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## **Communicative Competence Development-Acquisition Using the CLIL Approach: Oviedo-Ostrava, A Comparative Study.**

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### **Abstract**

The objective of this work is to analyse the reality of two schools in Oviedo (Spain) and Ostrava (Czech Republic) in relation to the development-acquisition of communicative competence through the CLIL approach. The analysis is carried out around some determining indicators such as the context of the school, its internal operations, the methodology used, the official curriculum of Primary Education, interviews with teachers and questionnaires for students. The results reveal better conditions for the development of communicative competence in Ostrava as regards the daily use of the language, the importance given to it by the entire educational community or the methodology used in the school, all of which are subject to improvement in the school of Oviedo.

**Keywords:** CLIL, communicative competence, bilingualism, Primary Education.

### **1. Introduction and research context**

This paper aims to analyse the characteristics of two Primary Education schools, in Oviedo (Asturias) and Ostrava (Czech Republic) in order to suggest some of the reasons why the level of English language proficiency is different in both countries (English Proficiency Index, 2011; European Commission, 2012a; Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2016; Eurydice, 2012). The study relies on earlier research in the Asturian context, that sought to understand the academic performance and key-competencies development-acquisition of students immersed in bilingual programs (Fernández-Sanjurjo and Arias-Blanco, 2015), and to analyse its organization and internal operation, the relationship with academic results or the relationship with results in diagnostic evaluation (Educastur, 2016). In addition, other studies conducted at the University of Oviedo addressed the situation of other bilingual programs in different European countries in relation to our programs (Arce, 2016; Huelga, 2013; Santos, 2014; Villar, 2015).

This article is especially relevant because, since the bilingual programs were put into operation in our region in the late 2000s, there have been no scientific publications that support how the start-up of these programs helps the development-acquisition of communicative competence in English among Asturian students. Despite the fact that there are more than 200 public and private schools which have adhered to this bilingual program (Educastur, 2018), and although this region has the highest number of intermediate level speakers in Spain, the results reflect how Asturian citizens have the second highest level of difficulties, at the national level, expressing themselves in English (Cambridge Monitor, 2016). This fact has caused concern in the educational community, as this could be due to the quality of language teaching in the Early Childhood and Primary Education stages –both of them essential for language development– (Fernández-Costales and González-Riaño, 2018). Therefore, since English is accepted as the lingua franca of the interconnected world in which we live, the importance and need for students to achieve a good development-acquisition of communication skills in that language seems essential.

Communicative competence has been studied and defined by several authors throughout the last decades. Not only does it imply that a person masters a language, it also specifically means that they act as members of the linguistic society in question (Berruto, 1979; Girón and Vallejo, 1992; Hymes, 1971).

Therefore, communicative competence can be said to be the ability of a person to manage all the linguistic situations they are immersed in. On the other hand, the CLIL approach (Content and Language Integrated Learning), is a dual educational approach that focuses its attention on the use of the foreign language for the teaching-learning of content in non-linguistic subjects (Marsh, 2012).

Taking this into account, and considering the results observed in the level of proficiency indicators of this foreign language, it can be pointed out that the aforementioned bilingual programs implemented in Asturian schools are not achieving the desired results. One of the main objectives of these programs is that students improve their language or communication skills in English (Agudo et al., 2006), which does not seem to be taking place. In addition, it can be observed how other countries such as Malaysia, Portugal, Mexico or the Czech Republic –whose socioeconomic development is inferior to the Spanish (Conceição, 2019)– overtake us in terms of mastery of this foreign language (Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2016).

This paper will yield data that allow to establish a clearer perspective on why these differences in English language mastery occur in both countries. An observation of an educational system and a subsequent comparative analysis, will also offer relevant information about possible deficiencies in terms of the methodologies used, the communicative competence in English of the teachers in our region or the motivation that students might have for learning English. Also, this last part of the analysis could provide data on the use that students can give to the language outside the classroom in their day-to-day lives, the perception they have about learning the language for their future work or the willingness, and interest that the educational community shows for the English teaching in terms of, for instance language assistants and internationalization.

## 2. Theoretical framework: communicative competence and CLIL approach

Scientific literature is prolific in terms of publications on communicative competence and CLIL, as previously seen. Notwithstanding, it is necessary to determine the relationship between both concepts to see if, by putting into practice the CLIL approach in the classroom, communication skills in a language can be developed and acquired by students. To do this, we will first have to characterize both concepts to subsequently establish the possible relationships between them.

### 2.1 Communicative competence

The definition of communicative competence indicates that learners of a language have to gain knowledge not only of the basic functioning of the language in terms of spelling or grammar rules, but also of other aspects such as the cultural traits that are intrinsically associated with it (Berruto, 1979; Girón and Vallejo, 1992; Hymes, 1971). Therefore, according to the definitions proposed by these authors, it seems that communicative competence is not an isolated construct but is integrated and nourished by other forms of language use. A more recent analysis of the term reveals new designs that seem to structure communicative competence by other sub-competences necessary to develop it correctly, as described below (Bermúdez and González, 2001):

- Canale (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980) subdivided them into grammatical, sociolinguistic, discursive and strategic.
- Bachman (1990) and Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1995) subdivide it into organizational, pragmatic and discursive.
- Correa (2001) subdivides it into linguistic, pragmatic, cultural and ideological.

From the above summary it seems necessary to select the linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discursive, strategic and cultural or sociocultural dimensions, since they are the ones that can best define the communicative competence as a combination of competences:

- Linguistic competence (*LC*) was defined by Chomsky (1965) as the conscious or unconscious knowledge that one has about the functioning of a linguistic system, that is, the capacity that a speaker or listener has to produce and interpret verbal signs, to create, reproduce and interpret all kinds of statements and sentences.
- Sociolinguistic competence (*SLC*) was explained by Canale and Swain (1980) as the ability to adapt linguistic use to the context or as the set of knowledge and skills essential to achieve an appropriate use of language in the social context in which we find ourselves (Moreno, 2007).
- Pragmatic competence (*PC*) was defined by Morris (1946), Peirce (1960) and Van Dijk (1980) as the ability to differentiate between the formal content of the communication and the communicative intention.

It must be added that, according to Hymes (1971), the person must be able to inform, order, interrogate, challenge, suggest, pray, taking into account the purpose of their communicative action, the receiver to whom their communication will be aimed, the moment and the place where it will take place.

- Discursive competence (*DC*) will be the speaker's ability to apply their own experience to generate understandable messages and to analyse and understand others (Canale and Swain, 1980). This competence will refer to the selection, sequencing, organization and interpretation of words, phrases, structures and sentences to achieve oral or written texts with coherence, cohesion and structuring and that are related to the community where the individual is immersed (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).
- Strategic competence (*StC*) is defined, according to Canale and Swain (1980), as the ability to know what can be said and how, integrating of verbal and non-verbal language. The strategic dimension encompasses factors related to the effective use of language, that is, "the use of verbal and non-verbal resources to favour communication and compensate for errors in it, derived from lack of knowledge or other conditions that limit it" (Bermúdez and González, 2011, p.101).
- Cultural or sociocultural competence (*CSC*) is defined by Canale and Swain (1980) as that which enables the individual to be able to interpret the cultural contents of the statements. This competence is related to the level of knowledge of the person to generate appropriate messages in the sociocultural context in which they are (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

## 2.2 The CLIL approach

The main objective of the CLIL approach is teaching a non-linguistic content subject using the language of study as a vehicular language; thanks to this, students also develop skills related to 4Cs: Content, Communication, Culture and Cognition (Marsh, 2012). Therefore, in order to determine whether, by putting this approach into practice in the classroom, students can develop and acquire communicative competence in the target language, it is useful to first characterize the CLIL approach itself. The CLIL approach presents a series of general characteristics that make it distinguishable (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010):

- Student-centred teaching.
- Flexibility and variety: attention to the diversity of learning styles.
- Learning based on processes and tasks.
- Interactive and autonomous learning.
- Cooperative teaching-learning process.
- Coordination and support: reduction of the affective filter.
- Use of multiple resources and materials, especially ICT: richer and more varied context.

In addition, CLIL involves a number of basic general principles on which it is based and which should always be present if schools conduct their classes using this educational philosophy (Coyle et al., 2010):

- Balance between content and languages: foreign-language-skills improves and reinforces and enhances non-language skills.
- Preference for cooperation and coordination.
- Reinforcement of linguistic diversity.
- Increased exposure to the foreign language.
- Greater curricular integration.
- More conscious class planning.
- Diversity of resources and ways of organizing classes.
- Code change naturally.
- Richer learning contexts.

Finally, CLIL implies some specific principles that relate to the linguistic, content and learning focus aspects (Coyle et al., 2010), as explained below:

- Linguistic: language embedded in all content; holistic and natural language learning, more effective in real situations; contextualized language, knowledge is built and understanding is developed on a topic through tasks close to reality; learning focused on meaningful content, using the language with a purpose; increased motivation; increased exposure to the foreign language, more opportunities for incidental or implicit learning.
- Content: all content is made of language; greater awareness of the role of language in the learning process; more methodological and conscious teaching with the integration of learning strategies; diversity of perspectives on the same phenomenon; deeper learning processes and positive impact on conceptualization; development of basic skills.
- Approach: cooperative work tasks and peer teaching technique; discovery and troubleshooting tasks; research work such as hypotheses, procedures, data collection and results; personalization; and planning support or scaffolding to build learning.

### 2.3 Communicative competence acquisition through the CLIL approach

The following communicative competences will be achieved through the CLIL approach:

- *LC* will be worked since CLIL states that the language will be embedded in all content, generating a holistic and natural approach, where it will be learned through its use, in real situations in which the students will build their own knowledge (Coyle et al., 2010). This will allow students to generate the conscious or unconscious knowledge that a person has about the functioning of the linguistic system (Chomsky, 1965).
- *SC*, the ability to communicate in an unequivocal context (Canale and Swain, 1980; Moreno, 2007), will be worked since CLIL principles defend that language is contextualized, and knowledge is built and developed through tasks close to reality (Coyle et al., 2010).
- *PC*, the ability to differentiate between the formal content of the communication and the communicative intention (Morris, 1946; Peirce, 1960; Van Dijk, 1980), will be worked as CLIL improves the foreign language skills of students, but also reinforces and enhances non-language skills (Coyle et al., 2010).
- *DC*, the ability to communicate meaningfully, coherently and in a clear and structured way (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995), will be covered due to the fact that CLIL states that all content is built with language and embedded in all the content, which will guarantee a constant interaction that will favour the adequate construction of phrases and texts (Coyle et al., 2010).
- *StC*, the ability to use verbal and non-verbal resources to guarantee effective communication (Canale and Swain, 1980), will be put into practice taking into account that CLIL improves the foreign language skills of students but also reinforces and enhances non-language skills (Coyle et al., 2010).
- *CSC*, the ability to generate appropriate messages in the sociocultural context in which they are (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995), will be gained through CLIL since this increases student-time exposure to foreign language (Coyle et al., 2010) and, as Romero (2000) defends, language is one of the most important elements of a culture.

Taking these characterizations into account, it can be concluded that, by using CLIL approach in the classroom, each of the sub-competences that make up the communicative competence work and students are provided the necessary mechanisms to develop and learn the target language.

## 3. Method

This paper will be centred on comparing two educational systems as regards communicative competence and CLIL. One part will be carried out by the general principles of qualitative research. The other relies on quantitative methodology: a questionnaire was submitted to the schools with a survey –completed anonymously– designed to assess students' perception about English in their surroundings.

### 3.1. Participants and procedure

Firstly, an analysis concerning the educational systems in Oviedo and Ostrava, through qualitative research approach, is developed, in order to collect the information needed to determine the differences between the two educational systems. The participant observation will allow to understand the schools' context, internal operations and the methodology used. A documentary analysis of the syllabi of both educational systems will be carried out, whereby we will determine the importance given by the educational community of the two locations to foreign language learning.

Secondly, interviews with key informants will be conducted. Through these we will learn the insights of the interviewees –coordinators of bilingual sections of each school who are highly qualified in teaching-learning through the CLIL approach– concerning the reality under study. These interviewees will provide first-hand information on the main factors to be analysed and compared.

Finally, we will have 90 students from 6th grade of Primary Education at each school to complete a survey. Thanks to the analysis of the questionnaires it will be possible to determine the degree of importance that they give to the learning of a foreign language.

### 3.2 Instrument

The research tools in this paper were a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire. The interview, adapted from Castillo (2012), was to be answered by the schoolteachers as key informants, with questions related to the importance given to the bilingual project at school, the motivation of the students or the training of the teachers in bilingual subjects.

The assessment questionnaire, adapted from Bergfelt (2008), has 20 items to answer on a Likert scale with the following format: 1-strongly disagree; 2-little disagree; 3-agree; 4-quite agree; 5-strongly agree. It was completed by the students at both schools, with questions related to the importance given to English at home or the perception they have about the level of English of the teachers at the school. We included an additional multiple-choice section to select options depending on the use they make of English outside the school.

#### **4. Results**

The results shown yield significant data to determine the differences in level between students at both schools. Although we understand that these results cannot be extended to the reality of the whole Asturian or Spanish societies, we believe that they are relevant as a basis for future research.

##### **4.1. School context analysis**

Although the two cities are very similar in population –220,000 Oviedo; 280,000 Ostrava–, with the same services and facilities—shopping centers, football stadium, faculties, etc.—, there are a series of differences that are believed to be decisive for this study. The first of them refers to each geographical location. While Oviedo can be considered as internationally isolated due to its inland location and distance from international borders as well as its poor connections to other European airports, Ostrava has a privileged position since it is in the heart of Europe, surrounded by four other countries, all of which speak different languages. Thus, while students in Oviedo do not consider mastery of English as something necessary in order to communicate in close surroundings, Ostrava students see it as useful knowledge. In addition, these students will have more facilities to put into practice, develop and acquire the sociolinguistic dimension, defined by Canale and Swain (1980) as the ability to adapt linguistic use to the context, since, with the proximity of other non-Czech-speaking countries, they have more possibilities of using a second language than Asturian students.

Furthermore, the number of foreign visitors (in terms of Erasmus students welcomed by each city) is clearly differential. While Oviedo receives 1,000 students per year (Universidad de Oviedo, 2019), Ostrava receives 29,000 (University of Ostrava, 2019). This situation generates a need in the population of Ostrava to learn a foreign language, English in this case, especially among working people or those who look for a job in the service sector and, thus, need to communicate with their customers. In Oviedo, on the other hand, the need to learn English, in this sense, is not perceived as importantly it is in Ostrava. Thus, people in the Czech Republic will have more opportunities than those inhabitants in Oviedo to develop their cultural or sociocultural competence, which was defined by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) as the ability to generate appropriate messages in the sociocultural context in which it is found.

Also, in the cultural context in which Ostrava finds itself, students are able to put into practice in their day-to-day life outside the classroom two of the basic general principles of the CLIL approach, such as increasing exposure to the foreign language and learning to change code and register naturally (Coyle et al., 2010), creating a connection between what is learned in class and life outside school. The same cannot be said for students in Oviedo, who are not going to be able to put these general principles into practice outside the classroom, and who do not create ties between what they learned in school and real life. Returning to the theoretical framework, Moreno (2007) explained that the acquisition of a second language could only be understood by putting it into operation in an unequivocal context where real communication situations were generated, which gives more meaning to the greater possibilities of Ostrava students to use English in real contexts, opposed to students from Oviedo. This, obviously, has an impact on their learning, making it much more effective, and therefore, improving the development of their communicative competence.

##### **4.2. School internal operations**

The Oviedo school began its bilingual project in 2008, while in Ostrava it started in 2004. This fact should not be a determining factor, since, in the case of the Asturian school, the scheme has been in operation for more than 10 years, and the initial problems that it could have had should already have been solved.

Both schools have reached their pupil-classroom ratio, although the Czech school has this limit set at 20, and in many of the sessions students are split up to work into two groups of 10. The case of Oviedo students is different in so far as the groups consist of 25 students and there are not usually divided.

This can be a differentiating factor since one of the characteristics for the CLIL approach to be effective is that there must be student-centred teaching and attention to the diversity of styles of learning (Coyle et al., 2010), this being easier to achieve, obviously, with a smaller number of students.

The main objective of the bilingual program of both schools, based on what appears in their official documents, differs since in Oviedo the scheme is expected to improve the students' English language proficiency, without providing further explicit information. In Ostrava, on the contrary, it is given a much deeper value, not only being considered a learning tool but also a daily communication tool, which seems significant in view of the approach that teachers give to their daily work, and which will benefit, as pointed out by Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (2002), that students are able to guide their discourse, structure it, tell stories, argue, etc. –this being one of the requirements to develop the discursive dimension and, therefore, the communicative one.

Another differential factor that may be decisive for this research is the schools timetables. While in Oviedo students have contact with English for 11 hours per week, students in Ostrava have 15. In addition, the latter have an English-speaking assistant teacher who increases the students' need to use English. Thanks to this, it is possible to achieve one of the CLIL principles which indicates that the increase in exposure to the foreign language will benefit its development and, as a consequence, its acquisition (Coyle et al., 2010).

### 4.3. Methodologies

In the Asturian school the methodology was based on cooperative learning, which favours an integral development of the student (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1999) and which also provides students with the possibility of sharing experiences (García, Traver and Candela, 2001), helping to improve English language proficiency thanks to this interaction. The Czech school, on its part, opted for a discovery learning methodology that favours the autonomy of students so that they can investigate on their own and interact with each other and with the teachers, always in English, to achieve their final objective (Baro, 2011), which enhances the implementation of language for everyday and day-to-day tasks in the classroom. In addition, if some of the main characteristics of CLIL are reconsidered here –Coyle et al. (2010) spoke about the relationship of these approaches with cooperation and coordination or the tasks of discovery and problem solving– we can conclude that both methodologies are equally valid, so that students can put their abilities to the maximum use to fully develop communicative competence. Perhaps the main problem is that in Oviedo this methodology is not always put into practice, as it is interspersed with more traditional individual work, while in Ostrava discovery learning methodology is almost always employed in class.

Other factors that may influence the Czech school's better disposition for students to improve their command of the English language is the calm atmosphere in which they work, where errors are not penalized but reformulated by the teachers. This allows for constant interaction with students. In Oviedo, in most cases, errors are penalized, forcing students to participate on future occasions with an additional feeling of being wrong. Furthermore, the connection seen between what is worked on in the classroom and real life in the sessions observed in Ostrava contrasts with the scarce connection in this sense that students perceive in Oviedo. One of the basic principles of the CLIL approach indicates that, through its implementation, richer teaching-learning contexts are generated (Coyle et al., 2010); this was undoubtedly generated in Ostrava with the methodology used by the teachers, while it was more difficult to perceive in Oviedo, due to the aforementioned penalization of errors and the scarce connection with real life, which generates fears in students to participate and also much more abstract teaching-learning contexts that do not motivate them to interact with their peers.

As for the English-speaking language assistants, they participated in very different ways. In Oviedo an American student attended one or two weekly sessions, in which she prepared content that was being worked on that week, many times as a review. In Ostrava there was the figure of an assistant teacher who attended all the sessions in which the English language was used, in this case, 15 hours a week. It is clear, from this time difference, that Czech students were much more likely to be able to interact and listen to an English-speaking person with the advantages that this implies. According to CLIL, thanks to the presence of the native teacher assistant, the following aspects would be achieved: an evident increase in exposure to the foreign language, more conscious planning of classes and a greater diversity of resources and ways of organizing them (since there are two people working together and complementing each other to find the best activities for students);

In addition, a code change would occur naturally since they have to change from Czech to English or vice versa when they have one or the other subject, and richer teaching-learning contexts would develop thanks to having two teachers with different experiences and from different cultures, who can contribute with different points of view and propose different situations of interest to students (Coyle et al., 2010).

#### 4.4. Curriculum

There are not many differences between the two official documents in each country, but those that are identified are significant for our study. For instance, the Czech curriculum mentions that a good level of languages is essential for the maturity of the students, and that their command of English will be necessary for interaction with an interconnected Europe and world as well as for international mobility. Our official document, the Asturian curriculum, only establishes that it will be good to know the language in order to live in a multicultural and multilingual world, but it does not mention the interaction with those other countries or cultures, which is precisely what is fundamental in this regard. The Czech curriculum, through its provisions, facilitates the sociolinguistic dimensions, those that enable students to adapt their linguistic use to the context (Canale and Swain, 1980), and sociocultural ones, those that allow students to generate messages appropriate to the sociocultural context in which they are (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995); these can be taken into account by teachers when making their plans, this information being less specified in the official educational document of Asturias.

An essential characteristic of CLIL is motivation, as one of the main factors for students to better develop and acquire communicative competence in the English language (Coyle et al., 2010), and, in this sense, the curriculum indicates that Czech students will be able to finish the Primary Education stage with at least an accredited A2 level, whereas this extra motivation is not considered in the Asturian curriculum.

#### 4.5. Interviews

The interviews reflect two points of disagreement that we believe are fundamental in explaining the difference in linguistic skills between the two schools: on the one hand, the importance that students and their families place on learning the English language and, on the other, the qualification of the teachers of the school.

First of all, the coordinator of the bilingual program in Ostrava points out that the students understand that mastering this second language is essential for their future, a viewpoint which was not shared to the same extent in Oviedo, and which increases the motivation to learn. The coordinator adds that her students not only consider it essential for their future, but also find it necessary for their day-to-day lives since, for example, if they go to the cinema to see any non-Czech film, they will have to know English if they do not want to spend the duration of the movie reading subtitles. As López (2014) pointed out “through cinema, the linguistic, discursive, strategic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence of English can be acquired more easily, and also the affective one, since it increases their motivation” (p.2). Therefore, Czech students will have more facilities to develop each of the dimensions that make up communication skills in a much more natural and motivated way than Oviedo students, which will undoubtedly help their development-acquisition.

Secondly, it can be observed how, after the interview with the bilingual coordinator in Oviedo, doubts arise concerning the level of linguistic competence of the school's teachers. This is not so in Ostrava, where teachers were accredited with at least a C1 and one year of teaching experience in some English-speaking country. Thanks to this better mastery of the foreign language by teachers, students will have had much more exposure to that language than teachers in Oviedo, who will frequently have to resort to speaking Spanish and whose linguistic model (pronunciation, intonation, linguistic resources...) will not be a good reference for them. Thus, in the case of Oviedo, one of the characteristics mentioned in CLIL –namely that the students should have a greater exposure to the foreign language and, therefore, more opportunities for incidental or implicit learning (Coyle et al., 2010)– will not be met.

#### 4.6. Questionnaire

As regards the question "I like to speak English" the favourable percentages are very high in both cases, 80% Oviedo and 96% Ostrava, although the difference is that, in Oviedo, 50% of the students do not like to study English (versus 4% in Ostrava). Thus, this disagreement will be directly proportional to the day-to-day motivation of the students to study and learn English, and we know that, according to Coyle et al.

(2010), motivation is an essential factor for the development-acquisition of any learning and that "learning without motivation is unfeasible" (Junco, 2010, p. 2). Without motivation, learning the second language will be less effective in Oviedo than in Ostrava.

At this point, it must also be highlighted the importance that the Czech students' parents give to studying English, which, in part, could be explained due to the fact that the vast majority of them are fluent in the foreign language themselves (70% of interviewees strongly agree). This factor is not relevant in Oviedo since the results are not significant. It is pertinent that students do not give importance to English for their professional future (56% disagree), which in turn can be related to the lack of interest by their families. Therefore, it can be believed that there is a direct relationship between both issues discussed, and in Oviedo it is not observed that such learning is something significant for students, which entails less interest than in Ostrava.

Finally, we must highlight the response regarding the "Contact with English outside the school". If we look at the percentages relative to the answers "never" and "private classes" the difference is overwhelming and they show how in Oviedo the percentage reaches 95%, while it stands at 5% in Ostrava. Thus, Czech students with the great number of possibilities they have to put the English language into practice every day focus much more on its development-acquisition, in order to be able to communicate adequately in different contexts and with different interlocutors. This does not happen in Asturias, due to the scarce presence that the English language has in students' daily lives. The situation will also influence the motivation of some students because they are communicatively competent in a language that they will use regularly or not and, it must be remembered, without motivation there is no learning (Junco, 2010).

## 5. Conclusions and proposals for improvement

The general purpose of the paper was to carry out research to compare the communicative competence development-acquisition using the CLIL approach between two bilingual-Primary-Education schools in Oviedo and Ostrava, in order to determine the reasons for the difference in English language mastery. The review of the literature to define the communicative competence and the CLIL approach clearly shows the relationship between them: the communicative competence associated with CLIL and its implementation in the classroom has a positive effect on the linguistic abilities which students develop in the foreign language, since they are in greater contact with the second language. In addition, this allows them to further develop each of the dimensions that comprise communicative competence and that allow for its acquisition.

The analysis of the schools' context and the official documents enabled us to gain a more in-depth and detailed understanding of the educational contexts analysed and reveals data that prove that:

- Ostrava's students can put their English linguistic skills into practice much more assiduously than those of Oviedo. Thus, due to its closeness with other non-Czech speaking countries and the high number of foreign people among its population, this is positively perceived and taken advantage of by the Czech people. Here linguistic immersion is possible, and students develop their communicative competence better than those in Oviedo.
- The official school documents and the amount of time that students are exposed to the foreign language constitute evidence that students can develop their communicative competence better in Ostrava than in Oviedo.
- Ostrava's class groups are split into two on several occasions during the week, and, in this way, students receive much more teacher's attention and they have a bigger chance to use the foreign language. This is not the case in Oviedo, where classes with 25 students do not have as many chances to engage with and improve linguistic skills—the groups are not often divided.
- Studying the methodology used by the school staff, we can conclude that both ways of working are valid and contribute to the development-acquisition of communicative competence. Nevertheless, we are inclined to think that in Ostrava the conditions for developing the mentioned competence are better, since in Oviedo the methodology is used in an on-again, off-again way. It can then be determined that communicative competence will be better developed and acquired by the students in Ostrava.
- The schools' curricula have shown how both contexts focus their teaching on developing the communicative competence. However, whereas in Oviedo these documents only mention that the bilingual project has as its objective the development of the communicative competence, in Ostrava they go one step beyond that, since they regard English not only as a learning tool but also a communicative one.



The interviews carried out with staff from both schools provide two significant observations, the first being that they highlight the motivation of Czech students to learn the English language, since they consider its daily usage more necessary than in Spain. Secondly, and related to the teachers' lifelong learning in Ostrava, the training that they receive on a regular basis, as well as or the possibility of international stays is much greater than that of teachers in Oviedo. It is clear that these two points are essential for teachers to give a better training, since if the students are motivated to learn English and have a better linguistic model for the foreign language, the acquisition of linguistic abilities will be the best possible. Therefore, Ostrava students have more possibilities to have a better development-acquisition of the communicative competence.

Finally, the results of the surveys can confirm the data from staff interviews about Oviedo students' aptitude to learn English, where, although there is no opposition to its use, there is disagreement about its study and learning (motivation and lack of teacher training). Nevertheless, it was possible to highlight one of the most noteworthy findings, which is that Oviedo students do not perceive the usefulness of English, since its main day-to-day usage is in school or in private lessons, which is exactly the opposite to Ostrava, where students put into practice other more relevant social uses of the language, such as on television, cinema, travel and even to use it with their family. It is clear, then, that, in this sense, the development-acquisition of the communicative competence will be greater in Ostrava than in Oviedo, thanks to the students' daily use of the language.

Based on these conclusions, we could provide some proposals for improvement which may eventually lead to future areas of research. Within the context of Oviedo some school activities devoted to implement the use of English could be designed; for instance, on a local level, school field trips to museums, where guides could conduct tours in English or the use of realia or materials in English, such as films in the original version; on a global perspective the enforcement of exchange primary-student programmes to English-speaking countries could be most useful as well as the creation of a YouTube channel on which students could present their works in English and also use it for international communication from a more motivational perspective. Although many of these measures are at the school level, the whole society should also change to place more importance on learning languages in this increasingly interconnected and multi-lingual world we live in.

Further research could imply the observation of these practices and the performance of more comparative studies between different educational contexts that help us identify the strengths and weaknesses of our schools in this globalised world. The focus here has been on the development-acquisition of the communicative competence, but others such as intercultural, digital or problem-solving competences could and should also be examined.

## 6. Reference list

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