



Voices from the Classroom: Writing Skills in a CLIL Context

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We would like to thank our colleagues, students, and institutions for their valuable contributions and insights during this study.

Dedication

To our families, whose constant support and encouragement made this work possible.

Foreword

The mastery of English as a second language has become an urgent need to ensure access to academic, professional, and cultural opportunities in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. This study addresses a highly relevant and current issue: the instruction of English through the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method, which combines the learning of academic content with the development of linguistic skills in a foreign language.

The analysis presented by the researchers focuses on an educational context in Ecuador. It provides a detailed examination of the challenges and opportunities that teachers and students face when implementing CLIL as a teaching and learning approach, with particular attention to the development of English writing skills. The study is framed within a rigorous methodology that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data, exposing the real complexities of this educational experience: from the lack of specialized teacher training, to the need for more effective and engaging teaching resources, as well as insufficient feedback and student motivation that often falls short for young learners.

This work not only identifies the problems that hinder effective writing development, but also offers evidence-based pedagogical recommendations aimed at improving teaching practices and student performance. In addition, it highlights the importance of critical reflection on the connection between content and language, the alignment of linguistic skills, and the continuous demand for teacher training in innovative methodologies.

I strongly believe that this text is essential reading for teachers, researchers, and policymakers who seek to strengthen English instruction in multicultural and bilingual settings, as well as for those who see curricular integration as a driver of personal and academic growth. This document promotes educational action and change, reaffirming that only through a collective commitment among students, institutions, and teachers can obstacles be overcome and the levels of linguistic competence required and deserved by learners in the twenty-first century be achieved.

Dr. Mendieta Toledo. PhD.

Introduction

English has become one of the most widely studied languages worldwide, and in South America, it plays a central role in both public and private education. In countries like Ecuador, students typically receive English instruction for six to twelve years, starting in primary school and continuing through secondary education. Many institutions dedicate several hours per week to English, and bilingual schools often increase this exposure through CLIL-based instruction. Banegas (2021) notes that CLIL has gained popularity across the region, allowing schools to teach academic subjects in English without reducing content time. This extended contact with the language is intended to help learners develop communicative competence and prepare them for global academic and professional environments.

To support this goal, EFL teachers implement a range of methods and strategies aimed at developing both receptive and productive skills. These include task-based learning, process writing, and integrated reading-writing activities. By the time students graduate from high school, they are expected to use English at a proficient level, although outcomes vary depending on the quality of instruction, teacher training, and access to resources. In CLIL settings, the integration of content and language offers meaningful opportunities for language use, but challenges such as limited feedback and lack of adapted materials can hinder progress. Therefore, achieving high levels of writing competence requires not only exposure but also systematic support and pedagogical innovation.

Although CLIL has been promoted as a methodology capable of integrating content and language to enhance communicative skills, evidence shows that students often continue to display low levels of writing competence. Even in contexts where CLIL has been systematically implemented, learners struggle with producing coherent, accurate, and well-structured texts. Research by Gené-Gil, Juan-Garau, and Salazar-Noguera (2015) confirmed that while CLIL students outperformed their non-CLIL peers in certain dimensions of writing, overall results still highlighted persisting weaknesses in accuracy and cohesion. Similarly, González, Lara, and Romero (2024) reported that Ecuadorian students in bilingual schools achieved lower results in writing than in other skills, pointing to a gap between CLIL's theoretical promises and its practical outcomes.

The effectiveness of CLIL in writing development cannot be taken for granted; its impact largely depends on the presence of adequate resources, teacher training, and contextualized materials. Scholars such as Banegas (2012), and Papaja (2013), argue that CLIL programs often fail to deliver expected outcomes when instructors lack methodological preparation or when institutions do not provide sufficient support. Furthermore, Ali and Khan (2015) highlighted that feedback and writing guidance are frequently insufficient, a limitation that undermines students' ability to refine their compositions. Without systemic backing, CLIL risks being perceived as a superficial innovation rather than a transformative pedagogical tool.

One of the most frequently reported barriers to effective writing instruction in CLIL settings is the scarcity of appropriate materials. Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols (2008) emphasized that resources specifically designed for CLIL remain limited, leaving teachers to adapt general EFL or content textbooks that do not meet the dual demands of the approach. In Ecuador, both public and private institutions face this issue, though the problem is more acute in public schools with fewer technological and financial resources (Bonces, 2012). Even in private contexts, students' limited access to CLIL materials at home further constrains opportunities to reinforce writing beyond the classroom

The lack of materials is also tied to curricular design, which shapes students' opportunities to reach international standards such as those assessed in the First Certificate in English (FCE). Dale, Van der Es, and Tanner (2011) pointed out that the CEFR can guide teachers in aligning writing tasks with expected levels, yet this alignment requires coherent curricular planning and adequate resources. González, Lara, and Romero (2024) demonstrated that insufficient integration of content and language objectives in Ecuadorian private schools prevented students from achieving the writing benchmarks expected for their age and grade level

Another recurring challenge is teachers' lack of specialized training in CLIL pedagogy. While many instructors are competent English speakers or hold degrees in language teaching, they are often unprepared to address the dual focus of CLIL classrooms. Banegas (2012) stressed that without structured professional development, teachers tend to revert to traditional language teaching or content instruction, neglecting integration. Fürstenberg and Kletzenbauer (2015) also warned that insufficient training leads to surface-level practices, where language support is minimized, and writing

outcomes stagnate. This suggests that teacher preparation is a cornerstone for achieving meaningful progress in writing.

Feedback is widely recognized as essential for developing writing competence, yet in many CLIL contexts, it is either superficial or inconsistent. Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) underscored that corrective feedback should combine clarity, specificity, and encouragement, but teachers often struggle to balance these demands due to workload and time constraints. In the Ecuadorian case, students reported that feedback tended to be general and unhelpful, which limited their ability to improve subsequent drafts.

Studies such as those by Zaman & Azad (2012), and Sarie (2013), similarly found that vague or overly directive comments reduce the effectiveness of feedback, undermining learners' motivation and written performance.

Finally, students' reluctance to engage in writing tasks represents another obstacle. This unwillingness is often linked to a lack of reading habits, insufficient exposure to authentic writing models, and low motivation. Al-Mansour (2014), and Mermelstein (2015), demonstrated that extensive reading programs can significantly improve writing skills, yet such practices are not consistently integrated into CLIL classrooms. In Ecuador, Alvarado (2014) found that learners' lack of concentration and limited confidence contributed to poor outcomes in productive skills, including writing. When coupled with inadequate feedback and scarce resources, these factors can demotivate learners, reinforcing a negative cycle where students perceive writing as an unrewarding or overly difficult task.

Despite the growing interest in CLIL across Latin America, there is a noticeable absence of studies that systematically examine its impact on writing skills in private high schools in Machala. Most existing research in Ecuador focuses on university-level contexts or major cities such as Riobamba, Quito and Guayaquil, leaving a gap in the literature regarding smaller urban areas like El Oro province. Nevertheless, a local study meant to create knowledge on CLIL and the factors that hinder the development of students' writing skills in our context has not been done yet. This research aims to provide contextualized evidence that reflects the realities of secondary education in Machala, offering insights that can inform both policy and classroom practice.

International literature consistently identifies writing as one of the most underdeveloped skills in CLIL environments (Gené-Gil et al., 2015; Whittaker et al., 2011). However, in Ecuador, few publications explore how secondary students cope with writing challenges in bilingual classrooms. While speaking and listening often receive more attention, writing tends to be overlooked, despite its importance in academic performance and international exams such as the FCE. This study seeks to address that gap by documenting students' writing development in CLIL settings and offering practical recommendations for schools aiming to improve outcomes in productive skills.

A recurring issue in CLIL implementation is the lack of specialized teacher training. Although many educators are qualified in English language teaching, they often lack the pedagogical tools to integrate content and language effectively. Banegas (2012), and Banegas & Arellano (2024) emphasize that without structured professional development, teachers tend to revert to traditional methods that separate language from subject matter. In Ecuador, there is limited research on how this training gap affects writing instruction in private schools. This study contributes by examining how teacher preparedness influences students' written performance and by proposing strategies to strengthen CLIL-based writing pedagogy.

As a matter of fact, this study aims at highlighting the significance of content and integrated language learning in fostering the development of learners' writing skills. Also, it aims at investigating teachers' and students' attitudes toward the CLIL methods and their self-assessments of their writing competence in English under CLIL.

The general objective was addressed through the following specific objectives:

- a) to determine the factors that affect the appropriate development of students' writing skills in a CLIL context,
- b) to determine the students' proficient level at writing in a high school where English is taught through CLIL by using the FCE test results, and;
- c) to discover if teachers' lack of training, inappropriate feedback, students' low interest and their language proficiency have influenced the development of their writing skills in a CLIL context, a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) was used and the following process applied.

There have been numerous studies related to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); however, only a limited number have focused specifically on the development of written competence. For example, Whittaker, Llinares, and McCabe (2011) conducted a longitudinal study with secondary students in Madrid to examine how CLIL supports academic writing development over four school years. Using a systemic functional approach, they observed a clear progression in students' writing—from producing list-like texts to creating more coherent and content-rich compositions. These texts demonstrated improved reference control, stronger cohesion, and more complex nominal structures. Interestingly, even without explicit instruction on coherence, students increasingly used pre- and post-modifiers and showed fewer errors in referent tracking.

These findings suggest that sustained exposure to subject content in English helps build the disciplinary language required for academic writing. The authors argue that content knowledge serves as a scaffold for organizing texts, enabling learners to synthesize and argue rather than merely describe. Nonetheless, they noted persistent gaps compared to native-speaker norms, particularly in abstract language use, and recommended explicit instruction in academic discourse features. Overall, the study positions CLIL as a powerful tool for gradual and measurable improvement in writing skills.

Furthermore, Gené-Gil, Juan-Garau, and Salazar-Noguera (2015) compared CLIL and non-CLIL secondary students over the course of a school year using complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) metrics. CLIL students produced more cohesive, fluent, and syntactically complex texts, while their non-CLIL peers showed slower or inconsistent progress, especially in sentence structure and discourse organization. A follow-up longitudinal analysis over three years confirmed that CLIL learners improved across multiple CAF dimensions, particularly in subordination and lexical diversity, although gains in accuracy were more gradual.

The results highlight the role of integrated content exposure as a driver of development: students write to learn content and learn language to write about that content. Familiarity with genres and repeated, content-linked writing tasks also helped stabilize planning and revision strategies. However, the authors caution that vocabulary development may still require targeted, form-focused instruction within CLIL settings. Taken together, the findings suggest that CLIL can outperform traditional EFL

approaches in writing development when tasks are sustained, content-driven, and aligned with assessment goals.

Obando Flores (2024) conducted a study titled “Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to Activate the Writing Skill for 9th-Grade EGB Students at Unidad Educativa La Salle in Riobamba.” The research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the CLIL approach in enhancing written expression among Ecuadorian secondary students. Conducted in a private institution in Riobamba, located in the Chimborazo province, the study offers valuable local insight into how content-based instruction can influence language development in highland educational settings.

The study addressed a key gap: the lack of empirical evidence regarding CLIL’s impact on writing skills among 9th-grade (EGB) learners. To investigate this, Obando Flores employed a quasi-experimental design that combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data collection included pre- and post-intervention assessments of students’ writing performance, structured classroom observations of CLIL implementation, and interviews with teachers to explore their instructional strategies and perceptions.

Although the full results were not detailed in the abstract, the study highlights the potential of CLIL to stimulate and improve writing skills at the secondary level. It suggests that CLIL-based instruction can increase student engagement with writing tasks and foster the integration of language and content learning. These findings lay the groundwork for further research into writing development in Ecuadorian CLIL contexts and emphasize the importance of context-sensitive pedagogical interventions in diverse regions.

The authors.

CHAPTER I

Literature Review

CHAPTER I

Literature Review

In order to ground this study in theory it is essential to understand certain topics such as Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), writing process, direct and indirect feedback, among others; and previous studies related to the theme of this investigation. The knowledge and insight obtained from an in-depth reflection on that information will be very valuable for this research process.

Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014) content language integrated learning (CLIL) is an approach that involves a content teacher who teaches content through a second or foreign language. Others researchers have confirmed this view.

CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. That is, in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. (Coyle, et al., 2010)

Similarly, Nikula, et al. (2013) define CLIL as “an educational approach in which a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction to teach content subjects for mainstream students”. Likewise, Mehisto (2012, p. 52,53) stated that “CLIL is a dual-focused teaching and learning approach in which the L1 and an additional language [...] are used for promoting both content mastery and language acquisition to pre-defined levels”.

Along the same lines, Richards and Rogers (2014) stated that CLIL principles are meant to help learners to achieve individual, educational, social and intercultural goals through the language teaching-learning process. On the same token, Coyle et al. (2010) pointed out that CLIL principles tackle content, cognition, communication, and culture.

In addition, content matter in CLIL deals with a personalized learning process, which enables learners to create their own knowledge, understand and develop skills by going through this process. Moreover, content in CLIL tackles linguistic demands connected

to the learning and thinking process (cognition) that enables learners to create their own interpretation of content. Furthermore, language has to be learned through communication related to the learning context, thus the language used in these procedures have to be transparent and accessible, because the interaction through a foreign language in a meaningful way will enable students to learn effectively. Finally, intercultural awareness is developed through CLIL because learners are supposed to be in contact with a foreign language and cultures in CLIL classes.

CLIL principles

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has emerged as a powerful pedagogical approach that simultaneously promotes subject knowledge and foreign language competence. Since its conceptualization in Europe, CLIL has become a global methodology, valued for its adaptability, inclusivity, and capacity to prepare learners for intercultural communication and academic success (Astika, 2025; Coyle et al., 2010). Scholars emphasize that CLIL is not simply about teaching content through another language but about creating meaningful, cognitively demanding, and culturally enriching learning experiences. The following principles outline the theoretical foundations, pedagogical strategies, and innovative practices that define effective CLIL implementation across educational context.

Dual Focus on Content and Language

One of the foundational tenets of CLIL is its integrated focus on both subject content and language acquisition. Rather than isolating language instruction, CLIL situates it within authentic academic contexts, enabling learners to simultaneously deepen their conceptual knowledge and enhance their communicative abilities in the target language. For instance, when students engage with geography through English, they not only grasp geographical concepts but also learn to articulate and interpret them using discipline-specific language. Consequently, educators must formulate learning goals that harmonize content mastery with linguistic development, fostering outcomes that reinforce both domains in tandem (Astika, 2025; Coyle, 2010).

Theoretical Foundation with Flexible Application

CLIL draws upon key theoretical foundations including second language acquisition, bilingual education, and constructivist learning. These pillars lend both credibility and

consistency to its diverse applications across educational settings (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). While the framework maintains academic rigor, it remains adaptable to various levels of education—from primary to tertiary. This flexibility allows institutions to align CLIL practices with their specific cultural and curricular needs. For example, some programs may emphasize vocabulary acquisition, whereas others focus on fostering critical thinking or intercultural competence. Such adaptability ensures CLIL’s global relevance while preserving coherence through its theoretical underpinnings. Educators are thus empowered to innovate locally, guided by evidence-based methodologies that uphold pedagogical standards. (Mehisto, 2008).

Transferability and Effectiveness

The effectiveness of CLIL has been validated across a wide range of educational contexts and geographical regions, demonstrating its strong potential for transferability. Empirical studies consistently show that students enrolled in CLIL programs tend to outperform their peers in traditional EFL settings, particularly in areas such as reading comprehension, oral fluency, and long-term retention of subject matter (Astika, 2025). CLIL’s success is largely attributed to its emphasis on authentic language use, where learners engage with cognitively demanding content in the target language, fostering both academic achievement and linguistic proficiency. Moreover, CLIL equips students with transferable skills such as effective communication and problem-solving, which are essential for participating in a globalized society. Its inherent flexibility enables implementation across diverse socioeconomic settings, promoting inclusive and equitable educational outcomes (Naufel et al., 2018; UNICEF, 2019)

The 4Cs Framework: Content

The “content” first component of CLIL underscores the importance of acquiring subject-specific knowledge through the medium of the target language. This principle reinforces that CLIL is not solely a language-teaching strategy, but a pedagogical approach aimed at fostering disciplinary understanding. In classroom practice, this means designing instruction that prioritizes conceptual learning—be it historical narratives, scientific mechanisms, or mathematical reasoning—while embedding relevant vocabulary and discourse conventions. By placing content at the forefront, CLIL redefines language as a cognitive tool, linking linguistic development to the construction of meaningful academic knowledge. (Coyle, et al., 2010).

The 4Cs Framework: Communication

The second “C,” communication, places strong emphasis on the communicative dimension of learning, positioning language as both a medium for instruction and a key learning outcome. Learners are encouraged to actively use the target language to engage in discussions, explain concepts, and collaborate with peers, thereby enhancing fluency in academic contexts. Communication in CLIL goes beyond vocabulary acquisition, encompassing discourse strategies, pragmatic awareness, and interactional competence. For instance, a biology lesson may prompt students to hypothesize, justify their reasoning, or present findings orally, embedding authentic communicative tasks into subject learning. This approach empowers learners to express complex ideas effectively, reinforcing the role of language as a tool for intellectual engagement and collaborative learning. (Llinares, et al., 2012).

The 4Cs Framework: Cognition

The third “C” in the CLIL framework—cognition—focuses on fostering learners’ critical and creative thinking through the target language. Rather than relying on rote memorization, CLIL lessons are designed to promote higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These cognitively demanding tasks, often structured around Bloom’s revised taxonomy, include activities like debates, problem-solving, and project-based learning. Learners are challenged to process complex subject matter while navigating linguistic demands, which cultivates cognitive flexibility and metacognitive awareness. Recent studies confirm that CLIL supports the development of procedural and conceptual knowledge, particularly in the “apply” and “analyze” stages of Bloom’s taxonomy, making learning both intellectually engaging and linguistically enriching (Ortiz-García & Navarrete-Villarraga, 2022; Martín-del Pozo & Rascón-Estébanez, 2020)

The 4Cs Framework: Culture

The fourth “C” in the CLIL framework—culture—centers on fostering intercultural competence and cultivating global awareness. CLIL transcends traditional language instruction by connecting learners to diverse perspectives and cultural narratives. Lessons often incorporate international case studies, cultural comparisons, and authentic practices that promote empathy and respect for diversity. Through engagement with the

target language, students gain insight into the cultural values embedded within it, enhancing their ability to navigate cross-cultural interactions. This cultural dimension positions CLIL as a transformative educational approach, preparing learners to participate meaningfully in a globalized society with openness and intercultural sensitivity (Coyle, et al., 2010; Gómez-Parra, 2020; Nakayama, 2021)

Learner-Centered Pedagogy and Scaffolding

CLIL is fundamentally grounded in learner-centered pedagogy, which prioritizes active engagement, autonomy, and collaboration. Rather than relying on teacher-led instruction, CLIL classrooms promote student agency through group tasks, project-based learning, and inquiry-driven activities. This approach encourages learners to take responsibility for their own progress while interacting meaningfully with peers. A recent study in Austrian secondary schools revealed that student-centered design is a key pedagogical practice in CLIL, especially when addressing diverse learner needs and promoting inclusive education (Bauer-Marschallinger et al., 2021). By placing learners at the center of instruction, CLIL fosters motivation, critical thinking, and deeper conceptual understanding.

Scaffolding plays a vital role in CLIL by providing structured linguistic and cognitive support that enables learners to access complex academic content. Teachers use tools such as visuals, glossaries, sentence frames, and modelled responses to guide students through challenging tasks. These supports are gradually reduced as learners gain proficiency, promoting independence and confidence. In tertiary education, CA-CLIL (Computer-Assisted CLIL) has emerged as an effective scaffolding strategy, using digital platforms to enhance both content and language learning (Štefková & Danihelová, 2023). This integration of technology and scaffolding ensures that all students, regardless of language level, can participate actively and achieve academic success.

Integrated and Holistic Assessment

Assessment in CLIL must align with its dual focus on content mastery and language development. Rather than isolating grammar or factual recall, effective evaluation strategies assess how learners use language to express subject understanding. This requires clearly defined content goals alongside explicit linguistic outcomes. Teachers often implement alternative assessments such as portfolios, oral presentations,

collaborative projects, and reflective tasks, which better capture the integration of skills. Recent research highlights that multimodal and formative assessment practices in CLIL foster deeper engagement and more accurate representations of learner progress, especially in multilingual classrooms. By integrating cognitive, linguistic, and academic dimensions, holistic assessment validates learners' achievements in a balanced and meaningful way (Astika, 2025; Llinares, et al., 2012).

Inclusion and Equity

CLIL classrooms are designed to be inclusive, offering multiple pathways for student engagement regardless of their initial language proficiency. Educators adapt instructional materials and scaffold input to ensure accessibility without compromising academic depth. Tiered tasks and differentiated strategies allow all learners to participate meaningfully, promoting both linguistic and cognitive growth. Moreover, CLIL embraces equity by valuing students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, integrating them into classroom discourse and activities. This inclusive approach not only enhances academic outcomes but also fosters motivation and a sense of belonging. Recent research emphasizes that inclusive environments—where students feel psychologically safe and culturally acknowledged—are essential for maximizing learning in diverse classrooms (Vega, et al., 2020). CLIL thus reinforces its role as a democratic and student-centered pedagogy (Astika, 2025; Pérez Cañado, 2012).

Innovation and Digital Integration

CLIL embraces innovation by incorporating digital tools and interactive methodologies. Technology enhances learning through multimedia resources, online collaboration, and gamification, making lessons more dynamic and motivating for students. For example, learners may use virtual simulations, interactive quizzes, or digital storytelling to apply content knowledge while practicing language skills. Digital integration also enables personalized learning, allowing teachers to adapt tasks to varied proficiency levels. By blending innovation with pedagogical goals, CLIL ensures that students engage with authentic materials and develop digital literacy skills essential for the twenty-first century (Astika, 2025; Marsh et al., 2012).

Continuous Teacher Development

Ongoing teacher development is fundamental to maintaining effective CLIL instruction. Educators must continuously enhance their ability to integrate content and language, design inclusive assessments, scaffold learning, and promote intercultural competence. Professional growth is supported through workshops, peer collaboration, and reflective practices, which help teachers share strategies and address challenges. Establishing communities of practice fosters confidence and adaptability, ensuring that CLIL evolves in response to changing educational demands. Recent research underscores the importance of aligning professional development with teachers' self-reported needs, emphasizing competencies such as linguistic, pedagogical, and reflective skills (Kim & Graham, 2022). By investing in teacher development, institutions empower educators as key agents of innovation and ensure the long-term success of CLIL (Astika, 2025; Banegas, 2021).

Teachers' roles in CLIL

In CLIL environments, teachers take on dual responsibilities as facilitators and instructional designers. Their role involves adapting language use to support learners in grasping subject content through a second language. As Wang (2024) emphasizes, educators must scaffold instruction and provide meaningful feedback to help students navigate both linguistic and conceptual challenges. However, this task becomes particularly demanding when teachers lack sufficient language proficiency or formal training in CLIL pedagogy. Fürstenberg and Kletzenbauer (2015) and Kim & Graham (2022) observed that in Austrian higher education, inadequate training often leads instructors to revert to traditional lecture-based methods, neglecting the integration of language and content. Recent findings by Kim and Graham (2022) further highlight that many CLIL teachers report unmet professional development needs, particularly in areas such as linguistic competence, pedagogical strategies, and reflective practice. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensure that educators can fulfil their roles effectively and maintain the integrity of CLIL instruction.

Furthermore, it is commonly assumed that teachers who are fluent in the target language are automatically qualified to teach in CLIL settings. However, educators are expected to possess more than just a solid command of the language. Hall (2001) and Banegas (2021) emphasizes that language proficiency alone does not equate to the ability

to teach effectively in a second language, especially within the specific demands of a CLIL classroom. In other words, CLIL educators must go beyond simply speaking the L2 well; they must be able to use it strategically to support both content and language learning. Fürstenberg & Kletzenbauer (2015) and Wang, et al. (2024) further argue that while many CLIL teachers may be linguistically competent, the absence of proper pedagogical training can undermine their effectiveness. Without adequate preparation, teachers may default to traditional lecture-style instruction, focusing solely on content and neglecting the integration of language, which is central to the CLIL approach.

When it comes to instructional materials in CLIL, (Mehisto et al. (2008) and Ruiz de Zarobe & Banegas (2024) pointed out that there is a notable scarcity of resources specifically designed for CLIL implementation. As a result, teachers often need to invest significant time in creating or adapting existing materials to suit the dual focus of content and language learning. Similarly, Bauer-Marschallinger, et al. (2023) reinforced this observation, emphasizing that CLIL educators carry a substantial responsibility in selecting and designing their own teaching resources. Since they are granted autonomy over the materials and methods used in their classrooms, these decisions must align with their pedagogical skills and understanding of CLIL principles. This autonomy, while empowering, also demands a high level of expertise and preparation from teachers to ensure that both content and language objectives are effectively addressed.

Similarly, Banegas, (2021) and Ruiz de Zarobe & Banegas (2024) emphasized that CLIL instructors are often required to act as material designers in order to develop resources that genuinely meet students' needs, a competence regarded as essential for CLIL practice. These observations reinforce the notion that the scarcity of prepared CLIL resources presents a persistent challenge. Teachers' autonomy in designing or adapting materials is valuable but can also be time-consuming and, at times, overwhelming without adequate institutional support.

Learners' roles in CLIL

Learners occupy a central role in CLIL classrooms, as this pedagogical model is student-centered and demands active and continuous engagement. (Wang, Muñoz, & Yang, 2024; Gómez-Parra, 2020) argued that the success of CLIL lies in the clearly defined roles of both teachers and learners, highlighting that it is the learners' responsibility to participate actively in the construction of knowledge. The cognitive and

linguistic demands are often significant, particularly in the initial stages of CLIL implementation, which requires teachers to move beyond traditional transmission-based instruction and instead engage students in tasks that foster constant participation and interaction. In this sense, Anzenberger (2015), Kim and Graham (2022), and Štefková and Danihelová (2023) also noted that CLIL learners play a crucial role because teachers act primarily as facilitators. Therefore, student work should be grounded in peer cooperation, allowing learners to collaboratively establish both content knowledge and language skill outcomes (González, Lara, & Romero, 2024).

Language outcomes expected after applying CLIL

Concerning the outcomes of CLIL implementation, Idris, Said, and Sulaiman, (2025); Ruiz de Zarobe & Banegas (2024) suggested that “learners study a significant part of the curriculum through the CLIL language for a number of years with the intention of developing required content-learning goals and advanced language skills.” This implies that students exposed to CLIL over time are expected to achieve higher-order skills such as academic writing. In Ecuador, CLIL has been formally integrated as the framework for teaching English. According to the Ministerio de Educación de la República del Ecuador (2016); Serrano, Fajardo-Dack, & Céleri (2024) students in Educación General Básica (grades 2–10) are expected to achieve A2 proficiency, while those completing Bachillerato General Unificado (grades 11–13) are expected to reach B1 by graduation. These benchmarks demonstrate the high expectations placed on Ecuadorian students taught under CLIL.

It is also essential to consider the implications of these proficiency levels. The CEFR defines B1 learners as able to understand the main points of familiar topics such as school, work, leisure, or travel, and to produce simple connected texts on topics of personal interest. They can also describe experiences, aspirations, and opinions in a coherent way. In contrast, A2 learners are expected to manage basic communicative needs such as personal information, shopping, and employment, as well as routine interactions in familiar contexts. They are also able to describe their immediate environment and needs in simple terms. Within CLIL, these descriptors serve as practical guidelines. As Bauer-Marschallinger et al., (2023) explained, CEFR levels help CLIL teachers to adjust input complexity, design tasks that correspond to students’ abilities, and select skills that can be scaffolded appropriately.

The writing process in EFL and CLIL classrooms

A clear understanding of the writing process is essential, as the lack of awareness can undermine students' written performance. From an EFL perspective, Gebhard (2006) and Idris et al. (2025) outlined the key stages of the process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. In the prewriting stage, learners are encouraged to generate ideas, identify relevant issues, and plan organization. Drafting involves producing successive versions, while revising refers to reorganizing, adding, or deleting content. Editing focuses on grammatical accuracy, lexical appropriateness, and structural clarity. Bailey (2015) further added rewriting and proofreading as crucial steps, with rewriting involving a fresh review of earlier drafts to ensure coherence, and proofreading targeting minor errors that may affect clarity.

Supporting this perspective, Jaramillo and Gutiérrez (2011) and González et al. (2024) investigated the development of descriptive texts in English and stressed the importance of guiding learners step by step, from sentence writing to the production of coherent texts. They also emphasized that teachers must encourage learners to think critically about what they want to express, in line with CLIL principles, and then guide them through drafting, correcting, and rewriting. These findings are consistent with the broader literature, which highlights the importance of explicit instruction in the writing process and the need to develop students' awareness of it. Without such awareness, learners are less likely to produce well-structured compositions and more likely to fall into recurring patterns of weak writing.

Feedback in CLIL contexts

Feedback has long been recognized as essential in education, and in language learning its importance is even greater. In general terms, feedback can be defined as the process through which learners receive information about their performance, allowing them to identify strengths and weaknesses and make improvements (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Kim & Graham, 2022). In the context of writing, Ferris and Hedgcock (2014; Idris et al., 2025) describe written feedback as a complex but necessary process that involves selective commentary on errors and constructive suggestions for revision. They recommend a balanced approach that combines encouragement with targeted criticism, ensuring that students receive practical advice for improving current and future writing tasks.

It is also necessary to distinguish between direct and indirect feedback. Direct feedback provides learners with explicit corrections, while indirect feedback signals errors and requires learners to self-correct, for example through underlining or error codes. Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) argue that indirect feedback is generally more beneficial for developing L2 proficiency and metalinguistic awareness, whereas direct feedback is especially valuable for lower-level learners who may struggle to correct themselves.

However, research shows that the effectiveness of feedback is often constrained by contextual factors. Wang et al. (2024), for example, found that many learners received little or no feedback on their written work, which significantly limited their progress. Similarly, Sarie (2013) noted that unclear or overly general comments can frustrate learners and reduce the impact of feedback, while Zaman and Azad (2012) highlighted time limitations, heavy teacher workload, and large class sizes as barriers to effective feedback practices. Huy (2015) and Kim and Graham (2022) also observed that under such constraints, feedback tends to become superficial, leading students to repeat the same mistakes.

Within CLIL contexts, feedback requires particular attention because it must address both content and form. Dale, et al. (2010) stressed that teachers should provide a balance of feedback on subject matter (ideas, accuracy of content) and language (grammar, vocabulary, structure). They suggest a variety of strategies, from selective correction to collaborative feedback activities, that can make the process more effective. Gibbons (2002) and González et al. (2024) further proposed reflective checklists as tools to help teachers assess organization, clarity, and accuracy in student texts, enabling them to identify both strengths and weaknesses. Such practices allow CLIL instructors to provide targeted, constructive feedback that supports learners' overall development in both language and content.

RUBRIC

GENERAL CRITERIA	COMMENTS ON LEARNER'S WRITTEN WORK	SUGGESTIONS FOR LANGUAGE WORK
Is the overall meaning clear? Are the main ideas developed? Does the writing reflect the writer's other classroom language experiences (e.g. what they have read or talked about)? What is your overall impression compared to other things the learner has written?		
Text Type		
What kind of text is this? Is this appropriate for the writer's purpose? Has the writer written this type of text before?		
Overall organization		
Is the overall structural organization appropriate to the text type?		
Are any stages missing?		
Cohesion		
Are the ideas linked with the appropriate connectives for this text type? Is there an appropriate variety of these connectives? Are pronouns used correctly (e.g. this and it)? Do pronouns have a clear referent (e.g. is it clear what this refers to)?		
Vocabulary		
Is appropriate vocabulary used? Is there semantic variety (e.g. does the writer use a range of words to describe clouds)?		
Sentence		

Is this accurate (e.g. correct use of tenses, word order)?		
Spelling		
Is this accurate? If the writer does not produce the correct spelling, what is already known about the possible spelling (e.g. different possible ways of spelling vowel sounds or consonants)? What knowledge about the spelling of this word is still lacking?		

Source: Gibbons (2002, p. 73) taken from Rojas González, L. J. (2017). Teachers and students' perceptions on the factors that influence on the development of students' writing skills when using the Content and Language Integrated Learning Approach (CLIL): a case of a bilingual school (Master's thesis).

Building on the points above, feedback in CLIL settings operates differently from feedback in regular EFL classes, where commentary often tends to be more general. Because CLIL simultaneously targets content learning and language development, the corrective process necessarily diverges from traditional EFL practices; CLIL teachers must therefore weigh their options carefully when deciding which type of feedback to provide. By the same token, insufficient or absent feedback—whether in EFL or CLIL classrooms—can undermine students' overall writing performance.

Students' lack of interest in reading and its impact on CLIL writing development

A further factor that may impede the development of writing skills is students' limited interest in reading. Research conducted in EFL contexts sheds light on how weak reading habits can depress writing outcomes, and conversely, how sustained reading supports writing development. Palani (2012) argued that academic success is closely tied to robust reading habits, since reading strengthens comprehension and helps learners interpret vocabulary in context; however, he also noted that mass media consumption has eroded students' inclination to read, with negative consequences for achievement. His study proposed several ways to cultivate reading habits and highlighted the benefits of enhanced reading proficiency.

Regarding writing, Mermelstein (2015) reported that increased reading is associated with improved writing in both L1 and L2. Prior studies he reviewed showed gains in fluency, content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics for students engaged in extensive reading. In his own work—comparing pretest and posttest results—participants who devoted set periods to reading activities improved notably in organization, content, vocabulary, language use, spelling/mechanics, and fluency, all core components of the writing process. These findings indicate that reading can exert a substantial, positive influence on writing skills.

Similarly, Al-Mansour (2014) found that an extensive reading program enhances written performance. He defined such a program as researcher-selected English materials calibrated to students' abilities and designed to foster writing—spanning narrative, argumentative, descriptive, scientific, and expository texts, with associated reading-writing tasks adapted to learners' needs. In his quasi-experimental design, an experimental group completed 50-minute weekly extensive-reading sessions over two months, while a comparison group followed a traditional approach without those sessions. Posttest results showed that the extensive-reading group made significant writing gains, including better understanding of how ideas develop in texts and broader vocabulary for subsequent use in writing. Together, these outcomes suggest that reading can decisively strengthen students' writing.

In sum, reading time exposes learners to how words combine into coherent texts while expanding their ideas and vocabulary. When students also receive sufficient time to practice and consolidate their written production, prior research indicates that writing proficiency improves; by contrast, limited reading tends to depress performance.

Teachers' training for CLIL situations

Given CLIL's dual focus, it is important to consider teacher language proficiency and CLIL-specific materials from multiple angles, as both may constrain students' writing development. In Ecuador, the Ministerio de Educación (2016) stipulates that students should graduate with at least B1 proficiency; consequently, CLIL teachers are expected to demonstrate proficiency at a level exceeding that of their students. Numerous studies of CLIL contexts point to the need for high language competence among teachers.

Regarding professional development, Bonces (2012) argued that effective CLIL implementation requires schools to create opportunities for teachers to enhance both pedagogy and practice. Because CLIL differs from other approaches, he recommended targeted PD on lesson planning, differentiated instruction, assessment, and scaffolding. He further maintained that, regardless of the method or approach, education authorities must provide sustained support so teachers can deepen their expertise and manage change. From this perspective, a “lack of proficiency” in CLIL also encompasses limited mastery of CLIL-specific teaching procedures. If such constraints hamper teachers’ performance, student outcomes are likely to suffer as well. Notably, the teachers interviewed repeatedly raised concerns about CLIL materials, underscoring the scarcity of updated resources for classroom use—a theme echoed by other authors.

In the same vein, Banegas (2012) examined challenges in CLIL teacher development and identified limited training and support, alongside shortages of CLIL materials, as major constraints. He stressed that school leaders must be fully engaged in teacher training and provide appropriate resources. Interviews with administrators revealed that crucial areas—CLIL PD, content materials, and instructional resources—were often neglected. Ultimately, successful CLIL implementation requires collaboration among administrators, curriculum planners, and teachers to distribute responsibilities more evenly and reduce the burden on instructors. It is also important to recognize that developing or adapting materials substantially increases teacher workload; the time required for materials design might otherwise be invested in providing corrective feedback on students’ writing. This reality can negatively affect not only writing development but also academic performance more broadly.

Previous studies

Research on the development of writing skills within Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) contexts has drawn increasing attention in recent years, especially regarding how teachers and students perceive the factors that influence this process. Several studies suggest that CLIL not only fosters subject-specific knowledge but also enhances language and literacy through integrated activities. Reading and writing tasks in CLIL classrooms require learners to engage in higher-order thinking, organize ideas effectively, and produce content-relevant texts. Scholars such as Coyle, Dalton-Puffer, and Loranc-Paszyk have highlighted that these practices, when combined with

scaffolding and authentic materials, can significantly contribute to students' academic writing competence.

In this regard, the literature reveals that students in CLIL environments frequently achieve better results in writing tasks than those in traditional EFL contexts, although such progress often depends on teacher training, instructional design, and learners' prior proficiency. Previous findings also emphasize the role of motivation, exposure to content-driven tasks, and meaningful interaction in enhancing written production. Considering these contributions, it becomes essential to review how CLIL-based instruction has been implemented across diverse contexts. Therefore, the following section will present an overview of previous studies conducted at three levels: international research that provides global perspectives, national studies focusing on Ecuador, and local investigations carried out in Machala.

International Studies

Loranc-Paszylk (2009) carried out a study that investigated the potential of integrated reading and writing tasks in CLIL classes in relation to students' linguistic outcomes. The research included a case study with 17 undergraduate students as the experimental group, who received CLIL instruction, and 35 students in the control group, who attended traditional EFL classes. Both groups worked with integrated reading and writing activities, but the experimental group was assigned systematic text-responsible writing tasks as part of the CLIL methodology.

To assess progress, the Cambridge ESOL IELTS exam was administered at the beginning and end of the course, focusing on academic reading, writing, and use of English. Post-test results showed that the experimental group achieved significantly higher outcomes in reading and writing, while the control group displayed very low progress. These results highlighted the benefits of CLIL-based tasks in fostering integrated skills development.

The author concluded that systematic text-responsible writing assignments contribute decisively to the effectiveness of CLIL instruction. This finding provides evidence that combining reading and writing under CLIL contexts promotes stronger outcomes compared to traditional EFL approaches, particularly in enhancing academic literacy.

Whittaker, Llinares, and McCabe (2011) This article investigates the development of written discourse in English as a foreign language in a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) environment. It follows the same group of students, aged 12–16, in two state schools in Madrid over the four years of junior secondary education. The focus is on how these learners produce coherent texts and manage nominal groups (noun phrases) as key resources for creating disciplinary registers. All nominal groups in the students' history-class compositions are analysed for the recoverability of their referents and classified by type, and their structures are examined for pre- and post-modification. The study responds to the lack of research on writing in CLIL and aims to trace developmental patterns over time.

Data were collected once a year from the same students' history-class essays, which were written after content-related oral activities. The researchers applied a systemic functional linguistic approach, analysing each nominal group to see whether it introduced new participants (presenting), referred back to known participants (presuming), or compared discourse entities. Tracking types—direct reference, exophora (reference to context) and anaphora (reference within the same nominal group)—were also noted. The study further categorised nominal group structures by the presence of pre-modifiers and post-modifiers. Statistical distributions were examined to see how these categories changed each year, allowing researchers to chart shifts in textual cohesion and nominal group complexity.

The results show that over four years students gradually reduce the number of nominal groups used to introduce new participants and increase those used to presume known participants. Although comparison structures remain rare, the use of direct reference grows and exophoric reference declines, signalling greater textual cohesion. Students rely less on pronouns and simple nouns and begin to use more pre- and post-modification, particularly in the third and fourth years. Miscues—errors in signalling new or known participants—also decrease. Together, these trends indicate that the learners' writing is moving away from lists of topics toward more structured, coherent texts with richer nominal groups.

The authors conclude that a CLIL setting can support the development of written discourse because students build on a solid content knowledge base. Even without

explicit instruction on coherence or nominal group construction, the learners in this study showed increased control of reference and a modest rise in nominal group complexity. They argue that these gains may be due to accumulated exposure and cognitive maturity but note that students still lag behind native speakers in features such as abstraction. The paper suggests that explicit teaching of academic discourse features and careful sequencing of content-based tasks could accelerate development, while acknowledging the methodological challenges this poses for CLIL teachers.

Jackson (2012) examined the effectiveness of combining the CLIL approach with genre process writing to improve students' written skills. The study involved two groups: a "test group" that was instructed through genre-processing methods in CLIL, and a control group without this methodology. Students in the test group completed written assignments across various genres, including narrative, argumentative, contrast-and-compare, and cause-and-effect essays. Topics were aligned with academic subjects, and the intervention lasted 14 weeks.

Placement tests at the start revealed no major differences between the two groups. However, post-tests showed that the CLIL group had significantly improved writing skills compared to the control group. Beyond overall gains, the findings highlighted a substantial reduction in grammatical errors among the test group, underscoring the effectiveness of integrating genre writing with CLIL instruction.

The study demonstrated that genre-based CLIL teaching offers a dual benefit: improving accuracy while developing written fluency across academic registers. It confirmed the potential of CLIL to not only enhance language outcomes but also support structured academic literacy development.

Papaja (2013) conducted qualitative research exploring the role of teachers in CLIL classrooms. The study applied class observations, questionnaires, and interviews with 31 instructors teaching Geography, Biology, Mathematics, Physics, and History through CLIL. Interestingly, only four of these were certified English teachers; the rest had studied English courses and passed proficiency exams that allowed them to teach in English.

Findings revealed several systemic challenges inhibiting CLIL effectiveness. Teachers cited shortages of appropriate materials, lack of financial and institutional support,

insufficient training in CLIL pedagogy, and limited collaboration in sharing resources. Existing teaching materials were often designed for native speakers, creating additional barriers for teachers adapting content for bilingual learners.

The study emphasized that teacher preparation and institutional support are essential for CLIL success. Without adequate training, resources, and collaboration, even motivated instructors face limitations in achieving effective outcomes in writing or broader academic competencies.

Gené-Gil, et al. (2015) in their research investigated writing development under CLIL with 45 secondary students divided into two groups: 30 CLIL learners studying social sciences in English, and 15 non-CLIL learners in traditional instruction. Writing data was collected through four composition tasks over the school year, and complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) were measured.

Findings showed that CLIL students significantly outperformed non-CLIL peers in written competence. Specifically, CLIL learners displayed greater fluency and accuracy, producing more cohesive and sophisticated texts. A holistic assessment confirmed these results, with CLIL students excelling beyond their counterparts.

The authors concluded that CLIL supports writing development by integrating language use with content understanding, strengthening both linguistic and cognitive skills.

In another study, the same authors Gené-Gil et al. (2015) did a study that investigated how learning context—specifically CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) plus formal instruction (FI) versus FI alone—affects the development of EFL writing in secondary school students over three years. The authors posed two questions: (1) How does written performance in English develop within each group? and (2) How do CLIL learners compare with their non-CLIL peers when exposure is controlled. Fifty Spanish/Catalan bilingual students from four state schools in the Balearic Islands participated—30 in the experimental CLIL group and 20 in the control group. Both groups had similar starting levels at age 13, and the study aimed to fill gaps in research on long-term writing development in CLIL contexts.

A longitudinal design with four data-collection points over three consecutive academic years was used. At each point, students wrote a 25-minute composition in

English describing a film they had seen, including details such as title, storyline, characters and personal opinion. CLIL students received both FI and three hours of content instruction in English each week, while non-CLIL students had only FI. Written competence was measured through quantitative metrics of complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF). Syntactic complexity was assessed using coordination and subordination ratios; lexical complexity via the D-value of vocabulary diversity; accuracy through ratios of error-free T-units; and fluency via T-units per minute, words per T-unit and words per minute.

Within the CLIL group, significant longitudinal improvements were found in six of eight CAF measures across syntactic and lexical complexity, accuracy and fluency. These students produced more subordinate clauses and increased lexical diversity over time, with higher ratios of error-free T-units and fewer errors. Fluency improved initially but declined in the final year, possibly due to task fatigue. In contrast, non-CLIL learners showed significant gains only in lexical complexity and accuracy, not in syntactic complexity or fluency. When groups were compared at equivalent exposure levels, CLIL students generally wrote more syntactically complex and fluent texts, although differences were not always statistically significant.

The study concludes that CLIL enhances EFL writing development by providing integrative, naturalistic exposure that complements formal instruction. Over three years, CLIL students' texts became more complex, accurate and (until the final year) longer than those of their non-CLIL peers. However, non-CLIL learners excelled in lexical variety when exposure hours favored them, suggesting FI remains valuable for vocabulary development. Limitations include a small sample size, attrition, and potential fatigue from repeated tasks, which may have reduced fluency at the final testing point. The authors recommend larger corpus studies and more varied text types to further explore writing development in CLIL contexts.

Alrabah and Wu (2017) This study, conducted at the College of Nursing in Kuwait, sought to examine students' self-assessments of their English writing competence and their attitudes toward a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) course. The motivation for the research stemmed from students' low entry-level English proficiency and poor writing outcomes in previous courses. The main research questions were: (1) How did students evaluate their writing skills after completing the CLIL course? and (2)

How did the integration of English instruction with medical content influence their attitudes? The study aimed to fill a gap in the Middle Eastern context, where little prior research on CLIL had been conducted

To address these objectives, the researchers applied a mixed-method design. Data collection included five focus-group interviews with the 27 participants, which were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify recurring themes. Based on these themes, a 16-item survey was designed and distributed through Google Forms, yielding a 96.3% response rate. Descriptive statistics, including means, percentages, and standard deviations, were generated using Microsoft Excel. The tools allowed for a comprehensive analysis of students' writing performance both at the sentence level—capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement—and beyond the sentence level—transition words, organization, and cause-and-effect.

The findings revealed that 80% of students reported improvement in their writing competence, particularly in basic sentence-level skills. While most participants also perceived gains in advanced skills such as organization, writing patient case reports, and producing cause-and-effect texts, a smaller percentage (about 20%) felt CLIL did not enhance their writing beyond the sentence level. Importantly, the results showed a strong consistency between students' self-assessments and their final course grades, suggesting that learners realistically evaluated their progress in the CLIL course

In terms of attitudes, the study showed overwhelmingly positive responses toward the CLIL approach. Students appreciated learning medical terminology, reading charts, and applying English in meaningful professional contexts. They expressed that integrating medical content increased motivation and relevance, making English learning more practical and engaging. However, the study also acknowledged limitations, including the short-term scope, time constraints that limited classroom observations, and the need for specialized teacher training to deliver CLIL effectively. The authors recommend longitudinal studies to track the gradual development of writing skills and further explore how CLIL can systematically enhance both language proficiency and academic content learning.

Chaimba & Ikhlas G. (2024) did a study which aimed to investigate how Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) contributes to the development of writing skills among EFL students, with a particular focus on the perceptions of both teachers and

learners regarding its implementation. Two central research questions guided the inquiry: How do teachers perceive the use of CLIL to enhance writing? And how do students view CLIL as a tool for improving their writing competence?

The research was carried out at Mila University Centre in Algeria, involving ten English teachers and seventy third-year English students. The study addressed the persistent issue of writing difficulties among EFL learners, even at advanced levels, often linked to low motivation, limited language proficiency, and a lack of authentic writing contexts. CLIL was explored as a potential solution, offering a dual focus on content and language development. Data were gathered through two questionnaires and analyzed using a mixed-methods approach.

Results indicated that both teachers and students held favorable views of CLIL's impact on writing improvement. While educators acknowledged its benefits, they also noted challenges such as insufficient training and limited resources. Students, on the other hand, expressed strong motivation and a desire for more CLIL-based activities. The study concluded that expanding CLIL practices could significantly enhance students' writing abilities and recommended increasing opportunities for learners to engage in integrated tasks.

Idris, et al. (2025) set out to investigate how Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) influences the development of writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) among secondary school students. The authors identified a gap in existing research, noting that while many studies have explored general performance or motivation, fewer have examined specific writing dimensions such as fluency, accuracy, vocabulary use, and genre awareness.

Following PRISMA guidelines, the review analyzed 43 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2023, sourced from databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, and EBSCO. The research spanned various countries, with Spain contributing the most studies, followed by Sweden, Japan, Indonesia, Ecuador, and others. The selected articles addressed a range of writing genres and employed diverse assessment frameworks, such as CAF (complexity, accuracy, fluency), systemic functional linguistics (SFL), rubrics, and error analysis.

The results consistently showed that CLIL had a positive impact on students' writing development. Learners in CLIL programs demonstrated richer vocabulary, more complex grammatical structures, and better organization and cohesion than those in non-CLIL settings. Although improvements in accuracy were sometimes modest, overall writing performance was stronger in CLIL contexts. The review concluded that CLIL enhances both language proficiency and content mastery, while also highlighting ongoing challenges such as the need for teacher training, resource development, and balancing linguistic and disciplinary goals.

Ruiz de Zarobe, & Banegas (2024) This multiple case study aimed to explore how Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) is conceptualized and applied within CLIL-focused teacher education programs across South America. The research concentrated on three national contexts—Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador—where CLIL is gaining prominence, yet teacher preparation remains inconsistent. The study was guided by two core questions: how teacher educators and student-teachers understand TLA during initial training, and how these understandings are reflected in classroom practice.

Conducted over two academic years (2019–2020 and 2020–2021), the study involved five teacher educators and fifty-eight student-teachers from three distinct programs. Data collection included interviews, online discussion forums, classroom observations (both virtual and face-to-face), and teaching artefacts such as lesson plans and presentation slides. The interpretive analysis was informed by Morton's (2018) framework on language knowledge for content instruction and employed inductive coding to uncover patterns. This approach enabled a detailed examination of how TLA is embedded in CLIL-oriented teacher education.

The results revealed both converging and diverging views. Language educators emphasized explicit linguistic knowledge, while a science educator focused on disciplinary literacy. Student-teachers often associated TLA with grammar rules and metalinguistic awareness, although their classroom practices tended to address only surface-level language features. The study culminated in a pedagogical model for CLIL teacher education, structured around four phases: exploration, inductive input, reflection, and informed application. This model highlights the importance of bridging theoretical knowledge and practical implementation to ensure that future CLIL teachers can effectively integrate language and content in their teaching.

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National Studies (Ecuador)

This article from Barre (2021) examines how Ecuador’s 2016 mandate to adopt Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been enacted in zone 4 (Manabí) between 2019 and 2021. Ecuador’s English proficiency ranking dropped significantly over the past decade, prompting questions about motivation and teaching methods. The authors investigate two key questions: how CLIL has been implemented in secondary schools and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected this process. By focusing on nine

public and private institutions, the study seeks to provide reliable information on policy outcomes and highlight differences in CLIL adoption across school types.

Employing a transformative paradigm, the researchers combine quantitative and qualitative methods to assess changes in CLIL implementation. Seventy English teachers (aged 28–45, average experience eight years) from nine Manabí schools participated. Data collection instruments included an observation form adapted from Turner et al. (2017), focus-group discussions and in-depth interviews, all vetted by expert panels. Procedures involved classroom observations before and during the pandemic, online focus groups and interviews, and statistical analyses (Wilcoxon tests) coupled with category analysis to compare implementation across years and between public and private schools.

Results reveal significant challenges. Teachers reported insufficient training for online instruction, inadequate follow-up on CLIL use and limited resources, which led to stress and decreased language production. Private schools offered more professional development and differentiated between soft and hard CLIL, with better access to CLIL-aligned materials and online platforms; public schools lacked these supports. During the pandemic, private schools maintained or slightly increased CLIL use (45 % to 46 %), whereas public schools declined from 15 % to 13 % due to connectivity issues and competing priorities. Statistical tests confirmed significant differences across years and between school types.

The authors conclude that CLIL implementation varies markedly by school sector and that the pandemic hindered progress. They attribute the decline in public schools to poor internet access, limited teacher training and curricular policies that prioritise mathematics and the national language. They recommend comprehensive training in CLIL and digital tools, advocating for its inclusion in teacher-education programmes. While the study provides valuable insights, its small sample limits generalisation. The authors call for further research on CLIL in Ecuador and Latin America to better guide educational policy and improve English learning outcomes.

Obando (2024) explored how Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) could enhance the English-writing abilities of ninth-grade EGB students at Unidad Educativa La Salle in Riobamba. This quasi-experimental mixed-methods study's context shows a persistent difficulty with writing among students who lacked concentration,

confidence and appropriate pedagogical support. The general objective was to determine the impact of CLIL on writing skills, while specific objectives involved analysing existing teaching practices, assessing the students' baseline writing level and designing a methodological guide. Although the thesis did not articulate explicit research questions, it investigated whether integrating subject content and language through CLIL would improve the four rubric dimensions—purpose and audience, organisation and structure, details, and language conventions—in students' writing.

The study involved four English teachers and 350 learners, but the sample comprised one teacher and 33 ninth-grade students aged 13–14 with A1 proficiency. Data were gathered via a CLIL-focused observation guide and a pre-/post-test that evaluated the four writing dimensions on a five-point scale. Eight classroom observations assessed how the teacher connected content and language and whether instruction was adapted to students' level and culture. The intervention consisted of lessons where English served as the medium for subject content, with tasks designed to promote vocabulary expansion, text organisation and audience awareness, reflecting the 4Cs (Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture) of CLIL.

Baseline (pre-test) results revealed mid-range performance: the purpose-and-audience dimension averaged 2.91 points out of five, organisation and structure 2.73, and details 2.52. Students struggled to address email recipients appropriately and to provide relevant supporting information. After the CLIL intervention, there were substantial gains. Purpose and audience rose to a mean score of 3.61; organisation and structure climbed to 3.73; details improved to 3.52; and language and conventions reached 3.48, although many students still performed only moderately. The overall post-test mean was 14.34/20, indicating a notable improvement across all categories.

The study concluded that CLIL positively influenced students' writing by integrating subject matter with language learning, thereby enhancing organisation, audience awareness and detail development. Nonetheless, improvements in language conventions were less pronounced, suggesting persistent grammar and vocabulary challenges. Limitations included a small sample size and the quasi-experimental design, which restricted the generalisability of findings. The author recommended that teachers receive specialised CLIL training, incorporate the 4Cs systematically and provide more focused

grammar support. Future research should examine CLIL's long-term effects on other language skills and explore strategies to strengthen linguistic accuracy within integrated curricula.

Serrano, et al. (2024) tried to answer this research question: Are Ecuadorian Universities Preparing EFL Teachers for CLIL? *Sacred Versus Secret Stories* examines whether pre-service English teachers in Ecuador are being adequately trained to implement Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Set within the framework of the national curriculum—which formally incorporates CLIL as a key pedagogical approach—the study explores the extent to which Ecuadorian universities prepare future teachers for this dual focus on content and language. It contrasts official policy expectations with the realities of teacher education programs in the country.

The authors identify several challenges that hinder effective CLIL preparation. These include the lack of formal CLIL-oriented training within undergraduate curricula, insufficient teacher educators with expertise in CLIL, and limited opportunities for student-teachers to engage in CLIL practice during their teaching practicums. To investigate these issues, the study employed a qualitative approach drawing on document analysis, curricular review, and narratives collected from teacher educators and student-teachers, which the authors describe as “sacred stories” (the official discourse) and “secret stories” (the lived experiences).

The findings reveal a significant gap between policy and practice. While the national curriculum promotes CLIL as a central methodology, universities largely fail to include systematic CLIL training in their programs. Moreover, student-teachers rarely encounter CLIL implementation in their practicum schools, which limits their capacity to apply the approach in real classrooms. The study concludes that Ecuadorian EFL teacher education programs are not yet equipping graduates with the skills and knowledge needed for CLIL, underscoring the urgent need for more targeted pre-service and in-service professional development.

Local Studies (Machala)

González et al. (2024) aimed to describe the factors influencing the development of students' writing skills in a bilingual high school in Ecuador where English is taught through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. The research

responds to the increasing demand in Latin America for effective bilingual education, particularly in English, due to globalization and curricular reforms in the Ecuadorian education system. The context involved 62 international baccalaureate students, aged 15–17, and three English teachers in a private school in Machala, Ecuador

The study identified persistent problems affecting the improvement of writing skills in CLIL classrooms. Despite most teachers being native speakers with degrees in English language teaching, they lacked specific CLIL training, relied on limited teaching materials, and often provided insufficient or ineffective feedback. These issues hindered students' progress in writing tasks. To investigate these factors, the researchers applied a mixed-method design, combining quantitative tools (FCE standardized test results, descriptive statistics, and questionnaires) with qualitative tools (class observations and teacher interviews). This combination allowed triangulation of student proficiency levels, perceptions, and classroom practices

The findings showed that students' writing proficiency was significantly lower compared to other skills such as speaking or listening, as evidenced by their FCE test results. Both teachers and students confirmed that the lack of training, insufficient feedback, and scarce writing practice opportunities were major barriers. Additionally, large class sizes, uninteresting writing topics, and limited vocabulary negatively influenced learners' motivation and writing development. The study concludes that for CLIL to be effective in enhancing writing skills, teachers require stronger preparation in CLIL methodology, more appropriate teaching materials, and strategies to integrate reading and writing tasks meaningfully in class

Huilcapi, et al. (2021) set out to explore the advantages of using the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in combination with the flipped classroom model to enhance foreign language acquisition. It was carried out within the Medical Sciences program at Universidad Técnica de Machala in Ecuador, targeting students in their third, seventh, and eighth semesters. The research was driven by the need to improve students' English proficiency while simultaneously deepening their understanding of medical subject matter.

The research addressed the challenge of the sporadic and limited use of CLIL and flipped classroom strategies in medical education, as only a few instructors consistently applied them. To assess their impact, the researchers conducted a descriptive,

observational, and analytical cross-sectional study. They gathered data through structured surveys completed by 174 students and evaluation forms from 22 professors. The data were analyzed using SPSS to uncover trends in how these teaching methods were perceived and their effectiveness.

Results showed that only 22.7% of professors regularly implemented CLIL in their teaching. However, students noted that these methods significantly boosted their engagement, interaction, and creativity. The flipped classroom approach encouraged students to study content beforehand, which improved their understanding and promoted independent learning. Overall, students reported improvements in both individual and group learning, motivation, and the integration of English with medical knowledge. The study concluded that combining CLIL with the flipped classroom model is highly effective in enhancing language skills and preparing students for professional success in the health sciences.

CAPÍTULO II

Methodology

CHAPTER II

Methodology

Improving students' writing performance within CLIL contexts requires not only addressing classroom practices but also rethinking institutional support and teacher preparation. The challenges identified in this study—ranging from the scarcity of teaching materials to insufficient feedback and limited training opportunities—highlight the urgent need for strategic pedagogical interventions. Effective solutions should go beyond temporary fixes and aim to establish sustainable systems that support both teachers and learners. With this in mind, the following recommendations are proposed as practical measures to strengthen writing instruction, enhance student motivation, and foster more balanced language development in CLIL classrooms.

Setting and Participants

This research was conducted in a private high school located in Machala, Ecuador. The study involved sixty-two students and three English teachers from the third year of the International Baccalaureate program. The students, both male and female, were aged between 15 and 17 years and came from middle to upper socio-economic backgrounds. Their language proficiency ranged from B1 to B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The CEFR is an internationally recognized standard that describes language ability across six levels, from A1 (beginner) to C2 (mastery), and it provides common criteria for assessing and comparing proficiency across contexts (Council of Europe, 2001).

It is also important to note that these learners had been engaged in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) instruction since school. CLIL is defined as an educational approach in which a second or foreign language is used as the medium of instruction to teach both language and subject content simultaneously (Coyle et al., 2010). Institutional policy required that, to graduate, students must achieve an upper-intermediate proficiency (B2) across all language skills according to CEFR standards. At the B2 level, learners are expected to interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity, produce clear and detailed text on various subjects, and explain viewpoints on topical issues (Council of Europe, 2001).

Regarding the teachers, two were native speakers from England, one with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and the other with a degree in English Education. The third teacher was Ecuadorian, holding a Bachelor's degree in English Education and pursuing a Master's degree focused on CLIL methodology. Their varied academic backgrounds reflect the blend of linguistic and pedagogical expertise necessary for implementing CLIL effectively. In educational research, carefully describing the setting and participants is considered an essential step in methodological rigor, as it helps readers evaluate the transferability and credibility of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This teacher profile demonstrates the value of combining international expertise with local perspectives, which is key to supporting students' learning in bilingual education environments.

Procedures

Mixed-methods research is defined as the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches within the same study in order to provide a more complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, the mixed-methods approach allowed the combination of numerical data with descriptive insights, which strengthened the validity of the results. In order to achieve all the objectives of this study a mixed-methods approach was used and the following process applied.

The research started with a literature review, which is a systematic analysis of existing scholarly works to build theoretical foundations, identify gaps, and contextualize the current research (Hart, 2018). The review focused on key concepts related to teaching English through the CLIL approach and on previous studies about factors that influence writing skill development. This stage was essential to understand what has already been discovered regarding students' writing development when learning English through CLIL.

In order to identify students' level of proficiency in writing performance, school authorities were asked to provide standardized test results obtained by their high school pupils through the First Certificate in English (FCE). A standardized test is an assessment administered and scored in a consistent manner, providing reliable measures of learner achievement across contexts (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019). Sixty-two (62)

students out of seventy-three (73) test takers were surveyed for the present study, that is, a sample value of 85% that guarantees accuracy. These learners took the FCE in February of this year. Therefore, those figures were tabulated and contrasted with the results from listening, reading, and speaking skills; the findings showed the students' level of writing proficiency.

Third, data collection from the field research was done by observing six CLIL classes using an observation sheet (Appendix C) and by administering a structure questionnaire to 62 students from three courses involved in this research. (Appendix A). A questionnaire is a structured instrument designed to collect data systematically about participants' perceptions, attitudes, or behaviors. (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Questionnaires are especially useful in language education because they allow researchers to collect comparable information from large groups in a short time (Cohen, et al, 2018). In this study, they helped to identify students' perspectives on writing in CLIL classes.

Additionally, a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix B) was applied to the teachers to collect more data. A semi-structured questionnaire is an instrument that combines fixed, closed-ended items with open-ended questions, allowing both quantitative measurement and qualitative insights (Creswell, 2014). In this study, closed items that served to systematically record whether specific teaching practices—such as the use of brainstorming, feedback, or appropriate materials—were present during the writing lessons. The opened questions, on the other hand, was an open-ended item that allowed teachers to add further comments and highlight other relevant factors influencing students' writing performance. This design ensured that the instrument captured not only measurable indicators of classroom practice but also contextual information that enriched the interpretation of the data. This mixed design ensured that the instrument collected both quantitative data for statistical analysis and qualitative information for a deeper contextual understanding (Creswell, 2014; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

In the fourth phase, the results were organized and analysed using statistical software. Percentages and charts were produced to clearly present the data, and a quantitative approach was applied to support the analysis (Field, 2018). Given that this was a mixed-method study, the interpretation of the results also incorporated discourse analysis in connection with the existing literature, which was intertwined rhizomatically with

teachers' responses. Alongside discourse analysis, a hermeneutic approach was employed to interpret and re-signify participants' words (Balzer, 2002; Kornblit, 2007) This process helped compare findings and identify the main factors that limited students' writing performance. Finally, based on the analysis and interpretation of all the data, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations were proposed.

CAPÍTULO III

Results and Discussion

CHAPTER III

Results and Discussion

In this section, the data obtained from the on-site investigation are presented and analyzed through quantitative procedures. Specifically, the responses to each item in the student and teacher questionnaires are displayed in statistical figures and examined in relation to one another. To strengthen the analysis, these results are further supported and contrasted with evidence from classroom observations and the performance outcomes of the First Certificate in English (FCE) test. By integrating these different sources, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence students' writing development in a CLIL context.

A standardized English test's results

Table 1.

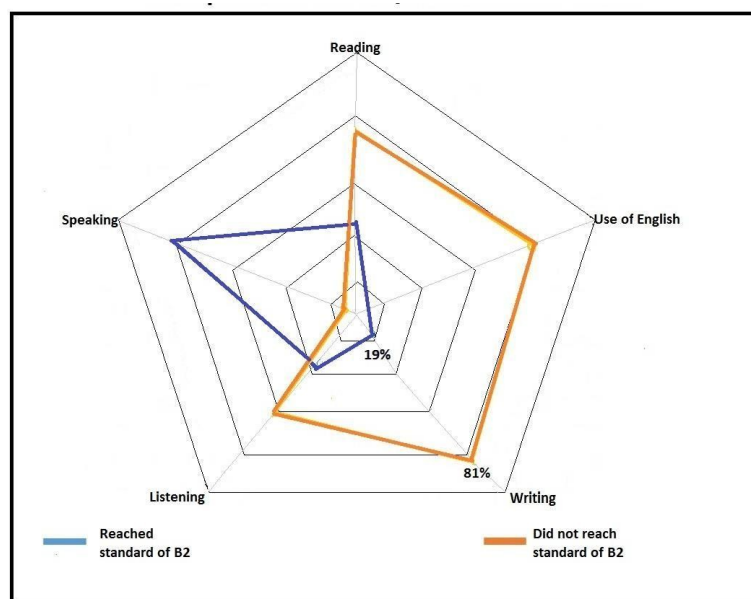
First Certificate in English (FCE) test results

Report Per Skills	Students who reached the standard proposed (B2)		Students who did not reach the standard proposed (B2)		Total	
Reading	16	25 %	47	75%	62	100%
Use Of English	11	18 %	51	82%	62	100%
Writing	12	19 %	50	81%	62	100%
Listening	22	35 %	40	65 %	62	100%
Speaking	52	84 %	10	16 %	62	100%
Integrated Skills Result	14	22 %	48	78 %	62	100%

Note. Adapted from “Teachers’ Perceptions Regarding the Factors Affecting English Essay Writing of O Level Students,” by M. Ali & I. Khan, 2015, Journal of Education & Social Sciences, 3(1), p. 178. Copyright 2015 by Knowledge Bylanes.

Figure 1.

Comparative development of the students’ skills



Note. Adapted from “Teachers’ Perceptions Regarding the Factors Affecting English Essay Writing of O Level Students,” by M. Ali & I. Khan, 2015, Journal of Education & Social Sciences, 3(1), p. 178. Copyright 2015 by Knowledge Bylanes.

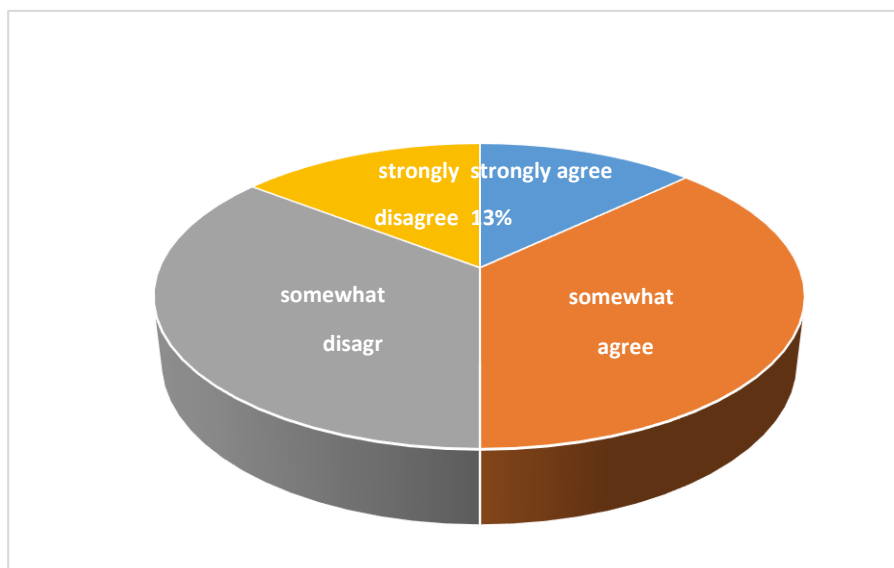
Table 1 and Figure 1 show the results of the First Certificate English (FCE) test applied to the students who learned English through CLIL to know their performance level in each skill. Standardized tests have an emphasis on exercises, which combine the use of two or more skills at a time and include the manipulation of written texts along with audio verbal drills. Evidently, the students focused primarily on verbal production in detriment to their writing and reading skills. Regarding writing skill, only 19% of them obtained the required higher intermediate level in writing, whereas four fifths did not reach the above-mentioned standard. Indeed, the school policy stipulates that students should graduate with all the language skills developed at an upper intermediate level of language proficiency. Similarly, when the learners were assessed in reading, only a quarter of them reached the proposed

standard. Likewise, 35% of them managed to obtain the proposed score band in listening. Interestingly, the highest level obtained was for the speaking skill which showed an outstanding amount of 84%. Thus, the problem seems to deal with the way the skills are practiced and developed in the institution, obviously their strength is in speaking, since it is a rather free productive skill, moreover, a lack of integration of the other skills is evident, and shown in the results above. Nevertheless, the aforementioned results remark the presence of procedural gaps at the moment of implementing the CLIL approach. In other words, a communion of skills in the foreign language teaching-learning process is urged in order to develop in parallel the dimensions of a language. For instance, Loranc-Paszylk (2009), verified the benefits of specific strategies such as text-responsible writing assignments to build up reading-writing skills within a CLIL program.

Students Questionary

Figure 2.

I have difficulty with writing tasks



Note. Students' Questionnaire

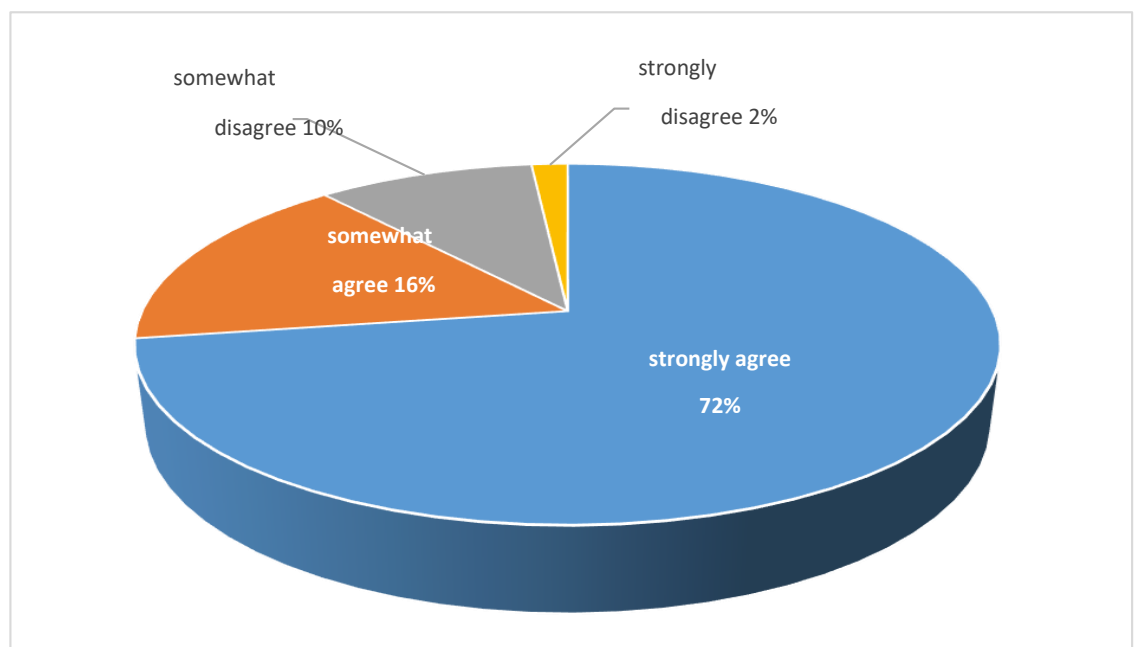
Figure 2 shows that 37% of the participants somewhat agreed with the statement from this Figure, while 35% of learners somewhat disagreed with this idea. On the other hand, 15% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement, and 13 % of the survey takers strongly agreed with it.

The results indicate that there is a divided opinion on either having or not having difficulties when doing tasks in writing. Half of the learners reported some difficulties meanwhile the other half claimed not to have too many writing difficulties. Conversely, the results from the First Certificate English (FCE) test corroborate that the majority of students struggle with their writing skills; in fact, writing is one of the lowest scoring skills.

Evidently, in order to attain language gain, users of CLIL advise to process bodies of information and construct new texts based on prior reading material progressively, that is to say, the more frequently students practice with writing drills, the less difficulties they will find it.

Figure 3.

I enjoy writing in English



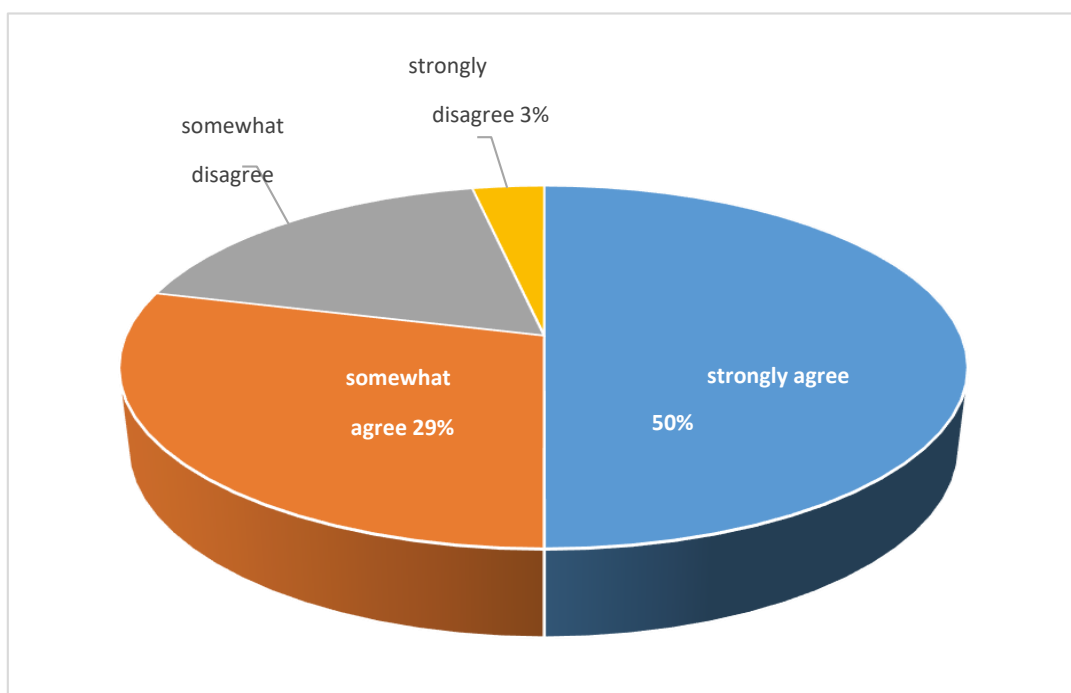
Note. Students' Questionnaire

Regarding the joy students feel when writing in English, (Figure 3) 72% of them confirmed it emphatically, 16% of them somewhat agreed. Meanwhile, only a tenth of the learners expressed dissent partially from enjoying writing. Interestingly, only one of the students firmly denied enjoying it at all.

Over three quarters of the target students are assured to enjoy writing in English in a rather high degree. In contrast, barely one tenth of the participants expressed their low excitement when writing. Nonetheless, in the classes observed, a considerable number of students seemed frustrated and puzzled when performing writing tasks in class. For instance, in one of the classes, learners were given the topic “Globalization” to write a short essay, students were not willing to write, and if they did it, it was because they had to. Thus, these findings provide confirmatory evidence that what pupils claimed and was shown in Figure 3 does not match with what was seen in some classes. Interestingly, Arabah and Wu (2017) reported that students’ attitudes in regards to writing competences in English under CLIL instruction are notably positive and students’ writing skills are usually enhanced, thus it is fair to suggest that students are supposed to enjoy writing in the CLIL course. Therefore, the students’ boredom and lack of interest in the writing activities demonstrate the necessity of acknowledged engaging topics to write about.

Figure 4.

I practice writing Figures and essays in class



Note. Students' Questionnaire

In the case of Figure 4, the information obtained is related to students' opportunities to practice writing and essays in class. The results showed that from the entire number of pupils who participated in a CLIL session, 50% of students strongly agreed to practice written tasks in class, 29% of the learners agreed in part. Whereas, 11 of them claimed not to practice written activities in class. Finally, two of them representing 3% strongly disagreed.

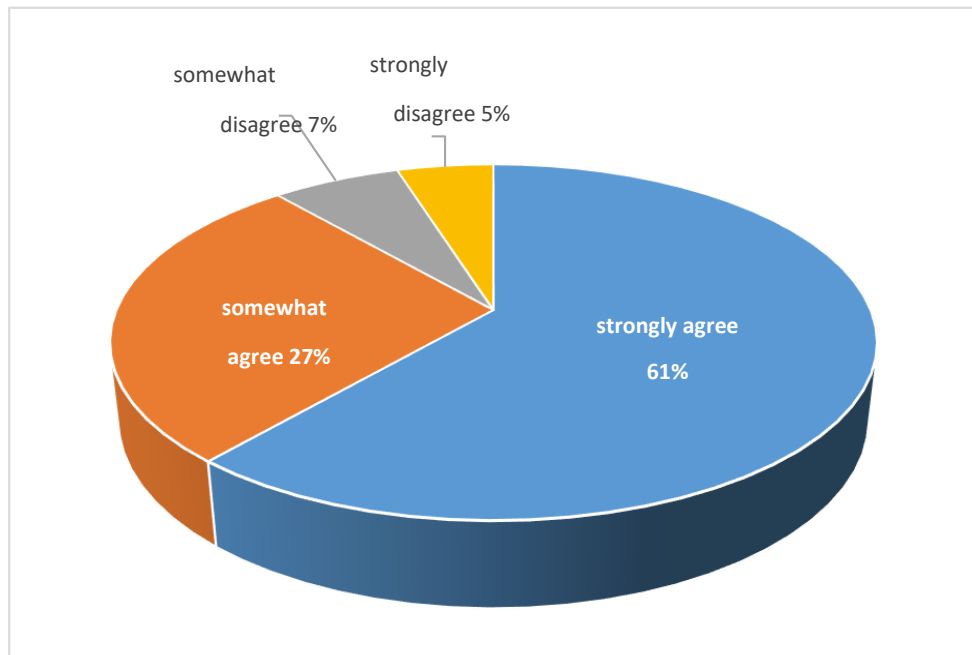
More than 75% of the learners confirmed that they frequently practice writing and essays in class. On the contrary, 21% of the respondents affirmed not to practice their writing skills to some extent in class. Those results are aligned with the teachers' answers from statement 3 from their questionnaire because 67% of them strongly stated to ask their pupils to utter written compositions. In fact, when CLIL classes were observed, it was confirmed that the teachers usually asked their students to practice writing by providing different tasks.

Accordingly, the writing genres used in the observed classes were at a certain degree repetitive, in fact, in the majority of the classes the pupils were asked to write about a genre continuously. In this regard, Jackson (2012) discovered that CLIL learners who

were asked to approach varied genres in combination with CLIL instruction enhanced their writing skills and reduced grammatical mistakes. Consequently, the problem does not only deal with unattractive topics but also with genres used repeatedly in classes, creating a tedious and demotivating scenario for students to write.

Figure 5.

I feel I need more practice writing essays in English



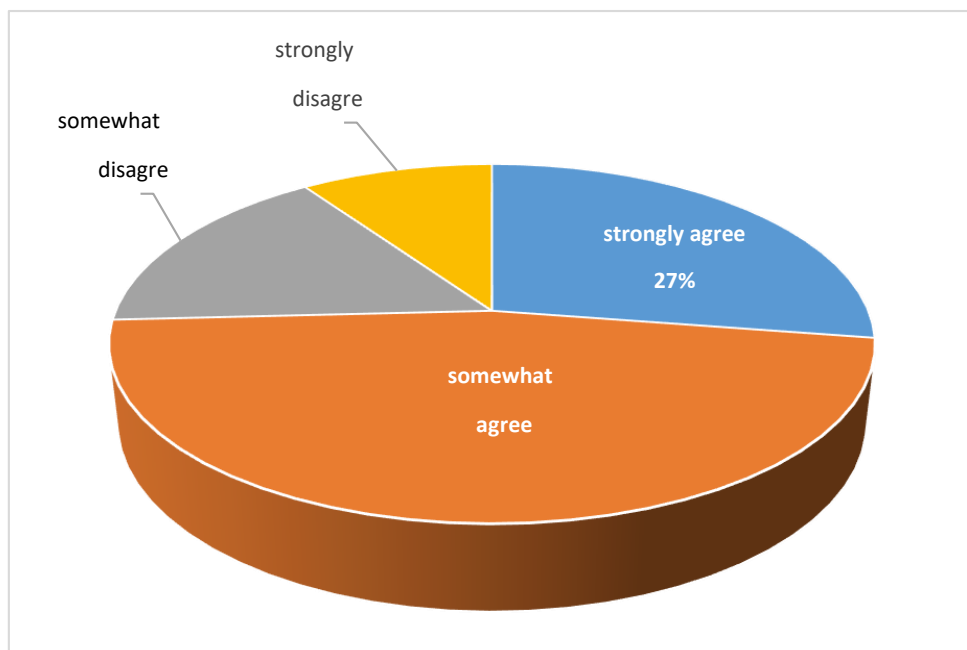
Note. Students' Questionnaires

Figure 5 tackles with the students' need of practicing writing essays in English. The results showed 61% of the learners agreeing strongly, 27% of the pupils somewhat agreed on that affirmation. Conversely, a reduce number of learners, that is to say 7% somewhat disagreed with the idea; finally, only 5% of the learners strongly disagreed with the statement from Figure 5.

The results indicate that the majority of students need to practice writing; only a few students disagree on the need to practice writing in a CLIL class. This statement was confirmed through observing students' reactions and attitudes when doing written tasks in classes, it was obvious that many of them felt frustrated and seemed to need more help when performing writing activities.

Figure 6.

My writing limitations deal with lack of awareness on the writing process



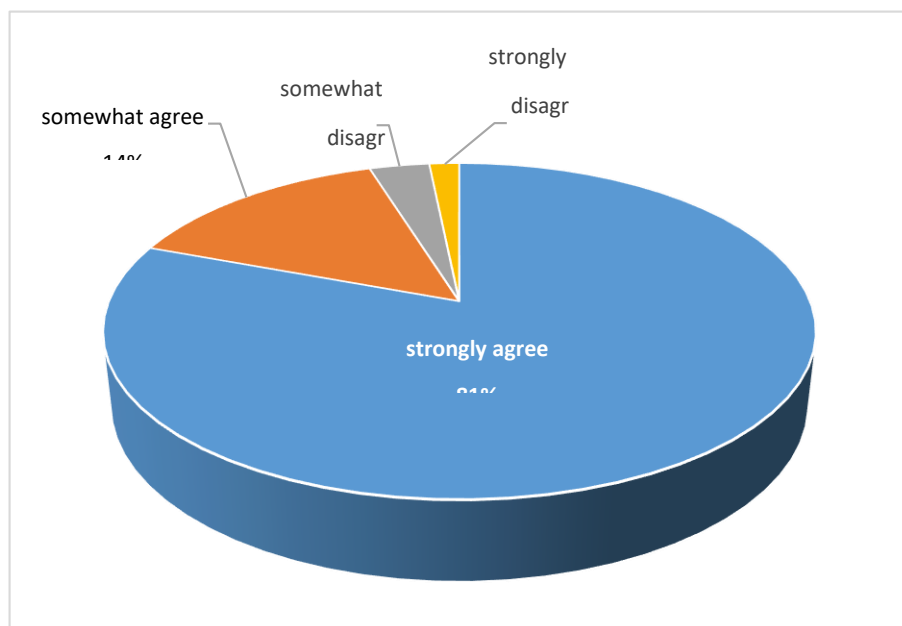
Note. Students' Questionnaires

Regarding Figure 6, which states that students' writing limitations might be related to the lack of awareness on the writing process, 47% of the pupils somewhat agreed, 27% of them strongly agreed with that statement. On the contrary, 16% of the participants somewhat disagreed with the affirmation; finally, only 10 % of respondents strongly disagreed with this thought.

As the statistics have shown more than half of the target group of pupils affirmed their writing limitations are due to a lack of awareness on the writing process during CLIL instruction. In fact, the class observations showed that students' knowledge on this process could be insufficient. For instance, it was observed that many students divided their writing into three sections: introduction, discussion and conclusion, then learners simply wrote below each heading about the requested topic and then turn in their essays to the teacher at the end of the class. Indeed, the writing process involves more than three basic steps. Concerning this point Gebhard (2006) highlighted prewriting, drafting, revising and editing as crucial elements of the writing process. Therefore, on the basis of currently available evidence, it is appropriate to suggest that teachers focus their activities on methodical procedures.

Figure 7.

Writing feedback that my instructors give on my writing is very helpful to me



Note. Students' Questionnaires

In Figure 7, there is key information related to writing feedback given by CLIL instructors and students towards the helpfulness of correction. The results show that 81% of the students strongly agreed with the statement, 14% of them somewhat agreed with the idea from this Figure. Nevertheless, only 3% of the pupils somewhat disagreed with the affirmation, and just one student, representing 2% strongly disagreed.

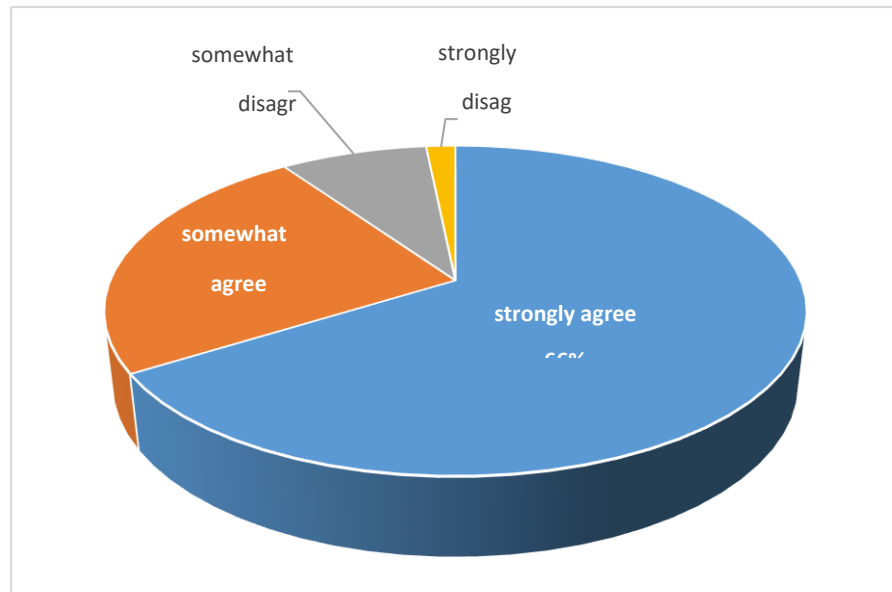
The results evidenced that the majority of pupils find the written feedback given by their instructors helpful enough to enhance their writing abilities, only a reduced number of students thought otherwise. Besides, most CLIL tutors claimed to provide feedback on writing compositions. Correspondingly, Harmer (2001) pointed out that providing this type of feedback is a time-consuming task, because teachers have to spend time reviewing the written utterances, writing down their impressions, and providing suggestions of improvement.

Conversely, after observing several classes, holding conversations with teachers about written feedback, and reading comments left by instructors in the open question section, it was concluded that teachers' written feedback tends to be superficial and not meaningful enough. Differently, Dale et al. (2010) claimed that feedback for written work

in CLIL classes should be a meaningful process given whether on subject content or form that includes actions such as underlying mistakes, using a correction code for different kinds of errors, and consistent correction. It was also perceived that constraints like shortness of time and large classes affect the effectiveness of this CLIL process.

Figure 8.

My teachers give me direct feedback in my writing activities



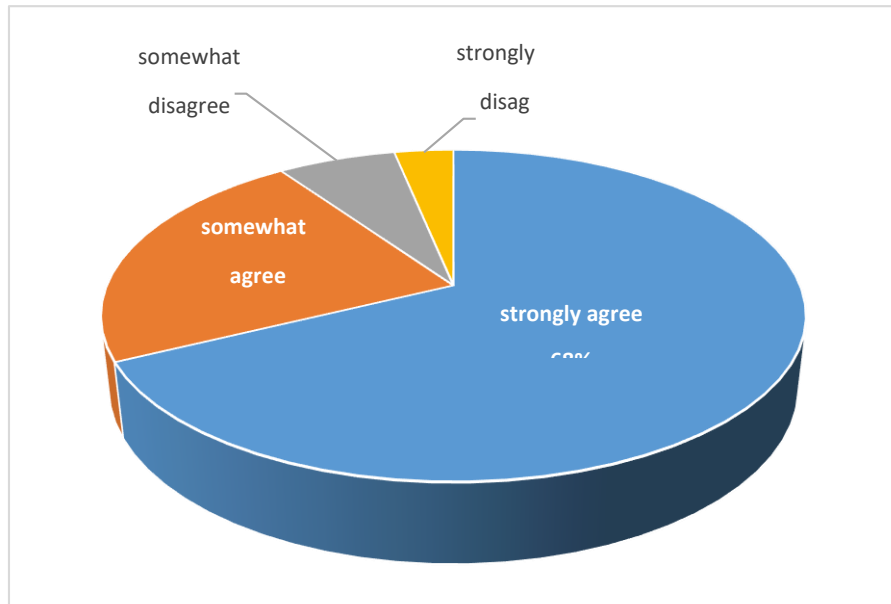
Note. Students' Questionnaires

Results in Figure eight present that 66% of students receive direct feedback in their writing activities. Furthermore, 24% of the respondents said they somewhat agreed with the existence of corrective feedback. Meanwhile, 8% of students somewhat disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed with the aforementioned idea.

These findings evidence that the majority of students admitted that direct feedback is regularly provided during CLIL classes; only a few students disagreed with their classmates and affirmed that no feedback was given. After monitoring some classes and interviewing teachers, it was verified that 50% of the times, direct feedback was provided and the other 50% it was not, which is relatively aligned with the results from Figure eight. However, it was also found that the direct feedback tends to be superficial, opposed to the principles of direct feedback. In this regard, Maleki and Eslami (2013) claimed that providing direct feedback involves giving the correct forms, which facilitates the process of correction, since it is meant to help students with low-level-of-proficiency.

Figure 9.

I learn writing through English B and business management content



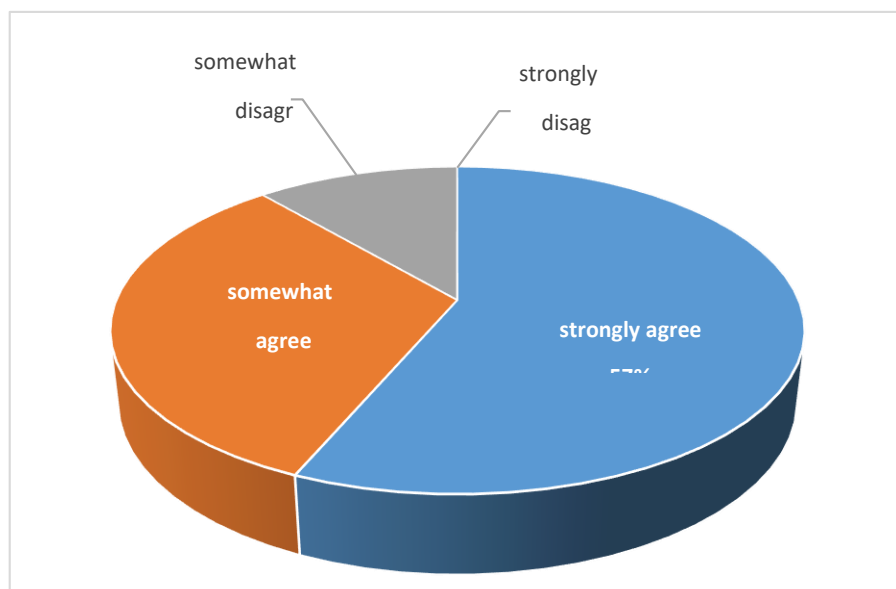
Note. Students' Questionnaires

As Figure nine shows, 68% of the respondents were certain to learn writing through English B and Business management content. Moreover, 23% of the students somewhat agree with said statement. However, 6% of the learners do not think the same towards this statement, in fact they somewhat disagreed with it; a minor group of students strongly disagreed with the idea expressed in this Figure.

Undoubtedly, most students confirmed their learning perception on writing through content, in this regard Coyle, Hood, and Mash (2010) pointed out that content and language are interwoven in CLIL classes, that is indeed one of the main principles of CLIL approach.

Figure 10.

When the instructor bases the writing task on reading activities of English b or business management, it is easier for me to write a composition



Note. Students' Questionnaires

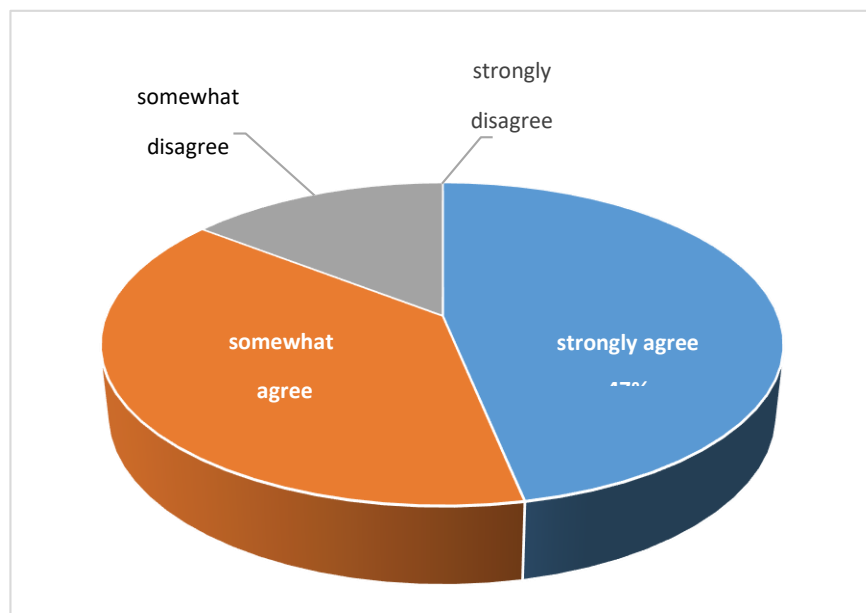
Figure 10 indicates that 57% of students answered that the process of writing a composition becomes easier when the instructor bases writing tasks on reading activities of English b or business management. Similarly, 32% of the participants declared they somewhat agree with statement 10. Differently, only 7 % of the respondents answered they somewhat disagreed with it. Interestingly, no strongly disagreement was given.

The results showed that nearly 90% of students admitted that their CLIL teachers-based writing tasks on reading activities making the writing process easier. Barely, a few students did not think the same as their classmates did. Those outcomes are partially aligned with the observations. In fact, all the teachers based the material for writing class on reading activities; the core of some classes and brainstorming were based on reading material. At this point, it is essential to mention that the integration of reading and writing tasks in CLIL classes are believed to bring many benefits. In the same line of reasoning, Loranc-Paszylk (2009) pointed out that integrated reading and writing activities used in CLIL classes favors the acquisition of new vocabulary and information that can be later used for the construction of new texts. Moreover, since students need to select information based on previous reading material for the writing process, their critical thinking skills are enhanced as well. However, despite of the teachers' conscious efforts

to use reading material, the writing process was not significantly simplified because it was observed that several students were short of ideas, lacked vocabulary and were unwilling to write on the topic selected. Along the same lines, Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggested that it should first be remembered to motivate learners by involving them in the selection of materials and topics that attract their attention and arise their interest. Consequently, the problem seems to deal with the students' lack of interest in the reading material selected for CLIL classes.

Figure 11.

I find the reading material of English B and business management appealing enough to motivate me to write in English



Note. Students' Questionnaires

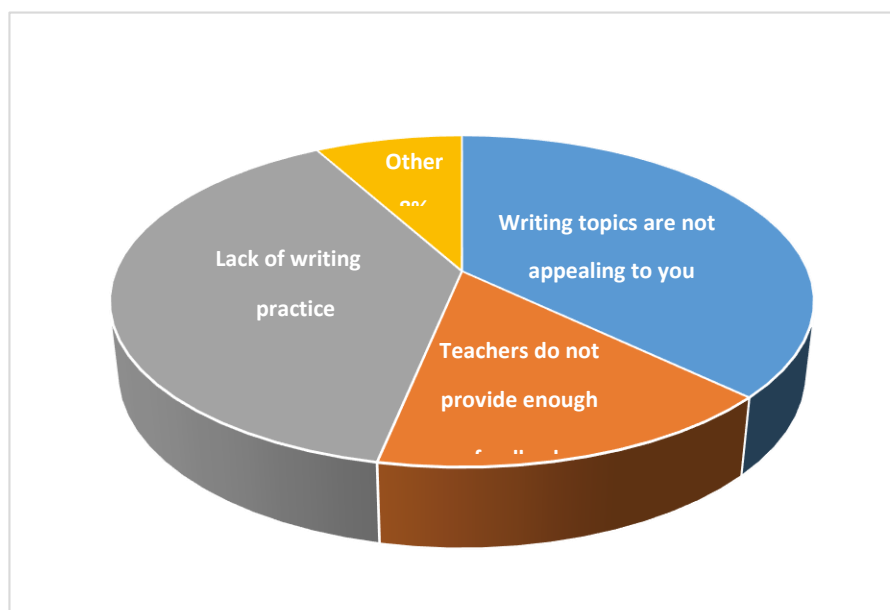
Concerning Figure 11 that deals with reading material that is supposed to be appealing enough to encourage students to write in English, 47% of the students answered they strongly agreed with it. Some of them who represent the 39% alleged they somewhat agreed with the aforementioned affirmation. Nonetheless, only 14% of the students somewhat disagreed with this statement, and nobody strongly disagreed with it.

Not surprisingly, these results are not aligned with what was observed in two large CLIL classes where it was evidenced that even though teachers based their lessons on

content related to the subject taught, students did not feel motivated enough to write. Their attitudes revealed a lack of willingness to be fully involved in writing in English.

Figure 12.

Select one of the factors you think that mostly affect your writing performance in a CLIL context



Note. Students' Questionnaires

Regarding Figure 12 that is related to the factors that mostly affect students' writing abilities in a CLIL context; 39% of the learners affirmed that the lack of writing practice is the factor that mostly affect their writing performance in a CLIL class. On the other hand, 37% of them answered that the writing topics are not appealing to them. Moreover, 16% of the participants declared that teachers do not provide enough feedback, finally, 8% of the students assured that there were other factors such as lack of motivation, uninteresting topics to write, and not enough vocabulary, which have affected their writing performance.

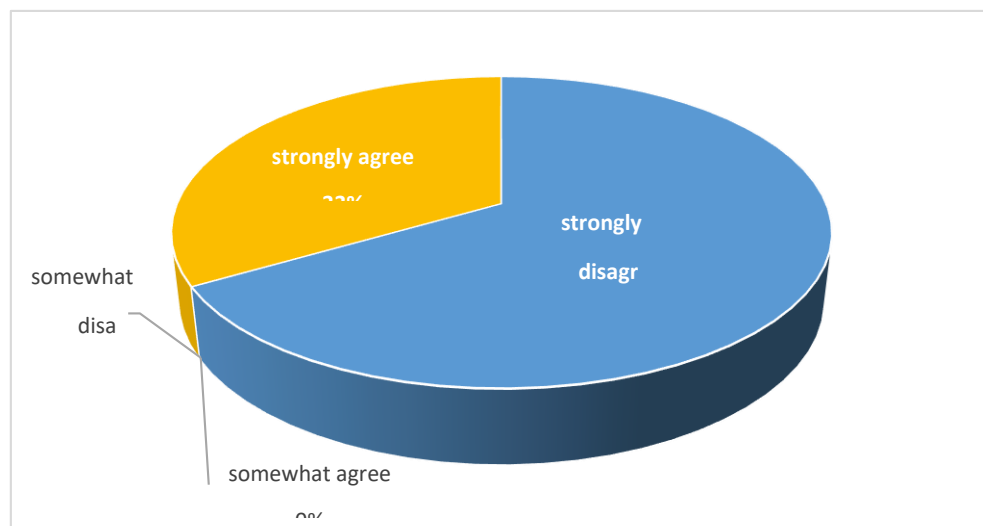
The idea that students' writing practice is harmed because of the lack of opportunities to practice prevailed, however after analyzing the teachers' answers that dealt with this issue and based on the observations, it was deduced that instructors frequently ask their students to write essays, which differs, from what the majority of students assured about this matter.

Furthermore, having observed several classes, the position of those who said that topics to write about are not appealing to them seemed right, because students' lack of interest in writing was evident along the classes monitored; in fact, this unwillingness to write can be considered a signal of the students' calling for more interesting topics to write.

Teachers Questionary

Figure 13

I have been trained to implement CLIL approach in my classes



Note. Students' Questionnaires

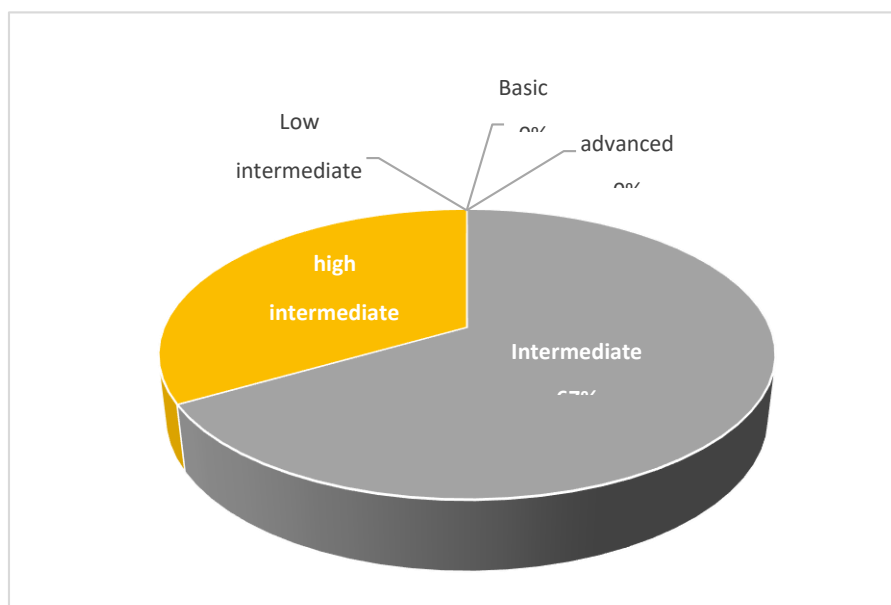
With regard to previous training to teach using the CLIL approach, two of the three teachers, that is a 67% confessed a total lack of instruction on implementing the CLIL approach. Notably, one teacher equivalent to 33% answered categorically to have received such training.

At this point, it is necessary to mention that the only teacher, who confirmed having received training on CLIL implementation, due to his independent enrolment in a Master degree program with an emphasis on CLIL approach. In an open question item, it was clarified that the institution did not provide such specific training. It is also interesting that the two teachers who disagreed with the statement are English native speakers from England, thus, it is assumed that they are overall proficient with regard to the English language.

About this matter, Fürstenberg and Kletzenbauer (2015) claim that teachers who are not given the appropriate training and assistance to implement CLIL approach in their classes can concentrate on teaching only content and deviate from teaching language through content at once. Following a similar line of reasoning, Richards and Rodgers (2014, p.132, 133) pointed out that “language teachers may be insufficiently grounded to teach subject matter in which they have not been trained”. Thus, CLIL teachers who have not given training on teaching content need constant preparation and support. In fact, when administrating the teachers’ questionnaire, brief conversations were held with the instructors who claimed not to receive instruction on implementing the CLIL approach, one of them stated emphatically that he only teaches content not language. Certainly, the lack of training on CLIL implementation can have negative consequences in students’ learning outcomes.

Figure 14.

I think my students’ level of proficiency regarding writing skills is



Note. Students’ Questionnaires

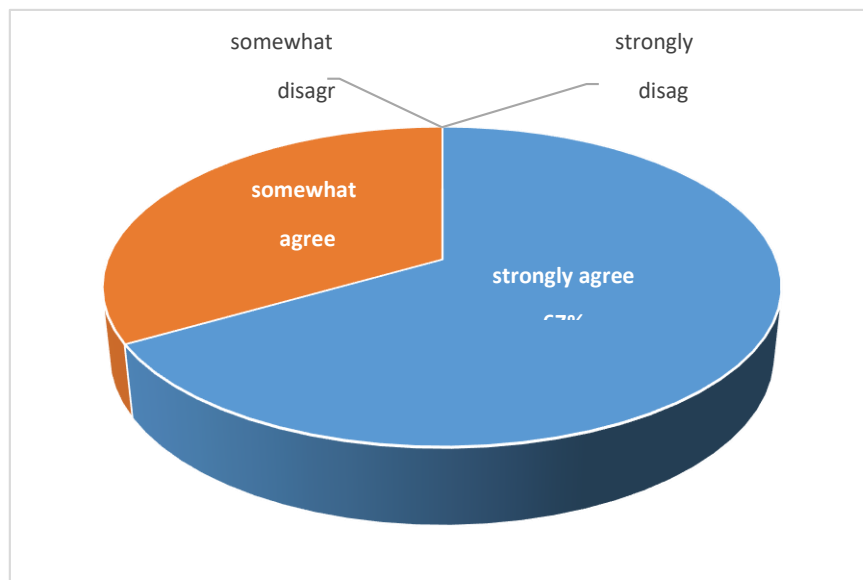
Concerning the students’ level of proficiency regarding their writing skills, their teachers affirmed that 67% of students are still in process to obtain the proposed standard of B2, whereas 33% of them already achieved to meet the target standard of B2. These results show that according to the teachers’ perceptions, only one third of the

learners might have a more than acceptable level of proficiency with regard to their writing abilities.

It is vital to bear in mind that those students are in their last year of instruction and have spent many years learning English. Thus, it is expected that learners have developed high-level language skills such as essay writing skills. In that respect, Richards and Rodgers (2014) suggested that students who have studied under a CLIL modality are supposed to have developed advanced language skills. The teachers' perceptions on their students' level of proficiency at writing are almost in concord with the results students obtained after taking the FCE test, because most of them achieved a B1 and only a reduced number of learners reached a B2 level with regard to their writing skills, which indeed confirms what their teachers assured on students written abilities.

Figure 15.

I often ask students to write different types of essays



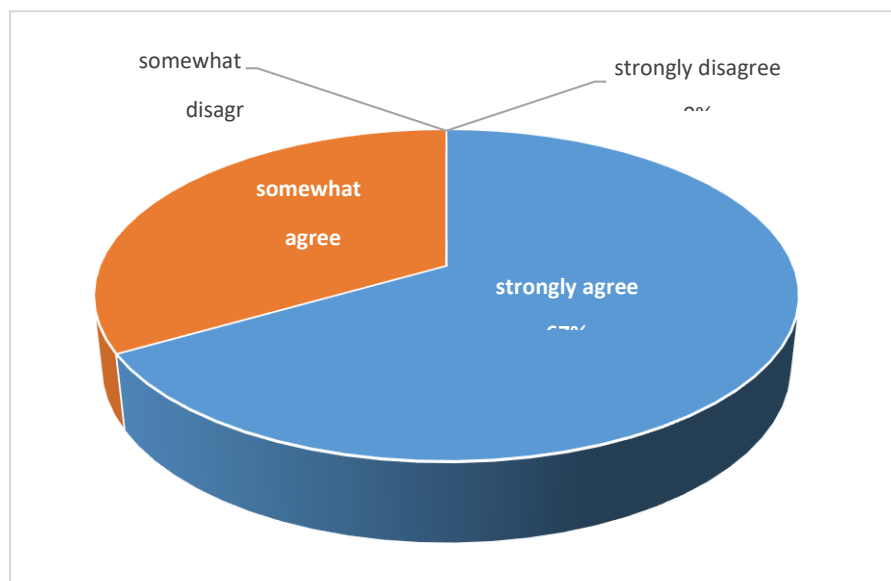
Note. Students' Questionnaires

Figure 15 highlights the frequency that teachers ask their students to write different types of essays. Interestingly, 67% of them strongly agree and 33 % somewhat agree with that affirmation. On the contrary, nobody disagrees with the idea of Figure 15 at all.

Those findings are aligned with the result from statement 2 from students' questionnaire, which showed that 79% of them affirmed to practice writing and essays in class.

Figure 16.

The didactic material I use in my CLIL classes enhance students' writing skills



Note. Students' Questionnaires

The reason for having this statement was to know the teachers' perceptions about the didactic material and its effectiveness to enhance students' writing skills in CLIL classes.

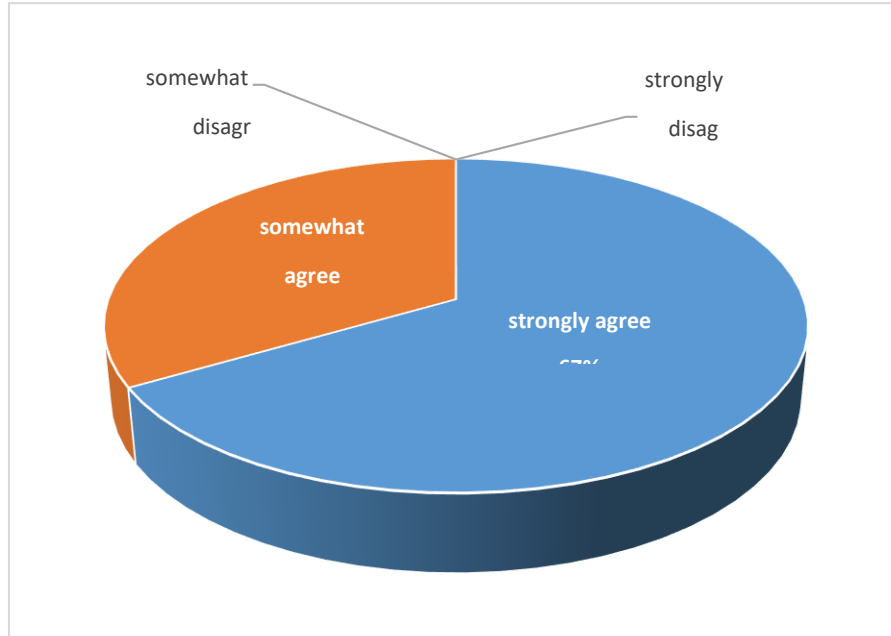
Figure 16 shows that 67% of the teachers answered that the material used in their classes is good enough to better students' writing abilities. Similarly, 33% of the instructors somewhat agreed with this statement. It is interesting that nobody disagreed with this affirmation.

The majority of the teachers believe that the material employed for their CLIL classes is effective; nonetheless, the findings displayed in table 1 contradict their assumption. Thus, it can be assumed that the didactic material used in CLIL classes somehow fails to enhance

students' writing skills; otherwise, there would be better learning outcomes in regards to students' writing abilities.

Figure 17.

I use several techniques such as brainstorming, cluster mapping to help my students to improve their writing.



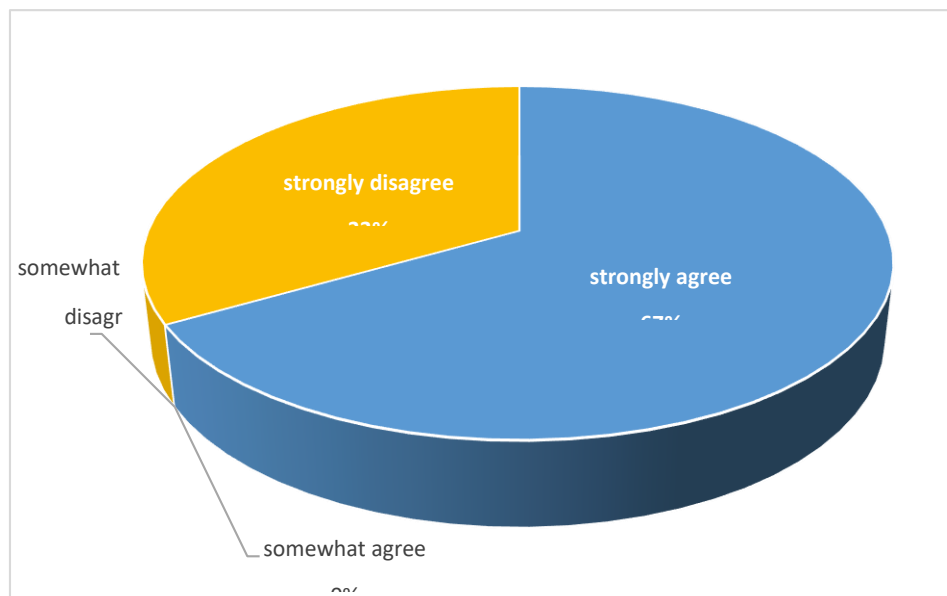
Note. Students' Questionnaires

As indicated in Figure seventeen, 67 % of the teachers answered that they used several techniques such as brainstorming, cluster mapping to help their students to improve their writing. Nobody disagreed with that statement.

After witnessing several classes, it was concluded that those deductive techniques were used to improve students' writing skills.

Figure 18.

I provide frequent feedback on structure, punctuation and cohesion to help my students in the writing process



Note. Students' Questionnaires

As Figure 18 shows, 67 % of the teachers assured they provide frequent feedback on structure, punctuation and cohesion to help their students in the writing process. Differently, 33% of them stated that they strongly disagree with the statement.

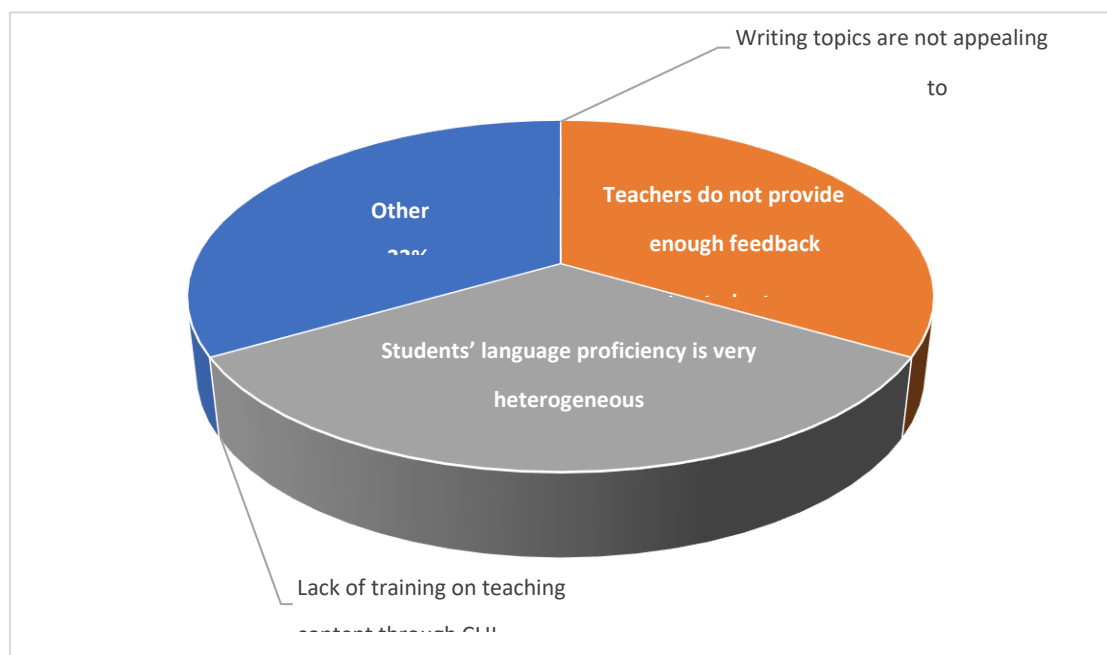
Based on information gathered from observed classes, it could be assumed that the frequent feedback on structure, punctuation and cohesion that most of the teachers affirmed to give depends on the class size and time. For instance, one of the teachers said, "Feedback is limited because of the number of students and time frame". It is important to mention that there were 31 students in that class where the teacher expressed what was cited in this Figure. However, the same instructor claimed that the situation is very different in a class where he only has 16 students. Actually, that was confirmed when that class was monitored, there were no constraints of class size and time neither, thus the feedback process was facilitated.

In the same fashion, one of the interviewed teachers firmly assured that feedback on structures, punctuation and cohesion are not provided in his classes, because he teaches

content and not language. His reasoning is not aligned with what Dale, Van der Es, Tanner and Timmers (2010) stated on this issue, they claimed that CLIL instructors must be cleared on the role of feedback of form (language mistakes), feedback on subject content (what students are trying to say), feedback on form (spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes). Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2014) claimed that CLIL learners do not simply “pick up” the language, instead they are supposed to be provided corrective feedback to develop language knowledge and language accuracy. In others words, feedback should always be administrated in CLIL contexts and given according to the task performed. Evidently, that teacher lacks awareness on CLIL implementation, because those language aspects can never be ignored when working with written tasks in a CLIL context.

Figure 19.

Select one of the factors you think that mostly affect your students’ writing performance in a CLIL context



Note. Students’ Questionnaires

The reason for having this statement was to know the teachers’ perceptions about the factors that most affect their students’ writing performance in a CLIL context. Figure 19 shows what instructors selected: 1) teachers do not provide enough feedback to

students; it was given a 33%. 2) learners' language proficiency is very heterogeneous was given another

33%, and 3) "other" a 33% as well; under this open comment section from this statement, one of the three teachers wrote that pupils do not work enough on essay writing before reaching the International Baccalaureate.

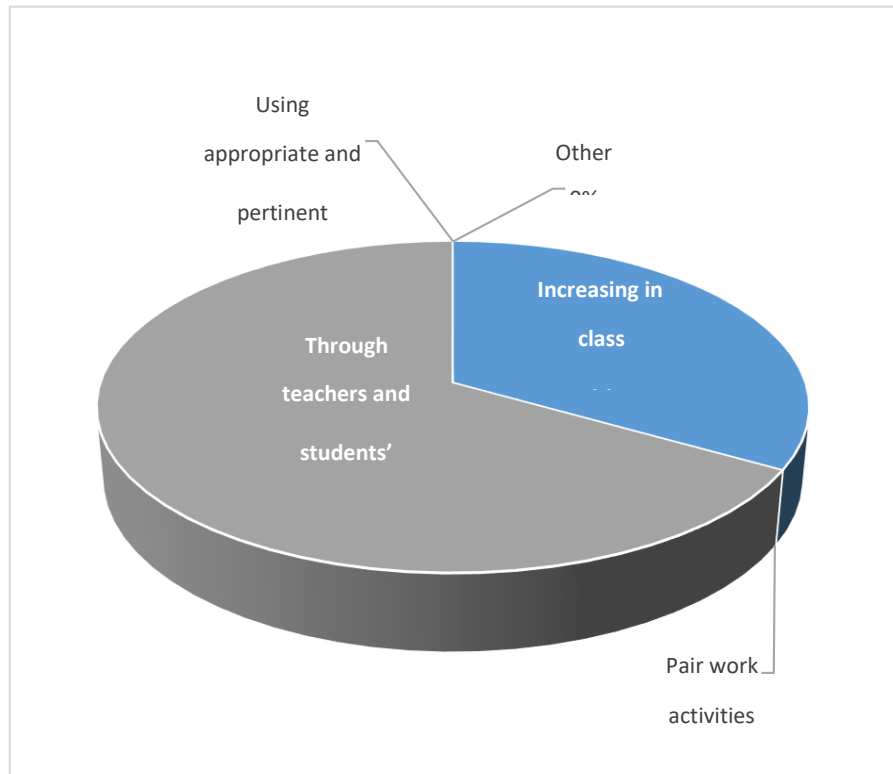
Regarding the first option selected, it is crucial to highlight that the majority of the teachers who participated in this work agreed on the relevance of providing meaningful feedback, and stated that a lack of proper guidance along the writing process prevents students' writing performance.

With reference to the second choice, the response pointed at the heterogeneous level of the learners. Undoubtedly, that is a limitation when trying to enhance an entire group of students with different levels of proficiency.

Finally, it is important to recall that students also complained about the need to practice writing essays more frequently, disclosing a similitude with their teachers' opinion.

Figure 20.

How do you think teachers can help students to improve their writing skills in a CLIL context?



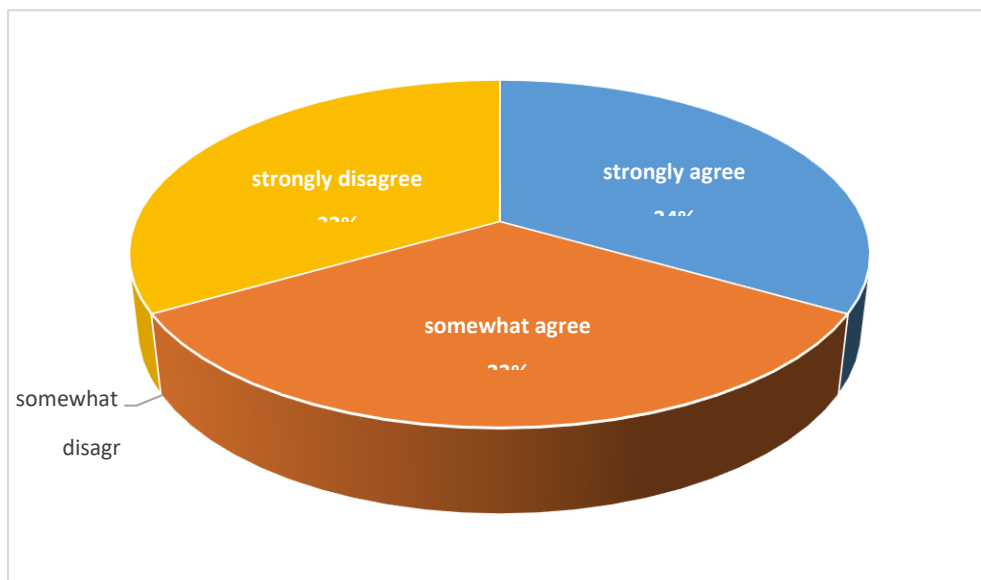
Note. Students' Questionnaires

The reason for having this statement was to know the teachers' perceptions about ways to help their students to improve their writing skills in a CLIL context. Figure 20 displays teachers' choices; instructors chose the option "through teachers and students' feedback" which represents a 67%. The second most selected option was "increasing in class writing practice", that reflects a 33%. The other options were not selected.

There is overwhelming evidence for the notion that teachers agree on the fact that feedback can improve their students' written production. Undoubtedly, the data yielded by this statement reaffirm the necessity of feedback and the increment of class writing practice to enhance students' writing abilities.

Figure 21.

My schools' authorities often organize training workshops on the implementation of CLIL



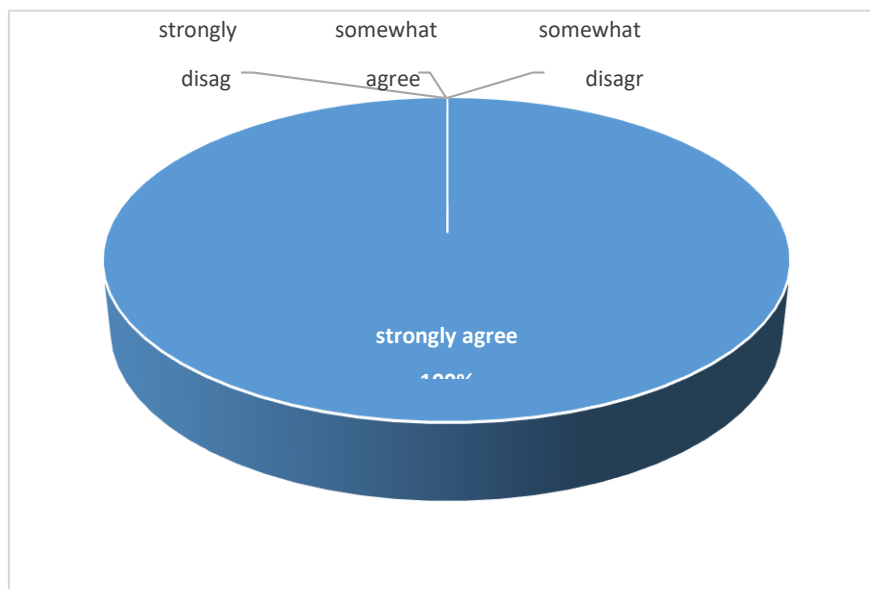
Note. Students' Questionnaires

Concerning Figure 21, that is about frequent training workshops on the implementation of CLIL organized by schools' authorities. The Figure shows that 34% of the teachers strongly agree with the statement, also 33% of the instructors somewhat agree with it. On the other hand, 33% think differently and strongly disagree on that statement.

In order to confirm those figures, schools' authorities were consulted on the frequency training workshops on CLIL implementation are organized. Through conversations with them, it was determined that sporadic training sessions on CLIL in general have been carried out throughout last year and this current year, however it was stated that limitations such as intense workload, time constraints, and lack of interest from teachers have brought negative results that might be reflected in students' academic performance. On the same token, Bonces (2012) affirmed that schools' authorities should provide teachers training on CLIL matters such as professional development programs on dealing with lesson planning, differentiated instruction, scaffolding techniques to enhance their expertise and capacity to handle CLIL issues.

Figure 22.

I believe the material used in CLIL classes is appropriate



Note. Students' Questionnaires

All the three teachers who answered the questionnaire, which constitutes the 100 % of the participants, affirmed that they consider the material used in CLIL classes appropriate.

Concerning the factors that hinder teachers' performance as a CLIL teacher when teaching writing to students, the researcher asked about what factors teachers think hinder their performance as a CLIL teacher when trying to enhance their students' writing performance.

A first teacher claimed that students' level versus program's objectives regarding learning outcomes might be unrealistic to a certain extent, in terms of time. The gap between students' actual proficiency and the institutional expectations places excessive pressure on teachers, who must often sacrifice depth for coverage. This mismatch not only affects the quality of instruction but also leads to frustration among learners, who perceive writing tasks as beyond their current abilities. As a result, the teacher highlighted the need for more realistic curricular planning and scaffolding strategies that align students' proficiency with achievable writing goals. In this respect, Banegas (2012)

pointed out that If curricular planning lacks coherence and objectives are not realistic, CLIL teachers face conflicting demands that ultimately reduce their effectiveness in fostering students' language development.

A second teacher said that one of the main factors that hinder him from enhancing his students' writing abilities is the lack of resources such as newspapers, books, brochures and material in general for CLIL classes. In the same fashion, Mehsito, Marsh and Frigols (2008) remarked that CLIL materials are in short supply and it is needed significant amounts of time to create or modify existing learning material which coincides with was assured by the teacher. In fact, he claimed that he prepares all the material for his CLIL classes because there is not a textbook for his subject. This situation illustrates how the absence of specialized resources places an additional burden on teachers, forcing them to invest time in material design rather than in providing feedback on students' writing. As Gené-Gil, Juan-Garau, and Salazar-Noguera (2015) also noted, the sustainability of CLIL practices largely depends on the availability of adequate materials that support both content mastery and language development.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that this teacher claimed to have barely received training sessions on CLIL implementation. He said: "I prepare all the material for his CLIL classes because there is not a textbook for his subject". Moreover, it is important to highlight that this teacher claimed to have barely received training sessions on CLIL implementation. In this regard, Papaja (2013) pointed out that "the lack of teacher training concerning CLIL methodology and criteria to create teaching material is one of the main de-motivating factors that inhibit CLIL teachers' performance. Thus, it can be assumed based on what the teacher reported that creating materials for CLIL classes can be a time-consuming task and the materials might not be appropriate in some cases because of time constraints and lack of awareness on CLIL issues. Banegas (2012) similarly argued that insufficient professional development and the absence of institutional support place teachers in a vulnerable position, often forcing them to improvise materials and strategies, which weakens the overall impact of CLIL instruction on students' writing outcomes.

A third and last teacher assured that "The principal factor that hinders students' writing performance is the lack of feedback. He claimed: 'As a teacher, it is difficult to correct due to the amount of time that is involved in order to give appropriate feedback.'" Based on the answers from this final open question, it seems fair to suggest that the lack

of appropriate CLIL materials and time constraints to provide feedback are the two main factors that inhibit teachers from enhancing their students' writing abilities. In line with this, Gené-Gil, Juan-Garau, and Salazar-Noguera (2015) highlighted that CLIL teachers often struggle to balance content delivery and language support, which reduces the quality and frequency of feedback students receive in writing tasks. This situation reinforces the idea that without institutional support and feasible planning, teachers' efforts to improve learners' writing performance remain limited.

Classroom Observations

The observed classes brought to light that 100% of the material seemed to be appropriate and pertinent for a writing class. It was determined during the in-class observation time that a considerable amount of learning material such as handouts, PowerPoint presentations, reading material from different sources than students' textbook were created or modified to use in classes. In fact, for the subject of business management there is not a textbook, all the learning material has to be created by the teacher. Thus, it can be assumed that teachers consciously try to select or create appropriate and pertinent material meant to enhance their students' writing skills in a CLIL context, which was confirmed through observing classes.

However, in spite of teachers' asseverations on this point, the effectiveness of the material can be doubtful; on this concern Hüttner, Dalton-Pufferand and Smit (2013) declared that CLIL teachers have the autonomy to develop learning material based on their abilities as CLIL teachers, which is a heavy responsibility. Therefore, it is essential to recall that teachers selected a lack of training on CLIL implementation as one of the constraints to enhance their students' written abilities, thus, it can be assumed that untrained teachers on CLIL can produce to a certain extent inadequate material and the effectiveness or failure of it might be reflected in students' learning outcomes. On these grounds, it can be argued that students' poor level of proficiency at writing might be a sign of the ineffectiveness of such materials.

Interpretation

From a pedagogical-didactic perspective, the results of the evaluation of performance in language skills, especially in writing, of students who acquired English learning strategies through the CLIL method are interpreted. The interpretation is carried out with the aim of highlighting learning deficiencies in didactic procedures, elements that influence learning to improve the teaching of writing in a CLIL environment. This follows the analysis of the data obtained through surveys with students and teachers, as well as classroom observations.

Modern theories on second language acquisition, in relation to the teaching of English as a foreign language and models of curricular integration, are the foundations of this interpretation

1. Evaluation of integrated pedagogy and the integrated didactics

1.1. Difference between actual performance and students' perception: A cognitive dissonance during the learning process.

The data are conclusive and demonstrate that there is a significant discrepancy between what students perceive and their actual performance in writing. As shown in Figure 3, 72% of students say they like writing in English. According to Figure 10, 89% also think that reading-based tasks make writing easier. However, only 19% reached the B2 level in the FCE (Figure 1), and more than 80% did not meet the institutional standard. As can be inferred, this phenomenon, from Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, in the educational field indicates that students may be rationalizing their effort by claiming they like writing, despite the evident difficulties they encounter in class (lack of ideas, frustration, limited vocabulary).

This contradiction highlights the importance of analysing not only what students express, but also what they do and how they carry out their tasks. Likewise, the fact that most students consider that they write often (Figure 4), but need more practice (Figure 5), indicates a lack of depth in the tasks. Simple repetition of writing tasks does not ensure progress unless complemented with metacognitive processes, appropriate scaffolding, and relevant feedback (as Hyland, 2003, points out).

1.2. Disarticulation of language competences and gaps in the writing process development.

Although the CLIL methodology promotes the incorporation of content and language, the results indicate an imbalance towards oral expression (84% in FCE), at the expense of reading (25%) and writing (19%). This lack of balance shows that the CLIL model has been partially implemented, which does not respect the principle of skills integration (Coyle et al., 2010).

Writing, being a very complex skill, needs the support of other competences, especially critical thinking and reading comprehension. However, although teachers' base tasks on readings (Figure 10), students lack techniques to transfer the information read into writing. This points to an absence of pedagogical mediation or didactic transposition as the epistemological foundation of teachers' academic knowledge (Perafán Echeverri, 2013). In this context, Loranc-Paszylk (2009) shows that text-based writing tasks strengthen the relationship between reading and writing by forcing students to summarize, argue, and re-elaborate. It is not enough to simply read and then write; a cognitive bridge is needed.

Likewise, 74% of students admit they are not aware of the writing process (Figure 6). Many restrict the process to introduction, body, and conclusion, omitting previous stages such as planning, reviewing, or prewriting. According to Gebhard (2006), the writing process must include:

- Prewriting (concept maps, brainstorming)
- Drafting
- Peer evaluation
- Editing and publishing
- These stages not only optimize text quality, but also foster autonomy and metalinguistic awareness

1.3. Feedback: between perceived usefulness and superficial practice. al.

Feedback is recognized as essential for progress in writing. 67% of teachers say they often provide written feedback (Figure 18), and 95% of students think it is useful (Figure 7). However, observations show that this feedback is superficial, inconsistent, and restricted by class duration and size.

According to Dale et al. (2010), appropriate feedback in CLIL must be:

- Relevant (both in terms of content and form)
- Coded (using symbols for errors: V = vocabulary, G = grammar)
- Continuous (throughout the process, not only at the end)

However, some teachers do not correct cohesion or structure elements, defending the idea that they ‘teach content, not language’ (Figure 18). This position goes against the essential principle of CLIL: the joint teaching of language and content. As Dale et al. (2010) point out, in CLIL, content serves as a vehicle for language. Overlooking the linguistic aspect in writing tasks means missing opportunities for incidental learning.

1.4. Insufficient teacher training: the Achilles’ heel of CLIL

One of the most crucial findings is that 67% of educators have not been specifically trained in CLIL (Figure 13). Although two are native speakers, linguistic competence does not guarantee pedagogical competence. Fürstenberg and Kletzenbauer (2015) affirm that teachers who are not trained in CLIL often focus only on content, neglecting explicit language teaching. This results in unbalanced learning, where students gain knowledge of specific disciplines but do not develop advanced language skills. In addition, Bonces (2012) emphasize that continuous professional development programs in CLIL, which institutions should provide, focus on:

- Integrated lesson planning
- Scaffolding methods
- Differentiated teaching methods

The absence of institutional refresher workshops (Figure 21) worsens this situation, since teachers remain autonomous but lack the training necessary to develop effective materials.

1.5. Material design and motivation: between appropriateness and engagement.

Although 100% of teachers consider the material used appropriate (Figure 22) and the use of various resources (readings, presentations) is evident, student motivation remains low. 37% of students believe writing is not interesting (Figure 12), and although reading material is relevant, it does not stimulate them to write (Figure 11). In light of the empirical and scientific evidence, Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggests a post method perspective in which students jointly participate in curriculum creation. He proposes that topics should come from students’ authentic needs, experiences, and interests. In this

context, Jackson (2012) also showed that the diversity of written genres improves competences and reduces errors. However, in the observed classes, genres are repeated, which causes demotivation and boredom.

Based on the evidence presented in the data and experienced by the researchers, it is appropriate to note:

- Oral expression is the main focus of the CLIL approach, while writing and reading are neglected; therefore, it is applied unevenly.
- There is a difference between students' perception and actual performance, particularly in writing.
- Skills development is hindered by lack of awareness of the writing process and superficial feedback.
- A crucial element that negatively impacts educational quality is the scarce preparation of teachers in CLIL.
- Although materials are appropriate, they are not motivating and written genres repeat patterns.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusions y recommendations

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Conclusions.

The results of the First Certificate in English revealed a developmental sequence of language skills in which speaking emerged as the most advanced area, followed by listening and reading, while writing consistently occupied the lowest position. This pattern indicates that students were encouraged to prioritize oral communication, often at the expense of developing their reading and writing abilities, which showed the weakest progress overall.

Although corrective feedback was regularly provided, factors such as limited instructional time and large class sizes reduced its impact. Moreover, the absence of meaningful and timely feedback further hindered students' performance in writing, preventing them from addressing recurring errors effectively.

The findings also highlighted that the scarcity of CLIL-specific materials posed challenges for both teachers and learners in developing writing skills to a higher level. Teachers frequently reported investing substantial time in adapting or creating resources to fit classroom needs, while many students indicated that writing topics often lacked relevance to their interests and seemed disconnected from their personal or academic contexts.

Furthermore, although school authorities organized occasional professional development workshops on CLIL implementation, these sessions were generally broad and lacked depth in specific content areas such as arts, social studies, or business management. Importantly, they rarely focused on strategies to improve students' writing skills within CLIL settings. In addition, not all teachers consistently applied CLIL principles in their classrooms, underscoring the need for training that emphasizes the methodological foundations of the approach itself.

Finally, the study revealed that despite the fact that most of the participating teachers were native English speakers with undergraduate degrees in English, their limited training in content areas and CLIL pedagogy diminished the effectiveness of their teaching. This

lack of preparation had a negative impact not only on their instructional performance but also on the pace of students' progress in developing writing skills.

Recommendations.

It is recommended that a centralized database be established where all supplementary CLIL materials developed and applied by teachers can be stored and subsequently reused by new instructors. In this way, the time invested in preparing resources would not be lost, as only minor adaptations would be required. Such a repository would also make updating or modifying materials more efficient than creating them from scratch, thereby allowing teachers to dedicate more time to providing detailed feedback and guidance on students' writing tasks.

To address the demand for more effective feedback, the implementation of a peer-feedback system is advised. This collaborative strategy would enable students to identify recurrent errors in their classmates' work and then forward the revised drafts to the instructor. By doing so, teachers would be relieved from the burden of correcting large volumes of written assignments, while learners would also develop greater autonomy and responsibility in the writing process.

Rather than conducting general CLIL training sessions, it is suggested that school authorities organize targeted workshops focused on specific subject areas and, more importantly, on methodologies for teaching writing within CLIL contexts. Specialized professional development would raise teachers' awareness of these challenges and equip them with practical strategies to strengthen their students' writing proficiency.

In order to overcome students' lack of interest in the writing topics assigned, it is advisable to consult learners directly through surveys to identify subjects that are more appealing to them. Incorporating these preferences into classroom practice would increase motivation and ensure that writing activities are more meaningful and engaging.

Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to integrate the skills in which students perform most strongly with those in which they struggle the most, especially in the area of writing. This combined approach would allow learners to work within a unified framework, reinforcing weaker abilities through the scaffolding of stronger skills.

The weaknesses identified in the educational system of the target institution represent one of the main causes of the uneven development of students' language competencies. For this reason, school authorities should be promptly informed of these shortcomings

so that corrective measures can be implemented in pursuit of the desired improvements in academic quality.

Pedagogical implications

The findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating CLIL into English classes to strengthen students' writing skills. Teachers are encouraged to design tasks that not only focus on linguistic accuracy but also foster critical thinking through subject-related content. By doing so, students can connect language learning with meaningful academic knowledge, increasing both motivation and performance.

Moreover, the results suggest that teacher training in CLIL methodology is fundamental. Institutions should provide ongoing workshops and resources that help educators prepare integrated lessons, use authentic materials, and apply feedback techniques that guide students in the writing process. Professional development will allow teachers to implement CLIL more effectively, ensuring that writing activities are not limited to language practice but also to content mastery.

Finally, adopting CLIL requires collaborative work among teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers. Creating shared repositories of CLIL materials, promoting peer observations, and encouraging reflective practices can facilitate consistency and quality in writing instruction. This collaborative approach ensures that the benefits of CLIL extend beyond individual classrooms and become a sustainable practice across institutions.

Limitations

Finally, the scarcity of previous studies on how to develop written skills when teaching English in a CLIL context, and time constraints to coordinate more class observations were among the limitations faced in this study.

Future research

Future studies should explore the long-term impact of CLIL on students' writing performance across different educational levels and contexts. It is also recommended to conduct comparative analyses between CLIL and non-CLIL groups to measure progress more accurately, as well as to examine the role of digital tools in supporting writing development within CLIL frameworks.

Invitation

Teachers are warmly invited to implement CLIL in their schools, colleges, and any educational institution. By integrating language and content instruction, educators can enrich students' learning experiences, foster higher levels of engagement, and prepare them with the academic and linguistic skills necessary for real-world communication.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Students' questionnaire

Dear student:

This questionnaire is aimed to know your opinion about the possible factors that hinder the satisfactory development of your writing skills. The information gathered will be used for academic and research purposes.

Instruction: Please select the answer according to what extent you agree with the following sentences: score them from one to five if you agree.

Scale: 5: strongly agree 4: agree 3: somewhat agree 2: disagree 1: strongly disagree

Item	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	I have difficulty with writing tasks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I enjoy writing in English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I practice writing paragraphs and essays in class.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	I feel I need more practice writing essays in English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	My writing limitations deal with lack of awareness of the writing process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	The feedback that my instructors give on my writing is very helpful to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	My teachers give me direct feedback in my writing activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	I learn writing through English B and Business Management content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	When the instructor bases the writing task on reading activities of English B or Business Management, it is easier for me to write a composition.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	I find the reading material of English B and Business Management appealing enough to motivate me to write in English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	Select one of the factors you think that mostly affect your writing performance in a CLIL context: • Writing topics are not appealing to you. • Teachers do not provide enough feedback. • Lack of writing practice. • Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix B

Teachers' questionnaire

Instruction: Please select the answer according to what extent you agree with the following sentences: (5: strongly agree 4: agree 3: somewhat agree 2: disagree 1: strongly disagree). In the case of question two, select the option that best express your opinion on the information requested. For item 11, give an answer in the lines provided.

No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	I have been trained to implement the CLIL approach in my classes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I think my students' level of proficiency regarding writing skills is: 5 Basic · 4 Low Intermediate · 3 Intermediate · 2 High Intermediate · 1 Advanced	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I often ask students to write different types of essays.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	The didactic material I use in my CLIL classes enhances students' writing skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	I use several techniques such as brainstorming and cluster mapping to help students improve writing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	I provide frequent feedback on structure, punctuation, and cohesion to help students in the writing process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	My school authorities often organize training workshops on the implementation of CLIL.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	I believe the material used in CLIL classes is appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Open-ended Items

7) Select one of the factors that you think mostly affect your students' writing performance in a CLIL context:

Writing topics are not appealing to students.

Teachers do not provide enough feedback to students.

Students' language proficiency is very heterogeneous.

Lack of training on teaching content through CLIL.

Other: _____

8) How do you think teachers can help students to improve their writing skills in a

CLIL context?

Increasing in-class writing practice.

Pair work activities.

Through teachers' and students' feedback.

Using appropriate and pertinent material.

Other: _____

11) What factors do you think hinder your performance as a CLIL teacher when trying to enhance your students' writing performance?

Appendix C

Observation sheet

No.	Observation Item	Yes	No
1	Were techniques such as brainstorming, cluster mapping used to help students improve their writing?	☐	☐
2	Was the material for the writing class based on reading activities?	☐	☐
3	Was the material selected for the class appropriate and pertinent?	☐	☐
4	Did the teacher provide students with appropriate and corrective feedback during the class?	☐	☐
5	Was the feedback meaningful enough to correct students' writing performance?	☐	☐
6	Was frequent feedback on structure, punctuation, and cohesion provided to help students in writing?	☐	☐
7	Were activities carefully planned to motivate students to enhance their writing skills?	☐	☐
8	Did the writing topics seem appealing to students?	☐	☐
9	After being given the topic for the writing activity, were students willing to write on it?	☐	☐
10	At the end of the class, did students seem satisfied with the writing instruction?	☐	☐
	Other important information relevant to the study		

About the authors



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Livingston Javier Rojas González is a dedicated professional with a strong passion for education and knowledge, widely recognized for his commitment to the holistic development of his students and his continuous pursuit of academic excellence. His dedication to lifelong learning has enriched his teaching practice and strengthened his expertise within the educational field.

Academically, he holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education with a specialization in English and a Master's Degree in Pedagogy for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language from the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. His solid academic background has equipped him with the necessary tools to design and implement innovative pedagogical strategies aimed at enhancing English language learning.

His enthusiasm for teaching stands out as one of his most remarkable qualities. With inspiring energy and a steadfast commitment to education, he transforms every learning environment into an opportunity to motivate, guide, and elevate his students' experience. Through his dedication and professionalism, he has established himself as an academic reference and a model of commitment to his vocation.



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John Marcelo Chamba Zambrano is a passionate professional devoted to education and knowledge, two fundamental pillars that have defined his life and academic career. From a young age, he discovered his vocation for teaching and his deep interest in contributing to the intellectual and professional development of his students.

Holding a Bachelor's degree in Education with a specialization in English Language, he not only gained a profound understanding of the richness of the language but also the ability to transmit its importance to learners at different stages of their academic formation. Committed to academic excellence and continuous improvement in education, he pursued a Master's degree in University Teaching and Educational Research. This achievement marked a milestone in his career, equipping him with tools to lead processes of change and improvement in educational institutions and to create more effective and humanized learning environments.



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Eddy Marshel Zaldúa Morán is a distinguished professional in the field of Language Pedagogy, specializing in the teaching of English as a foreign language. His vocation for education has guided his career, allowing him to contribute to the training of students and future teachers with dedication and commitment.

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Laura is a dedicated professional committed to the teaching of English and the training of future educators, values that have guided her life and career. From an early age, she discovered her vocation for education and her interest in contributing to the academic and personal growth of her students. She is a member of the research teams on the epistemological profile of university teachers and Life Stories of University Teachers, focusing on language acquisition and narrative inquiry.

Holding a Master's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the University of Jaén, Spain, she has developed a solid career in higher education in Ecuador. At ESPOL and the University of Guayaquil, she contributes to improving English teaching and promotes research in EFL and CLIL, emphasizing pedagogical innovation, writing development, and effective learning methodologies.



The CLIL method provides an encouraging context for combining English language learning with academic content; however, its success depends on strict pedagogical implementation. It is essential to strengthen teacher training, promote process-based writing strategies, broaden the range of genres and topics, and ensure meaningful feedback. In this way, students' actual performance and their perceptions can become more aligned and coherent, allowing for a balanced and effective development of linguistic competences in bilingual settings.

The authors.