


## Chapter 9

# CLIL in Pre-Primary Education: A Qualitative Analysis of Teachers' Views in a Spanish Context

Ana Otto

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3058-1067>  
Complutense University, Spain

### ABSTRACT

*Content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) has experienced an exponential growth with its implementation into international pre-primary education contexts. But pre-primary CLIL has to be suited to the main principles of early childhood education and care (ECEC) and thus respect very young learners' idiosyncratic features in terms of their development and acquisition. In 2004, the Madrid regional government implemented the Spanish-English bilingual programme granting students the opportunity to study English as an additional language and receive instruction for other subjects through English. In the academic year 2017-2018, the programme extended to the very early years, and it is currently run in all bilingual schools. The main aim of this contribution is to discuss the potential applicability of CLIL for pre-primary education and to analyze the teachers' views in Madrid by means of two focus groups.*

### INTRODUCTION: CLIL IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The term CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) refers to any type of teaching in which an additional language (foreign language, second language or regional and/or minority language) is used as a tool for learning a non-language

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-3073-9.ch009

subject or area and is integrated with the curricular content with the aim of learning both (Marsh, 2002, p. 58). Since its inception, CLIL has enjoyed great success mainly because it is an approach that offers great flexibility in terms of the various areas offered in the additional language, the increased exposure time to it, and the consequent improvement in terms of acquisition (Marsh, 2004; Wolf, 2006; Coyle, 2007; Mehisto et al., 2008; Moreno de Diezmas, 2016). Likewise, it seems that CLIL increases learner confidence and autonomy, reduces anxiety in the language learning process, and encourages classroom participation, among other advantages (Hidalgo & Ortega-Sánchez, 2023).

Perhaps one of the most frequent controversies we face in the area of early language acquisition is the appropriateness of additional language exposure when students have not fully developed their mother tongue. In this regard, we find voices that point to a decrease in content learning (Fernández-Sanjurjo et al., 2019), and others that point out, in addition, that this approach may not be suitable for students at early ages (Baker, 2011; Phillipson, 2018), although they are far less in number compared to the large number of opinions in favor of an early start. The latter are based on factors such as the mental flexibility inherent to this stage (Enever, 2011) the ability of children to act on their own and regulate their learning process (Schawrtz, 2018), and the European recommendations about the need to adopt oral approaches in early childhood (European Commission, 2011), to name the most significant contributions.

In any case, and based on the premise that an early start does not always have to be an advantage, but rather that it provides the appropriate characteristics (Custodio-Espinar, 2022), it seems clear that the CLIL approach in Early Childhood Education requires special features and treatment to adapt it to the context in question. First of all, it is necessary to take into account the psycho-evolutionary characteristics of children, who at this age are in a pre-operational stage (Jonhston, 2009). In this sense, the pedagogical foundations must be laid to ensure this respect for the psycho-evolutionary development of children (Fleta, 2019). In addition, it is necessary, above all, a change of paradigm to distinguish it from good practices in EFL, and focus on the knowledge, skills and values that derive from the different areas of expertise (Andúgar & García-Abellán, 2023, p. 52). Finally, it is advisable to provide teachers at the early childhood stage through the CLIL approach with the necessary tools and competencies to know how to adapt its basic principles to the students' developmental stage (Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar, 2021; Cortina-Pérez & Pino-Rodríguez, 2022).

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/clil-in-pre-primary-education/340265](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/clil-in-pre-primary-education/340265)

## Related Content

---

### Lawrence2College: A Mentoring Initiative

Audrey Faye Falkand Ashley J. Carey (2021). *Research Anthology on Instilling Social Justice in the Classroom* (pp. 784-805).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/lawrence2college/270125](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/lawrence2college/270125)

### Qualitative Studies in Cases of Trafficking: The Case of Migrant Women in Malaysia

Haezreena Begum binti Abdul Hamid (2022). *Social Justice Research Methods for Doctoral Research* (pp. 1-24).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/qualitative-studies-in-cases-of-trafficking/293615](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/qualitative-studies-in-cases-of-trafficking/293615)

### Burger King: Cutting Corners and Tampering With Data

Qiuying Zhang (2023). *Cases on Social Justice in China and Perspectives on Chinese Brands* (pp. 133-143).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/burger-king/317876](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/burger-king/317876)

### Civic Knowledge, Engagement, and Attitudes Among Lower-Secondary Students in 24 Countries: Results From ICCS 2016

Wolfram Schulz (2019). *Handbook of Research on Education for Participative Citizenship and Global Prosperity* (pp. 1-44).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/civic-knowledge-engagement-and-attitudes-among-lower-secondary-students-in-24-countries/217210](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/civic-knowledge-engagement-and-attitudes-among-lower-secondary-students-in-24-countries/217210)

### Fostering Pre-Service ESOL Teacher Candidates' Advocacy Through the Funds of Knowledge Approach

Brian Hibbs (2024). *Supporting Activist Practices in Education* (pp. 125-147).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/fostering-pre-service-esol-teacher-candidates-advocacy-through-the-funds-of-knowledge-approach/340480](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/fostering-pre-service-esol-teacher-candidates-advocacy-through-the-funds-of-knowledge-approach/340480)