintenance programs and enrichment programs (Baker, 1997).

In Colombia, there have been many attempts to foster bilingual education since it was established in The Colombian General Law of Education (1994) that students should be able to comprehend and express themselves in a foreign language. The biggest attempts have been developed through the National Bilingual Programme launched in 2004, which seeks to improve students’ English proficiency level by the end of 2019; however, its results have not been as expected (British Council, 2015).

### **1.3 Aims**

The general aim of this master’s dissertation is to analyze the integration of CLIL fundamentals and principles in the Initial Cycle at San Bonifacio de las Lanzas School.

Apart from this, the specific aims derived from the general one are:

- To describe the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers.
- To analyze evidence of CLIL fundamentals and principles in teaching practices.
- To identify the teacher’s reactions and opinions towards bilingual education.

### **1.4. Methodology**

To achieve the previous aims, this dissertation has been divided into chapters. In the next chapter, a literature review focused on CLIL and basic aspects of Bilingual Education is presented. The third chapter describes the type of research design, the research context and participants, and the data collection instruments of this study. The results and analysis are shown in the fourth chapter, in which the collected data is analyzed in order to answer the research questions of this study. Then, the fifth

chapter offers a discussion based on the results in relation to some findings from other authors and previous studies. Subsequently, some conclusions will be drawn in chapter six. And finally, the future lines and limitations are shared in the seventh chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study is mainly focused on CLIL and basic aspects of Bilingual Education. Regarding the first construct, this section will review the definition of CLIL, forms of CLIL, its main fundamentals and principles contained in the 4 Cs framework, as well as in the core features of CLIL. In regard to the second construct, the definition of Bilingual Education, its main characteristics, and attempts to Bilingual Education in Colombia will be analyzed. Finally, four previous research studies about CLIL will be discussed, highlighting methodological aspects and findings that will guide the development of the present project.

### **2.1. CLIL**

This section refers to four main aspects around the concept of CLIL: definition, forms, 4 Cs competences, and principles and features.

#### **2.1.1. Definition of CLIL**

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning, and, as its name indicates, it seeks the development of content and language in the teaching and learning process. In that way, Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010, p. 1) consider CLIL as “dual-focused educational approach” because content and language is taught and learned through the use of an additional language; therefore, language and content are interwoven in such a way that the focus is not only on one of this aspect but on both. More than a teaching method, CLIL must be defined as an approach to teaching, whose principles and elements aim to develop and improve student content knowledge and language skills.

Marsh (2002), who coined the term CLIL, says that this approach takes place when a foreign language is used to teach subjects, keeping dual-focused aims in relation to the learning of content and language. In CLIL, the target language is used as vehicle to build content knowledge; however, the development of the foreign language is not taken for granted, CLIL teachers have to find a balance between content and language. For this reason, Eurydice (2006) states that it is necessary to develop a special approach to teaching in order to achieve the twofold aim of CLIL, so that subjects are taught *with* and *through* a foreign language, but not *in* a foreign language.

Certainly, CLIL is a complex and challenging approach because it implies the use of the most suitable strategies to support both aspects, language and content; however, its benefits have been well recognized worldwide, as Marsh (2002) says: “it can be more challenging, but at the same time more motivating and authentic for students and teachers” (p. 72). In other words, CLIL is an opportunity to teach and learn content and language with real and contextualized purposes.

### **2.1.2. Forms of CLIL**

Even though CLIL is a recent approach, the integration of content and language in the school is not something new for this world; one example of language education in the past is the study and teaching of Latin in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As time passes, people have developed different forms, methods or approaches to teaching content and language, which makes it normal to relate CLIL to other immersion programs or approaches. These confusions can emerge especially when comparing CLIL to similar approaches such as Content Based Language Instruction (CBLI/CBI) in which teachers develop language, content, cognitive and study skills through the use of classroom materials, activities, tasks, and other resources from academic content areas (Crandall, 1994).

CLIL shares some characteristics with most of immersion models. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2009) explain 5 principles that CLIL has in common with immersion programmes:

- The final objective: to have proficient students in both languages (L1 and L2) and academic content knowledge.
- The language role: students learn a new language in a process similar to L1 acquisition.
- Parent beliefs: parents think it is the best L2 learning option.
- Teacher language: teachers must be bilingual.
- The communicative approach: effective communication is developed through a real learning environment with significant situations.

As it was mentioned before, it is usual to find the terms CLIL and immersion very similar, because they are commonly used to refer to any kind of teaching in which an additional language is used to develop content (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2009); consequently, they identify some key differences with immersion programmes:

- The language of instruction: in CLIL, it is not a language spoken locally.
- Teachers: in CLIL, native speaker teachers are not usual.
- Starting age: late immersion in CLIL
- Teaching materials: abridged materials in CLIL.
- Language objective: in CLIL, L2 proficiency is not similar to that of a native speaker.
- Immigrant students: immersion programmes are commonly offered to immigrant students.
- Research: CLIL programmes are emerging and experimental.

Having these differences and similarities between CLIL and other approaches or immersion programs in mind, it is important to mention the two forms of CLIL, which are defined depending on their main focus or objective; these forms are known as soft CLIL and hard CLIL. “[S]oft CLIL, which refers to contexts where topics from the curriculum are taught as part of a language course, and hard CLIL, in which almost half the curriculum is taught in the target language” (Bentley 2010, p. 6). We can say that in the soft version of CLIL, the teaching and learning objective is mainly focused on language, so some topics or contents are taught in foreign language classes; but in the hard version of CLIL, the teaching and learning objective is focused on subject contents so some of the content subjects are taught through a foreign language. For this study, we will be analyzing the principles and fundamentals of the hard version of CLIL.

### **2.1.3. The 4 Cs of CLIL**

Coyle (2006) set the 4Cs Framework which aims to explain the integration of learning, in terms of content and cognition, and language, in relation to communication and culture.

The 4Cs Framework suggests that it is through progression in knowledge, skills and understanding of the content, engagement in associated cognitive processing, interaction in the communicative context, developing appropriate language knowledge and skills as well as acquiring a deepening intercultural awareness through the positioning of self and ‘otherness’, that effective CLIL takes place. From this perspective, CLIL involves learning to

use language appropriately whilst using language to learn effectively. (Coyle 2006, p. 6).

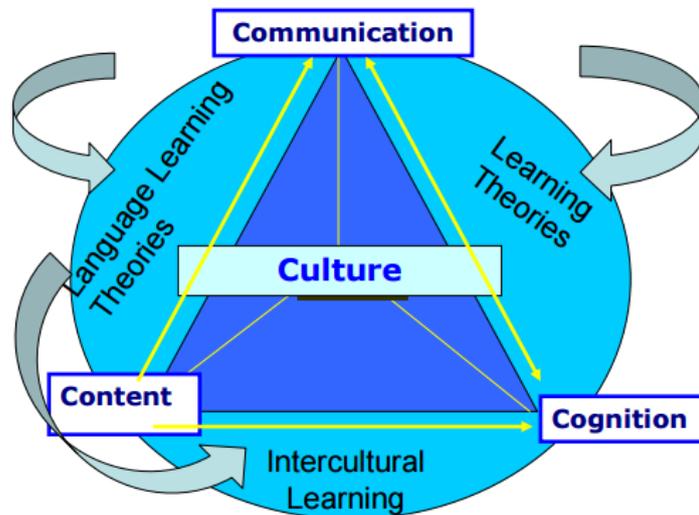


Figure 1. The 4Cs Conceptual Framework. (Coyle, 2011)

Among those commonalities, the CLIL approach integrates elements of content, communication, cognition and culture. The 4Cs Framework (figure 1) is the core of CLIL fundamentals, in such a way that a successful CLIL lesson or class should combine those 4 elements.

#### 2.1.3.1. Content

Content is part of the dual focus of CLIL, as it was mentioned before, the additional language is the vehicle to develop content knowledge. Coyle (2005) highlights the importance of content in learning, she says: “At the heart of the learning process lies successful content or thematic learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding” (p. 5). Certainly, content refers to concepts, facts, themes, vocabulary, and even to subjects; however, it cannot be considered in isolation or just as the acquisition of knowledge, skills or understanding, but as part of a process of cognitive development and intercultural understanding, (Coyle, 2015) in which the learners are able to create their own knowledge and understanding as well as developing learning skills.

#### 2.1.3.2. Communication

Communication is another key aspect of CLIL. In this approach, “language is used to learn, to communicate and to externalize and internalize understanding” (Coyle,

2015, p. 90). In that way, communication has to do with the additional language that is used to construct knowledge through interaction in the learning context; therefore, the language is considered as a learning and communication tool, as Coyle (2005) comments, *learning to use language* and *using language to learn* is a clear formula to understand the concept of communication in CLIL.

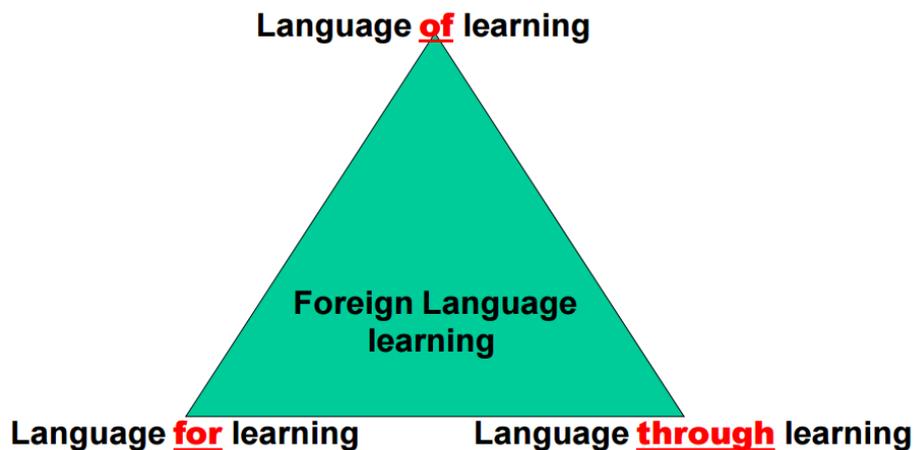


Figure 2. The Language Triptych. (Coyle, Hood, Marsh, 2010)

When describing communication in CLIL, it is essential to pay attention to the three dimensions of language displayed in the language triptych (figure 2). The divisions in this triptych show the ways language is needed and used in any CLIL lesson. Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) explain these three dimensions of language in communication:

- Language *of* learning: it refers to the content specific language in the form of vocabulary, lexis, phrases, expressions and sentences structures that are necessary to learn specific content knowledge in a CLIL lesson.
- Language *for* learning: it has to do with the use of the target language focusing on learning content. The language needed for performing effectively in a learning environment.
- Language *through* learning: it takes place when the learners use the language in order to support and enriching learning when applying what they have already learned, so the students access new language for themselves.

BICS and CALP are two terms proposed by Cummins (1980/2001) (as cited in Lin, 2016, p.11) in order to describe how language varies in different contexts. The first one, BICS, stands for Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and is highly related

to the *language for learning* in the triptych, as it has to do with the language we commonly use through conversations or interactions in our life. The other one, CALP, means Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency and is related to the *language of learning*, which corresponds to the language we use in order to understand or express ideas on academic topics.

### 2.1.3.3. Cognition

Cognition has an essential role in the twofold aim of this student-centered approach. This fundamental corresponds to the cognitive level of the learning in CLIL, which is based on the constructivist idea of knowledge. Therefore, based on a social constructivist perspective, Coyle (2015) explains that “deep learning involves social settings where learners are enabled to articulate their learning before internalizing their own interpretation of these concepts on an individual basis.” (p. 90); in that way, cognition in CLIL refers to the development of students’ learning, thinking, critical and creative skills, in such a way that they are able to construct their own knowledge, while gradually enhancing their cognitive skills in a meaningful learning process.

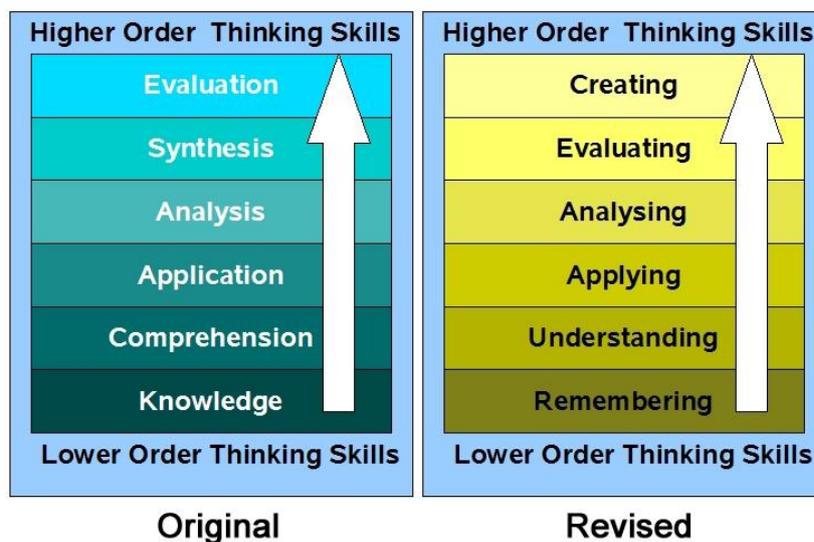


Figure 3. Bloom’s Taxonomy Revised for 21st Century Learning (Anderson, 2001)

A common reference to illustrate the cognitive process in CLIL, is the Bloom’s Taxonomy (figure 3) revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). They establish two different levels of learning development when classifying the learning skills. The Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) shows the thinking skills from the first stages of the cognitive progress corresponding to remembering, understanding and applying;

however, the target is to develop learners' Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) which make the students to perform at a higher thinking process that includes skills from analyzing, evaluating and creating, so they are able to reach a deeper level of learning.

#### *2.1.3.4. Culture*

The last element to analyze from the 4Cs framework is *culture*. This aspect is essential, as it is the link among the other elements (content, communication and cognition); culture sets the context for learning in CLIL. This element is commonly referred as Citizenship and Community and may differ depending on the country or school. Part of the aims of this fundamental is to develop plurilingual competence in learners which includes fostering pluricultural awareness so the students can be able to work, learn and communicate successfully in diverse contexts. Culture cannot be taken in isolation in CLIL, as its role is crucial in a context-related and culturally mediated learning (Coyle, 2015). In that way, the students will be able to develop awareness of their own society and other societies while acquiring personal values.

#### **2.1.4. Core Features of CLIL**

Apart from the elements contained in the 4Cs Framework, there are some other fundamentals and principles immersed in the CLIL approach. Those principles are identified and presented in the core features of CLIL proposed by Mehisto et al. (2008), who list the following as the core features of CLIL:

- **Multiple focus:** refers to the way learning is organized through cross-curricular themes and projects, so language learning is supported in content classes, as well as the content learning is supported in language classes. In addition, a CLIL programme integrates several subjects and supports reflection on the learning process.
- **Safe and enriching learning environment:** has to do with the different strategies that teachers can use in order to increase student's confidence to experiment with language and content.
- **Authenticity:** normally occurs when CLIL teachers include aspects from students' lives and interests. Learning is also authentic when using real and current materials from the media, so the learners are able to connect with other speakers of the target language.

- **Active learning:** taking into account that CLIL is a student-centered approach, students must be encouraged to have an active role in their learning process. Active learning can be evidenced when the students are the ones who communicate more in the classroom; they contribute to setting learning outcomes and monitoring their own learning process. In this way, teachers act as facilitators by supporting student's content and language learning and favoring peer co-operative work.
- **Scaffolding:** refers to diverse strategies that teachers use in order to help each student when fostering creative and critical thinking, so the students are challenged to take another step forward in their learning process.
- **Co-operation:** occurs in a process of planning that involves CLIL and non-CLIL teachers, parents and the local community.

The previous core features of CLIL play an important role in this study as they will be used to guide the process of data collection and analysis.

## **2.2. Bilingual Education**

This section refers to three main aspects around the concept of Bilingual Education: definition, classification and bilingual education in Colombia.

### **2.2.1. Definition of Bilingual Education**

In order to characterize bilingual education, some definitions of bilingualism will be revised; however, it is important to take into account that there is no standard or widely accepted definition of bilingualism (Grosjean, 1982). The following are some interpretations of this concept from different perspectives.

A commonly definition of bilingualism is the one expressed by Mackey (1970) who considers "bilingualism as the alternate use of two or more languages by the same individual" (p. 555). Similarly, Weinreich (1968) states that "the practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the person involved, bilingual." (p. 1). This general view let behind some factors such as proficiency or functions, which have been commonly used as a criterion when defining bilingualism in terms of categories such as ideal vs partial bilingual (Romaine, 1995). In that way, we can find a maximalist view such as the description given by Bloomfield (1933) in which bilingualism is seen as the native-like control of two or

more languages; opposite to that, Diebold (1964) uses the term ‘incipient bilingualism’ to characterizing the initial use of two languages, so people with minimal competence on L2 are considered as a bilingual. As we can see, bilingualism is a term that can be constructed from different perspectives depending on specific contexts.

Based on a general definition of bilingualism, we are going to describe the term “bilingual education”. Doubtless this term involves two languages in educational programs; in that way, Pifer (1979) (as cited in Grosjean, 1982) says that “this term refers to programs that employ a child’s native tongue as a medium of instruction while he or she is being helped to learn English.” (p.68), that is in the case of the United States where English is the majority language and “child’s native tongue” refers to a minority language. As we can see bilingual education also may vary depending on the context and language purposes, we will see it in deep in the next subsection; therefore, a country where English is the second or foreign language may have a different interpretation of what bilingual education is. In respect to this issue, Martin-Jones (2007) uses “the term ‘bilingual education’ to refer to all forms of provision for bilingual learners, including minimal forms of support for learning in and through two languages.” (p. 164), this idea is pertinent to this study as bilingual education involves more aspects than just the presence of two languages in instructional settings.

### **2.2.2. Classification of Bilingual Education**

Having in mind that the term of bilingual education is used in a huge variety of complex contexts, it is necessary to describe different types of bilingual education in order to recognize the multiple forms of education in bilingualism.

Baker (1997) offers a clear classification of diverse educational programs; initially, he distinguishes three aims fostered in different educational contexts: *transitional*, *maintenance* and *enrichment*. The transitional programs attempt to change student’s L2 into L1; the maintenance programs aim to preserve minority language and culture for the speaker; and the enrichment programs attempt to foster L1 and L2 so the speaker is proficient both languages.

Table 1

*Classification of Bilingual Programs (modified from Baker, 1997)*

<b>FORMS OF EDUCATION FOR BILINGUALISM</b>	
<b>WEAK FORMS</b>	SUBMERSION (structured immersion)
	SUBMERSION with Withdrawal Classes
	SEGREGATIONIST
	TRANSITIONAL
	MAINSTREAM with Foreign Language Teaching
	SEPARATIST
<b>STRONG FORMS</b>	IMMERSION
	MAINTENANCE / HERITAGE LANGUAGE
	TWO-WAY DUAL LANGUAGE
	BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN MAJORITY LANGUAGES

Considering those aims, Baker (1997) classifies the bilingual programs in two great categories which correspond to the weak and strong forms of education for bilingualism (table 1). On the one hand, the weak forms correspond to those types of education that aims to foster monolingualism or limited bilingualism, and on the other hand, the strong forms attempt to achieve bilingualism and biliteracy aims.

### **2.2.3. Bilingual Education in Colombia**

The importance of bilingualism has been increasing recent years, so Colombians perceive foreign language learning, in the case of English in the Colombian context, as crucial for gaining access to the modern world; consequently, The Colombian General Law of Education (1994) established that some of the objectives for students who finish high school are related to the comprehension and the capacity of expressing themselves in a foreign language, and acquisition of elements of conversation and reading as well. In that way, the Ministry of Education (MEN) has been making efforts to foster certain levels of proficiency at the different educative stages.

The National Bilingual Programme, developed by the government in Colombia, was launched in 2004, aiming to improve students' English proficiency level by the end of 2019. In order to support the aims of this programme, the Ministry of National

Education has carried out diverse strategies to improve EFL teaching and learning; some guidelines for assessing English as a foreign language were established in a document called *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés* (MEN, 2006). These guidelines contain key aspects in relation to the concept of bilingualism in Colombia and some reasons supporting the importance of English in the Colombian context. It also presents some fundamentals for these standards such as the gradual development of the target language in 5 stages: 1st - 3rd grade, 4th - 5th grade, 6th - 7th grade, 8th - 9th grade, and 10th - 11th grade, the use of the CEFR as a basis for determining the levels of performance, and descriptions of the communicative competences immersed in this model.

As it was mentioned before, the Colombian government guidelines proposed a set of gradual standards to achieve the expected language proficiency level, throughout primary and secondary education, in connection to the goals from the National Bilingual Programme that aims to get the B1 level (CEFR) by the end of eleventh grade. Unfortunately, the results have not been as expected; according to a study carried out by the British Council (2015) the goals for this programme are overambitious and not coherent to the reality of this country; the SABER PRO results show that 31.5 per cent of secondary students were below A1, 35.8 per cent were at an A1 level, and just one per cent were at the expected level.

### **2.3. Previous Studies**

This section refers to four previous research studies about aspects related to CLIL and Bilingual Education. Two of these research studies are national, and the other two are international studies.

The first study I will refer to is national and has to do with teachers' attitudes, perceptions and experiences in CLIL. McDougald (2015) developed a survey-based research with population dispersed throughout Colombia in more than 15 major cities. The objective of this study was to explore attitudes, perceptions and experiences in CLIL. He found that many teachers had positive experiences teaching language and content; however, a significant number of them were lacking in content knowledge. Also, the majority of the participants recognized the benefits of the CLIL approach and the need of doing more research on the CLIL approach in the Colombian context.

The second study was also conducted in Colombia, and it refers to Foreign Language Education. In this research, Ramirez (2015) interviewed teachers of a public school of the Colombian Escuela Nueva. The results showed different perceptions about role and importance of English among students, teachers and administrators; also that there were some misinterpretations of the information about the teaching of a foreign language published in the General Law of Education; and some participants thought that the national bilingual program is beneficial whereas others considered it arbitrary.

The third study is international and conducted in a Latin American country. The objective of this study was to provide data to push CLIL implementation in Chile. In this study, Pueblas and Perez (2012) found that that none of the language teaching models followed by the institutions can be exportable as the perfect methodology; also, they explained that teachers are aware of the improvements they have to foster and mentioned that this approach makes the students generally feel comfortable using the English language.

The fourth and last research project analyzed in this section was conducted in Spain in order to study the implementation of CLIL in a primary-education school in Spain. Blasco (2011) mainly focused this study on the effects of CLIL on L2 English learners' oral production skills. She reflects on the way CLIL learners outperform non-CLIL learners of the same ages not only in fluency, but also in syntactic complexity.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

This section will refer, first, to the type of research design, paradigm and approach used for conducting this study; secondly, a brief description of the research context and participants will be included; and finally, the data collection instruments used for the achievement of the objectives of this study will be described.

### **3.1. Type of Research**

This study will be carried out through a qualitative paradigm with a synthetic approach. According to Creswell (1998) the qualitative paradigm "is an inquiry process of understanding [...] a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducted the study in natural setting." (p. 15). This study will be conducted through a qualitative paradigm because it involves the use of some data collection instruments in order to describe and analyze evidence of CLIL fundamentals and principles in the teachers' teaching practices, as well as their reactions and opinions towards this integration.

### **3.2. Research Context and Participants**

San Bonifacio de las Lanzas School (SBL) is a private school located in Ibagué, Colombia. This is a bilingual school divided into four educational cycles covering grades from transition to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The initial cycle at SBL School consists of the following grades with their corresponding ages: transition (5 years old), kinder-6 (6 years old), first Grade (7 years old), and second Grade (8 years old). Each grade is divided in two class groups (A and B); each class group has one bilingual teacher and one teaching assistant. In the initial cycle, the bilingual teachers are in charge of planning and developing lessons for content subjects (Math and Science) as well as the foreign language class. Math and Science are taught through English. In all, there are eight bilingual teachers in the initial cycle.

The participants for this study will be the seven bilingual teachers from the initial cycle; I am the eighth bilingual teacher in this cycle, for that reason I will not take part in this study as a participant. During the data collection and analysis each teacher will be labelled with the letter T and a corresponding number from 1 to 7.

### **3.3. Procedures and Data Collection Instruments**

This research project involves the use of a series of data collection instruments applied in order to analyze the integration of CLIL fundamentals and principles in the Initial Cycle at San Bonifacio de las Lanzas School. Concretely, we have used a survey, two lesson plans, and an observation guide, and we have carried out some interviews.

#### **3.3.1. Survey**

One survey (see appendix B) will be applied initially with the total of the selected population. These will be used to explore the teachers' perceptions of the CLIL fundamentals and principles that they consider as essential in the teaching practices and methodology in the initial cycle, and their opinions towards benefits and challenges of bilingual education.

#### **3.3.2. Interviews**

A semi-structured interview (see appendix C) will be carried out individually with each of the seven teachers in order to go in depth in relation to their perceptions of the CLIL fundamentals and principles.

#### **3.3.3. Video recordings**

Two class sessions from each teacher will be recorded: one science class and one math class. These recordings will allow us to analyze evidence of CLIL fundamentals and principles in the teachers' teaching practices.

#### **3.3.4. Lesson plans (Units)**

It is not possible to observe all the classes, because the school year will end soon; however, some lessons plans will be analyzed in order to identify evidence of the way the teachers implement the CLIL fundamentals and principles in their classes. The lesson plans of two units or long-term performances from a focal grade at this cycle will be analyzed.

#### **3.3.5. Observation guide**

An observation guide (see appendix D) will be used in order to focus the class observations or the analysis of the lesson plans; it will be based on the CLIL fundamentals and principles. The video recording will support it.

## **CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

In this chapter, the collected data that answers the research questions of the current study will be described. The results will be presented in the description of the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers, and the analysis of the corresponding evidence in their teaching practices, as well as the teachers' reactions and opinions. This will be done in order to analyze the integration of CLIL fundamentals and principles in a bilingual school.

The first section will refer to the results of the survey that explore the teachers' perceptions of the CLIL fundamentals and principles that they consider as essential in the teaching practices and the analysis of the interviews in order to achieve the first aim by describing those principles identified by the teachers. The second section will show some evidence of how teachers apply the CLIL principles in their teaching practices; this has been done through the analysis of two lesson plans from one grade. Finally, the third section will refer to the teachers' reactions and opinions towards bilingual education, found out in the survey and interviews.

### **4.1. CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers**

Achieving the first aim, which consists of describing the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the participants, was possible through the analysis of the survey and the interviews.

Firstly, the seven teachers, from the initial cycle at this school, completed individually a survey to identify the fundamentals and principles, based on the 4 Cs Framework and the core features of CLIL, which they consider as essential elements in their classes.

#### **4.1.1. CLIL 4 Cs identified by the teachers**

The first construct in order to describe the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers is the 4 Cs framework (Coyle, 2006), obtaining enough data for analyzing each one of the 4 Cs. The results of the survey are represented in the following tables.

Table 2

*CLIL 4 Cs (survey: question number five)*

<b>Which of the following elements are present in your content classes?</b>	
CLIL 4 Cs	Teachers who marked it affirmatively
Content	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7
Communication	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7
Cognition	T1, T3, T5, T6, T7
Culture	T2, T3, T4, T5, T6

The results of the fifth question in the survey (see table 2) show in general terms that all the teachers consider that content and communication are present in their classes; however, a few teachers differ on the presence of cognition and culture in their classes. The table below (table 3) displays the frequency of the use of the 4 Cs of CLIL in their classes.

Table 3

*Frequency of the 4 Cs of CLIL in the classes*

<b>How often do you...</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
Facilitate a continuous growth in content?	T2, T3, T6	T1, T4, T5, T7	-	-	-
Help your students to develop Academic Language Proficiency?	T1, T2, T6	T3, T4, T7	T5	-	-
Help to develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills?	T5, T6	T1, T2, T3, T4, T7	-	-	-
Foster critical and creative thinking?	T3, T6	T1, T2, T5, T7	T3	-	-
Promote cultural awareness and interculturality?	T3, T6	T5	T1, T2, T3, T7	-	-

The teachers' answers on how often they include the 4 Cs of CLIL in their classes are coherent to what they mentioned in the fifth question, so most of them stated that they usually include aspects of content, communication and cognition in their classes; in relation to culture, the majority say that they sometimes develop this element, which is not as frequent as the rest of the 4 Cs.

Through the interview, it was possible to go deeper on the aspects from the 4 Cs of CLIL that the teachers perceive as crucial in their classes and lesson plans. Their answers were categorized and classified in order to create a description of each of the 4 Cs by including the aspects mentioned by the teachers. As the interviews were held in Spanish, it was necessary to translate and paraphrase the teachers' comments. Those answers are organized in the subsequent tables.

Table 4

*Teachers' answers in relation to content*

<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Taken from the national and school curriculum	T7, T6, T5, T4, T2
The learning activities help the students to understand the content / the content influences on the didactics for the class	T7, T6, T3, T2, T1
The students don't need to develop content awareness	T6, T2
Appropriate for the students' development level / grade	T7
Must be related to their corresponding skills	T7
Based on the students' interests	T7
Is an "excuse" for developing learning	T5
Is not the main purpose of the class	T5
Teachers have to search about the content for their classes	T4
Teachers must consider how to assess the content	T3
Contents are interdisciplinary	T2

Regarding *content* (see table 4), the teachers do not have many ideas in common when characterizing this dimension of the 4 Cs of CLIL; however, the teachers complement each other throughout their answers. There are just two characteristics of content that were mentioned by most of the teachers.

The first one common idea regarding the first C of CLIL is that the content must be related to the requirements from the national curriculum and school curriculum;

contents are not chosen randomly, they correspond to standards which are distributed according to the students' development level or grade (T1); this does not mean that all the contents are already set so the teachers do not have to search for something more. Teachers have to constantly do additional research about the content for their lessons (T4) because there are some other factors that influence the content selection such as the students' interests (T7).

The other common characteristic among the teachers is that content highly influences the didactics for the class in such a way that the learning activities help the students to understand the content; therefore, the content is used for developing learning skills (T5, T7), and the teachers have to be able to assess content effectively (T3). Other considerations offered by some of the teachers is that it is not necessary to develop content awareness in children (T2, T6), content should not be the main purpose of the class (T5) and contents should be interdisciplinary (T2).

Table 5

*Teachers' answers in relation to communication*

<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Students interact using L2	T7, T5, T4, T1
Use of different strategies to develop L2 (word banks, routines, feedback)	T7, T6, T3, T1
Specific language or vocabulary for each subject or content	T7, T4, T2
Teacher have to anticipate the required language	T7, T3
It is difficult for students to give opinions using L2	T7
Contexts let students to use the L2 spontaneously	T5
Students are able to give opinions and make arrangements using L2	T5
Enhancement of the language skills	T4
Sometimes it is necessary to use L1	T4
Teachers have to encourage students to interact with their partners using L2	T2
Teachers have to model the use of L2 constantly	T1

In relation to *communication* (see table 5) there are two ideas that were mentioned by most of the teachers.

One of them is that students' interaction using L2 is essential for the classes; therefore, this interaction implies that the teachers encourage their students to use L2 when interacting with their classmates (T2); to do so, it is important that the teacher models the continuous use of English (T1) and sets contexts that let the students use English spontaneously (T5). In addition to that, some teachers have certain considerations regarding the permanent use of English; on the one hand, one teacher considers it difficult for students to give opinions using L2 (T7) and another teacher explains that sometimes it is necessary to use L1 (T4), on the other hand, a teacher says that students are able to give opinions and make arrangements using L2 (T5).

The second idea in common is the use of diverse strategies to develop L2 such as routines, word banks and even a continuous feedback; that is accomplished when the teachers have a clear understanding of the specific language or vocabulary required for the class (T7, T4, T2), so, they are able to anticipate that language (T7, T3) in order to enhance students' language skills (T4).

Table 6

*Teachers' answers in relation to cognition*

<b>COGNITION</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Use of different strategies to foster advanced levels of complexity (thinking routines, questions, situations/dilemma...)	T6, T4, T3, T2, T1
Each intelligence has its corresponding skills (Multiple Intelligences)	T7, T4, T1
Teachers have to offer to the students an environment for reflecting, giving ideas and making arrangements.	T5, T3
Development of competences	T7
Teacher must have clear learning objectives for their classes	T7
Development of thinking skills	T5
To foster metacognition	T3

The third aspect described in this analysis is *cognition* (see table 6). The majority of the teachers indicate that this element is present in their classes through the use of different strategies to foster advanced levels of complexity such as thinking routines, driving questions and situations.

The initial cycle at this school seeks the development of the multiple intelligences in each learner, that is the reason why some of the teachers mentioned that each intelligence has its corresponding skills (T7, T4, T1); this way, teachers have to offer the students an environment for reflecting, giving ideas and making arrangements (T5, T3), in order to develop thinking skills (T5), metacognitive skills (T3) and competences (T7); to do so, the teacher must have clear learning objectives for their classes (T7).

Table 7

*Teachers' answers in relation to culture*

<b>CULTURE</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Real contexts: Interaction in other places and with other people	T7, T5, T4, T2
Students value the diversity when they investigate and know more about their own culture and others' culture	T7, T5, T4, T2
Culture is developed through the projects	T6, T5, T2
Culture is not a main focus in the classes	T3, T1
Language should be considered as a way to interpret the world	T7
Use of means of communication	T7
Learning must be useful for students' everyday life	T7

In relation to *culture* (see table 7) which is the last element from the 4 Cs framework, most of the teachers explained that this aspect takes place in their classes when the students investigate and get more knowledge more about their own culture and other cultures, in such a way that they are able to value diversity.

They also mentioned that one of the best ways to foster such a sense of culture is through the use of real contexts, so the students can interact in other places and with other people, apart from the school. Consequently, a teacher takes into account some other considerations when fostering culture, those are that learning must be useful for students' everyday life, language should be considered as a way to interpret the world and teachers must include diverse means of communication in their classes (T7).

In addition, the use of project work helps to contextualized learning and developed culture in the initial cycle (T6, T5, T2). As mentioned before, in the analysis of the survey (see tables 1 and 2), some teachers consider that culture is not a strong element in their classes, and it is confirmed in the interviews because some participants think that culture is not being developed as one of the main focuses in the classes (T3, T1).

#### 4.1.2. Core features of CLIL identified by the teachers

The second construct in order to describe the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers corresponds to the core features of CLIL (Mehisto et al., 2008), obtaining enough data for analyzing each one of those aspects. The results of the survey are represented in the following tables.

Table 8

*Core features of CLIL included in the classes*

<b>Do you think that the content classes in the initial cycle include elements such as...?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
Multiple focus	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7	-	-
Safe and enriching learning environment	T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T7	-	T5
Authenticity	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7	-	-
Active Learning	T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7	-	T2
Scaffolding	T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7	-	T4
Cooperation	T1, T2, T3, T6, T7	-	T4, T5

The results from the survey (see table 8) show, in general, that most of the teachers think that all the elements from the core features of CLIL are included in their content classes. The low score, between one and two, corresponds to the teachers who are not sure if some of those elements are part of their classes.

The description and analysis of the participants' answers in relation to each one of the core features of CLIL will be presented below. This data was gathered through the interviews held with the seven teachers.

Table 9

*Teachers' answers in relation to multiple focus*

<b>MULTIPLE FOCUS</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Classroom projects to contextualize learning	T7, T4, T3, T2, T1
Connections among subjects	T7, T6, T5, T2, T1
Students solve everyday life situations	T7, T1
Development of multiple intelligences, skills	T7, T5
Students transfer acquired knowledge and skills to other subjects	T5, T3
Strategic planning	T4
Cross curriculum	T2

Table 10

*Teachers' answers in relation to safe and enriching learning environment*

<b>SAFE AND ENRICHING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Teachers must promote values in the classroom (respect...)	T7, T6, T3, T1
Students interact and participate in small groups / spots	T7, T4, T2
Constant feedback on attitudinal and motivational aspects	T7, T6, T1
Enhancing student peer and self-assessment	T7, T5
The classrooms/learning environments and learning materials are designed to foster students' skills	T3, T2
Setting classroom rules and agreements	T7
Making students to take part of the classroom decisions	T6
Use of appropriate strategies for correcting students' errors	T5

In general, the teachers consider that their classes and lesson plans contain a *multiple focus* (see table 9) because there are clear connections among different subjects and learning is contextualized through the use of classroom projects. Thus, the students transfer acquired knowledge and skills from one to another subject in such a way that they are able to solve everyday life situations (T7, T1) and develop their learning skills and multiple intelligences (T7, T5). Some teachers mentioned

other aspects that influence the multiple focuses, those correspond to a strategic planning (T4) or daily meetings in which teachers from a same grade get together to find connection among their subjects, and the cross-curricular approach (T2) that the school has adopted.

The participants have diverse ideas and believe in how to create a *safe and enriching learning environment* for the students (see table 10). What is common among the majority of the teachers is that they must promote values in the classroom such as respect or trust, so the students can feel comfortable participating in class. Also, the teachers consider different strategies in relation to this aspect for instance to give students the opportunity to interact and participate in small groups/learning spots (T7, T4, T2), to offer constant feedback on attitudinal and motivational aspects (T7, T6, T1), to enhance student peer and self-assessment (T7, T5) and to correct student's errors and mistakes in a proper manner. Few teachers considered that setting classroom rules and agreements (T7), and making them to take part of the classroom decisions (T6) are ways to create a safe environment. Finally, the materials and classrooms designed to foster students' skills (T3, T2), support an enriching learning environment.

Table 11

*Teachers' answers in relation to authenticity*

<b>AUTHENTICITY</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Students' interests, needs and likes offer contexts for learning	T7, T6, T2
Use of contextualized and real resources or materials	T4, T3, T1
Transference of knowledge to students' everyday life	T7, T4
Authentic use of L2	T5
Fieldtrips	T5

In relation to authenticity, there is not any answer in common among the majority of the participants (see table 11). However, there are specific ideas shared by some teachers on how to develop an authentic learning in their classes; one of them is that learning must be based on students' interests, needs and likes (T7, T6, T2), and the other idea is that learning is authentic when the materials and resources for the class are contextualized and real (T4, T3, T1). Therefore, the knowledge must be

transferred to students' everyday life (T7, T4) as well as the target language must be used authentically (T5); it means with real purposes or functions. In addition, a teacher considers that fieldtrips are appropriate scenarios for developing authentic learning (T5).

Table 12

*Teachers' answers in relation to active learning*

<b>ACTIVE LEARNING</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Students have an active role and the teacher is facilitator or guide in the classroom	T7, T6, T4, T3, T2
Teachers promote autonomous learning in the classroom	T7, T5, T3, T1
Lesson plans are based on students' interest, needs and likes	T7, T6, T5
Students participate actively and express constantly their ideas	T6, T5, T2
Teachers listen actively to students' ideas and opinions	T7, T2
Enhancing student peer-assessment	T3, T1
Students work to develop a project	T7
Students feel responsible for their own learning	T5

Regarding active learning, most of the teachers agree on two ideas (see table 12). The first one has to do with the teacher's and students' roles, as the participants expressed the students must have an active role while the teacher should be seen as a facilitator or guide in the classroom; the other common idea is that teacher has to promote students' autonomous learning, so the students can feel responsible for their own learning (T5). That way, the teachers mentioned some ways or strategies to foster an active learning in the class, like enhancing students peer-assessment, planning the lessons based on the students' interest, needs and likes (T7, T6, T5), so the student will participate and express their ideas constantly (T6, T5, T2) when working together in order to develop a project (T7); coherently, the teacher must listen attentively to students' ideas and opinions (T7, T2).

Table 13

*Teachers' answers in relation to scaffolding*

<b>SCAFFOLDING</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Use of diverse resources (manipulatives, visual aids, flashcards, word banks, dictionaries...)	T7, T6, T5, T3, T2
Students left the aids when the level of complexity is higher	T7, T5, T4, T3
Teachers should model and give examples	T6, T2
Use of body language	T5, T2
Teachers must know their students' learning styles	T4, T1
Students need some aids at a starting level when learning	T7
Students themselves can be a support for their classmates	T4

Table 14

*Teachers' answers in relation to cooperation*

<b>Cooperation</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Teachers from different subjects working together	T6, T5, T3, T1
Lesson planning is a group process, not individual	T6, T4, T3, T2
Students work cooperatively	T5, T2
There are connections among the subjects so the knowledge is transferred	T5, T1
Impact on the community	T7
Inviting people from the society to the classes	T7

The participants also offered some ideas on how to use scaffolding in content classes (see table 13). Most of them consider it essential to use diverse resources like manipulatives, visual aids, flashcards, word banks, dictionaries and so on; for carrying out a successful scaffolding it is crucial that the teachers know their students' learning styles (T4, T1), for instance a kinesthetic student might find body language (T5, T2) as a benefit for learning easier. Another idea in common, in relation to scaffolding, is that the students must leave the aids when the level of complexity is higher, as this temporary support should be mainly used at a starting

level when learning something (T7). Some other important considerations are that teachers should model and give examples to support learning (T6, T2), and the students themselves can be a support for their classmates (T4).

In relation to cooperation (see table 14), the teachers think that their lessons are developed as a result of a cooperative process because teachers from different subjects work together when planning, so lesson planning must be considered as a group process, but not individual; this is evinced when there are connections among the different subjects in such a way that the knowledge can be transferred from one subject to another one (T5, T1). This level of collaboration is also extended to the students, who are encouraged to work cooperatively (T5, T2), and the people from the society, who are invited to take part in the classes (T7); in this way, learning can have an impact on the community (T7).

## **4.2. Evidence of CLIL fundamentals and principles in teaching practices**

The second aim of this study, which consists of analyzing evidence of CLIL fundamentals and principles in teaching practices, was possible through the interpretation of two lesson plans from a grade at the initial cycle. Initially, it was planned to observe some class sessions, but it was not possible because the school year was over when collecting data for this study.

One grade and one teacher were selected as focal for collecting and analyzing this data. Second grade, which corresponds to the participant-T7 from this study, was selected for this part. There are many reasons for this selection, some of which are that second grade is the last grade at this cycle, one of the second-grade teachers, T7, has more experience working at this school than the other teachers, and I took part in this lesson planning process, in my role of a second-grade teacher.

One of the lesson plans analyzed was part of the Logical Mathematical Intelligence class and the other one belongs to the Naturalistic Intelligence class; the evidence of CLIL fundamental and principles were registered in the observation guides. In the initial cycle from this school, the subjects are named based on the multiple intelligences theory, so we will be referring to Logical Mathematical Intelligence as Math, and Naturalistic intelligence as Science, or vice versa.

#### **4.2.1. Evidence of the 4 Cs of CLIL**

Regarding content, communication, cognition and culture, the evidence taken from the lesson plans show a coherent development of these four aspects in the teaching practices at the initial cycle. This evidence is described and analyzed below.

The first aspect, content, was present in both lesson plans in such a way that the content is clear throughout the classes in the form of knowledge, understanding, or topics that students need to acquire. In the math lesson, we found content such as saving money, math operations, algorithms, repetitive addition, demonstration, math situations with multiple variables, and in the lesson from Science, the contents were about natural resources, 3 Rs of the environment, environmental problems, preservation and protection of the environment. All these contents are developed sequentially during the different stages in the lessons; consequently, all these content knowledge is applied when developing the outcomes for these units.

Another aspect to analyze is communication; this element of CLIL is also evinced in both lessons, which show the way students can interact using L2 while acquiring knowledge. In these content classes the students have the opportunity to participate in talks, round table and class discussions, ask and answer questions, talk to their partners, give opinions, share ideas and conclusions, make plans and arrangements, write and read, explain processes and results, and interact in communicative events. Doubtless, the content classes showed in this lesson plans offer students the possibility to use the target language functionally and spontaneously.

The third element, cognition, was also observed in both subjects. There is clear evidence about the development of learning skills in the lessons, as well as the way they are being fostered in the content classes. In that way, there is a continuous reflection based on driving questions, in some classes, through thinking routines or graphic organizers, the classes also aim to foster students' HOTS, for instance, the students solve more complex math situations, inquire, apply and create strategies to preserve nature, plan, monitor and evaluate a recycling campaign. In addition to that, the students connect and transfer previously acquired knowledge.

The last aspect, culture, was found in both lessons but especially in the one from science. Learning was contextualized through clear connections to students' daily life and community issues. So, in Math, some people's habits in relation to manage and saving money are considered, the students set real purposes for saving and

support a community group by saving money all together. In Science, people from the community are involved in the classes (students, family members, neighbors and citizens), the students are able to understand some of the environmental problems and issues that affect their city, and see how their actions have impact on the community.

#### **4.2.2. Evidence of the core features of CLIL**

The lesson plans from second grade were analyzed based on the core features of CLIL proposed by Mehisto et al. (2008). The descriptors from each one of those characteristics were used as a reference when looking for evidence of CLIL principles in the teaching practices. The findings are analyzed below.

It is important to mention that some characteristics were not evinced in the lessons; it occurred because they are aspects that can be observed in the development of a class more than in a lesson; that is the reason why it was proposed at the beginning of this study to hold some class observation. However, those missing aspects do not affect the results because the vast majority of the items were found in both lessons.

The first feature has to do with the *multiple focus* of a CLIL class. The analysis of the lessons showed that language learning is supported in both classes through the enhancement of the four language skills and vocabulary, and the functional and contextualized use of the target language. In the math lesson, it was possible to observe that the content learning is supported in the foreign language class, as the teacher wrote “performances related to shopping” were developed in foreign language class. In the lesson from Science, it was clearly seen the way how several subjects were integrated because some performances supported knowledge and skills from other subjects such as Logical Mathematical and Emotional Intelligence. Also, a cross-curricular project about “Life and Experience” is established, which fosters contextualized learning in real life situations and student’s everyday life. The cognitive aspect is also evinced in a reflection on the learning process in such a way that the students monitor and evaluate their learning, and foster high order thinking skills.

With regard to the second feature, the teacher follows different strategies to create a *safe and enriching learning environment*. In that way, the teacher uses routine activities such the weekly monitoring of a recycling campaign and a thinking routine (think, share, and peer). Besides that, the teacher builds the students’ confidence to

experiment with language and content by encouraging the children to use the prior knowledge, perform practical actions to put knowledge into practice and make decisions, plans and arrangements. Also, the teacher guides assess to authentic materials and environments when including texts from internet, using and saving real money, inquiring real issues, collecting waste to recycle and help a real recycling company.

With respect to *authenticity*, something that is very clear is the accommodation of student interests; thus, the project itself is based on learner's interests and needs, for instance, in Math, they are allowed to save money for something they want to get, and in science classes, they make decisions on the strategies and actions they prefer to follow. Also, the connection between learning and the students' lives is permanent in both lessons; in Math, the students understand the importance of managing and saving money for their real and daily lives, and in science, they understand how environmental problems affect their lives, and what actions they can perform to preserve the environment. In addition to that, the teacher uses current information from the media when including an article for children about tips for saving money.

Another core feature analyzed has to do with *active learning*. As both lessons are totally student-centered it is evident that students communicate more than the teacher during the classes and the teacher acts as a facilitator when supporting and guiding the students' process, and offering initial instructions without long explanations. Consequently, the students help to set the content, outcomes, and language and learning skills when building their own knowledge by giving opinions constantly, making plans and arrangements on what they are going to do and how, and creating math situations to solve. The students are allowed to evaluate their progress in achieving learning outcomes in different ways. In Math, the children share results from their saving project, by describing the weaknesses and strategies to achieve their goals; additionally, in Science, they monitor weekly the results of their recycling campaign and evaluate the final outcome. In the same way, the teacher promotes peer-assessment and cooperative work so the students can give feedback each other, participate in class discussions, and work together for developing a saving project and a recycling campaign.

The fifth characteristic of CLIL to analyze is *scaffolding*. Regarding this aspect, there is some evidence of the teacher building on students' existing knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests and experience. Some questions from both lesson plans seek prior knowledge and experiences in lot ways, so the students are able to apply

acquired knowledge and skills in a new task. Besides that, in science, the information is repackaging in user-friendly ways so all the information about the 3 Rs of the environment are presented through practical actions such as reusing objects to create piggy bank or a present for a friend, and analyzing the garbage bins at the school; this is connected to how the teacher responds to different learning styles, so the students decide what strategies to apply and set roles in the groups depending on their styles, also there are diverse resources such as texts, realia, graphics, algorithms, kinesthetic activities, bar graphs, talk and charts. Therefore, the teacher fosters critical and thinking skills when enhancing higher order thinking skills such as solving, creating and planning, and giving opinions and reflecting on topics related to the project. Hence, the teacher challenges students to take another step forward when solving more complex math situations with multiple variables and fostering a greater impact on the community each week.

The last core feature of CLIL is *collaboration*, which takes crucial part in these lessons in the way that the ideas for the lesson plan and project emerged from meetings with all the teachers from that grade, including bilingual and non-bilingual teachers, lesson planning is a group process so it is easy to observe connections with other subjects in the lessons. In Science, the family is involved, so the students ask their parents about ways to reduce waste and invite them to participate in the recycling campaign; in the same way, the community take part of the science classes, so the whole school community and people from the students' neighborhoods are invited to take part in the recycling campaign; besides that, the objects and materials collected are given to a recycling company.

### **4.3. The Teachers' reactions and opinions towards bilingual education**

This section gives information in relation to the third specific objective of this study, which aims to identify the teachers' reactions and opinions towards the integration of CLIL fundamentals and principles in their own classes. To do so, we will compare the answers given by the participants in the survey, establishing commonalities among them. This data was analyzed based on two main aspects: benefits and challenges of bilingual education. Their answers are displayed in the tables below.

Table 15

*Teachers' answers in relation the benefits of bilingual education*

<b>Which are the benefits of teaching content through a foreign language?</b>	<b>Teachers who gave these answers</b>
Development of language and communicative skills in real contexts	T7, T5, T3, T2, T1
Students learn new language/vocabulary related to the subjects	T7, T5
Enhancement of learning skills	T6, T1
Students have access to new and different information and resources	T7
Teachers become more strategic and creative when planning	T6
Fostering cooperative learning	T4
Connections with the world and the reality	T1

Table 16

*Teachers' answers in relation the challenges for bilingual teachers*

<b>Which are the challenges for a bilingual content teacher?</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
To empower students to use L2 for different purposes (expressing opinions, interpreting or analyzing information)	T7, T5, T2
To deal with meaning or connotation of academic language in L1 and L2	T7, T4, T2
To plan successful learning activities that motivate students to use L2 spontaneously	T5, T2
To find connections among learning skills, contents, cultural background and the curriculum	T3, T1
To get great results in standardized test	T7
To support students' learning based on their learning styles, likes and preferences	T6
To foster better students' understanding when acquiring knowledge content knowledge and developing thinking skills	T1

The teachers mention different benefits of teaching content through a foreign language. The most popular benefit is that bilingual education offers real contexts for developing students' language and communicative skills; hence, the students have the opportunity to learn and acquire new language or vocabulary related to the subjects (T7, T5). Apart from the language benefits, the students improve their learning skills (T6, T1) while fostering cooperative learning (T4) having access to new and different information and resources (T7) and creating connections with the world and the reality (T1). Besides that, the teachers also receive benefits when teaching content through English, which is to become more strategic and creative when planning in order to have more dynamic classes (T6).

Apart from the benefits, the participants also identified some challenges for any bilingual content teacher (CLIL teacher). The first one is that the teachers have to contribute to empowering the students' use of L2 for different purposes, like expressing opinions, interpreting or analyzing information (T7, T5, T2), because language proficiency can influence on the students' learning process in content classes; that is why the teachers have to deal with meaning or connotation of academic language in L1 and L2 (T7), especially when the students present national standardized tests (T7) which are presented in Spanish. Coherently, a CLIL teacher has to find connections among diverse elements such as learning skills, contents, cultural background and curriculum (T3, T1) in order to foster better students' understanding when acquiring knowledge content knowledge and developing thinking skills (T1). A last challenge is that teachers have to make an extra effort in order to plan successful learning activities that motivate students to use L2 spontaneously (T5, T2), while supporting students' learning based on their learning styles, likes and preferences (T1).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results from the current study offered significant information for understanding pedagogical aspects of bilingual education at preschool and primary school levels. It is important to mention that the bilingual school selected for this research does not follow CLIL as one of its mainstream approaches, and only two teachers out of the seven were familiar with its fundamentals and principles; as McDougald (2015) mentions in his study, most Colombian teachers know little or nothing about this approach. Despite that, CLIL fundamentals and principles were considered as the reference points for this research, because they help us to understand the process of content and language learning and teaching (Marsh, 2002), offering principles to foster students' content knowledge and language skills through a foreign language (Eurydice, 2006).

Considering the 4Cs Framework by Coyle (2006) as the core of CLIL fundamentals, some data in relation to content, communication, cognition and content were collected and analyzed. Most of the teachers identified these aspects as essential for their content classes; in general, they felt they were facilitating a continuous development of content, language, thinking skills and cultural awareness through their classes. Having in mind that effective learning takes place in CLIL, when those four elements are present in the classroom (Coyle, 2006), we can claim that there is evidence of a balanced development of the 4 Cs of CLIL in the lesson plans analyzed. By integrating those fundamentals, this bilingual school is going beyond the goals and strategies that the government has established in order to foster bilingualism in Colombia (MEN, 2005) and even to what other Latin American countries do, such as Chile, where English is mostly taught a separate subject (Pueblas & Perez, 2012).

Subsequently, some principles of CLIL were analyzed, using as a reference point the core features of CLIL proposed by Mehisto et al. (2008). The results showed that the majority of the participants think that they include all the elements from the core features of CLIL in their content classes. In addition, they offered some ideas on how their classes and lesson plans include aspects such as multiple foci, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding and cooperation. Therefore, the lesson plans provided enough information to understand the way the teachers develop each one of those principles. Considering that bilingual education refers to diverse forms of provision and support for learning through two languages (Martin-Jones, 2007), we can say that the core features of

CLIL are not exclusive elements for CLIL schools, but they should be essential aspects of any pedagogical attempt to foster effective bilingual education.

Finally, this research also offered information regarding the teachers' reactions and opinions towards bilingual education. The most common benefit mentioned by the teachers is the development of language and communicative skills in real contexts, so the foreign language is not taught in isolation but is directly connected to the content learning process; these results are coherent to what McDougald (2015) found in his study in which the participants mention that one of the main benefits of the CLIL approach is that learners are able to develop language skills and subject knowledge through a meaningful communication. Apart from the benefits, the participants in the current study also expressed some of the big challenges that bilingual teachers have to face; those challenges were mainly related to pedagogical issues or teaching skills. In contrast, Ramirez (2015) showed in her study that a big challenge for public school teachers has to do with the misinterpretations of the information published by the Ministry of National Education about foreign language teaching in Colombia; however, this is not a challenge for this bilingual school and their teachers who have been building a pedagogical proposal in order to seek effective bilingual education.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In order to analyze the integration of CLIL in the Initial Cycle at a bilingual school, it was essential to describe the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teacher-participants, analyze their corresponding evidence in the teaching practices and identify the teachers' reactions and opinions towards bilingual education. In this section we will draw some conclusions based on the research aims for the current study.

Regarding the first specific aim, to describe the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers, it is concluded that most of the teachers consider that the 4 Cs of CLIL are present in their classes; according to the participants, they usually include aspects of content, communication and cognition in their classes, culture is also developed but not as frequent as the rest of the 4 Cs. It is also concluded that a majority of teachers think that all the elements from the core features of CLIL are included and developed in their content classes.

Having described the CLIL fundamentals and principles identified by the teachers, and considering the common ideas given by most of the teachers, we may conclude that:

- Content must be related to the requirements from the national curriculum and school curriculum.
- Content highly influences the didactics for the class because the students are able to understand the content through effective learning activities.
- Students' interaction using L2 is essential for the classes.
- Bilingual teachers should use diverse strategies to develop L2 routines, word banks and even a continuous feedback.
- Bilingual teachers should use different strategies to foster advanced levels of complexity such as thinking routines, driving questions and situations.
- Students value diversity when they investigate and know more about their own culture and other cultures.
- A way to foster a sense of culture is through real contexts, so the students can interact in other places and with other people, apart from the school.
- Learning and the connections among different subjects are contextualized through the use of classroom projects.

- Teachers should promote values in the classroom such as respect or trust, so the students can feel comfortable participating in class.
- Students should have an active role while the teacher should be seen as a facilitator or guide in the classroom.
- Teachers have to promote students' autonomous learning.
- The use diverse resources such as manipulatives, visual aids, flashcards, word banks and dictionaries are essential for carrying out successful scaffolding.
- The students must leave temporary supports to get into a higher level of complexity.
- Teachers from different subjects should work together when planning, so lesson planning must be considered a group process, not an individual one.

In relation to the second specific aim, to analyze evidence of CLIL fundamentals and principles in teaching practices, we can conclude that the lesson plans are coherent to the teachers' beliefs on how they develop their content classes through English, so in just two lesson plans (Science and Math) there was enough evidence of how the teachers include the 4 Cs and Core features of CLIL in their classes.

From the evidences of CLIL fundamentals and principles found in the teaching practices, we may conclude that:

- Content is presented in the form of knowledge, understanding, or topics that students need to acquire sequentially.
- Students can interact using L2 while acquiring knowledge; so, the content classes offer the possibility to use English functionally and spontaneously.
- The development of learning skills offers diverse manners to foster cognition in the content classes.
- Learning is contextualized through clear connections to students' daily life and community issues.
- Language learning is supported not only in language classes but in content classes.
- Cross-curricular project help to foster contextualized learning in real life situations and the student's everyday life.
- Bilingual teachers use diverse strategies to build students' confidence to experiment with language and content.

- The connection between learning and the students' lives is permanent in the lessons; thus, the projects and classroom activities are based on the learner's interests and needs.
- Lessons are totally student-centered.
- Teachers scaffold learning by supporting students to reach more complex levels.
- Lesson planning is a group process so it is easy to observe connections among subjects, and the involvement of the local community.

Concerning the third specific research aim, to identify the teachers' reactions and opinions towards bilingual education, it is concluded that there are many benefits for students and teacher in bilingual education, for instance the students develop foreign language and communicative skills in real contexts, and the teachers become more strategic and creative when planning. Thus, those benefits are correlated to certain challenges that any bilingual teacher must take.

Based on the findings of this dissertation, we may say that the CLIL approach is an appropriate reference point for those schools which want to foster bilingual education by improving language and content teaching and learning. As explained, the teachers from the initial cycle at this school have been able to integrate the CLIL fundamentals and principles in their classes; even though they do not consider CLIL as the essential approach for bilingual education in this school, its fundamentals and principles are immersed in their everyday teaching practices, finding a way to develop content and language in an effective bilingual education model for the school.

## 7. FUTURE LINES AND LIMITATIONS

Bilingual Education and the CLIL approach offer multiple lines for performing research; as presented in the current study, each one of the CLIL fundamentals and principles can provide interesting and useful lines for having a better understanding of the process of bilingualism. Therefore, each bilingual school should focus on their particular educational needs, as found in Blasco (2011) who carried out a study based on the effects of CLIL on L2 English learners' oral production skills.

From the current study, we may consider it important for this bilingual school to conduct a study mainly focused on the element of culture which is a weak aspect according to the teachers' opinions; another interesting aspect to analyze is authentic learning, because the teachers mentioned that authentic performances approach was part of the principles of bilingual education at this school but there were not common ideas among most of the teachers on how to foster authentic learning in their classes.

It would be interesting to do research on the approaches or methodologies of different successful bilingual schools in Colombia. That study could offer significant information about common pedagogical aspects in effective bilingual education, and provide key instructions for schools that want to integrate bilingual projects.

Another relevant line to research in Colombia is the implementation of Bilingual Education and CLIL in non-bilingual school, which could solve some of the questions or doubts that many Colombian teachers and administrators have in relation to the process of bilingualism in public schools.

Regarding the limitations for this study, we may consider time as of them. The data collection process was developed in a short period of time; the school year was almost finished when the surveys and interviews were held, because the school year ends in November at this school; therefore, it was not possible to have some class observations as it was first planned.

Another limitation was the teachers' lack of knowledge about the CLIL approach. Probably, a better understanding of The CLIL fundamentals and principles would have helped to collect more data from a deepest metacognitive process; however, as it was mentioned before, this lack of knowledge did not affect the results of the

current study because the CLIL fundamentals and principles were immersed their teaching practices.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Consent Letter



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Ibagué, 17 de febrero de 2017

Señores  
UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LA RIOJA  
España

Por medio de la presente dejo constancia que el estudiante MA en educación bilingüe, JOSE MIGUEL CORREA identificado con cédula de ciudadanía 1.110.482.934 de la ciudad de Ibagué, Contó con autorización de la Corporación Colegio San Bonifacio de las Lanzas, para que realizara una encuesta, entrevistas, observación de clases y planes de unidad a docentes bilingües del ciclo inicial, en el mes de noviembre de 2016; con el fin de tomar datos para el desarrollo de una investigación acerca de la integración de principios de CLIL.

Además, el colegio autoriza al docente para utilizar el nombre de nuestra institución con fines académicos.

Atentamente,



**MAURICIO GABBIERA SAAVEDRA**  
Rector

Carrera 17 No. 73-70, Sector El Vergel | PBX: (57-8) 2770-770 | [www.sanboni.edu.co](http://www.sanboni.edu.co)  
Ibagué - Colombia

## Appendix B: Survey form

 UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LA RIOJA	Survey	 Corporación Colegio San Bonifacio de las Lanzas
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Teacher's Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instruction:** answer the following questions by selecting one or more options and writing your answer when required.

**Note:** content class refers to subjects such as Math, Science... (Naturalistic and Logical Mathematical Classes in your context)

1. Which principles has the school (SBL) adopted in terms of Bilingual Education?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which are the benefits of teaching content through a foreign language?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which are the challenges for a bilingual content teacher?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you familiar with the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach and its main fundamentals and principles?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Which of the following elements are present in your content classes?

Content: \_\_\_\_\_ Communication: \_\_\_\_\_ Cognition: \_\_\_\_\_ Culture: \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you...	always	usually	someti mes	rarely	never
facilitate a continuous growth in content in your classes?					
help your students to develop Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in your content classes?					
help to develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in your content classes?					
foster critical and creative thinking in your content classes?					
promote cultural awareness and interculturality in your content classes?					

Do you think that content classes in the initial cycle include elements such as...	Yes	No	Not sure
<b>Multiple focus:</b> integration of several subjects and organize learning through cross-curricular themes or projects.			
<b>Safe and enriching learning environment:</b> teachers use routine activities, build the student confidence (language and content) and guide the access to authentic learning materials or environments.			
<b>Authenticity:</b> students ask for the language help they need, maximize the accommodation of student interest, make a regular connection between learning and the students' lives and use current materials from the media and other sources.			
<b>Active learning:</b> students communicate more than the teacher and themselves evaluate their progress. Teachers always favour peer co-operative work.			
<b>Scaffolding:</b> repackaging information in user-friendly ways (use of graphics, manipulatives,etc). Use of different learning styles and creative and critical thinking.			
<b>Co-operation:</b> Planning lessons in a cooperative way. Involving parents in learning about how to support students. Involving the local community.			

## Appendix C: Interview form

 <b>unir</b> UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LA RIOJA	<b>Interview</b>	 <b>SBL</b> Corporación Colegio <b>San Bonifacio de las Lanzas</b>
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Teacher's number: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: this interview will be held in the Spanish. It will take between 20 min - 30 min. The interview can paraphrase the questions, ask new questions and explain the meaning of some terms when necessary.

**Questions**

1. ¿De qué manera los siguientes elementos presentes están en tus planes de unidad y en el salón de clases?

Contenido:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comunicación:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cognición:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultura:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. ¿Por qué consideras que tus clases y planeaciones contienen un enfoque múltiple (Interdisciplinary/cross-curricular teaching) ?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. ¿Cómo logras generar un ambiente seguro y enriquecedor para tus estudiantes?

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4. ¿De qué manera desarrollas un aprendizaje auténtico en tus clases?

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5. ¿Cómo se evidencia un aprendizaje activo en tus clases?

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6. ¿Cómo logras brindar "scaffolding" en tus clases" (apoyo temporal a los estudiantes en construcción de nuevos aprendizajes)?

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7. ¿Por qué consideras que tus clases y planeaciones son construidas en un proceso de cooperación?

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## Appendix D: Observation guide form

 <b>unir</b> <small>UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LA RIOJA</small>	<h3>Observation Guide</h3>	 <b>SBL</b> <small>Corporación Colegio San Bonifacio de las Lanzas</small>		
<p>Teacher's Number: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____</p>				
<p><b>Instruction:</b> the researcher will complete the following chart based on the analysis of the lesson plan of a performance/unit from a grade.</p>				
Subject: _____		Term: _____		
Unit: _____				
<b>4 Cs of CLIL</b>				
	Yes	No		
Content			<b>Observations</b>	
Communication				
Cognition				
Culture				
<b>Core Feature of CLIL</b>			<b>Observations</b>	
<b>Multiple Focus</b>	supporting language learning in content classes			
	supporting content learning in language classes			
	integrating several subjects			
	organizing learning through cross-curricular themes and projects			
	supporting reflection on the learning process			
<b>Safe and enriching learning environment</b>	using routine activities and discourse			
	displaying language and content throughout the classroom			
	building student confidence to experiment with language and content			
	using classroom learning centres			
	guiding access to authentic learning materials and environments			
	increasing student language awareness			
<b>Authenticity</b>	letting the students ask for the language help they need			
	maximizing the accommodation of student interests			
	making a regular connection between learning and the students' lives			

	connecting with other speakers of the CLIL language			
	using current materials from the media and other sources			
Active Learning	students communicating more than the teacher			
	students help set content, language and learning skills outcomes			
	students evaluate progress in achieving learning outcomes			
	favoring peer co-operative work			
	negotiating the meaning of language and content with students			
	teachers acting as facilitators			
	Scaffolding	building on a student's existing knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests and experience		
repackaging information in user-friendly ways				
responding to different learning styles				
fostering creative and critical thinking				
challenging students to take another step forward and not just coast in comfort				
Cooperation	planning courses / lessons / themes in co-operation with CLIL and non-CLIL teachers			
	involving parents in learning about CLIL and how to support students			
	involving the local community, authorities and employers			