



## Subject Area Teachers' Perception on the CLIL Program's Implementation in Lebanon

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### ABSTRACT —

The main purpose of this study is to explore how subject area teachers in Lebanese schools view the implementation of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) program. By investigating language and subject teaching in Lebanon, the research aims to uncover the challenges and possibilities associated with adopting and executing the CLIL program within the Lebanese educational context. As there is currently limited understanding of these issues and potential areas for improvement in CLIL instruction in Lebanon, the insights provided by teachers' perspectives will be valuable for researchers, educators, school administrators, and university instructors in addressing these challenges.

To achieve these objectives, the study followed a qualitative approach using phenomenological methodology, involving interviews with Lebanese teachers who deliver CLIL concepts in English across different subject areas. The participants were carefully selected to provide comprehensive and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation. The research focused on describing the experiences of Lebanese teachers and identifying common themes across their experiences.

The findings of the study revealed that Lebanese teachers encounter difficulties in implementing the CLIL program. These challenges arise from various factors, including unfamiliarity with the approach, time constraints, lack of adequate resources, limited collaboration between English language teachers and subject matter experts, and insufficient training. Overall, this research sheds light on the perspectives of subject area teachers in Lebanon and highlights the obstacles they face when applying the CLIL program. By understanding these challenges, stakeholders in education can work towards improving the effectiveness of CLIL instruction in Lebanese schools.

Index Terms—*Content and Language Integrated Learning, Lebanese teachers' perceptions.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Due to globalization and internationalization, there is a high demand for foreign language skills, leading to a growing need for bilingual education. This has made CLIL programs increasingly popular, as they aim to teach both academic content and a foreign language simultaneously. Such an approach has shown its effectiveness in numerous countries and education systems, leading to higher proficiency levels in both academic subjects and the target language among students. However, for CLIL to succeed, specific conditions and prerequisites must be met. Teachers need to receive proper training to implement the program, sufficient resources should be available to support and reinforce the content, and collaboration between language and content subject teachers is essential for effective planning.

Despite CLIL's expansion in various western countries, there is a dearth of research on its practicality, effectiveness, and implementation in the Lebanese context. The extent to which Lebanese teachers are trained to deliver successful CLIL lessons remains unknown, and this lack of training can impact their instructional methods, directly affecting the comprehension and development of Lebanese students.

The most recent Lebanese curricula were introduced in 1998 and have remained unchanged since then. This content-based curriculum emphasizes the integration of skills, collaborative learning, independent learning, cultural knowledge, and study skills. Students are encouraged to become proficient in two community languages alongside their native language.

### A. Aims and Objectives

This qualitative study seeks to investigate the beliefs of subject area teachers regarding the feasibility of CLIL in Lebanon. Through their perspectives, we aim to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing this program in the Lebanese educational context. The insights gained from this research will be valuable for curriculum designers to adapt and contextualize CLIL teaching materials in Lebanon. Additionally, it will provide teachers with a platform to voice their needs and emphasize the significance of teacher training and professional development in implementing CLIL.

effectively. Furthermore, this study aims to inspire other educators, institutions, and researchers to explore and enhance CLIL programs in Lebanon, with the teachers who participated in this research acting as key motivators for further experimentation and improvement.

#### *B. Research Problem*

The CLIL method holds significance in the Lebanese context; however, there is a lack of research on its practicality, effectiveness, and implementation in this setting. Lebanese teachers may not receive adequate training to effectively deliver CLIL lessons, impacting the comprehension and development of students. Practical limitations, such as time constraints, resource scarcity, and insufficient professional development, have been identified as potential barriers.

The research problem revolves around issues in the Lebanese education system, CLIL programs, and teachers' needs. The rationale of the study is to provide a platform for teachers to share their experiences and perspectives, enabling them to propose solutions and recommendations for effective CLIL implementation. Understanding the needs of Lebanese teachers can help researchers and educators identify gaps in the curriculum, provide insights to enhance materials and training, and offer the necessary support for teachers to deliver the CLIL program effectively.

#### *C. Research Questions*

This study aims to conduct action research, but it will utilize the phenomenological methodology to address the research questions. Phenomenology is focused on studying actual human experiences through description. In this research, the focus is on exploring Lebanese teachers' teaching experiences, perceptions of CLIL programs, and their needs. By employing the phenomenological theory, the study emphasizes both describing the teachers' experiences and interpreting common themes among them.

Specifically, the research aims to answer questions related to the teachers' opinions and experiences of teaching subject contents using the English language in the Lebanese context, as well as their requirements for effective CLIL implementation.

#### *D. Study Context*

The current study was conducted in Lebanon, specifically in the regions of Mount Lebanon and Beirut. The participants were subject area teachers from the private sector. The selection of participants was done using purposeful sampling to ensure detailed and in-depth information about the phenomenon. The teachers selected had a minimum of five years of teaching experience, without any age limitations. Participants were chosen from elementary, intermediate, and secondary school cycles, and they taught various subjects such as math, science, social studies, economics, sociology, arts, drama, physical education, and music. The target participants were professional teachers with a university degree that qualified them to pursue a career in the education field.

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## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, both the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework for the study will be presented. The topic will be developed by discussing the history and significance of bilingual education in the development of CLIL programs. Additionally, an overview of the Lebanese education system, including the curricula and its implementation will be provided. This information will provide the necessary background and context for the study, helping to frame the research questions and objectives effectively.

#### *A. Bilingual Education*

Globalization and internationalization have led to a significant increase in the importance of bilingual education. The demand for foreign language skills has grown considerably in the job market, as they offer numerous advantages for individuals in terms of social integration and communication with diverse cultures. As a result, the need for bilingual education has become more pronounced and relevant in today's interconnected world.

Effective bilingual education programs are designed to acknowledge and build upon the existing knowledge and skills of students. They are carefully crafted to meet the linguistic, cultural, and developmental needs of the students. Such programs possess distinct characteristics that contribute to their success. Firstly, they have clear program objectives and set high expectations for students' academic achievements. Secondly, the curriculum includes a specific focus on English-language development, as English serves as the target language for learning, and it should be on par with the subjects taught in English-only classrooms. Additionally, multicultural instruction is integrated into the program to recognize and respect the students' home culture. The success of the program also relies on the support and involvement of the community, administrative staff, and teachers. Adequate teacher training, as well as the provision of linguistically, culturally, and developmentally appropriate resources and materials, are crucial elements for the effective implementation of the program.

The dominance of English as an internationally recognized language is evident, serving as the primary means of communication between people worldwide. It is extensively used in various domains such as global corporations, international trade, diplomacy, mass entertainment, telecommunications, and scientific publications. Being the first global lingua franca, English has established itself as the foremost world language.

Furthermore, the continuous growth of technology has further accelerated the usage of English. Initially, through televisions and computers, and now with the indispensable presence of electronic devices in our lives, English has become more prevalent. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for communication, with activists using English to spread their messages globally. The influence of social media on younger generations, particularly through public figures, is profound.

Notably, video games also play a significant role in language exposure and learning. As English is widely used in video games, it has further contributed to its integration into the lives of students and younger generations. Overall, the impact of English, facilitated by technology and media, is far-reaching and continues to shape global communication and interaction.

Rao (2019) highlights that English holds a dominant position in the global educational system, making it a mandatory subject to learn. This necessity arises from the fact that a significant portion of higher education courses are conducted in English. Moreover, the English language is extensively utilized in various industries worldwide, including science, engineering, technology, medicine, business, research, education, tourism, internet, banking, and advertising.

Due to the increasing importance of foreign languages, including English, in educational systems (Nunan, 2003), several bilingual education programs have been designed and implemented. These programs, such as Immersion Bilingual Education, English as a Second Language, Developmental Bilingual Education, and CLIL, aim to cater to the diverse linguistic needs of students and facilitate their language development and proficiency.

### *B. CLIL Program*

As foreign languages have become indispensable in various educational systems (Nunan, 2003), the CLIL program has gained popularity as an effective method to achieve language learning goals (ELDaou & Abdallah, 2019). Marsh (2000) asserts that CLIL is an excellent approach to foster a positive attitude among foreign language learners and results in high proficiency and linguistic competency.

The term "CLIL" was first introduced in the mid-1990s in Europe and received support from the European Union as a vital element of its multilingualism policy. CLIL was recognized as a significant means for mainstream schools to enhance their students' bilingual and multilingual abilities.

Despite being a relatively new field of study, research on language acquisition in CLIL has rapidly expanded due to concerns about its effectiveness and applicability in foreign language teaching and learning. Various research overviews, such as those by Dalton-Puffer (2011), Nikula and Mård-Miettinen (2014), and Ruizde Zarobe (2011), cover language acquisition in CLIL.

To support teachers in their venture of teaching subjects through a foreign language, the CLIL methodology was outlined, offering a fresh educational approach in domains where the native language was traditionally used. Coyle, Hood & Marsh (2010) propose the 4C's for CLIL framework, emphasizing the importance of connecting content learning to communication (language), cognition (thinking), and culture (awareness of oneself and others). Content is considered the foundation of CLIL, with language serving as both the means and goal of learning, as well as a prerequisite for higher-order thinking skills. This framework illustrates a perspective on language that integrates learning the language and using the language to learn, referred to as the separation between language of instruction, for learning, and via learning (Coyle, 2007).

In summary, CLIL is a teaching method that incorporates elements of psychology, sociology, and innovation in its application (Awan & Sipra, 2018).

CLIL relies on two main theories, constructivism and social constructivism, which promote collaboration and critical thinking skills. In this approach, language instruction is not simply provided to students; instead, they actively engage, observe, and acquire language skills through studying various subjects in that language.

The theory of constructivism, influenced by cognitive learning theory, suggests that students construct knowledge based on their beliefs, perspectives, interests, and environment. Skeet identified three key principles of constructivism: active learning, progression in task complexity, and creating a positive learning experience.

The theory of social constructivism, proposed by Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of interactions with the environment in the learning process. Vygotsky introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which represents the difference between a learner's capability without any assistance and their potential with support. The idea of scaffolding, a fundamental technique in CLIL programs, is closely related to Vygotsky's work.

Both constructivism and social constructivism provide the foundation for teachers to design their lesson plans in CLIL. Therefore, teachers must embrace and apply their knowledge of these theories to effectively implement CLIL teaching.

According to Hattie (2009), the CLIL methodology employs various teaching techniques that can significantly impact student learning. One of the main techniques is providing comprehensible input, ensuring that students understand all the key terms and concepts covered in class. Younger learners tend to benefit in the long term due to their lower affective filters, while older learners show faster growth in the early stages because they receive more understandable data, which is known as comprehensible input based on Krashen's (1985) theory.

Another critical aspect of the CLIL approach is scaffolding, a widely used technique where teachers provide specialized assistance to students to help them complete tasks or solve problems they cannot manage independently (Bruner, 1986). Cooperative learning is also frequently employed in CLIL experiments due to its potential for enhancing socio-emotional and cognitive development among students. This strategy aims to support each student and the entire class in achieving their full potential by creating learning environments that allow individuals to develop skills, think critically, and utilize tools and resources to complete tasks (Lazar, 2017).

### *C. Lebanese Education System*

The Lebanese educational system is structured into three main categories: higher education, professional and technical education, and general education. General education comprises four cycles: cycle 1 includes kindergarten classes for children aged 3 to 5, cycle 2 covers primary education for ages 6 to 11, cycle 3 includes intermediate education for ages 12 to 14, and cycle 4 involves secondary education for ages 15 to 17 (Nahas, 2009).

Lebanon's educational system is divided between public and private schools. Although both types of schools are evenly distributed across the country, the majority of students in Lebanon attend private schools and universities. Primary education is compulsory until the age of twelve, and it is typically provided in both public and private educational institutions (Yaacoub & Badre, 2012).

Since its implementation in 1998, the Lebanese curriculum has not undergone any evaluation or revision by either the Ministry of Education or the Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD). The NCERD was tasked with creating a new curriculum for all subjects to modernize the educational system and align it with global standards (NCERD, 1994). The World Bank supported this initiative, and the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies examined any gaps that existed. However, despite the efforts to address various issues in the 2010 education strategy, including quality education, equal opportunities, and social integration (Council of Development and Reconstruction, 2011), the 1997 curriculum remains unchanged and many of the proposed goals and objectives for the new curriculum have not been effectively implemented.

The new curriculum aimed to adopt a thematic, content-based approach to education. However, a report from the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies (LAES) in 2002 pointed out some shortcomings. The report highlighted that there were excessive themes in certain grades, ranging from 2 to 6 themes in elementary grades to 13 themes in some intermediate courses and 19 themes in grade 10. This imbalance in the number of themes made it difficult to create cohesive thematic units and establish connections across different themes and grade levels, which are essential for enhancing learning.

Additionally, the new curriculum recommended the implementation of collaborative learning to support the CLIL program in Lebanon. However, after a brief training period, it was found that incorporating collaborative learning as a systematic method for supervising student group projects proved to be challenging in practice. The teachers faced difficulties in effectively implementing this approach.

To ensure the success of the CLIL program at the institutional level, a cooperative organizational structure is essential, fostering collaboration between English teachers and subject area teachers. This cooperation involves establishing regular meetings and dedicated time for both language and subject teachers to come together and plan lessons collaboratively.

Shaaban (2013) discussed the importance of subject area teachers and English teachers working together in Lebanon. However, it was found that the teachers faced challenges due to discrepancies between the curriculum and the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD) texts. Lack of coordination between different textbook writing committees, both within and across cycles, resulted in a lack of coherence and sequencing in the textbooks, causing difficulties for teachers in implementing the CLIL program effectively.

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### III. METHODOLOGY

The interpretive phenomenological approach was chosen for this study, and data collection primarily involved conducting interviews with the 16 purposefully selected participants. According to Moran (2000), a phenomenon is anything that appears in a person's conscious experience. The phenomenological method is descriptive, and the data collected through interviews were presented in a reflective manner using basic writing techniques (Wertz, 2005).

In this research, using phenomenological theory, emphasis was placed on both describing the Lebanese teachers' experiences and interpreting the commonalities of their experiences. Giorgi (1975, 1985, 2009) published many articles about basic methodology, procedures, and standards. He emphasizes the importance of providing a good description which reveals the phenomenon of the research.

The interviews with the subject area teachers began with open-ended questions to explore their opinions and experiences of teaching subject content in the English language. Subsequently, more specific questions were asked to delve into their perceptions of CLIL, its effectiveness, and its implementation in the Lebanese context. Finally, the interviews included additional questions to investigate the teachers' needs and their willingness to implement CLIL effectively.

During the research process, the data were analyzed by creating codes to identify common themes among the participants' perspectives. Thematic coding was used to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and to analyze their shared experiences related to the CLIL program.

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### IV. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the research, which were obtained through thematic coding. The analysis revealed seven distinct themes that accurately represented the real experiences of Lebanese subject area teachers on various aspects of the CLIL program, including its effectiveness, implementation, and their needs for effective CLIL teaching. The section is structured into three main parts: (1) the interview results derived from the collected data, (2) the coding and analysis of the data, and (3) the interpretation of the results. The themes identified in this section provide valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of the teachers involved in the study, shedding light on important aspects related to the CLIL program and its successful implementation.

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## V. Interview Results from Collected Data

The aim of this qualitative phenomenological research was to investigate the viewpoints of Lebanese teachers regarding CLIL teaching. It sought to understand the constraints and difficulties they encounter while implementing CLIL in Lebanon and identify their requirements for successful CLIL implementation. This section comprises a discourse on the outcomes of interviews with subject area teachers, drawn from the gathered data.

### A. *The Use of the English Language in Subject Classes*

When asked about language training or courses they received, the subject teachers provided valuable insights. The vast majority (87.5%), comprising 14 out of 16 participants, reported not having received any language support before or during their teaching tenure. Only a small portion (12.5%), which included 2 out of 16 participants, had some English background. Among these two, one had an English education, and the other took English language courses at the university.

To gain a deeper understanding, the subject area teachers were asked to self-assess their language competence and fluency honestly. About 37.5%, or 6 out of 16 of the participants claimed to be fluent in English and felt comfortable using it as a medium of instruction without facing significant challenges. Another 37.5% of subject teachers expressed that while they were generally okay with using English in their teaching, they encountered various difficulties. The remaining participants (25%) admitted finding it quite challenging to deliver their lessons in English. Interestingly, despite teaching different scientific and non-scientific subjects, they shared similar challenges and concerns.

### B. *The use of code-switching in subject area classes*

Code-switching is a debatable method. Some people are with code-switching until the students become confident in the language. Others believe that teachers should not allow code-switching in class. The participants were asked about their perspective and use of code-switching in class to learn about the Lebanese teachers' perspective.

The majority of subject teachers (43.75%) stated that they never utilize Arabic in the classroom due to restrictions imposed on them. A smaller portion (18.75%) mentioned that they sometimes use Arabic in their teaching but make an effort to minimize its usage. On the other hand, 37.5% of subject teachers admitted that they do use the students' first language (L1) in class for various reasons, even if it may contradict school rules. Some teachers resort to Arabic words when unsure of the correct English terminology, while others use the students' L1 to explain complex or unfamiliar English terms. However, they have found that relying on repetition to help students understand new concepts or terms is not always effective. Consequently, teachers should adopt alternative strategies for re-explaining such concepts. Some teachers also emphasized that students tend to express themselves more effectively in their mother tongue, so they are allowed to use Arabic freely in the classroom. This is particularly true for students who are more comfortable expressing themselves in Arabic due to their language proficiency limitations in the foreign language.

### C. *Correction of language errors by subject teachers*

Error correction is a crucial aspect of CLIL teaching, and teachers should be adept at knowing when and how to provide constructive feedback on students' errors. Proper feedback helps students identify their mistakes and learn to correct them. While English teachers are expected to encounter language errors, they were not specifically asked for feedback during the interview. On the other hand, subject teachers were asked about their experiences with students' language errors.

Among subject teachers, 37.5% explained that they do correct language errors, particularly if they are straightforward and obvious. However, some mentioned that they might avoid correcting errors if they are uncertain about the correctness or unsure of the appropriate correction. Lastly, some teachers stated that they correct language errors only when they hinder students' comprehension of the subject matter being taught. On the whole, 62.5% of subject teachers claimed that they address almost all language errors made by students, and they employ various methods for correction. Some prefer to wait for students to complete their sentences before providing corrections. Others ask students to rephrase their sentences, while some accurately repeat the students' responses with the necessary corrections.

### D. *Challenges that teachers face while teaching different*

As numerous researchers and studies have highlighted, teaching subject areas in English presents several challenges for teachers. Through interviews with the study participants, subject teachers' experiences revealed various challenges they encounter. The most prevalent challenge reported by the teachers is finding the appropriate terminology while explaining concepts.

Furthermore, teachers from a French background mentioned the difficulty of transitioning from French to English in both language use and teaching methodology. This language shift can pose additional obstacles for these teachers.

Additionally, students often ask unexpected questions, and if subject teachers are not adequately prepared or competent in the subject matter, they may struggle to provide satisfactory answers and address students' curiosity effectively. This emphasizes the importance of teachers' readiness and proficiency in the subject being taught in English.

### E. *The Effect of Culture on Language Learning and Students' Motivation*

Being familiar with the country's culture was considered essential by the participants. Their opinions on the influence of culture on foreign language learning varied, particularly concerning its impact on students. The focus was mainly on how students' culture affects their motivation to learn a foreign language.

The participants in the study had different perspectives on the influence of culture on foreign language learning. While 18.75% believed that culture does not significantly affect students' motivation to learn a foreign language, the majority (81.25%) thought that cultural factors do play a role in motivating students. They emphasized the importance of family encouragement and social media exposure as motivating factors. Additionally, students aspiring to continue their education abroad were more motivated to learn the language for practical purposes.

#### *F. Teachers' Knowledge about the CLIL Program*

To ensure the effectiveness of the CLIL program, it is crucial for teachers to possess sufficient competence in the program. This entails being well-informed about its objectives, techniques, and implementation. If teachers lack the qualifications to teach the CLIL program, they may encounter challenges in its implementation, leading to potential difficulties for the students in achieving the expected success of the program. In order to assess the Lebanese teachers' familiarity with the CLIL program, the participants were asked about their knowledge of it. The findings revealed that 25% of the subject teachers were knowledgeable about the CLIL program, while 75% did not have prior experience in teaching CLIL proficiently.

#### *G. Efficacy of the CLIL Program and Implementation in Lebanon*

The participants reached a consensus that the effectiveness of the CLIL program relies on proper implementation, planning, and adherence to its principles. Teachers acknowledged its positive impact on students' language skills, but they also acknowledged that it poses challenges, demanding dedication, time, and effort to coordinate and plan lessons effectively, especially for subject teachers collaborating with language teachers.

All participants agreed that the CLIL program is not widely utilized in public schools. They emphasized the need for significant changes in the public-school sector, including curriculum reform, improved school amenities, better resources, and enhanced teacher training.

However, 34% of the participants reported that the CLIL program is being successfully implemented in some reputable private schools and institutions with international accreditations. These private schools focus on developing updated programs and curricula, offering extensive teacher training and workshops. Administrators in these schools prioritize providing necessary resources, equipment, and support for teachers to conduct experiments, activities, and educational excursions, ensuring high-quality instruction and education for students. On the other hand, 66% of the participants expressed the belief that the CLIL program is not effectively utilized in Lebanon. Some teachers speculated that a few individuals with background knowledge of CLIL, a passion for exploring new teaching methods, and dedication might use it in their classrooms. However, they pointed out that without strong support from school administrators and effective coordination among all teachers, the full implementation of CLIL remains unlikely.

#### *H. Lebanese teachers' perspective of the CLIL program's efficacy and practicality*

All the participants unanimously agree that the CLIL program can be highly effective when implemented, planned, and followed diligently. Teachers who have experience with the CLIL program acknowledged its positive impact on students' language development and improvement. However, when it comes to its effect on subject content, teachers seemed somewhat unsure and hesitant about its overall benefits. While CLIL proves advantageous for language learning, teachers expressed reservations about its direct impact on subject matter comprehension.

Despite its effectiveness for students, the CLIL program presents various challenges for teachers. For subject teachers, especially, practicality becomes a significant concern. The integration of language objectives and coordination with English teachers during instruction can be demanding. Many teachers are accustomed to traditional teaching methods, making it challenging to adapt to the CLIL approach. Successful implementation requires dedication, time, and effort from teachers to coordinate, plan lessons, align content and language objectives, prepare activities, and adopt different teaching strategies.

#### *I. Teachers' Needs for Effective CLIL teaching in Lebanon*

The participants were asked to discuss the obstacles and requirements for successful CLIL teaching in Lebanon, and their demands and concerns were similar and interconnected.

One of the main limitations they highlighted was the outdated curriculum, lacking interdisciplinary lessons among subjects. Participants expressed the need for more engaging activities and experiments to cater to students' interests.

Limited access to materials and equipment to reinforce lessons was another shared limitation. Teachers face challenges due to the lack of resources and budget to conduct experiments and activities that enhance student understanding and learning experiences. Participants suggested allocating higher financial resources to educational supplies and teacher creativity in lesson planning.

Participants also emphasized the importance of guidance from experienced and CLIL specialized coordinators to support successful CLIL implementation. They proposed having coordinators follow up on teachers' lesson plans to ensure alignment and harmony among subjects and themes taught.

Teacher training emerged as a critical aspect for effective CLIL programs in Lebanon. Participants emphasized the involvement of universities and schools in providing CLIL training. Undergraduate students should receive CLIL training, while new and current teachers require pre-service and in-service trainings regularly.

Some participants recognized the significance of teachers' motivation and dedication to implementing the CLIL program, as it demands time-consuming efforts to develop innovative activities and experiments. However, challenges such as economic crises and personal commitments can hinder teachers' extra efforts outside of school hours. Participants stressed the need for schools to appreciate and motivate teachers, considering the challenging living standards in Lebanon.

Overall, the participants acknowledged the importance of addressing these obstacles and requirements to ensure the successful implementation of CLIL teaching in Lebanon.

#### *J. The Subject Teachers' Readiness to Implement CLIL in their classrooms*

After discovering the teachers' perspective, limitations, and needs for successful CLIL implementation in Lebanon, it was essential to explore their willingness to implement CLIL. As mentioned earlier, teachers expressed genuinely their belief of CLIL being very effective yet time consuming. When subject teachers were asked about their readiness to work with CLIL, the answers varied. 43.75% of the subject teachers were excited about the CLIL program. They were definite that if provided appropriate training, resources, and guidance, they would surely implement it. They explained further by noting that they would implement it because it helps the students and improves their skills. They believed that the CLIL program not only improves their language skills, but also it gives them confidence in the society. However, they all shared the same demand before implementing CLIL; to be professionally trained. On the other hand, 37.5% of the subject teachers were hesitant about adopting CLIL. These teachers were concerned that the program is very demanding, time-consuming, and hectic. They were worried about implementing CLIL because they are already overwhelmed in their working hours at school. Subject teachers, especially the teachers that teach several classes, have a lot to prepare and plan for. These participants shared that they might be willing to try it, but not sure if they may continue with it.

The remaining 18.75% declared that they will not implement it even if they were guided and trained. Each participant gave a different reason to explain. One of them shared that it is very challenging to teach English in parallel with the subject they are teaching because he/she has a French background. This would be the case for most of French educated subject teachers because they have to take English language courses to master English first. Afterwards, they need guidance and training to implement the CLIL program. The other teacher shared that he/she might use CLIL in a few lessons, but not consistently. He/she believes that they would benefit from CLIL strategies in some lessons but not all. Also, he/she believed it is time consuming and hectic.

The last participant shared that to apply CLIL, it needs more than effort and training. It needs a radical change in the whole education system. For this participant, no matter how much effort teachers, coordinators, and administrators put, if the whole system was not changed, it will not be productive. By the whole system, they mean the traditional teaching methods, outdated curriculum, and untrained coordinators.

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## **VI. Coding Data and Analysis**

In this qualitative study, thematic coding was employed as the methodological approach for data analysis. The framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed, and the thematic coding process involved six distinct phases. Firstly, all interviews were manually transcribed, and the researcher thoroughly read the responses multiple times to become familiar with the data. Next, initial codes were generated by organizing the data into relevant categories. Subsequently, relevant data points were collected to identify overarching themes, which were then examined to ensure their relevance to the coded extracts and the entire dataset.

Throughout the study, a continuous examination was conducted to fine-tune the details and characteristics of each theme, resulting in the creation of accurate definitions and labels for each identified theme. Finally, the selected themes and corresponding extracts were analyzed in connection with the research questions, objectives, and existing literature.

The resulting motivating factor themes from the thematic coding process are as follows: (a) The use of the English language in subject area classes, (b) Benefits and challenges of learning different subjects in English, (c) The effect of culture on language learning and students' motivation, (d) Teachers' knowledge about the CLIL program, (e) Efficacy of the CLIL program and its implementation in Lebanon, (f) Teachers' needs for effective CLIL teaching in Lebanon, and (g) Scientific subject teachers' readiness to implement CLIL in their classrooms.

#### *A. The Use of the English Language in Subject Area Classes*

The primary goal of the CLIL program is to enhance English language acquisition by integrating the study of various scientific and non-scientific subjects taught in English. In this program, teachers are required to use English as the medium of instruction consistently, while students are expected to develop their language skills and grasp subject content simultaneously. It is important to note that each teacher may have their own unique approach and teaching methods within the CLIL framework. This flexibility allows for diversity in instructional techniques while still aligning with the overarching objective of reinforcing English language learning through subject-based education. The majority of the participants, 43.75%, stated that they never use Arabic in class because they are not allowed to. 18.75% of the participants mentioned that they sometimes use Arabic in their teachings, but they try to avoid and eliminate its usage. However, 37.5% of the subject teachers admitted that they use the students' L1 in class for many reasons although it might be against the school rules. Some subject teachers use Arabic words if they are not sure of the correct terminology in English. Other teachers use the students' first language to explain difficult or new English terms. Other teachers highlighted the fact that students tend to express themselves better in their mother tongue, so they are allowed to use Arabic freely in class. Since students are used to expressing themselves in Arabic at home, they find it difficult to shift from their native language to the foreign language, especially if they are not fluent enough in it.

Consequently, subject area teachers were asked if they encounter students' language errors. While 62.5% of the subject teachers claimed that they fix almost all language errors committed by students, 37.5% of them explained that they fix language errors, as long as they are easy and obvious. Some said that they might avoid correcting if they are not sure if it is wrong or not certain of the correction. Lastly, some teachers stated that they fix language errors that only affect the comprehension of the content being taught.

#### *B. Benefits and Challenges of Learning Different Subjects in English*

All participants in the study unanimously agreed on the significant benefits of teaching various subjects in English, emphasizing the positive outcomes it can bring for students. However, they stressed the importance of teachers using proper English in order to facilitate students' improvement. The participants highlighted that, students would enhance their vocabulary, gain confidence in the foreign language, place a higher value on language classes, and be better prepared to pursue education outside of Lebanon.

The study also identified a common challenge faced by subject teachers, which is finding appropriate terminology when explaining concepts. Additionally, teachers with a background in French expressed the difficulty of transitioning from French to English in terms of language proficiency and teaching methodology. The experiences shared by subject teachers revealed several challenges faced by students in subject-based classes, particularly their struggles with paraphrasing, retelling, or explaining non-scientific concepts compared to scientific ones.

#### *C. The Effect of Culture on Language Learning and Students' Motivation*

The CLIL teaching program recognizes the significance of culture in language learning, as highlighted by the 4Cs framework. Culture and language share a dynamic relationship, influencing each other in the learning process. Among the participants, 18.75% held the perspective that culture does not impact students' motivation to learn a foreign language. According to this view, intrinsic motivation is crucial, particularly when it comes to languages that students do not use outside of the classroom. Conversely, a majority of the participants (81.25%) believed that cultural factors do influence students' motivation to learn a language. They emphasized the role of family and parents in encouraging students to use the language in their everyday interactions. These findings underscore the interplay between culture and motivation in language learning, highlighting the need to consider cultural factors in fostering students' engagement and enthusiasm for learning a foreign language.

#### *D. Teachers' Knowledge about the CLIL Program*

Teachers must be competent in the CLIL program to ensure its success, as they must be knowledgeable of its objectives, techniques, and implementation. Without this knowledge, students will not achieve the expected success. The Lebanese teachers' familiarity with the CLIL program was studied. The participants were questioned about their knowledge of the program. 25% of the subject teachers were knowledgeable of the CLIL program, yet 75% did not have experience in teaching it.

#### *E. Efficacy of the CLIL Program and Implementation in Lebanon*

The participants agreed that the CLIL program is effective if implemented, planned, and followed properly. Teachers agreed that it helps students develop and improve their language skills, but they were hesitant about its positive impact on the content of the subject. Although it is effective for students, CLIL is a challenging program for subject area teachers, as it requires dedication, time, and effort to coordinate with each other and plan for the lessons. They claimed that lesson planning needs time if they are to align the content and language objectives, prepare activities, and adopt different teaching strategies, it will definitely need more time.

As for the implementation, all the participants agreed that the CLIL program is not utilized in public schools. They held the opinion that the public schools sector needs to undergo radical change in the curriculum, school amenities, resources, and teacher training. However, 34% of the participants reported that the CLIL program is implemented in several reputable private schools, and institutions with international accreditations use it. They believe that some private schools work on developing updated programs and new curricula. They offer teacher trainings and workshops extensively. Additionally, private school administrators strive to provide students with the finest instruction and education possible. Thus, they spent money on providing teachers with supplies, equipment, and support needed to conduct experiments, do activities, and go on educational excursions. The remaining 66% of participants were certain that the CLIL program is not utilized in Lebanon. They explained that neither public nor private schools implement CLIL appropriately. However, some teachers supposed that it may be partly applied by a few teachers in a few settings. They assume that the teachers who have background knowledge of CLIL, passion to discovering new methods, and dedication to teaching, use it in their classrooms. Yet, school administrators neither demand it from the teachers nor follow it up. They continued to add that CLIL would not be implemented completely if the school administration did not follow it up and facilitated coordination among all teachers.

#### *F. Teachers' Needs for Effective CLIL Teaching in Lebanon*

The participants were asked to discuss the obstacles and requirements for successful CLIL teaching in Lebanon. All of the participants had demands and concerns that were similar and related.

The curriculum was listed as the first limitation since it had not been revised. The subject teachers were concerned that the curriculum and books lack interdisciplinary lessons among the subjects. They also believe there should be more activities and experiments that satisfy the students' interests nowadays.



Participants discussed the difficulty of having access to materials and equipment to reinforce lessons. They suggested that schools should dedicate a higher financial plan for educational supplies and resources to enable teachers to be more creative in their lesson plans. This would help students understand and experience better learning.

The participants expressed their need for experienced and CLIL specialized coordinators to guide them towards better CLIL teaching. Coordinators should follow up with each teacher's lesson plan and ensure alignment and harmony among the subjects and themes taught. This will help them implement the program successfully.

Participants noted the importance of teacher motivation and dedication to implement the CLIL program, as it requires a lot of time to research and plan. They also noted that the current situation and living standards in Lebanon have a great influence on teachers, as they are struggling to survive the economic crises. Most teachers are overwhelmed with their personal life and commitments after school hours, making it difficult for them to put extra effort after school.

The participants continued to add that teacher training is critical and key to have effective CLIL teaching programs in Lebanon. They reported that both universities and schools have to take part in teacher training. Universities should provide CLIL trainings to undergraduate students. Subsequently, schools should provide new teachers pre-service trainings and in-service trainings for all teachers regularly.

#### *G. The Subject Teachers' Readiness to Implement CLIL in their Classrooms*

As mentioned earlier, teachers expressed genuinely their belief of CLIL being very effective yet time consuming. When subject teachers were asked about their readiness to work with CLIL, the answers varied.

43.75% of the subject teachers were excited about the CLIL program. They were definite that if provided appropriate training, resources, and guidance, they would surely implement it. On the other hand, 37.5% of the subject teachers were hesitant about adopting CLIL. These teachers were concerned that the program is very demanding, time-consuming, and hectic. They were worried about implementing CLIL because they are already overwhelmed in their working hours at school. The rest 18.75% declared that they will not implement it even if they were guided and trained. Each participant gave a different reason to explain. One of them shared that it is very challenging to teach English in parallel with the subject they are teaching.

The last participant shared that to apply CLIL, it needs more than effort and training. It needs a radical change in the whole education system. For this participant, no matter how much effort teachers, coordinators, and administrators put, if the whole system was not changed, it will not be productive. By the whole system, they mean the traditional teaching methods, outdated curriculum, and untrained coordinators.

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## **VII. Interpretation of Results**

Indeed, various research studies have demonstrated the positive outcomes of implementing the CLIL methodology. These studies consistently show that the CLIL program can effectively enhance students' language skills and academic content knowledge simultaneously. The belief in the efficacy of CLIL among subject area teachers in Lebanon further emphasizes its potential for success in the educational context.

As highlighted by Marsh (2000), the CLIL approach has been particularly effective in cultivating a positive attitude towards foreign language learning. This positive attitude has been linked to increased competence and proficiency in both the target language and the subject content. Such findings provide further support for the benefits of CLIL and its potential to improve language learning outcomes in Lebanon and other educational settings.

Like any other educational program, teachers encounter various difficulties when implementing CLIL. Pistorio (2009) points out that CLIL approaches present teachers with intricate limitations and challenges. Some subject area teachers expressed difficulties in teaching their subjects in English, while others reported satisfaction with their language abilities. The study's conclusion, emphasizing the importance of teachers' correct use of the English language for students' language proficiency, aligns with Wolff's (2007) view that subject matter teachers do not necessarily need to sound like native speakers. Instead, they should focus on precise language usage in the content lessons. Teachers who implement CLIL should be fluent in the target language and rarely use the learners' mother tongue. However, code-switching is a natural communication technique for students. Therefore, teachers should permit it, especially in the early phases of CLIL (Novotná, J., Hadj-Moussová, Z., & Hofmannová, M., 2001).

According to Pavon (2013), some educators lack familiarity with the CLIL program and may misunderstand it, mistakenly thinking that they can use it by merely translating content into the target language. The study's results, along with the literature review, indicate that a significant number of teachers are not familiar with the CLIL program. Around 72% of the participants in the study were unfamiliar with the program's techniques, goals, and implementation. Charunsri (2020) also points out that because teachers are not well-versed in the principles of CLIL, they may believe they can implement it simply by changing the medium of teaching to English. The study suggests that many teachers may incorrectly apply the CLIL program and fail to follow its techniques and objectives accurately.

The subject teachers expressed concern over the lack of interdisciplinary courses and engaging activities in the curriculum. They believe that more experiments and interesting activities would benefit students' learning experiences.

Another issue raised by the participants was the lack of support from subject or school coordinators for effective CLIL implementation. They emphasized the need for experienced coordinators with expertise in CLIL to guide and assist teachers.

Lastly, the participants stressed the importance of adequate teacher preparation for successful CLIL teaching in Lebanon. They highlighted the need for teacher training at both universities and schools, with undergraduate students receiving CLIL instruction and schools providing pre-service and in-service training for teachers. The participants recognized that teacher training plays a crucial role in the proper development of CLIL programs.

43.75% of subject teachers showed enthusiasm towards the CLIL program. They expressed certainty in implementing it if they received proper training, materials, and guidance. They believed in the program's benefits for students, improving their skills and confidence in society. However, they emphasized the need for formal training before starting CLIL.

On the other hand, the remaining subject teachers were hesitant to implement CLIL. They cited concerns about its high demands, time-consuming nature, and hectic schedule, as they already had busy schedules during regular school hours. This aligns with the literature, which also highlights the lack of time as a significant challenge for CLIL implementation (Hashmi, 2019).

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## VIII. CONCLUSION

CLIL, or Content and Language Integrated Learning, is an approach in education where non-linguistic subjects are taught in a foreign language. This method combines language learning with subject learning, making both the language and the subject integral to the learning process.

The CLIL methodology employs various instructional methods that can significantly impact students' learning, such as comprehensible input, scaffolding, and cooperative learning. By providing comprehensible input, younger learners benefit from their lower affective filters, while older learners progress more swiftly in the early stages due to receiving understandable data. Scaffolding is another essential aspect of CLIL, where students receive specialized assistance from teachers or peers to complete tasks or solve problems beyond their current capabilities.

Cooperative learning is crucial in the CLIL program, fostering teamwork and analytical skills among students. Rather than traditional language teaching, students are encouraged to pay attention, observe, and study other subjects in the foreign language, facilitating their language acquisition. Collaborative learning further enhances the learning experience, as students can support and assist one another in their language and subject understanding.

Overall, the use of CLIL not only promotes language proficiency but also cultivates collaborative and analytical abilities, making it an effective and engaging method for language and subject learning.

### D. Responses to Research Questions

In response to the research questions, the authors found that the English language is not consistently used properly in classrooms due to varying levels of language proficiency among subject area teachers. Some teachers come from a French background but teach in English schools, while others are native or fluent English speakers. The teachers' language proficiency directly affects the students' learning experience, as they spend most of their time together. Teachers serve as the main source of knowledge and learning for students, so if their language skills are not adequate, students may acquire incorrect information.

Despite acknowledging the importance and benefits of CLIL teaching, the majority of teachers do not believe that it is effectively applied in the Lebanese context. A few reputable and accredited schools might implement the program, but most teachers refrain from doing so.

The study also revealed various obstacles hindering teachers from implementing CLIL. These challenges include time constraints, lack of resources, inadequately trained teachers, language barriers, and limited collaboration between subject matter experts.

Overall, the research sheds light on the existing issues with language proficiency and the implementation of CLIL in the Lebanese educational system. The findings underscore the importance of addressing these challenges to foster more effective language teaching and learning experiences in the classroom.

### E. Recommendations

CLIL, which stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning, involves teaching a non-linguistic subject in a foreign language while incorporating both language and subject matter in the learning process. The CLIL methodology utilizes various instructional techniques like comprehensible input, scaffolding, and cooperative learning, which significantly impact students' learning experiences. Instead of being explicitly taught the language, students acquire it through studying subjects in a foreign language, thereby fostering teamwork and analytical skills. Collaborative learning is crucial in this approach, as students support each other during the learning process. However, teachers face challenges in implementing CLIL, such as time constraints, limited resources, inadequately trained educators, language barriers, and a lack of collaboration between subject matter experts. Addressing these challenges can lead to more effective CLIL implementation and enhanced language learning experiences for students.

After conducting the research, seven main themes were observed: (1) The use of the English language in subject classes, (2) benefits and challenges of learning different subjects in English, (3) the effect of culture on language learning and students' motivation, (4) teachers' knowledge about the CLIL program, (5) efficacy of the CLIL program and implementation in Lebanon, (6) teachers' needs for effective CLIL teaching in Lebanon, and (7) the subject teachers' readiness to implement CLIL in their classrooms.

Correct use of the English language by subject teachers is crucial for effective language learning. As students spend significant time with different subject teachers, their language practices greatly influence the students' language acquisition. Thus, all teachers should be fluent in the target language.

The CLIL program offers numerous benefits, such as learning content-related vocabulary, practicing language in various contexts, building self-confidence in communication, and creating opportunities for studying and working abroad. However, students may face difficulties expressing themselves or explaining non-scientific subjects in the foreign language.

Culture also plays a vital role in students' motivation for language learning. Understanding different cultures, especially the culture of the foreign language being learned, is essential for meaningful language acquisition.

Many participants in the research showed a lack of familiarity with the CLIL program, and most teachers were not even aware of its existence. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers become acquainted with CLIL's objectives, techniques, and implementation through training during university education or in-service trainings at schools.

To implement the CLIL program effectively, various limitations must be addressed. The Lebanese curriculum should be revised and updated, providing sufficient resources and materials for teaching. Teachers need support from school administrators to organize educational activities and trips for students. Adequate training for teachers before starting their teaching career and continuous attendance in workshops for professional development are crucial. Moreover, cooperation between subject and language teachers is essential to align themes and lessons. Finally, subject teachers should have proficiency in the target language before beginning their teaching journey.

In conclusion, subject teachers expressed their willingness to implement the CLIL program, but they also emphasized the need to resolve the mentioned challenges for successful implementation.

#### F. Future studies

Indeed, incorporating quantitative research alongside qualitative research can enhance the credibility and robustness of the study's findings. A well-designed survey and subsequent statistical analysis can provide additional evidence to complement the insights gained from qualitative research.

Future research could explore targeted demographics, using quantitative methods to study a larger and more diverse population of Lebanese teachers. Comparing perspectives from teachers in different areas of Lebanon may shed light on the influence of the local environment on language learning experiences.

Conducting another qualitative study specifically targeting teachers in public schools would be valuable to understand their unique concerns and needs regarding CLIL implementation. Comparing the results of this study with the current one would provide a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives, limitations, and needs of teachers across different educational sectors.

In addition, examining the viewpoints of language coordinators, subject area coordinators, and principals from both private and public schools would offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by school administrators in implementing the CLIL program effectively.

By combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods and exploring different perspectives, future studies can further enrich the understanding of CLIL implementation in the Lebanese context and contribute to the improvement of language teaching practices in the country.

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