

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING TOWARD PROFICIENCY: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS POTENTIAL IN A PUBLIC BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN RIO DE JANEIRO

APRENDIZAGEM INTEGRADA DE CONTEÚDO E LÍNGUA VOLTADA PARA A PROFICIÊNCIA: UMA ANÁLISE DO POTENCIAL DESSA METODOLOGIA EM UM PROJETO DE EDUCAÇÃO BILÍNGUE DA REDE PÚBLICA DO RIO DE JANEIRO

Fernanda Tavares Cabral¹
Adriana Tavares Mauricio Lessa²

ABSTRACT: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an approach that has been adopted in various countries around the globe, mainly as a strategy to host immigrants immersed in a foreign school. In Brazil, it has been implemented with different purposes, as an immersion programme for local students. However, not much is known about this adaptation, especially as an education policy. Hence, this paper aims to investigate CLIL as an English teaching approach in Brazil. Specifically, we analyse its implementation in a public school in Rio de Janeiro, focusing on (i) whether integrating language and content can be considered a relevant factor in the proficiency of the students and (ii) which other pedagogical aspects of the bilingual programme students considered significant for their learning process. We do so investigating students' beliefs on the approach through a semi-structured interview. The interviews were guided by ten questions concerning their experience while learning English, more specifically in the context of High School. Through the students' answers we were able to identify as main factors for their proficiency: (a) the importance of CLIL for language input exposure and vocabulary enhancement and (b) other noteworthy pedagogical aspects, namely: use of English for communicative purposes, the friendly English speaking environment and teacher-student rapport.

Keywords: CLIL; bilingual schools; proficiency.

RESUMO: Aprendizagem Integrada de Conteúdo e Língua (conhecida como CLIL, do inglês) é uma abordagem que vem sendo adotada em vários países por todo o mundo, principalmente como uma estratégia para receber imigrantes inseridos em contextos escolares estrangeiros. No Brasil, tem sido implementada com diferentes propósitos, como um programa de imersão para estudantes nativos. Entretanto, não há muita informação acerca desta adaptação, sobretudo na esfera pública. Desta forma, este trabalho tem como objetivo investigar o CLIL como uma metodologia de ensino de inglês no Brasil. De maneira mais específica, analisamos sua implementação em uma escola pública do Rio de Janeiro, com foco em (i) se a integração entre ensino de linguagem e de conteúdo pode ser considerada como um fator relevante para a proficiência dos alunos e (ii) quais outros aspectos pedagógicos do programa bilíngue podem ser considerados como significativos para o processo de aprendizado. Para esse fim, investigamos as crenças dos estudantes sobre a abordagem a partir de uma entrevista semiestruturada. As entrevistas contavam com dez perguntas relacionadas às experiências dos ex-alunos durante o processo de aprendizado de inglês, mais especificamente, no contexto do ensino médio, e foram cuidadosamente

¹ Graduação em Letras pela Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro.

² Doutora em Linguística pela Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro-UFRJ. Professora Adjunta de Língua inglesa da Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro-UFRRJ, vinculada ao Mestrado profissional em Letras-PROFLETRAS

analisadas, ajudando a caracterizar o CLIL existente no Brasil e a apontar as características de tal metodologia que podem ser consideradas como cruciais para o aprendizado dos alunos. Através das respostas dos alunos, foi possível identificar como fatores principais para a proficiência: (a) a influência do CLIL para a exposição ao idioma e aprimoramento de vocabulário e (b) outros aspectos pedagógicos relevantes, a saber: o uso do inglês para fins comunicativos, um ambiente favorável para o uso de inglês e a relação aluno-professor.

Palavras-chave: CLIL; escolas bilíngues; proficiência.

1 Introduction

Over the last decades, many different methods and approaches have been developed in order to help students learn a second language and become bilingual speakers. In the 21st century, bilingual schools have risen as a major stake for guaranteed learning of English, especially in South America (cf. WEWER, 2017). However, there is only scarce academic analysis of bilingual school programmes.

Although bilingual private schools have spread over Brazil, the access to these schools can be considered restricted to socially advantaged families. In Brazilian public schools, English is taught within a traditional curriculum design very disparate from what tends to be described as bilingual education. Unprecedentedly, a bilingual education programme has recently been adapted to the reality of students from public schools in Rio de Janeiro.

The Intercultural High School programme was implemented in Rio de Janeiro, aiming to promote the learning of a second language, making use of CLIL and focusing on oral communication, while students keep studying their mother tongue. Since this bilingual education programme is a very specific undertaking in terms of modern educational public policies, it is of great importance to understand whether integrating language and content might be a relevant factor in the proficiency of these students - who mostly have had contact with the English language for the first time within the project -, as well as how this integration between content-based disciplines and the English one happen.

Therefore, the main goal of this research is to analyse a Brazilian CLIL project in a public school from Rio de Janeiro. Specifically, we aim to investigate (i) whether integrating language and content can be considered a relevant factor in the proficiency of the students and (ii) which other pedagogical aspects of the bilingual programme students considered significant for their learning process. In order to do so, we investigate the beliefs of three former students on this approach - specifically, on the characteristics they believe that might have been key for them to improve their proficiency. Based on this material, we analyse the contribution of CLIL in the late process of second language learning.

Hence, this paper is organized in five sections. First, we present an overview on bilingual schools and try to clarify the miscategorisation of different types of schools that may teach a foreign language in ways that differ from traditional High School. Second, we illustrate the concept of CLIL and explore the pedagogical project of the Brazilian bilingual public school from Rio de Janeiro - object of the present research - that adopts this approach. On the third part of this paper, a further explanation on the methodology used to conduct this research can

be found. The analysis of excerpts from the interviews, in section 4, leads to the considerations of the paper, in section 5.

2 Bilingual education in Brazil

According to Liberali & Megali (2016), bilingual education is most commonly described as the teaching that occurs at school involving at least two languages. However, for Hamers & Blanc (2000) this presents a very broad definition. They believe that second or foreign language education can only be achieved through means of teaching content in the second language, instead of teaching language as a subject. Thereby, they propose the existence of three groups which are divided according to how language is used for instruction. The first group refers to bilingual programs that use both languages simultaneously. The second category comprehends programs in which the first language is used for instruction until learners are able to deal with the second language as a means of learning. Finally, the last of such groups encompasses those programs in which instructions are mainly given in the second language, and then the first language is incorporated at a later stage.

In Brazil, Liberali & Megali (2016) point out that it is possible to establish three different models of bilingual education: the one directed to indigenous communities, bilingual education with sign language and the so-called elite bilingual education (EBE). The latter differs from the former ones since its target group is not a minority community. EBE consists of teaching an international prestigious language as a mean of instruction for socially advantage students who speak the country's official language (SILVA & FREITAS, 2012, p. 1).

Even though in this paper we aim to discuss bilingual education, we do not mean to address bilingual education for minorities, that is: bilingual education for indigenous communities and bilingual education with sign language. Likewise, it is not our intention to discuss all the types of bilingual education. Rather, our concern is to specifically investigate the implementation of CLIL in a different social context: a public bilingual programme from Rio de Janeiro.

The Brazilian Ministry of Education does not provide specific guidelines for bilingual education. As a result many schools in Brazil have been indiscriminately entitled bilingual schools. Yet, we understand that in Rio de Janeiro there are two major types of schools aimed at teaching EBE: bilingual schools and international schools. We do not intend to go much further on the discussion concerning the latter one, but it is crucial for this paper that we keep in mind that calling a school bilingual or international mean different things. For each of them, laws may offer different definitions concerning, for instance, the need for teaching a second language, as well as the amount of time students must be exposed to.

Traditional EBE tends to make use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which might be described as “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (COYLE, HOOD & MARSH, 2010, p.1). CLIL is used as an ‘umbrella’ term considered very inclusive, since it covers, among others, student exchanges, international projects, partial immersion, total immersion and even everyday activities, provided they take place in a foreign

language. Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter (2013, p. 246) explain that it is difficult “to distinguish CLIL learning environments from non-CLIL learning environments, except in cases where there is exclusive instruction in the target language with absolutely no content as a vehicle for instruction.” Concerning CLIL teachers’ practices, Graaff (2007) advises that a teacher who works through the approach must be able to help students overcome any language and content comprehension, as well as any communication problems using a repertoire of strategies that fits the situations.

However, some features have been characterized in the literature as being typical of CLIL projects, differentiating them from immersion programmes. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2010) and Marsh (2002) point that the underlying distinction between immersion and CLIL programs would be that the goal of immersion programs is native-like proficiency in the target language, whereas the goal of CLIL is much less advanced levels of L2 proficiency. This position would support the idea that immersion begins at an earlier age than CLIL and CLIL is usually implemented after learners have acquired literacy skills in their first language. So, immersion is considered a type of content-based instruction. According to Zarobe (2008, p. 61), CLIL and content-based instruction can be considered synonymous, but “the former is used more frequently in Europe while the latter has gained more popularity in the United States and Canada.”

In spite of those similarities, in Brazil, there are some subtle differences among EBE schools, such as the way the target language is treated. As Roberta Deliberato, pedagogical coordinator of *Escola Internacional de Alphaville* and Ana Célia Mustafá Campos, director of the Organization of Bilingual Schools in São Paulo (*Organização das Escolas Bilíngues de São Paulo*), stated in an interview to *Folha de São Paulo* (2016), in an international school, children have classes in a foreign language, and the country’s official tongue is treated as a second language, which means it does not have to follow the Brazilian Ministry of Education’s determinations. In contrast, in a bilingual school, there is a minimum amount of instructional time that must be dedicated to the second language, which, in this case, stands for English.

Furthermore, international schools are normally private, expensive and usually have a great quantity of students who are not Brazilian. They also present an enormous difference in their calendars. As an example, the school year in an American school in Brazil starts in September, similarly to the U.S. education system, and not in February or March, as Brazilian schools do.

Another divergence we can spot between these types of schools, as it was observed by the Pacific Policy Research Center (2010, p. 4), is that bilingual institutions follow an enrichment model and are defined as schools whose aim is “bilingualism and biliteracy as well as extension of the minority language and culture into the community and nationally.” International schools, however, follow a model called Structured English Immersion, which uses English as a means of instruction aiming at developing proficiency.

As far as proficiency is concerned, research outcomes indicate gains in different aspects of language knowledge and use depending on the type of instruction students’ are exposed to. In terms of pronunciation, students from Basque-Spanish bilingual school exposed to additional CLIL English instruction have been considered to have a more intelligible foreign

accent than students exposed to non-CLIL English classes (Puerto, Lacabex & Lecumberri, 2009).

In Canada, Paribakht e Wesche (1993) have assessed young adult university students exposed to two types of instruction: comprehension-based (which resembles CLIL learning contexts) and four-skill classes from a mixture of first language backgrounds. The latter have shown stronger results for grammatical measures in error correction tasks, whereas the former showed superior gains in text comprehension and discourse processing, including vocabulary measures.

The enhancement in vocabulary sizes has also been proven by a recent study on Finnish students of English as a foreign language. Actually, more than that, Pietilä & Merikivi (2014) have proven that students who reported reading in English in their free time turned out to have larger vocabularies, both receptive and productive. However, CLIL students read in English in their free time substantially more than pupils in regular classes. As a result, participants in the CLIL programmes who read in English in their free time had larger vocabularies than their mainstream peers.

The authors suggest this might be interpreted as a result of the effective learning environment. In any case, the habit of reading more in English in their free time is an interesting cultural behavior that we might think of as being related to how CLIL students see themselves as subjects in their learning process.

Catalán and Zarobe (2009) have also reported CLIL effectiveness comparatively to non-CLIL learning environments in north of Spain when it comes to vocabulary size. However, the authors are cautious in attributing students higher scores in receptive vocabulary tests strictly to the type of programme they have been subjected to, as it follows:

As in most CLIL studies, in which content instruction is related to more language exposure, in the present study it is not possible to draw a sharp line between the two variables: we cannot be sure of how much is directly related to the effect of CLIL proper and what is due to the effect of more hours of instruction. (CATALÁN & ZAROBÉ, 2009, p.88).

Besides highlighting the importance of time of language exposure to the results of the study, they believe other learning factors should be taken into consideration in future research, covering variables such as the socioeconomic context. This is a great lead to the present study, since we investigate beliefs regarding different CLIL features from students in a different socioeconomic context.

3 Intercultural High School Project

Considering the previous debate on bilingual education, the school subject to investigation in this paper cannot be considered an international school, although it is part of an international agreement. Further, according to the most important Brazilian law referring to education, *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases* (LDB), Rio de Janeiro's Intercultural High School Project does not qualify as bilingual education, since this type of education in the national school

system is legally restricted to indigenous people. Nevertheless, it is important to establish that, throughout this paper, we refer to Intercultural High School Brasil-Estados Unidos as bilingual, due to the amount of extra time dedicated to studying English or content in English.

Acknowledging its bilingual character, we would like to debate its definition as a CLIL programme. According to Marsh (2002, p.11), CLIL was ‘a pragmatic European solution to a European need’, responding positively to their need for enhancing second-language education and bilingualism. Being normally used in European universities “as a way to increase multilingualism and attract foreign academics of different parts of the world to European universities” (FINARDI; LEÃO; PINHEIRO, 2016), CLIL’s popularity has grown among Brazilian schools in the past years. This type of European programme has inspired Rio de Janeiro’s Double School programme, after an international agreement with the French government that pioneered in the development of the Intercultural High School Program.

Firstly, being a High School project, the age of the students distinguishes it from an immersion program: students have already acquired literacy skills in their first language. Secondly, it does not intend to guarantee that students achieve native-like proficiency in the target language. For 3rd year-students, the project aims at achieving intermediate low proficiency for listening and speaking levels and intermediate high proficiency for reading and writing levels, according to the American Council of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines 2012. Thus, in this paper, we consider Rio de Janeiro’s Intercultural High School project a bilingual CLIL programme, accordingly to its project, whose remaining details we present further.

Intercultural High School (in Portuguese, *Ensino Médio Intercultural*) is one of the subprojects of Double School, directed to the learning of a foreign language. Double School is a project created by the government of Rio de Janeiro, turning toward the development of abilities that aim to make a difference in High School students’ professional qualification.

Since these are full-time schools, their curricula are composed of a “specific nucleus”, focusing on linguistic and non-linguistic disciplines. This means that the teaching of a foreign language in each intercultural institute has its focus on at least two disciplines apart from the study of a foreign language itself. This way, the schools not only expose students to a different language by presenting content through the target language, but also provide students with moments of interaction that help them get used to the language and develop their own autonomy by working with the features of grammar they are used to. This constitutes the major difference between the teaching that occurs at Double School through CLIL, and the teaching existent in regular classes in which Portuguese is the main means of instruction, as it “involves additional language learning objectives and specific opportunities for communication and language use” (GRAAF et al, 2015).

Double School has got, so far, four intercultural centers according to the website of *Secretaria de Estado de Educação do Rio de Janeiro*: CIEP 449 Leonel de Moura Brizola, which brings to Brazil a part of French culture; C.E. Hispano-Brasileiro João Cabral de Melo Neto, that integrates Brazilian and Spanish cultures; C.E. Matemático Joaquim Gomes de Sousa, that is a Brazil-China institute and finally, CIEP 117 Carlos Drummond de Andrade, an intercultural high school that combines Portuguese and English, which is the object of study of

this paper.

The school focus of the present study, CIEP 117, had its first class with 30 students in 2014. At present, 90 youngsters are able to attend the school where English is mainly used for two regular disciplines, as it is mentioned in the school's pedagogical project:

Geography and Mathematics were the disciplines chosen, and can count on a great diversity of perspectives, besides making possible the established goals for the proficiency of the students in each stage of the course. (p. 12)³

Besides, it establishes that content from different disciplines must be integrated and taught in both languages, but in different proportions of time:

According to this, the disciplines from the National Common Core and from the Diversified part will be taught in Portuguese during 90% (ninety percent) of the amount of class time. The remaining class hours, equivalent to 10% (ten percent) of it, should be used for less complex activities in English. The disciplines from the Specific Part, on the contrary, will have their instructions given in English during 90% (ninety percent) of the total class hours, and only in 10% (ten percent) of the time communication must be done through Portuguese. (p. 12)⁴

This means that students' contact with the English language should not be restricted to the English classes and the classes taught in English. All teachers should try to include some activities to help students get familiar with the language. For instance, a Biology class with the duration of 2 hours (120 minutes) will need to address an activity in English for about 12 (twelve) minutes every week.

On the other hand, the classes from that Specific Part of the curriculum also count on some use of Portuguese. This works as a way not only to teach students a new language, but also to help them "consider the possible interactions of content and practice between the universes of the mother tongue and the foreign language" (p. 10)⁵.

The Specific Part of the curriculum is composed of three disciplines, summing up approximately 15 hours per week immersed in English. Besides Mathematics and Geography, there is a curricular component named Global Integration Project (P.I.G., from *Projeto de Integração Global*, in Portuguese). This subject is supposed to provide an opportunity to integrate the different topics approached in Mathematics and Geography in interactive classes that aim to

³ Original version in Portuguese: "a opção se deu pelas disciplinas de Geografia e Matemática que poderão contar com grande diversidade de perspectivas, além de viabilizarem as metas estabelecidas para a proficiência dos alunos em cada etapa do curso."

⁴ Original version in Portuguese: "Segundo essa concepção, as disciplinas da Base Nacional Comum e da Parte Diversificada terão suas instruções oferecidas em Língua Portuguesa durante 90% (noventa por cento) da carga horária que lhes são destinadas. A carga horária restante, equivalente a 10% (dez por cento), deve ser utilizada para atividades menos complexas em Língua Inglesa."

As disciplinas da Parte Específica, ao contrário, terão suas instruções ministradas em Inglês durante 90% (noventa por cento) da carga horária total e apenas em 10% (dez por cento) do período a comunicação se faz através da Língua Portuguesa."

⁵ Original version in Portuguese: "Considerar as interações possíveis de conteúdo e prática entre os universos da língua materna e da língua estrangeira."

provide students with critical thinking on world issues and give them opportunities to express themselves.

The classes from the Specific Part of the curriculum normally take place simultaneously. This happens because the class of 30 (thirty) students is equally divided into two subgroups. While 15 (fifteen) of them are learning Mathematics in English, for example, the other half of the group is dealing with matters of a globalized world in P.I.G. and vice versa. By doing this, teachers facilitate their students' understanding, as they have smaller groups and are able to address specific doubts of students, if needed.

It is also important to highlight that school teachers were native in the community language. Nevertheless, the school's project stated as a major requirement that teachers of the Specific Part of the curriculum be at least Intermediate High, as an overall proficiency, considering ACTFL guidelines. Besides, the pedagogical and teaching team should be at least Novice Low English proficient.

Finally, according to the pedagogical project elaborated specifically for CIEP 117, its main goal is to

promote education for young people in a second language. Further than teaching the English language, this school unit is intended to ensure the learner's mastery and fluent use of English. Beyond English language learning, students will benefit from the broadening of knowledge in different study fields, such as Geography and Mathematics. The planning foresees the integration of the disciplines' contents, enabling a great interdisciplinary work in which each curricular component is able to motivate the learning process of both language and American culture. Yet, every discipline from the Specific Part, as well as the curricular components of the National Common Core and from the Diversified Part, establish a peculiar way of developing activities, prioritizing the development of an independent, conscious and critic youngster.(p. 6)⁶

It also states that in the non-linguistic curricular components, there is a “rupture of the traditional parameters of foreign language teaching, which allows teachers and students unlimited approaches” (p. 11)⁷. So, in the present paper, we aim to understand how the integration between the disciplines that teach Mathematics and Geography through English and the one called Global Integration Project occur as a way to diverge from traditional teaching of a foreign language, as well as how this approach has affected the way students learned English.

⁶ O objetivo principal do curso de Ensino Médio Regular, não profissionalizante, com ênfase em Língua Inglesa é promover a educação dos jovens em um segundo idioma. Muito mais do que ensinar a língua inglesa, nessa unidade pretende-se garantir ao educando o domínio e o uso da língua inglesa de forma fluente. Além da aprendizagem da língua inglesa, os alunos irão se beneficiar da ampliação dos conhecimentos de diversas áreas de estudo, como Geografia e Matemática. O planejamento prevê a integração dos conteúdos das disciplinas, possibilitando um grande trabalho interdisciplinar em que cada componente curricular possa ser uma motivação para a aprendizagem da língua e da cultura americanas. Ainda, cada disciplina da Parte Específica, assim como os componentes curriculares da Base Nacional Comum e da Parte Diversificada estabelecem um modo peculiar de desenvolver atividades, priorizando o desenvolvimento de um jovem autônomo, consciente e crítico.

⁷ Nos componentes curriculares não linguísticos há uma ruptura dos parâmetros tradicionais de ensino da língua estrangeira o que possibilita aos docentes e aos alunos ilimitadas abordagens.

4 Methodology

The analysis presented in this paper comes from the data gathered in an exploratory qualitative research, aiming at analysing the students' beliefs on the contribution of CLIL to their proficiency. It does so through a semi-structured interview with three former students who participated during the three years of High School in the project under investigation. The research protocol adopted in this research was submitted to and approved by the Ethics Committee of Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, under the protocol number: 23083.017216/2018-74.

The interviews were guided by ten questions about the programme and the students' perceptions on it and the model of questionnaire used is attached to the end of the present paper. The answers to the 10-question-interview were audio recorded and transcribed for thorough analysis. The recordings add up to a total of 77 (seventy seven) minutes of interview. In the present paper, we present the excerpts that better illustrate the analysis of the students' beliefs on how integrating the teaching of language and content may or may not have improved their proficiency.

When the interviews took place, the participants were undergraduate students in Language Arts and International Relations at Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro. Their ages ranged from 18 to 25 years old. We counted on two female and one male participants. One of them had been in the class of 2014, the school's first group, who graduated in 2016. The other two participants were part of the second class, having graduated in 2017. The three participants are residents of different cities in Baixada Fluminense, in the state of Rio de Janeiro. In order to respect their privacy, they will be addressed in this paper as participants 1, 2 and 3.

All the interviews were conducted in their mother tongue, which is Portuguese, in order to help the interviewees feel more comfortable. Nevertheless, the excerpts extracted from the interviews and presented throughout the present work are translated to English in order to maintain a pattern. Also aiming at making the participants feel comfortable, all the interviews happened at UFRRJ, in the campus of Seropédica, where they study. They were interviewed separately and the access to a reserved classroom guaranteed the necessary privacy for the interviews take place reducing inhibitory factors.

5 Analysis

Through the interviews, we tried to collect enough evidence to help us understand how the CLIL approach has exerted an impact in students learning process. In the analysis of the data, we were able to identify some factors related to the bilingual project in CIEP 117 which stood in their speech as being key for the development of their English proficiency.

It is important to establish that, during the interviews, there were no questions addressing specific classroom practices of CLIL teachers. Regardless, the content extracted from the interviews, which base the analysis, was selected in a way to respect three conditions that could be considered as essential for language learning, namely: exposure, use and motivation.

5.1 *The influence of CLIL*

As this paper tries to understand CLIL approach in the context of Double School, a lot of attention was given to how the students talked about the English classes and the classes in English. On the previous sections, we presented the pedagogical project's resolutions designed for CIEP 117, that guide the whole project on how to promote language learning through teaching Mathematics and Geography in English, while students also take part in the Global Integration Project. Although in different ways and to different extents, the three former students highlighted that these initiatives from the school made the difference in their learning processes.

There were grammar classes and oral production classes, but having school content in English had more influence in my learning process, because it taught me a lot more and I acquired more vocabulary. (participant 2)

The fact that we were there every day and had English classes four times a week and classes taught in English once a week, on the day in which we did not have English classes, I guess it was really relevant (for the learning process). (participant 1)

Besides the English disciplines, perhaps P.I.G. was even more relevant than those, due to this critical relationship. I believe that P.I.G. directly influenced my learning process, more than the English disciplines, especially on the third grade, because of one teacher. She brought some texts and videos, so it helped me a lot to expand my vocabulary and my communicative abilities. (Participant 3)

It is interesting to highlight students' awareness of the non-linguistic disciplines contributions to their English proficiency and critical development. They point out how crucial these subjects were to gain more vocabulary and to the exposure to input. It seems like the existence of these disciplines made them recognize the purposes of the school project, integrating their different practices and realizing the importance of using language for meaning focused processing.

5.2 *Noteworthy pedagogical aspects*

Graaff et al (2015) proposed that, more than the language input, teaching CLIL is based on three principles: communicative language teaching, content-based language teaching and task-based language teaching. In the context of Double School, along with the disciplines that follow the CLIL approach and teach content through the target language, the constant use of English inside and outside the classroom can be considered crucial for students proficiency.

Beyond teaching content in class, the school provided students with a vast range of opportunities to be in touch with both American language and culture. Consequently, it motivated students to keep studying and learning the language even when they were outside

school.

5.2.1 English for communicative purposes

As a way to help students in their learning process, Double School did not use English just to teach content. Even though CIEP 117 does not exist in the surroundings of a community of native English speakers, students did not lack opportunities to use English in activities concerning real communicative contexts with native speakers. In fact, the school often promotes meetings, events and lectures that can be performed face-to-face or even with the support of video calls and connect Brazilian and American people.

There was this partnership with the consulate, then the consulate was always at school making events, so besides learning English, you were also in contact with foreigners. (participant 2)

This year I took part in Volunteers' Day and there were some people from the consulate at the school, helping the current students learn English in a more dynamic way. (participant 1)

In the first and second grades we had calls at Skype with Maryland, that was a school sister to ours. (participant 1)

Some students also had the opportunity to experience the language traveling abroad by means of scholarships awarded by some students who made the difference in their schools. From CIEP 117, one of the former students interviewed had the chance to spend a month in Colorado. This represents a chance for students from public schools to live English and get immersed in a different culture, which would not be possible for them otherwise.

I would have to say that the most important factor for my proficiency was, definitely, my trip to The USA. I believe that this whole matter of learning a second language... I don't know. Even though you study in a school like mine, that tries to make English sound more natural for the students, we are still an ocean apart from The USA. (participant 3)

By the analysis of the interviews, the constant use of English was mentioned by the three interviewees. Indeed, the school's initiatives to provide students with opportunities to use English in real communicative contexts, inside or outside the school, were considered the most important factors for their proficiency. The former students made it clear at several times, as seen in the extracts present in this section, that the contact with native English speakers exerted a major influence in their learning process, as it provided them with chances to practice the language in a spontaneous and less monitored way.

The most important information to consider when it comes to the students' profile is

that all former students had access to English no further than the grammar taught in school, which usually stands for present simple, or even no access to English at all, as the law establishes that the community around the public teaching institution decides which foreign language is going to be a part of the curriculum. Due to this, one of the interviewees studied in a school where Spanish had been chosen and had had no access to English classes before High School:

There was no point in going to school and only study English there, we also had to study at home and practice. I had never had contact with English before, so the first grade was very difficult. I did not know anything, so, besides school, I also had to find new ways to get used to school. (participant 2)

Even though two of interviewees had had access to some features of English, all the former students pointed out that the experience they had at CIEP 117 was completely different from anything they had experienced before. Those former students' levels of proficiency could be classified as novice low when they got into the programme. This highlights the difference between the purposes of regular High School and the project investigated in the present paper. This distinction between the purposes of learning English in the two types of school projects has been explicitly mentioned by one of the students:

It was nice to, for the first time, leave “verb to be” behind as well as classes in which we only learned grammar or how to memorise content, without learning how to use those things for communicative purposes. (participant 3)

As it can be seen, the clear communicative purposes of the school motivated students to learn the language, differently from the traditional rote learning of grammar rules they had previously been exposed to in their former schools' English classes. This motivation seems to have encouraged a new attitude that overcomes school, since learning English turned into a different social and cognitive process for these students.

5.2.2 Friendly English speaking environment

Even though the school had students whose knowledge of English was very scarce, such as the ones who participated in these interviews, teachers tried to promote an English-only policy in their classes, which encouraged students to try to use English as much as they could. While doing this, they created a environment free of judgements for students.

They said that those were the moments for us to practice, so we had to use English as much as possible. [...] It felt very natural, and it was something that made me feel very comfortable, because I knew that even if I made a mistake or said something wrong, there would always be a teacher there, or maybe the students, you know? I did not feel pressured. (participant 2)

After some time at school, communicating in English, using expressions in English

inside and outside the classroom became normal, you did not notice that you were doing it. (participant 3)

This relaxed environment is described as being present in both parts of the curriculum, since regular activities in English were established. In addition to its frequency, the use of playful activities and dialogues without teacher intervention played an important role to the consolidation of this friendly English speaking environment, as we can see in the following extracts:

I remember that once the Chemistry teacher took a periodic table in English to class and we played memory game with the symbols and names of the elements. Those are more interesting ways to make students understand Portuguese and English more easily. (participant 1)

One of the things teachers gave a lot of attention was oral production. They destined 15 to 30 minutes for us to talk. [...] it made the classes flow naturally, because even if we had to force ourselves to talk in the beginning, as we discussed the disciplines and shared ideas, it became natural. (participant 3)

As the interviewees explain, everyone was aware of the fact that they were trying to improve their English proficiency and the classes were arranged to make the use of the language feel more natural for them. The lack of pressure in an English speaking environment is mentioned in both extracts and seems to reassure the existence of a clear teacher-student rapport, as we illustrate in the next section.

5.2.3 Teacher-student rapport

During the interviews, there were no questions concerning teachers' English skills. However, their practices in classroom were often addressed and exerted a great impact on students' lives, being mentioned as of great importance for the students' proficiency not just because of the content they taught, but also due to the importance they gave to their students. Recognising how dedicated their teachers were, students also got motivated, establishing a unique teacher-student rapport, as we can observe in the following extract:

It was very interesting the way teachers dealt with those disciplines that were taught in English. [...] How teachers were dedicated to teaching us was the most relevant factor for me to learn. (Participant 1)

According to the school's pedagogical project, the teachers from Double School must master the curricular contents they teach, be didactic in their classes while make sure students understand the content, understand students' individualities and, finally, promote their autonomy and good coexistence in the classroom as well as in the school community. These tenets seem to have been absorbed by the schools teachers, as we can see below:

I believe that P.I.G had a significant influence in my learning process, more than the English disciplines, specially on the third grade, because of one specific teacher. She brought some texts and videos, so it helped me a lot expand my vocabulary and my communicative abilities. (participant 3)

Therefore, although the present research has only covered students' beliefs regarding their learning process, teacher's motivation has also been presented as an outlier. So, it seems plausible to consider in further investigation the possible effects of this programme in teachers' motivation too.

6 Final considerations

The main goal of the present paper was to analyse a Brazilian CLIL project in a public school from Rio de Janeiro and its main pedagogical contributions to the late process of second language learning. Specifically, we aimed to investigate (i) whether integrating language and content could be considered a relevant factor for the development of students' proficiency and (ii) which other pedagogical aspects of the bilingual programme students considered significant for their learning process.

Based on semi-structured interviews performed with three former students from this bilingual programme, we could identify some shared beliefs on the main contributions to their learning process. When it comes to answering whether integrating language and content could be considered a relevant factor to proficiency, considering students' beliefs, we must highlight the importance of CLIL for vocabulary acquisition and exposure to input in a meaning focussed processing. Further, the former students pointed out the desire to continue in touch with English outside school. This could be directly related to the enhancement in their vocabulary sizes, in accordance with what has been shown by the research of Pietilä & Merikivi (2014).

The students believe that there is clear influence of the amount of instructional time dedicated to the use of English on their language learning process. In fact, they mentioned that the development of the disciplines Mathematics and Geography taught in English reinforces a belief that learning a new language is directly related to the amount of language input the learner is exposed to, as it represents "a form of fighting against the teaching of foreign languages with a focus on grammar and vocabulary in the target language" (FINARDI; LEÃO; PINHEIRO, 2016, p. 61).

Besides, according to students, the CLIL approach yielded the promotion of critical thinking in the contemporary world and of meaningful situations in which students can apply their knowledge, so that they know the relevance of what they have learned. This was especially afforded by P.I.G., a pedagogical particularity of this CLIL programme, since this discipline can be considered a distinctive innovation that was designed to integrate the different pieces of knowledge they had acquired in the traditional non-linguistic disciplines (Geography and Mathematics).

Previous studies (cf. GRAAF et al, 2007) show that, even in countries that have adopted

CLIL for longer than Brazil, a lot of attention is paid to CLIL teachers proficiency and content adaptation, but not to pedagogic issues. In the interviews we conducted, pedagogical issues which are not usually associated to CLIL programmes have emerged in students' discourse as essential to their language learning process due to its implementation. So, when it comes to other noteworthy pedagogical aspects, we have identified, according to students' beliefs, three factors as keen to promoting language proficiency. These factors can be put as: (a) the explicit use of English for communicative purposes created by the immersion in this programme and real-life situations, increasing students' motivation to study it; (b) the friendly English speaking environment, stimulating students' language practice; (c) teacher-student rapport to support the consistency of students' (and perhaps teachers') motivation.

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Appendix A - Semi-structured questionnaire used in the interviews

1. Você estudou inglês em algum outro contexto além do ensino médio intercultural? (Se sim, por quanto tempo?)
2. O que você diria a respeito da sua proficiência ou fluência no idioma antes da experiência com o Dupla Escola? E depois?
3. Como eram as aulas/atividades com foco na língua/exposição da gramática? Quais eram as metas dessas disciplinas? E nas que não exploravam gramática? Como eram as aulas/atividades com foco na língua/exposição da gramática? Quais eram as metas dessas disciplinas? E nas que não exploravam gramática?
4. Como foi a experiência de aprender um segundo idioma sem ter a língua como foco de análise (sem estudar as regras gramaticais)?
5. Você já teve alguma oportunidade de utilizar o idioma aprendido em algum contexto comunicativo real? Se sim, como foi a experiência? Se não, se sente preparado para tal?
6. Além das disciplinas ministradas em inglês, quais práticas eram frequentes na instituição, com objetivo de promover a aquisição/utilização do idioma? Com que frequência ocorriam tais ações?
7. O uso do idioma em sala de aula transmitia a sensação de naturalidade e acuracidade necessária?
8. No projeto da sua escola, havia uma proposta de integrar os conteúdos de diferentes disciplinas. Qual sua percepção sobre a realização dessa proposta, como aluno que vivenciou essa experiência?
9. O que você encara como fator mais relevante para a sua proficiência até hoje? Tente considerar fatores externos ao período em que teve aulas na instituição bilíngue.
10. Você acredita que alguma disciplina ou tipo de atividade específica recorrente (ou ainda alguma proposta específica dentro do projeto) teve mais relevância em seu processo de aprendizagem?

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