

# Comparative analysis of CLIL and IB programs

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**Comparative Analysis of CLIL and IB programs**

Bachelor's Thesis

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SVEUČILIŠTE U RIJECI  
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**Comparative Analysis of CLIL and IB programs**

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Rijeka, rujan 2024.

## **ABSTRACT**

English is a global language in today's world and is present in almost all domains of human activity, including education. As a result, classes in English in international schools have been an upward trend. This thesis aims to give an overview of such educational programs, specifically CLIL and IB programs. It also aims to compare the English language learning objectives of CLIL and IB programs, connecting them with specific curricular elements. Moreover, the thesis intends to compare the language learning methods used in CLIL and IB classes and their impact on the English language proficiency of students. Data from various academic articles and case studies show that both programs require their students to have excellent knowledge of the English language. However, CLIL requires its students to reach a level of English that enables communication and understanding in all contexts and situations. On the other hand, IB requires its students to have the native level of proficiency in English, while focusing on the academic aspect of the language. Moreover, the analysis shows that both programs use innovative language learning methods, which are likely to result in positive improvements in students' language skills. Although IB has been underexplored, especially regarding the language proficiency of IB students, this thesis provides valuable insight into the efficiency and success of both IB and CLIL programs in the context of English language learning and teaching.

**Keywords:** English, CLIL, IB, scaffolding, inquiry-based learning, language objectives, language proficiency

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# 1 Introduction

Language is a faculty inherent to humans only. Successful communication is largely possible through language, making it a central component of social interactions. Nowadays, knowledge of foreign languages is more important than ever, especially knowledge of the English language, which is considered the main language for communication in a globalized world. Besides being a means of understanding and communicating with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, English also serves as an asset for navigating and succeeding in the modern world. It might contribute to success in almost all aspects of society, giving a considerable advantage and providing one with numerous opportunities. As English is a global language, there has been an increasing need to introduce it as the language of instruction in educational institutions. Two educational approaches and programs that include teaching and learning in English in non-English-speaking countries are Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and International Baccalaureate (IB). Since both programs play an important role in education, CLIL and IB have become the subject of scientific research.

The aim of this thesis is to provide an overview of CLIL and IB approaches and thereby provide a starting point for the comparative analysis. Hence, the thesis also aims to compare these two programs, focusing on the language.

The thesis begins with describing the position of the English language as a global language and giving an insight into the historical reasons that led to its dominance as well as its massive spread in various domains of human activity. Afterwards, the thesis focuses on the spread of English in education.

The following chapter describes the methodology, which includes the objectives and research questions.

The methodology is followed by an overview of IB and CLIL methods as well as their comparative analysis and some concluding remarks.

## **2 Theoretical Background**

The first subsection of this chapter provides insight into the reasons for the global spread of the English language, placing them in a historical context. It also describes the spread of English in various domains of human activity. The next subsection focuses on the spread of English in education.

### **2.1 The Global Spread of English**

English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. The prevalence of the English language is indicated by the fact that a total of 2.3 billion people currently speak it, either as a native or as a foreign language (British Council, n.d.). Despite being de facto a global lingua franca, English has not always had the status of a global language. For example, the prevailing language in the West until the end of the Middle Ages was Latin, which could be attributed to the immense power and extensive territory of the Roman Empire (Samarin, 1987). Over time, the language scene has changed, and now English is a dominant language. One of the most fundamental reasons English became a lingua franca can be traced back to historical times. The British Empire, which was English-speaking, was one of the most influential empires at that time. It was economically and politically powerful, establishing colonies in various parts of the world (Crystal, 2003). Since the British Empire played a leading role in the global economy, for example, by establishing the English East India Company, English became the main language of international trade, paving the way for its global status (O'Regan, 2021).

However, only after World War Two did the English language start to reach the status of lingua franca, as the US emerged as a global superpower and dominated global financial, political and military affairs (Crystal, 2003). With the growth of the US in power, the development of technology, mass communication and media also began to grow, which further contributed to the spread of the English language. Global expansion of pop culture soon occurred, leading to the popularization of American films, TV shows and music in countries other than the USA. Crystal (2003) states that, according to the BFI film and television band-book, 80% of films released in cinemas in 2002 were in English. As for music, the singers and musicians who dominated the world music scene were from the USA or England, such as Elvis Presley, The Beatles or The Rolling Stones (Crystal, 2003). Since most of the popular music and movies worldwide were in English, the language started to reach households across the globe. Rather



than being just the lingua franca of international business and diplomacy, English became the language of everyday communication.

This upward trend has continued with the emergence of the Internet. Being the language that started the World Wide Web as well as the language of computer science, English is the number one language on the Internet (Zeng et al., 2023). With people from all over the world being exposed to it, whether by communicating with other people from different countries via social networks or reading English news online, the language has undergone even greater expansion.

All the previously mentioned factors contributed significantly to the position of the English language as a lingua franca. Apart from international trade, pop culture and the Internet, English is also used in international communication as the official language of various international organisations and institutions, such as the UN, the World Trade Organisation and NATO (Salomone, 2022a). Besides international communication, it is also spread in scientific fields, with most scientific articles published in English. According to Rao et al. (2020), in the past decade, 98.05% of academic articles in SCI, 96.17% of articles in SSCI and 75.26% of articles in A&H Citation Index were in English. In addition, many scientific and academic institutions operate in the English language, such as the European Academy of Anaesthesiology, the European Academy of Facial Surgery and the European Association of Cancer Research (Crystal, 2003).

However, one of the most important domains in which English has found its place is education.

## **2.2 Spread of English in Education**

As a global language, English is an integral part of various domains, including education. Since knowledge of foreign languages is important in today's world, English has been introduced as a compulsory subject in many educational institutions around the world, from primary to higher educational institutions.

The earliest stage of education where English has been introduced is kindergarten and preschool. Murphy and Evangelou (2016) state that various studies have shown the increasing trend of learning English as a foreign language in educational institutions. In other words, learning and teaching English in the earliest stages of education has expanded significantly and continues to expand. For example, English was officially introduced in preschools in countries such as

Poland, Spain and Cyprus, while in other countries it is taught mostly unofficially (Prošić-Santovac & Savić, 2021). On the other hand, in countries like Great Britain, Canada or the USA, where it is the official language, English has been introduced into preschool curricula to assimilate immigrant children into the school environment as soon as possible (Prošić-Santovac & Savić, 2021). The act of introducing English into the earliest stages of education was prompted by the belief that English should be learnt from an early age (May & Hornberger, 2017). The key role here plays the European Union's "1+2" language policy. According to the policy, every child should learn two foreign languages in addition to their native language during compulsory schooling (May & Hornberger, 2017). Therefore, in order to achieve the best language learning outcome, the European Commission emphasizes the necessity of exposing children to foreign languages as early as possible.

In primary education, English is commonly learned as a second language. The policy according to which it is necessary to learn two foreign languages in primary schools was established in the 1990s (May & Hornberger, 2017). Since then, English has been introduced as a compulsory subject in primary educational institutions in most European countries. Likewise, English is a mandatory part of the curriculum of many secondary schools, where students further improve their language skills.

Tertiary education involves a slightly different use of the English language in teaching and learning than primary and secondary education. It introduces English as the language for specific purposes (LSP), offering it either as a mandatory or optional language course (Trace et al., 2015). The focus is on the English language for academic or professional purposes, with students getting acquainted with the terminology related to their field of study. Therefore, the role of LSP is to acquire language skills necessary for professional communication in the English language (Trace et al., 2015). However, in order to adapt to the current linguistic situation in which English is a global language, higher educational institutions strive to internationalize as much as possible. The attempt at internationalization led to many changes such as changes in course offerings, student recruitment, faculty hiring and scholarship (Salomone, 2022b). To achieve internationalization, many universities offer programs in the English language, where English itself is the medium of instruction (EMI). Macaro et al. (2018, p. 2) define EMI as “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English”. EMI is of great importance in today’s world and serves as one of the initial steps for directing students towards further education, work or career abroad.

Therefore, it is especially a lucrative choice nowadays, attracting many students from different parts of the world. This is evidenced by numerous reports that show the popularization of EMI, especially in Europe in the past two decades (Macaro et al., 2018). In addition to English as the language of instruction in higher educational institutions, programs implemented at lower levels of education have also become part of the global trend. Such programs or educational approaches that focus on the use of English as the language of instruction are Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and International Baccalaureate (IB). Both programs highlight the increasing internationalization of education, as well as the significance of being proficient in the English language. Although they are very similar in this regard, the approaches differ in other ways.

Therefore, this thesis aims to provide an overview of CLIL and IB approaches and create the basis for the following comparative analysis. Specifically, the thesis aims to highlight the similarities and differences between the respective methods, focusing on the linguistic aspect.

### **3 Methodology**

The data collected for the thesis were obtained from the existing literature on IB and CLIL approaches. Relevant literature includes scientific articles and case studies sourced from academic databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR and Frontiers. Additionally, information was obtained from the official publications of the IB organisation and certain European educational bodies.

Upon reading the relevant literature, certain trends were observed, that is, recurring themes in academic and research papers, indicating common and distinct characteristics of IB and CLIL approaches. However, specific problems and challenges also occurred. Contrary to numerous studies of the English language proficiency of CLIL students, there is a significant lack of research related to the IB program, particularly the English language performance of IB students. This indicates a gap in educational research and the need for further research.

#### **3.1 Aim**

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the existing literature on CLIL and IB programs and provide an overview of their key characteristics and principles. With the overview serving as the basis for comparative analysis, the thesis aims to identify the similarities and differences between the language acquisition objectives of CLIL and IB approaches. It also seeks to connect language learning objectives with curricular elements that could potentially lead to achieving those objectives. Finally, the thesis intends to highlight the similarities and differences between the specific learning methods used in CLIL and IB classes, as well as their potential impact on students' English language proficiency.

#### **3.2 Research Questions**

The thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key characteristics and principles of the IB and CLIL approaches as indicated in existing literature?
2. What are the primary language acquisition goals of the CLIL and IB approaches and how do they differ?

3. Which curricular elements of the CLIL and IB programs promote the realization of the set language acquisition objectives?
4. What are the similarities and differences in methodology used in IB and CLIL programs, and how do they affect the language skills of CLIL and IB students?

## **4 Overview of CLIL and IB approaches**

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of CLIL and IB programs. First, definitions of CLIL and IB approaches are given, followed by a historical context, which briefly describes their origin and development. The curriculum, main goals, as well as key principles and concepts relevant to the approaches are also described. In addition, some advantages and disadvantages of CLIL and IB programs are listed in order to present an objective picture of each approach.

### **4.1 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach in which the content is taught through a foreign language (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). While content refers to non-linguistic subjects, such as mathematics, chemistry, history, or biology, language in this context refers to the tool by which content is learned and taught (Mahan, 2020). Due to its global position, English is mostly used as the language of instruction. However, CLIL classes can also be held in other foreign languages, such as French, Spanish, or German (Coyle, 2014). Since CLIL emphasizes both the acquisition of the content and the development of skills in the English language, it is considered a dually focused educational approach (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021).

Looking at the historical context of CLIL, the term “Content and Language Integrated Learning” was coined in 1994, but the educational approach in today's sense originates from bilingual and immersion programs that appeared around the 1960s and 1970s in Canada (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). However, the spread of CLIL, especially in Europe, occurred in the mid-1990s following the European multilingual policy known as the “L1 + 2 objective”. The main goal of this policy was to encourage every citizen to speak three European languages, with the intention of economic advantage, cooperation within the European Union and the adaptation of the European Union to migration and globalization (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). Since it is mostly spread in Europe, CLIL is primarily considered a European-oriented educational approach (Mahan, 2020).

As CLIL became more widespread, the approach changed its initial purpose. CLIL in the modern sense was developed on the belief that a foreign language is best and most quickly acquired as a language of instruction. Therefore, the main goal of CLIL is to help students

master subject knowledge and language skills (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). Moreover, CLIL aims to prepare its students for life in a globalized world, as well as for future education and careers. This is linked to the aspect of multiculturalism on which the educational philosophy of CLIL is based (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). In other words, CLIL seeks to achieve harmony within a culturally and linguistically heterogeneous community, representing one of the ideal solutions for the internationalization of education (Venema, 2019).

What is particularly characteristic of CLIL is the 4C framework, which helps in understanding its inner functioning. According to Coyle et al. (2010), the 4C framework refers to the four basic principles of CLIL: content, communication, cognition and culture. Content refers to acquiring knowledge and understanding in non-linguistic subjects. The next principle of CLIL is communication, which implies the development of cognitive and academic language, but also interpersonal language skills. It emphasizes interaction between students, which improves English language competency. Cognition refers to the development of lower-order and higher-order thinking skills, while culture refers to social awareness and the development of alternative perspectives that enable a deeper understanding of various cultures (Coyle et al., 2010). Cognition is thus important because it focuses on active learning, such as comparing and contrasting, connecting old knowledge with new knowledge and drawing one's own conclusions. It is important to note that content is closely related to communication, culture and cognition and cannot be seen as an isolated aspect of CLIL (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021).

Since language is a central component of the approach, CLIL also includes three key elements: language of learning, language for learning and language through learning. Coyle et al. (2010) define the language of learning as the language needed for learning foundational ideas and concepts of a particular subject. Language for learning refers to the language used in teamwork and group activities and includes methods that in such contexts enable the learning process. Language through learning denotes a process in which communication takes place, and through which new knowledge is built and connected with old knowledge (Coyle et al., 2010).

Evidently, CLIL has many advantages, but also several disadvantages. One of the more obvious advantages of CLIL is that the process of learning English is accelerated by parallel learning of the content through the same language. It is also accelerated by innovative learning methods, such as scaffolding, schemas and modelling (Sánchez Navas, 2022). All these methods foster an active learning process and encourage higher-order thinking.

Another benefit of CLIL is its flexibility and adaptability. For example, CLIL can be introduced at almost all levels of education, and accordingly, can be applied to any level of academic knowledge, whether basic or advanced (Sánchez Navas, 2022). The implementation of CLIL can also differ in the choice of subjects which are held in the foreign language, in the amount of time spent using the language and in the choice of the target language (Furlong, 2006). For instance, in some contexts, English is used occasionally, being only a small part of the curriculum. In other contexts, a more intensive focus on the target language is required, implying high exposure time. In addition, CLIL is defined as “a broad foreign language program” since it is more inclusive and intended for almost all types of students (Venema, 2019, p. 190).

As for the negative sides of CLIL, there is a lack of dually qualified teachers (Furlong, 2006). This means that teachers are often insufficiently trained either in the subjects or in the foreign language in which they teach. Furthermore, teaching materials in CLIL classes present challenges. There is a lack of adequate materials that are exclusively intended for CLIL classes, so teachers often must improvise and adapt materials to their teaching (Furlong, 2006). In addition, CLIL can hinder the development of the native language since a significant part of the teaching takes place in English. It can also pose problems for students whose English skills are not as developed, limiting their understanding of the content (Mahan, 2020).

Due to the position of the English language as the lingua franca of today's society, as well as its significant influence on education, CLIL has become the topic of many academic and research papers, and the trend is increasing.

#### **4.2 International Baccalaureate (IB)**

IB is a non-profit organisation whose programs are known worldwide for their high-quality education. As an international curriculum, IB was founded in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland, and since then has grown rapidly (Mambaeva, 2018). As of November 2023, there are over 5.500 IB schools in 160 countries, attended by more than 1.95 million students (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024). Unlike CLIL, which is more inclusive, IB is offered by private, that is, elite international schools, which are mostly attended by students from financially well-off families (Venema, 2019). In addition to IB programs being exclusive, and mostly intended for children from wealthier families, another disadvantage is the inflexibility of the curriculum. IB is an educational program that has its own organisation and structure, and



as such is often difficult to implement into the national curriculum of a particular country (Sánchez Navas, 2022).

Unlike CLIL, where classes can be held in many other languages, the IB curriculum is largely in English, although it can also be in French or Spanish (International Baccalaureate, 2023).

When it comes to its programs, IB originally consisted of three programs. These programs were the Primary Years Program, the Middle Years Program and the Diploma Program (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024). The Diploma Program is the foundation of IB since IB primarily developed from it. The Program emerged in Europe around the 1960s and later expanded (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024). It is intended for students aged sixteen to eighteen and represents an academic challenge, preparing students for future education and future careers (Maryono & Emilia, 2022). After students complete the Program, they obtain a diploma that is accepted by many colleges and universities, including some of the best universities in the world (Mambaeva, 2018). Following the emergence of the Diploma Program, the Middle Years Program appeared in 1994 for students aged eleven to fifteen, and in 1997, the Primary Years Program designed for children aged three to eleven (Maryono & Emilia, 2022). The latest program offered by IB is the Career-related Program intended for students aged sixteen to nineteen. It was first established in 2010 and is now offered by 363 IB schools. The program is specifically intended for those students who want to learn more about the career they want to pursue (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024).

One of the main goals of IB is to encourage students to develop basic skills that are necessary for life in a globalized world. These include, for example, international mentality, intercultural understanding and awareness, as well as tolerance towards different cultures and nations (Maryono & Emilia, 2022). By promoting intercultural understanding, which is considered crucial for today's world, the IB program strives to develop a sense of cultural and national identity in students. Furthermore, IB aims to embrace diversity and create an environment where different cultures coexist (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024). In this way, IB intends to fight against racism, prejudice or any other discrimination and thus make the world a better place. Another goal of the IB program is to create highly educated as well as highly qualified people who are prepared for any further education or future career in any part of the world (Venema, 2019). To achieve that, IB presents the IB learner profile. The learner profile illustrates what the IB requires their students to be (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024). Such students are liberal, open, and tolerant towards other religions,

traditions and cultures. They are not only highly educated but also ambitious people who actively participate in their communities, positively contributing to the world. This should lead to creating a better and more peaceful world, which is one of the main missions of IB (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024).

The following table illustrates the IB learner profile:

<b>Inquirers</b>	We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
<b>Thinkers</b>	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
<b>Communicators</b>	We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
<b>Principled</b>	We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

<b>Open-minded</b>	We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
<b>Caring</b>	We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
<b>Risk-takers</b>	We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
<b>Balanced</b>	We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
<b>Reflective</b>	We thoughtfully consider the world and own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

Table 1: The IB learner profile (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024, p. 15).

IB schools especially stand out for their innovative methods and approaches to teaching and learning. For example, the IB methodology is centred around the student, unlike traditional methodologies where the teacher is in focus. The method particularly specific to IB is inquiry-based learning, which fosters active participation in the learning process (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024). Furthermore, IB encourages the act of connecting various areas and disciplines. This means that the content is not learned in isolation but in relation with other subjects. The learning method of linking different subject domains is called transdisciplinarity and it is based on the belief that academic knowledge needs to be connected to the real world (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024).

The above-mentioned learning methods have a positive effect on the learning process, fostering the development of high-order thinking and the ability to solve complex problems, which is one of the many advantages of IB. Moreover, IB promotes the development of academic knowledge. For example, many studies have also shown that IB students achieve better academic results compared to non-IB students (Dickson et al., 2018).

Due to modern and alternative approaches to learning and teaching that go beyond traditional methods, IB has achieved a high status and reputation in the world.

## **5 Comparative Analysis**

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of CLIL and IB approaches. The first subchapter compares the English language acquisition objectives of the CLIL and IB programs. The respective objectives are also linked with certain curricular elements. The second subchapter compares the learning methods typical for CLIL and IB programs and illustrates their effect on students' English language competence.

### **5.1 Comparison between Language Acquisition Objectives of CLIL and IB Programs**

The first and most significant aspect of language use in CLIL and IB is the language goals both educational approaches set for their students. Both approaches aim to make students proficient in the English language while acquiring academic knowledge. However, there are some differences. For example, CLIL puts a greater emphasis on both the native language and the English language. This can be connected to the fact that typically three to four subjects are held in the English language, while the other subjects are taught in the native language (Furlong, 2006). Compared to CLIL, IB primarily focuses on mastering English language skills (Venema, 2019). Since IB programs primarily emphasize the English language, high exposure is common in IB schools (Furlong, 2006). This means that students spend most of their time using the English language, as IB attaches more importance to acquiring a high level of proficiency in that language.

When it comes to achieving a specific level of proficiency in the English language, the goals of IB and CLIL are quite different. CLIL aims to bring students' language skills to a level good enough for successful and efficient communication in various situations and contexts (Mahan, 2020). In order to achieve that objective, CLIL encourages students to learn the language for everyday communication, so that they can communicate with people from different countries effectively and successfully. Therefore, the goal of acquiring authentic communication skills is prompted by creating a natural, spontaneous environment in the classroom (Mahan, 2020). The natural state of acquiring English is also encouraged by using the language outside of class, such as during breaks, when spontaneous communication occurs (Sánchez Navas, 2022). This functions as an ideal basis for the development of authentic speech and communication situations.

The objective of acquiring a specific level of English language proficiency may be also reflected in the use of class materials. For example, materials used in CLIL classes are not necessarily intended for native speakers (Venema, 2019). On the other hand, the goal of IB is stricter and more demanding. For example, IB students are encouraged to reach a high level of English language competency, meaning that they should be able to communicate at the native level of proficiency. Therefore, most teaching materials are intended only for native speakers (Sánchez Navas, 2022). Moreover, in order to pass the exams, all IB students need to use the English language extremely well (Mambaeva, 2018).

To provide a more detailed insight into what IB specifically requires from their students in terms of English language acquisition, it is necessary to mention the language acquisition objectives of individual IB programs. For example, one of the main language goals of the Middle Years Program is for students to achieve the communication skills necessary for further English language learning as well as for real-life contexts such as education or work (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024). Middle Years Program students should also be able to understand the process of language learning, a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds and the nature of language itself (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024).

The Diploma Program offers English courses that are divided into Language Acquisition courses (English B course) and Language and Literature Studies (English A courses) (The National Information Centre, 2016). The language objectives of the English B course include maintaining clear and effective communication in various situations while demonstrating cross-cultural understanding and language proficiency. In addition, students should be able to understand and use English with accuracy and fluency to express ideas, analyse written and spoken texts, and read literature in the language. The main language goals of the English A – Language and Literature course, English A – Literature course and Literature and Performance course are for students to be able to express themselves fluently both in speech and writing. Furthermore, they should be able to analyse different types of texts, which requires a high level of English language proficiency (The National Information Centre, 2016). Similarly to the Middle Years Program and the Diploma Program, the Career-related Program requires students to reach a level of English that will enable them to communicate effectively and clearly in many situations and for many purposes (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2024).

An important aspect to consider here is the difference between academic language and communicative language, which reflects the English language objectives of each approach

(Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010). Not only does the IB program require students to have a very high level of English language competence for various situations and contexts, but it also requires them to possess knowledge of other aspects that are closely related to the language, such as various cultures, analysis of different literary texts and the very nature of the language. Therefore, the emphasis is also on the knowledge of the English language for academic purposes rather than purely on the communicative language, which is the case in CLIL classes. However, one should not ignore the fact that although CLIL emphasizes the importance of communication skills, academic language learning is also included. CLIL students and teachers daily encounter the terminology of various subjects taught in the target language (Mahan, 2020). Therefore, both CLIL students and teachers need to focus on vocabulary, which is an integral part of academic language, in order to understand the content being taught.

As evidenced by the stated language goals of individual IB programs, IB is more rigorous in terms of English language requirements than CLIL, focusing not only on achieving language skills for everyday communication but also on the academic aspect of the English language, as well as the mere nature of the language. Therefore, it can be concluded that although each IB program has its own goals and requirements regarding English language acquisition compared to the CLIL program the language goals of IB are much more demanding in almost every aspect of English language learning than the language goals of CLIL.

## **5.2 Comparison between CLIL and IB Learning Methods and Their Effect on Students' English Language Proficiency**

Both CLIL and IB approaches use innovative input and output methods related to the development of the high English language proficiency of their students.

Regarding language acquisition in IB classes, specifically Primary Year Program classes, the first starting point includes passive methods such as listening and reading content in English, where the language is only passively acquired (Venema, 2019). However, it is important to note that the terms “active” and “passive” for language learning methods are outdated and that the terms “receptive” and “productive” are now mostly used. Receptive methods refer to input methods that enable language acquisition by exposing students to the target language, but also include limited productive activities, such as solving tasks related to listening or reading comprehension (Leow, 2007). In other words, receptive methods are no longer considered

purely passive, since they involve a certain number of active components in the language learning process. After a certain period of students being exposed to input, more active methods are introduced (Venema, 2019). These active or productive methods refer to output methods and require students to use learned language skills more actively, including writing, speaking and presenting (Venema, 2019). The English language competencies of IB students can thus be primarily attributed to output methods because they encourage the active use of the English language, positively affecting the language learning process. By actively trying to use the language, language skills improve much more than they would otherwise, when the language is learned only through receptive methods.

When it comes to specific evidence that points to the positive language performance of IB students, little research has been conducted. Nevertheless, it is important to mention the research by the National Recognition Information Center for the UK. The research points to the English language proficiency of IB students, more precisely Diploma Program students. It includes a comparison between the proficiency of non-native English speakers, which is supported by IB Diploma Program courses grades and the CEFR English language proficiency levels. The results show that IB English language courses lead to the development of all four basic language skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening. Moreover, each course has at least one grade comparable to the CEFR B2 level that is typically required by many universities (The National Information Centre, 2016). Although it does not refer to specific language proficiency results of IB students, the fact that many universities do not require the submission of additional certificates of English proficiency shows the effectiveness of the IB program compared to traditional classes.

As the IB program, CLIL also highlights input and output methods, especially output methods. For example, a study was conducted in which the English language skills of CLIL students, such as the knowledge of syntax, morphology and semantics, were measured. In the case of language skills such as reading, listening, receptive vocabulary, speaking, writing and morphological phenomena, the results were positive, showing significant progress compared to non-CLIL students (Mahan, 2020). Moreover, Lorenzo et al. (2010) performed a study in which they selected 61 schools in Spain out of 403 and conducted an experimental diagnostic test. The test measured all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). The findings of the test show that CLIL students achieved significantly better results than non-CLIL students. More specifically, CLIL students scored an average of 62% on the test, while non-CLIL students scored 38%. In contrast, Manzano-Vázquez (2014) found that although CLIL students had more



classes in English, the difference in results between CLIL and non-CLIL students achieved on the English placement test was not significant.

Evidently, most research has shown that CLIL students outperform non-CLIL students in English language proficiency, which can be again attributed to input and output methods, especially output methods.

Another important methodological element to consider is comprehensible input, which is essential for the development of language skills of both IB and CLIL students. Graham et al. (2018) claim that the input method of foreign language learning works only if the input is slightly above the student's current language level. This means that students need a certain level of knowledge in the foreign language to be able to listen to the lecture with understanding and comprehend the teaching material. Therefore, comprehensible input is one of the main prerequisites for the development of language skills in CLIL and IB students (Graham et al., 2018). This also explains why many CLIL and IB programs require students to test their language proficiency before enrolling in a particular program (Mahan, 2020). Furthermore, comprehensible input can be linked to Krashen's theory. According to the theory, a foreign language can be learned only if meaning or purpose is involved in the process (Xanthou, 2011). In other words, students need to have a certain level of language proficiency to give meaning to the language, which allows them to develop their language skills in an effective manner. For example, many studies have shown that CLIL students make the most progress in semantics and discourse since they focus on the meanings of new words of the academic language (Gutiérrez-Mangado et al., 2018). This points to the fact that CLIL students need to understand the language in order to understand the course material. Krashen's theory can also be linked to other aspects of CLIL and IB approaches, such as inquiry-based learning or scaffolding.

Looking at specific output methods and English language competencies, language skills that especially come to the fore in CLIL classes are speaking and communication skills. Numerous studies have demonstrated that CLIL students surpass non-CLIL students in communication skills. For example, De Diezmas (2016) showed that CLIL students outperform non-CLIL students significantly in interaction and communication skills. These results can be connected to the scaffolding method used in CLIL teaching. Scaffolding can be considered an output method since it encourages student engagement in class and makes it more interactive compared to traditional passive classes. It refers to holistic education in a way that it puts students and their learning process in the centre, not the teacher, thereby increasing their autonomy (Furlong,

2006). By encouraging students to actively participate in class, that is, participate in class discussions and answering questions, the students are given much greater opportunities to use the English language. Apart from the high performance of CLIL students in speaking and communication due to more opportunities to use the English language, another reason may be attributed to the higher quality of the exposure to the English language (De Diezmas, 2016).

On the other hand, IB programs incorporate inquiry-based learning as one of the output methods in their pedagogical approach. Inquiry-based learning is fundamentally the same as scaffolding in terms of promoting active class participation (Dickson et al., 2018). Similarly to CLIL, IB encourages its students to ask questions, participate in discussions, and conduct research on their own, which can lead to positive consequences on the development of speaking abilities and ultimately to a higher level of English language proficiency.

In addition to communicative and speaking skills, there is visible progress in written skills. For example, Tan and Bibby (2010) conducted research, measuring the performance of IB students and non-IB students in different areas, including writing. The writing task consisted of content, language and spelling criteria. The language criterion is particularly important here because it includes linguistic skills such as syntax, vocabulary and punctuation. The results showed that IB students achieve better results in these linguistic areas compared to non-IB students. Similarly, Maxwell-Reid (2010) conducted research on the specific writing skills of CLIL and non-CLIL students. The research revealed that CLIL students show more features of the English language in their writing, while non-CLIL students show more features of their native language (in this context, Spanish). However, Basterrechea and del Pilar García Mayo (2014) and Gené-Gil et al. (2015) found no significant differences in writing skills between CLIL and non-CLIL students.

Evidently, both CLIL and IB emphasize the use of input and output methods, especially output methods such as scaffolding and inquiry-based learning. This is different from traditional educational approaches, which mainly focus on passive learning. As a result, scaffolding and inquiry-based learning might be the reason why CLIL and IB students achieve better results in English language performance compared to non-CLIL and non-IB students.

## 6 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to provide an overview of IB and CLIL approaches, discussing their objectives, values, principles and curriculum, and thus lay a foundation for the following comparative analysis.

The comparative analysis focused on the language acquisition objectives of CLIL and IB programs, as well as the learning methods used in both programs and their influence on the English language proficiency of students. The comparative analysis revealed differences and similarities in the English language goals. Both approaches promote English language competency alongside content learning. However, CLIL emphasizes the importance of developing students' communicative and speaking skills necessary to effectively communicate in various situations. At the same time, IB is more rigorous in that regard, placing emphasis on a deeper understanding of the English language and the mastering of the language for academic purposes.

Taking into consideration specific levels of English language proficiency, CLIL encourages students to acquire English at an authentic and practical level, rather than at the native level of proficiency. On the other hand, IB programs are more complex in their language acquisition objectives since each program has its own language acquisition goals. Generally, IB strives to develop students' English language abilities to the native level of proficiency. Students should not only be able to communicate in various situations and contexts but also understand the language at the academic level and the nature of language itself, which naturally requires a higher level of proficiency. Furthermore, specific curricular elements may be designed to align with the set language objectives for them to be realized. IB program thus emphasizes high exposure to the English language and the use of materials intended for native speakers, while CLIL involves less exposure to English, and materials not necessarily intended for native speakers. Overall, both CLIL and IB programs are educational approaches that promote effectiveness in the process of English language acquisition. By setting language learning objectives and incorporating specific curricular elements in line with those linguistic goals, both programs try to bring their students to reach the desired English language proficiency.

Moreover, both CLIL and IB programs include innovative, holistic learning methods in their pedagogical approach, which have a positive impact on English language proficiency. English language skills of both IB and CLIL students improve significantly through input and output methods, particularly through output methods. Since the input methods are to an extent more

passive, they have been found to be less effective than output methods. Furthermore, one of the main output methods used in IB classes is inquiry-based learning, which fosters the development of the English language skills of IB students. On the other hand, CLIL includes a method similar to inquiry-based learning, specifically scaffolding. Since active participation in class, included in both scaffolding and inquiry-based learning, creates more opportunities for speaking and thus a favourable environment for the development of English language proficiency, IB and CLIL students better develop communication skills than students who attend traditional classes. In addition to speaking skills, other language skills such as writing, semantic competencies, reading, vocabulary and listening improve. This testifies to the effectiveness of CLIL and IB programs in the English language learning process. Comprehensible input is also important, serving as a prerequisite for the successful development of English language skills.

Overall, the findings of the comparative analysis provide insight into the value of CLIL and IB programs concerning the development of English language proficiency. Moreover, the comparison illustrates the realization of CLIL and IB programs, which plays a key role in achieving positive results in the advancement of students' English language skills, as well as in the fulfilment of the set English language objectives.

The findings also suggest the effectiveness and success of CLIL and IB approaches, which points to several essential elements that the educational system could consider in terms of its practices.

First, IB and CLIL approaches emphasize the improvement of both linguistic and non-linguistic skills by integrating foreign language learning and subject content learning. They include certain innovative learning methods such as scaffolding and inquiry-based learning, which facilitate the process of English language learning by creating an environment for successful language acquisition and the development of language skills. Since these methods are proven to be highly effective and could lead to numerous benefits when it comes to English language learning, traditional classes could incorporate certain elements from those methods into their curricula.

Moreover, it would be important to consider the distinction between English academic and communicative language. More specifically, certain educational programs may be guided by the difference between the two types of languages, which could help them to clearly determine specific language requirements and adapt them to the needs of their students. For example,

programs intended to prepare students for future education at international universities or future careers in foreign countries may focus more on academic language. On the other hand, those programs intended for general language use could focus more on communicative language. In that way, the process of achieving set language goals of the respective educational programs can be more effective and much quicker.

To conclude, CLIL and IB programs represent modern and innovative educational approaches, testifying to the constant effort to introduce new pedagogical methods into foreign language teaching, with the purpose of faster and more efficient language acquisition. Since they offer unique opportunities for English language learning, CLIL and IB programs should be further studied, not only to yield new insights but also to identify elements conducive to more effective learning, which can be applied in traditional teaching and thus make them an integral part of the educational system.

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