

# Mapping Student and Lecturer Perspectives: Use of L1 in a CLIL-oriented context

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to describe action research conducted with lecturers who teach non-language subjects through English and their respective students at San Jorge University (USJ). The lecturers attended an introductory to teach through English following the CLIL approach (Content and Language Integrated Learning—CLIL). To further adapt this course to the lectures' needs and resolve issues related to the use of the students' mother tongue (L1), the author surveyed the opinions of both the lecturers' and their respective students on in regards to using Spanish in the CLIL classroom, especially when new terms are presented. The answers were compiled into themes that show both groups' overall agreement to the conditioned importance of L1. The themes were: 1) reasons for using Spanish; 2) pros of using English only; 3) the use of L1 as an indicator of competence in the target foreign language (L2); 4) what students value in CLIL teaching practices. The outcomes bring into focus what students prefer and value with regards to using L1 and L2 in the CLIL classroom.

**Key Words:** CLIL, lecturer and student opinions, classroom action research, professional development, first language (L1), additional/foreign language (L2), subject-specific content

## 1. Description

### 1.1. Background

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a known educational approach that aims at increasing students' exposure and use of an additional language in their local setting through content subjects, and has the dual aim of learning content as well as language (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Lecturers at the University of San Jorge who teach parts of their courses –or full courses– through English are required to complete 16 hours of CLIL training in a structured course that is supervised and executed by the Institute of Modern Languages at USJ. The outcomes of this training influence the teaching-learning process and shape the academic community at USJ, including teachers and students in first place (cf. Dafouz and Smit, 2014).

One of the areas of training focuses on helping the lecturers differentiate between subject-specific language and other types of language (academic and general language) so lecturers may decide how best to scaffold their learners. In the process of discussing scaffolding, the participants' attention is drawn to the importance of students' first language (L1), and how it is regarded as a beneficial resource (Méndez and Pavón, 2012; Lasagabaster, 2013). More on this point can be found in section 2.B.

The 16-hour course has four parts that start with a general familiarization of the CLIL framework and ends with a ten-minute micro-teaching practice. The importance given to the CLIL framework with its four Cs (Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture) is practical in nature as it acts as a guide for teachers during topic planning at the lesson or unit level. The second and third parts of the course focus on two of the framework guiding principles: Cognition and Communication (*language and languaging*).

Discussions with the lecturers about the relationship between cognition and communication and respectively between content and communication are prompted by activities that help them identify these relationships and connect them to their own content-subjects. For example, lecturers are given learning outcomes and are asked to discuss the level of cognition required of the students based on the verbs (a linguistic element) in relation to Bloom's Taxonomy. They are also asked to read statements (e.g. *First, quartz veins are located in rock and granite, then they are inspected for gold*) and decide which language function is performed (reasoning, hypothesizing, predicting, sequencing/ordering...) and which linguistic elements are required for this function to be successfully enacted.

The types of language used in CLIL settings are also introduced: language *of* learning (specific to the content subject), language *for* learning (to participate in activities) and language *through* learning (that emerges and cannot be pre-planned) (Coyle et al, 2010; Llinares, Morton and Whittaker, 2012). Cummin's (1984) BICS and CALP –Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency– is another way in which language types are explained; examples for how teachers move between different registers and types of languages are exhibited and the need for teachers to plan for using language types is brought into focus. At this stage, lecturers tend to voice their doubts and opinions about the use of L1 in CLIL classes, especially when confirming that CLIL is a non-elitist approach that respects the students' L1 and encourages bi-literacy (Pavón Vazquez and Gaustad, 2013).

Because the role of language(s) in CLIL is a central point that affects teachers' language teaching strategies, it is an important part of the course before the practical micro-teaching.

### 1.2. Teaching innovation in CLIL training

Though innovation does not have a specific definition, practitioners agree that it implies having an idea—new or recycled—applied differently and effectively in any teaching-learning situation. Innovation in this paper refers to using a bottom-up approach that allows us to uncover the role(s) of L1 by inspecting students' needs and perspectives, as well as that of lecturers', instead of merely embracing language practices found in other CLIL contexts. To clarify, decisions regarding the point in question are distilled from students' learning experience and from the lecturers' practices instead of solely depending on CLIL literature.

The corpus of comments from the students and the lecturers are communicated to all those concerned: pre-service and in-service CLIL lecturers; CLIL supervisors as well as other CLIL communities with similar interests and challenges. The illustration in the figure below (Figure 1) shows a model training cycle in which the original objectives are based on perceived needs then is revisited and adjusted according to the participants' evolving needs. In the case at hand, the need to address L1 as a necessary and acceptable teaching-learning resource became a new point of inquiry for teachers and the basis of this project.

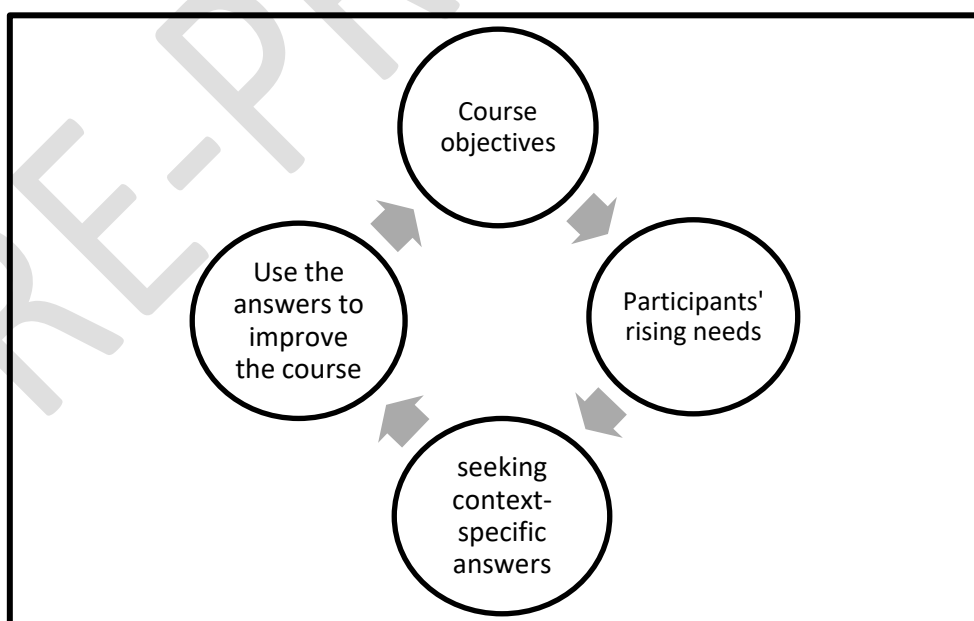


Figure 1. *The teaching-assessment cycle*

## 2. Context

### 2.1. Reasons to consider using students' mother tongue (L1)

There are conflicting beliefs regarding the use of L1, being perceived by some teachers –and even by some students– as an issue that requires intervention. CLIL was adopted in Spanish higher education to expose students to an additional target language and set up universities for internationalisation after the birth of the European Union (Dafouz and Smit, 2014); therefore, reverting to the L1 in education could be naturally seen as a hindrance of opportunities to use the L2. Despite the latter, the importance of students' first language can be argued. In higher education where students are already beyond the critical period of language acquisition and the cognitive process of language learning requires attentional control from the students (Wass, Scerif and Johnson, 2012) and tackling novel complex content and novel complex L2 puts a higher cognitive demand on the students (Cummins, 1984). Gil et al. (2012) found that L1 is used as a result of the increased challenge students have when coping with content subjects in English. It is in these cases that the L1 could be considered a valuable educational resource. From a pedagogical point of view, it can also be argued that because competent teachers are identified as those who make learning relevant and give learners “a sense of ownership” (Amabile, 1989), good teachers should be open to using students' mother tongue to exercise their ownership of the language as a social semiotic function (Halliday, 1975).

### 2.2. The Established roles of L1

Interest in the roles of L1 in CLIL contexts is novel but not new. In Lasagabaster's (2013) study, thirty-five CLIL teachers in Columbia who varied in their amount of use of L1 affirmed the positive role it plays in scaffolding content and language learning, and helping learners build up their lexicon and metalinguistic awareness, but he also pointed to other cases in which practitioners were against it because could it minimize negotiating meaning during explanations. Those who approve its use have different viewpoints about the role it plays; hence, several studies have examined the conditions that govern L1 in CLIL lessons (cf. Lin, 2014). Findings showed that it acted as a “source of relief” for both teachers and students, and as a scaffolding tool in the classroom (Gil et al., 2012). In line with the latter, Gerlinger (2007) explicitly stated that L1 is used to fill gaps in students' comprehension and help teachers and students avoid content-related miscomprehensions. Lin (2014) adds that to help ‘unpack’ the content, L1 is used to provide students with examples and translations of subject-

specific terms. Gierlinger (2007) and Lin (2014) coincide in that L1 has an important interpersonal function in the classroom, both regulatory and disciplinary, like when establishing and negotiating relationships between teacher and students and among students. If we advocate the use of L1, it needs to be principled since randomized use could be perceived as a teaching method flaw.

### 3. Objectives:

The in-service lecturers in our context question:

- 1- when L1 should/could be used;
- 2- if using L1 is understood by the students as a result of lacking L2 competence

I have decided to tackle those questions as my own objectives and use the answers to respond empirically to the concerned members who wish to proceed with their CLIL teaching to the best of their ability. Since the implementation of a new method or tool to solve a teaching-learning problem is one of the underlying rules of teaching innovation (Ferrari et al, 2009; Havelock and Huberman, 1980), it was befitting to treat these objectives as a teaching innovation project. It was, therefore, necessary to explore and record what students and teachers say in regards to these two points.

### 4. Development (Methodology)

#### 4.1. Classroom Action Research:

Classroom Action Research (CAR) lies in the center of the continuum between personal reflection and formal educational research. It is considered a systematic method that allows teachers to focus their attention on a problem they perceive as important and tackle it with the aim of improving their classrooms (teaching and learning). In comparison to personal reflection or personal preference for novelty in teaching methods, CAR is regarded as more research-oriented to teaching innovation and is based on the assumption of collaborative work to tackle problems the teachers themselves have identified (Watts, 1985, p. 118). This means that it is less reflective and less solitary than personal reflection and that more than one teacher is involved in the action. It is not about finding out what is wrong, but rather a quest for knowledge to teach better. The process of action research moves from posing questions to gathering data, reflecting and finally deciding on a course of action (Ferrance, 2000: 2), which is the case described in this chapter. The questions driving the action research here have

already been stated under *Objectives* in section 3. To gather the necessary data, the best course of action was to survey lecturers' and students' perspectives on the use of L1 in CLIL lectures using an open-ended prompt then classify their responses following a compare and contrast approach (Charmaz ,2000). This approach befits the analysis of qualitative data; each response is divided into chunks (phrases or sentences) that are thematically compared to the remaining language units (chunks) in the corpus of responses by asking what the chunk is about and how it differs from the others. These chunks or phrases are then classified into emerging themes to detect the general tendency of the respondents for each theme then contrast lecturers' and students' opinions. Sections 5 through 8 in this chapter elaborate on the followed steps.

#### 5. Personal, technical resources and infrastructure: Participants

Lecturers from different degree programs across USJ were invited to participate in an anonymous survey along with their respective students. The invitation was sent out by E-mail to all CLIL lecturers who had attended the 16-hour preliminary training course from the degrees of Information Technology, Business Administration, Sports Sciences, Education, Pharmacy, Communication and Physiotherapy. A total of 9 lecturers and 58 students from four of the mentioned degree programs responded to the target open-ended question (Table 1). The survey, as will be explained in the following section, had two parts, but this chapter reports on only one part with two open-ended questions to which all lecturers (9) and less than half of the students (58) responded.

Degree Programs	<i>N teachers to respond to the survey</i>	N teachers to respond to the target question	<i>N students to respond to the survey</i>	N students to respond to the target question
Education	1	1	23	13
Pharmacy	2	2	19	18
Communication	1	1	13	7
Physiotherapy	5	5	79	20
	9	9	134	58

Table 1. Participants from various degree programs

## 6. Tools

As already mentioned, the tool used in this CAR was a survey<sup>1</sup> divided into two parts, one with multiple choice questions to compare lecturers' and students' perspectives about the amount of L1 lectures used when tackling subject-specific terms and general English terms, whose results are published in another volume (Nashaat Sobhy and Giner, 2016), and another part with an open-ended question which is the focus of this chapter. This question sought teachers' and students' opinions—through a process of reflection—about the use of Spanish in the English CLIL lectures and asked whether they considered the use of Spanish in this case to indicate fluency in both languages or to indicate a lack of sufficient English language competence. The questions were put up in Spanish (Figure 2) and respondents could freely choose English or Spanish to respond.

**Con los términos específicos de un asignatura CLIL en mente**

**¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre el uso del español a la hora de impartir clases CLIL en inglés?**

**¿Crees que el uso de dos idiomas (inglés-español) indica soltura en los dos lenguas o indica una carencia lingüística en uno de ellos? ¿Por qué?**

Figure 2. *The target open-ended question*

As seen in the figure above, the respondents were not asked directly about the uses of L1. This was done to avoid implying that it does play a role, in case the participants had a different opinion.

## 7. Evaluation:

### 7.1. Prompting reflective thinking

Reflective thinking has become a common practice in pre-service and in-service education programs, one that brings to the surface biases and uncertainties and influence teachers' practices (Day, 2009: 229) says. The used questions clearly communicated to both the lecturers and their respective students that L1 is a point in question; one that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://app.surveymzmo.com/>

aroused enough interest to launch a survey. It also allowed those taking part in the CLIL process to voice their opinions, which in turn communicates their motivations, biases, uncertainties and evaluations about using a foreign language in content learning.

#### 7.2. A mini-corpus of perspectives

A total of 123 comments were gathered. The corpus has 97 student comments and 26 lecturer comments which are proportional to the number of participants from group. Four main themes were extracted, two in response to the opinions about the use of L1 and two in response to whether the participants considered the alternation of Spanish and English to be a sign of fluency in both languages or a sign of L2 incompetence. A fifth theme—valued teaching practice— was distilled.

What follow are the five themes (A through E) in a descending order from the theme with most to the least comments.

The following are the themes extracted from students and teachers' opinions about the use of Spanish in English CLIL classes

##### **A- *Reasons for using Spanish***

###### **i. *Students' comments*** (39 comments):

The majority of the comments under this theme came from Physiotherapy students (17 comments) and Education students (15 comments). The overall comments advocate the use of controlled L1 for reasons related to students' language competence (Example 1). Students stated that they need L1 to deal with complex content that is already difficult to deal with in Spanish (Example 2), but they also said that dealing with new terms in two languages increases their comprehension, especially in the case of French students who study at USJ(Example 3). Comments that were pro striking a balance between the use of L1 and L2 were present in this theme. According to the majority of the students, L1 use should be conditioned to certain moments and not all unknown or difficult terms should be explained in Spanish (Example 4).

Example 1: “...*está complicado estudiar en inglés para uno que solo tiene el nivel básico para entender y comunicar*”

Example 2: “...*necesario solo para cosas importantes o mejor entendimiento que pueden llegar a ser dificultosas en el otro idioma*” / “[*usar el español*] *es mejor debido que algunas partes de la materia son difíciles y aún se hacen más en inglés*”

Example 3: “...*que [el uso del español] ayuda a comprender el inglés*”/



*“me parece indispensable, como alumno francés, la mezcla de las lenguas ayuda entender palabras específicas.” / “... hay veces que el español es más comprensible que el inglés”.*

Example 4: *“Si hay vocabulario que no se conoce opino que se debería explicar en inglés salvo en casos muy puntuales.” / “El uso del español... no lo considero de gran utilidad hasta que no hay otro remedio para facilitar la comprensión”.*

ii. **Teachers’ comments** (9 comments):

More than half of the comments were generated by lecturers in Pharmacy (5 comments). They confirmed that there are moments when Spanish is needed, for example when the clarity of a specific point is key (Example 6) or when they perceive that they are unable to explain an idea ore clearly and students are struggling to understand (Example 7). The lecturers, like the students, also referred to the need to facilitate comprehension by simplifying the explanations in English and using Spanish only as the last resort (Example 8).

Example 6: *“ayuda necesaria en algún momento /...Cuando quiero que algo quede MUY CLARO...”*

Example 7: *“Si veo que en inglés no lo sé explicar de otra manera a la que ya lo he hecho sin éxito en la comprensión por parte de algunos alumnos.” / “Es necesario cuando ves que los estudiantes no entiende lo que quieres decir o no entienden el término al que te refieres.”*

Example 8: *“Si tras simplificar al máximo la explicación de un concepto o tema se detecta que el alumnado aun no lo ha comprendido, me parece bien el uso del castellano.”*

Based on the comments above, students and teachers seem to agree that Spanish is an indispensable resource given that not all students and not all teachers are able to understand and convey complex ideas in English. Students pointed out that learning specific terms in English and Spanish aids their comprehension. Similarly, lecturers confirm that resorting to Spanish helps disambiguate content; however, both groups see that the use of Spanish should be conditioned to selected moments.

## **B- Pros of using English only**

### **i. Students' comments (25 comments):**

The majority of comments explaining why English only classes were better came from Pharmacy students (12 comments) and Education students (8 comments). It should be noted that the students in these two programs had a full CLIL subject in which the lecturers strictly used English. For this theme, students' comments approved the use of 'English-only' given its usefulness in improving their language proficiency and for professional and employability purposes (Example 9 and 10). One of the students even mentioned that conducting classes in English-only was essential to accommodate international students (Example 11). There is also evidence in these comments to their willingness to exert the necessary effort to understand the content subject (Example 12).

Example 9: *“las clases deben ser totalmente en inglés para perfeccionar el idioma/... que es bueno para nuestro desarrollo del inglés”/ “... el español en asignaturas en inglés no ayuda en nada. Puesto que cómo de verdad se aprende es sumergiéndote totalmente en el inglés”.*

Example 10: *“me ha ayudado para mi formación además considero que me ayudará en el mundo laboral debido a que conozco distintos términos profesionales” / “una forma de aprender inglés en el ámbito en el que nos vamos a mover laboralmente” / “el uso de un solo idioma (ingles) ayuda al alumno a aprender el idioma de cara a trabajar en equipos extranjeros”.*

Example 11: *“Debido a que en las clases hay varios alumnos Erasmus, el español no suele utilizarse para evitar incomprensión”.*

Example 12: *“Creo que [el uso del español] no nos ayuda ya que debemos hacer un esfuerzo...” / “... puede hacer más duro el estudio pero sin duda trae más beneficios”.*

### **ii. Teachers' comments (1 comment):**

Only one lecturer—in Pharmacy— made a comment in relation to the preference for exclusive use of English; the lecturer saw that it was important to be consistent in using English for different functions in order to avoid confusing students (Example 13)

Example 13: *“se debería ser firme en utilizar siempre este idioma en todos los ámbitos: tutorías, emails, exámenes, etc...es menos confuso para el alumno trabajar bajo un criterio homogéneo.”*

It could be concluded that students advocate English-only classes as a means to improve and expand their language competences for future employability, whereas teachers see that using “English-only” is a matter of consistency in the first place. However, not enough teachers included this theme in their comments and hence no generalisations can be made.

### **C- Using L1 and L2 as an indicator of fluency or lack of linguistic knowledge**

Regarding participants’ opinions about whether the use of Spanish indicates fluency or lack of sufficient knowledge in one of the two languages, two sets of contrasting opinions appeared that are explained in C–1 and C–2.

#### ***C–1. The use of L1 in CLIL indicates fluency in both languages***

Students’ and lecturers’ comments (10 and 5 comments respectively) were quite similar in nature. They pointed out that switching between L1 and L2 (Spanish and English) indicated ease using both (Example 13). One of the students made reference to this alternation of languages as an indicator of cultural competence and a few mentioned that it depended on the frequency of times the shift from one language to the other happened (Example 14). Most importantly, comments from both sides affirmed that the choice of language had a didactic objective (Example 15). To sum up this point, both groups agreed that using L1 in a CLIL class can be a sign of fluency in both languages and that it is positively if is didactically justified.

Example 13: *“El emplear los dos idiomas indica soltura porque se puede emplear uno u otro indistintamente” / “Puedes dominar perfectamente las dos lenguas y no tener carencias de alguna de ellas”.*

Example 14: *“No creo que el uso en sí del castellano implique carencias, más bien sería el número de veces que se utiliza”.*

Example 15: *“En su caso no indicaría carencia de vocabulario, .... lo que hace entonces indica soltura pero sería para meterse al nivel de los alumnos que no entienden ciertas palabras” / “depende de cómo se mezclen ambos idiomas, sobre todo si es con objetivos didácticos. Si el uso de ambos está justificado, programado y bien estructurado, es decir, no resulta aleatorio, no debería denotar una carencia lingüística, sino todo lo contrario, un dominio de ambas lenguas.”*

### ***C-2. The use of L1 in CLIL indicates lack of competence in English***

The majority of the opinions under this theme came from the students (9 comments, as opposed to 2 comments from the lecturers). Students' opinions contradicted those previously mentioned in C1; they believed that using Spanish was an indicator of low language competence, either by the lecturers or by the students (Example 16). In this theme, students expressed preference for learning theoretical content in their mother tongue and either abandoning CLIL as an approach or limiting learning through/in English to doing exercises and completing practical tasks (Example 17). Students of course will always have their opinions as learners of how both content and language should be approached according to their own strengths and weaknesses, irrespective of what experts in education suggest is beneficial. For example, other students were very pro CLIL and showed preferences for an early start in CLIL and for the integration of content and additional language learning (Example 18). This point will be drawn upon again in section 8 below.

Example 16: “[indica] *carencia lingüística ... en temas específicos*” / “*es que al hacerlo en inglés no doy detalles o no me pongo a explicar matices*” / “*Indica una carencia necesaria, ya que si todos fuéramos bilingües no haría falta hacer las clases en inglés*”.

Example 17: “*Las explicaciones en clases deberían estar en español al fin de mejor entender la material*” / “*En caso de que se quisiera integrar el inglés en asignaturas netamente teóricas sería interesante hacerlo mediante trabajos o ejercicios, pero nunca sustituyendo al español en la parte teórica.*”

Example 18: “*Me gusta la integración de otros idiomas en las asignaturas siempre y cuando estas asignaturas sean de alguna forma complementarias a la formación que estamos recibiendo, ...*” / “*...el uso de inglés sería perfecto si el alumno empezaría la carrera usando esta metodología*”.

### ***D- What students value in CLIL teaching practices***

The last theme reflects some of the characteristics students obviously value in the CLIL context (a total of 15 comments): they appreciated lecturers' ability to convey clear explanations in English that aid content comprehension; more specifically, they valued the ability of the lecturers to use terms that are accessible to them—most probably, high frequency vocabulary or Latinate terms—and check they understand subject-specific

terms (Example 19). Again, where specific terms are concerned, it was mentioned that it is an advantage to study through CLIL subjects with specific-language with similar equivalents in Spanish (Example 20), and two of the students mentioned that they find subject-specific glossaries to be useful (Example 21). Interestingly, one of the students mentioned that automatic translators were confusing (Example 22).

Example 19 (*El docente utiliza bien el inglés durante las clases prácticas... nos permite entender bien porque habla bien el inglés y explica bien lo que debemos hacer*) / “...utiliza un vocabulario accesible y sencillo con el que podemos entender todo. Además con las palabras más específicas la profesora se detiene a explicarlas lentamente y saber si lo hemos comprendido.”

Example 20: “veo más positivo estudiar en inglés asignaturas en que los terminos son parecidos [en español]”

Example 21: “Los alumnos [por sus carencias lingüísticas] se les deberían facilitar un glosario con las palabras del vocabulario específico para que pudiesen seguir más fácilmente la materia” / “En cuanto a los glosarios, dependería del nivel general de la clase. Pero es un trabajo individual que conforme lo haces, se va aprendiendo.”

Example 22: (Lo de utilizar traductores automáticos lo veo como un factor que puede dar lugar a más confusiones que aclaraciones, pues no son herramientas muy fiables).

These comments are not only interesting but valuable since we, teachers, operate under preconceived conceptions and assume we know how students think and what they prefer; however, given the limited number of comments, we cannot claim that all students share the same opinions exhibited above.

#### 8. Main results and proposed actions:

To sum up the main results, there is an overall agreement among students and lecturers that Spanish is a vital learning tool in our CLIL setting: 39 out of 58 students (67, 2%) and all 9 lecturers (100%) support this finding through their comments. The role L1 plays as a tool for disambiguating content and aiding comprehension was evident in the extracted comments. Next to that, there was consensus among students that teaching through English exclusively—except for the specific moments that call for clarifying specific terms or checking student comprehension in Spanish—is believed to

be beneficial for their language learning, which in turn increases their professional skills and opportunities for employability. Thirdly, when students praised their lecturers for carefully explaining specific terms, extending glossaries, checking their comprehension and following the CLIL approach from early on in the semester, they were in fact reciting the teaching practices and tools that they believe are favourable for their learning.

In contrast, a few students suggested using L1 only and abandoning teaching through English, especially theoretical content. Such opinions, which pose a problem when considering the rising hopes and drawn plans for plurilingualism, have several interpretations. Two of these are related to motivation and self-regulation, which enables students to create better learning habits and monitor their performance to reach specific goals (Zimmerman, 2008). If students are self-regulated but lack the motivation to learn additional languages (English or other), they are not likely to embrace exerting more cognitive effort and increasing study-hours to learn content that is available to them in their L1. In other words, even if students possess the strategies to excel in a CLIL context, they have to be motivated enough first to use these strategies (Pintrich, 1989). Student motivation can be instrumentally enhanced, but if students lack self-regulation then they need to be empowered first with learning strategies. According to Dweck and Master (2008), students who lack learning strategies are not likely to make use of resources available to them to study and complete tasks, so it is a must that students in a bilingual setting are given the learning tools they need to support them cognitively and linguistically.

The results affect all stakeholders: the CLIL trainers, the lecturers in training, and eventually the students. The proposed actions are summarized in the following set of recommendations:

- Incorporate structured discussions about L1 in pre-service CLIL training

The use of L1 in CLIL should be delivered in a structured format in the CLIL training using activities that touch upon different scenarios to create a better sense for what conditioned L1 means. This would take the form of practical situations and applications (Figure 3). The illustrated episode is taken from a real classroom situation in which the lecturer's main objective was to help students discuss and debate the ethical decisions taken in an incident that involved the death of a mountain climber. The task implied using argumentation, a high cognitive thinking skill (*synthesis* to be precise), and the use of evidence from an original text to provide support for the arguments. The lecturer

used an exercise to draw students' attention to certain phrases and terms they could refer to for this purpose. As seen in Figure 3, The teacher tries to elicit from student the meaning of "starts in his eyes" then asks them for a translation. The expression is a low frequency expression that B1-B2 level students are not likely to recognize or use, so the lecturer<sup>2</sup> wisely (and naturally) switched to Spanish. The expression was important for this specific discussion but not to the overall subject-content. The episode (which is not relayed here in full) lasted for almost two minutes (from minute 0:39:03.7 to 0:41:34.8) and the duration of the focus on language form or meaning should be proportional to its relevance to the task in question and its probability of occurrence in the target content subject.

T: the most important thing for me is that you understand what they mean [in the text]  
he has stars in eyes  
what do you think it means? what do you think it means that somebody has stars in eyes?  
you don't have that expression in Spanish,  
S: (inaudible recording)  
T: say it in Spanish  
you translate  
S: perdió la vista  
T: NO it is it is not something bad  
Ss: ((students are speculating, throwing inaudible ideas at the teacher))  
T: in English it is means tiene ilusión (.) la ilusión que tenía  
T: so he has stars in eyes means he expects a lot (.)  
he was blinded by the stars in eyes  
it is something you like you to do but it is only an illusion  
la ilusión os lo digo en español  
es decir (.) te hace ilusión por un lado es positivo  
pero por otro lado (.) como puede ser solo una fantasía:  
that's what it means okay,  
that he may be blinded by (.) what he wants to do okay?

Figure 3. An example of conditioned use of L1 in a CLIL classroom

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Jonas Holst (Ética y Deontología aplicada)

- Survey the opinions of CLIL supervisors and trainers to reach an agreement on how the use of L1 should look like in higher education CLIL classrooms.
- Disseminate the roles of L1 to in-service CLIL lecturers who have already attended the training through the CLIL supervisors and coordinators, and open the door for discussing further uncertainties and answer questions in this regard.
- Raise lecturers' awareness to the need to enhance students' self-regulation by helping them:
  - o work through a flipped-based approach at their pace. This entails extending to the students the required materials (reading texts) with the introductory concepts and new lexis.
  - o build cognitive and language schemata to enhance their study skills, learning strategies and help them self-regulate. One way of doing so is through the use of graphic organizers accompanied by sentence starters and language frames.

#### 9. Innovative aspects

One of the strong points of this project is that it emerged from the questions of the lecturers during the CLIL training sessions. The project led to answers that lecturers can use to deal with uncertainties regarding L1 language use in CLIL settings. The proposal put forward to encourage conditioned L1 use was not only based on available global literature but was reached through an analysis of our local context through students' and teachers' comments making the proposal context-specific and *glocal* in nature.

#### 10. Conclusions

Parting from the understanding that teaching innovation is an action that lies somewhere between empirical experimentation and personal reflection, the use of classroom action research in this project has proved to be effective in finding answers to a question which has been troubling many CLIL practitioners. CLIL lecturers and students gave their opinions in regards to using English exclusively or to using L1 as a learning resource for CLIL purposes. It was deduced that most students and teachers find the conditioned use of Spanish (L1) is suitable for their needs. Since teaching innovation is about finding ways to teach and learn better, I



consider that any innovation in this field should be informed by the voices of those who are having the CLIL experience.

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