

## **Abstract**

English has become a compulsory subject in Primary Education and has gradually been initiated even earlier into the curriculum in many schools, highlighting the significance of English in primary school education specifically and in society in general. This research paper examines the students' ability to learn the linguistic communication skill.

The present study is of a qualitative design where an innovative methodology called "Phonics", that promises success is put into practice, using direct observation to collect information from a control group and an experimental group of Primary Education. Participants were chosen from a bilingual school in Martos, Jaén. Results indicate that when both groups are faced with a CLIL class, the experimental group obtains higher results in pronunciation, reading and writing than the control group. Generally speaking, the routine use of this methodology early on helps students to become independent readers sooner.

***Key words:*** *Linguistic communication, Phonics, bilingual, CLIL*

El inglés ha llegado a ser una asignatura obligatoria en educación primaria e incluso ha sido poco a poco introducida en el proyecto curricular de muchos colegios en niveles inferiores, esto destaca la importancia del inglés en colegios de educación primaria y en la sociedad. Este trabajo examina la habilidad de los estudiantes para aprender la competencia de la comunicación lingüística.

El presente estudio es un diseño cualitativo donde una metodología innovadora llamada "Phonics", que promete el éxito es puesta en práctica, usando la observación directa para recopilar información de dos grupos, uno de control y otro experimental de Educación Primaria. Los estudiantes fueron escogidos de un colegio bilingüe en Martos (Jaén). Los resultados indican que cuando los dos grupos se enfrentan a una clase CLIL, el grupo experimental obtiene resultados más altos en pronunciación, lectura y escritura que el grupo de control. En general, el uso rutinario de esta metodología desde niveles principiantes, ayuda antes a los estudiantes a ser lectores independientes.

***Palabras clave:*** *Comunicación lingüística, bilingüe, Phonics, CLIL*

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## **1. Introduction**

The aim of this work is centred on the students' difficulty in reading comprehension, vocabulary, structures or speaking when implementing CLIL in Primary Education. The present study analyses the benefits of a systematic phonics programme which might give children a head start with their reading, writing and spelling in CLIL teaching, which might reduce special educational needs at schools. That is, if children were taught to read using phonics techniques, they would achieve higher results in their English learning process.

The base of communication in any human language starts with oral skills: listening and speaking are related in this sense. Then, the technology of writing that is linked to reading will come. In the first stages of children's schooling, qualified models of output are provided in the learning of a foreign language. From then on, there is a need to employ methodological strategies to delve into the comprehension of oral expression in order to build a solid foundation of the phonological system of the language in their minds.

This topic has been selected after the author participated in an apprenticeship that taught pronunciation and oral skills to young learners. In this way, this phonics method is used to teach the reading process to English-speaking children. It was very interesting to note that in spite of the amount of work focused on the reading process and Phonetics in L1, the role in L2 has not been investigated.

## **2. Phonics: teaching pronunciation & oral skills to young learners**

### **2.1. Statement & significance of the problem**

The integration of the phonics method into reading instruction is important because it can increase the students' reading ability at early ages. Also, students who are able to use phonics skills to help to decode unknown words will be stronger readers. If a child can recognize the letters but not the phonemic sounds they have, they can have reading comprehension fluency and spelling difficulties in higher courses. Those problems can give rise to behaviour problems or a rejection of the learning-teaching process. Given the importance of this issue for early childhood development, we wonder how teachers should instil this cognitive skill.

Learning to read is more complex in English than in Spanish. In English, the written language differs greatly from the oral language. While in Spanish we rely on 29 letters that

represent 24 phonemes, in English the pupils face 26 letters that represent 45 phonemes either alone or blended together. In addition, we have the difficulty of enormous irregularities of pronunciation when we study English. In fact, in the area of English speech, the process of learning to read possesses consistent pedagogic materials based on phonological awareness. Consequently, they usually have difficulty with reading comprehension, fluency and spelling. According to Bernstein & Ellis (2000), children without phonemic awareness who want to memorize visual letters may not understand the relationship between letter and sound. The lack of phonemic awareness can result in several consequences in the early childhood years such as a low mark on a reading test. Therefore, students could need educational reinforcement instead of going to regular classes.

In Spain, the organisation of bilingual schools is regulated by the Order of July 24, 2006, by which they standardise certain aspects of the organisation and functioning of the Bilingual schools (BOJA no. 156 of August 11, 2006). Curricula are official and the areas directly linked to the Bilingual Programme carry out the corresponding adaptations. Learning the first foreign language begins in early childhood education. The number of hours spent learning a foreign language are the same as for other students. The difference is that students in bilingual groups receive 30% to 50% non-linguistic classes in a foreign language. The methodology applied to these lessons is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), with English as the first foreign language. The main purpose in the Spanish educative system is for pupils to acquire some key skills at the end of compulsory education, like the information and digital skill, the social and citizenship skill or the mathematics skill, among others. One of these key skills is the linguistic communication skill, both in Spanish and in a foreign language, usually English, as a core subject.

The principal aim that we want to achieve in the language will be to encourage the use of it correctly and for students to be able to develop the linguistic skill. Moreover, since the creation of the bilingual programmes in many schools in Spain, other subject areas of the curriculum are taught in the foreign language to encourage the achievement of the linguistic communication skill. We should bear in mind that an important part of communication is literacy. Therefore, if one of the most effective and available methods of teaching literacy is the use of the phonics method, it should be utilised in our educational system. As we have mentioned before, this study tries to understand some important concepts such as literacy or phonological awareness and their relation to the teaching-learning process of the English language for Spanish students which is based on using the phonics technique.

## **2.2. Research questions & hypothesis**

This question will be addressed in this research in order to show that phonemic awareness is an important part of reading instruction in early childhood education.

Do phonics programmes implemented in Primary Education lead to an improvement in the writing, pronunciation and reading of words in CLIL teaching?

Furthermore, we should keep in mind this hypothesis which make us think about the problems in reading comprehension, speaking, pronunciation and writing skills that Primary Education students have when facing new contents in class.

## **2.3. Objectives of the study**

We should consider these objectives in order to develop this research:

- Discovering the ways to teach the phonics method to students in the first and second cycle of Primary Education.
- To know if the synthetic phonics method helps to reinforce reading and writing skills in CLIL in the second cycle of Primary Education.

## **3. Literature review**

The purpose of this study is to discover the ways that teachers teach the phonics method to their students. The first section deals with bilingualism in education. The second is about content and language integrated learning. The third section refers to phonemic awareness in the reading, writing and spelling process. The fourth is based on the phonics approaches and the relationship between sounds, letters and the ability to read and write. The last section references the methodology and strategies to teach phonics, some myths and how the phonics method is treated in Spain and English-speaking countries.

What we want to achieve is that all children become successful readers, and phonemic awareness is one step to helping a student to reach his/her full potential as a successful reader. In order to teach the phonics method, teachers have to know what this concept is, so they must investigate how it is taught in English-speaking countries as a reference with the goal of familiarising and organising their work. It is assumed that teachers who are teaching the phonics method know the standards to teach it to students. A teacher must consider the level of the students, their difficulties and the school's context in order to provide a

meaningful and successful learning experience for each student. They must use strategies to increase motivation and stimulate continuous progress.

### **3.1. Bilingualism in education**

The term bilingualism has not been taken into consideration among researchers and theoreticians. Definitions vary considerably. In relation to Bloomfield (as cited in Cummins, J., & Swain, M., 2014, p.7)<sup>1</sup> describes a person who has native-like control of two or more languages. However, Crosjean (2010) proposes a definition of bilingualism contrary to popular belief, bilinguals are not just those who have “an equal and perfect knowledge of their languages” (p.20) but, rather, those “who use two or more languages... in their everyday lives” (p.4).

Two important terms should be introduced in our teaching-learning strategies. Both terms, immersion and submersion, can be used when we talk about learning a language different from that which is used at home. On the one hand, immersion is when students with the same linguistic and cultural characteristics use the second language, in this case, English, in class. On the other hand, in submersion contexts, according to Swain & Johnson (as cited in Fazio, L., & Lyster, R. 1998, p.303),<sup>2</sup> learners are apt to experience subtractive or “replacive”. Bilingualism insofar as they become proficient in their L2 but at the expense of their L1, which may be undervalued in the educational milieu.

Another point is that principle of successful bilingual education is the bilingualism through monolingualism. Some teachers consider bilinguals as two monolinguals in one person. For example, if English is the bilingual second language, an English reading test will compare with a test in their native language, in this case, Spanish. The main question is how both languages are used by the teachers. On the one hand, the two languages can be used at the same time, that is, with frequent changes between the two languages within a class lesson. According to McLaughlin (as cited in Cummins, J., & Swain, M., 2014, p.105) this approach to bilingual teaching has been called the mixing approach. On the other hand, the two languages can be used separately, separated by bilingual teaching. The principle of bilingualism through monolingualism proposes that the development of bilingual skills on the part of the students will be enhanced by the separated use of languages on the part of the

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1 Cummins, J., & Swain, M., (2014). *Bilingualism in education. Aspects of theory, research and practice*. London Routledge.

2 Fazio, L., & Lyster, R. (1998). “Immersion and submersion classrooms: A comparison of instructional practices in Language arts”. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 19(4), 303-317.

teachers. To show this evidence, we can take into account a study completed by Legaretta (as cited in Cummins, J., & Swain, M., 2014, p. 105) of six bilingual classrooms. In five classrooms the mixing approach was used, and in one classroom the separation approach was used such that only one language was used in the morning and the other language was used in the afternoon. The kindergarten children in these classes were pre-tested and tested again six months later in both Spanish and English. The children in the bilingual programme using the separation approach made significantly greater gains in oral comprehension of English and in communicative skills in general in both English and Spanish than the children in the classes which used the mixing approach. We might ask why the separation approach would produce superior results when compared to the mixing approach. There are at least four fairly powerful reasons to consider.

One reason is that children apparently learn to ignore the language they do not understand. If the same, or a related message is typically given in both languages, then there is no motivation to try to figure out what is being said in English. Lily Wong Fillmore (as cited in Cummins, J., & Swain, M., 2014), describes video-tapes of children in a classroom where a concurrent translation approach was used and reports the students “being alternatively attentive and inattentive as the teachers switch between languages in their lessons. During the time the language they do not understand is being spoken, the students simply stop listening”(p.29).

A second reason for the greater effectiveness of the separation approach may be that students and teachers have to work harder: students are trying to make sense of what the teacher's message is; and teachers are trying to present a message that makes sense. For the teacher, this means, as Lily Wong Fillmore suggests (as cited in Cummins, J., & Swain, M., 2014, p. 105) that the lesson must involve enough of the kinds of experiences (e.g. demonstrations, participation in ongoing activities) which permit the child to figure out what the point of the lesson is even if they do not understand what is being said, or could not understand it out of context. This kind of approach requires a lot of planning, preparation and imagination on the part of the teacher.

### **3.2. Contents and language learning in CLIL**

The term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was adopted in 1994 (Marsh, Maljers and Hartiala, 2001)<sup>3</sup> and whose objective in Europe was teaching and learning another language using the learning-teaching methodology to deal with language and contents. According to Eurydice (as cited in Coyle, D. 2006), it is a special approach that deals with a non-language subject taught in a foreign language. Additionally, a CLIL approach is relevant because of the way it prepares students for future studies and / or working life, as the main objective is cognitive development. Marsh (2009) asserts that the ability to think in different languages favours content learning and teachers should adapt the methodology to a variety of subjects where the language is the focus. It is another way to teach concepts in a different language. From this perspective, CLIL promotes linguistic competence and activates the cognitive capacity.

Furthermore, motivation is an important topic, if a student participates on his/her own using a new language, it could encourage interest in the subject itself. Moreover, the students can interact with what they are learning, and there is a direct correlation between motivation and learning. Grouped learners work in a motivated way. That is, they use whatever skills and strategies they have with training, constancy, and expectations of success. In relation to Guthrie & Wigfield, (1997), recent theorists and research have changed the perspective of motivation, relating it to the students' self-esteem and their achievements instead of a way to conduct students by means of teachers. We now know that motivation has to do with three important factors: self-confidence, beliefs about the success or failure, and finding it enjoyable. According to Schunk and Zimmerman (1997), "self-efficacy refers to beliefs a person has about his or her capabilities to learn or perform behaviours at designated levels" (p. 34).

Besides, Gardner (1993) introduced the idea of multiple intelligences and said to us that children do not all learn in the same way. They have their own personalities and they could be faster or slower than others. We call this multiple intelligences, learning styles or personalities.

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<sup>3</sup> Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010) *Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

### **3.3. The phonemic awareness in the reading, writing and spelling process**

Knowledge of letter names and sounds is related to success and ease of learning to read, write, and spell. Fluency and familiarity with letters and sounds eases the way to early reading success. Adams states that (as cited in Cramer, R.L., 1998) “a child who can recognize most letters with confidence will have an easier time learning about letter sounds and word spellings than one who still has to work at remembering what is what” (p.12).

Clarke (1988) compared the effectiveness of invented spelling and emphasis on correct spelling in first-grade classrooms. At the end of the year, the children who had regularly made up spellings demonstrated a performance superior to the others on measures of word decoding. Furthermore, invented spelling was particularly helpful to learning phonics for those first graders who had been designated as having a low level in reading at the beginning of the year. Research has proven that teaching the 44 letter sounds systematically and with certain speed accelerates early reading and writing development. Along with the recognition and knowledge of the sounds, however, children also require being taught the skills of blending and segmenting.

Regarding spelling and the phonics method, Roberts & Meiring (2006) assert that most reading programmes have phonics instructions inside. Most of the instructions tell us about the use of phonics in our current text. In accordance with Griffith & Klesius (1990), to be a good reading programme, spelling should be taught at the same time as phonics instructions. The main objective of current reading programmes is to centre on reading skills, vocabulary and comprehension skills when they start to read. They claim that children learn phonics skills unconsciously when they compare words with similar spellings. The English language certainly holds a leading position in the world and it offers learners an opportunity for personal, cultural and social growth.

The learning of a foreign language must have the communicative approach as its main reference, but in order to prove communicative, pronunciation and phonological accuracy are both quite important if we want to be understood by our interlocutor. If sounds are not articulated clearly, it will be too difficult to keep a conversation going. It is for this reason that we as teachers should care about those aspects of phonology that could facilitate mutual understanding and, thus, make communication possible. Specifically, direct and systematic instruction of phonemic skills is important for building reading skills. Research by Pullen & Justice (2003) supports that explicit instruction in phonemic awareness is essential for preventing reading failure in young participants otherwise at-risk for poor reading

achievement.

Adams (1996) claimed that children might need clear instruction in phonemic awareness. As soon as children learn the letters of the alphabet, they start to connect the letters with the sounds they hear and blend them together to form words. When developing phonemic awareness skills, children become aware of syllables and are able to hear initial and final sounds in words. Children are then able to combine consonants to create new sounds and to hear and discriminate rhymes. Well-developed phonemic awareness is the ability to hear different sounds, to discriminate between phonemes, and to orally manipulate these sounds, phonics instruction will help children learn sounds of unknown words. He advised that teachers begin by having children listen to rhymes and alliteration because they will need to be able to hear and distinguish different sounds.

Activities that reinforce these skills can be taught through the use of songs, poems, and nursery rhymes. The ability to divide words into individual sounds and blend these sounds together promotes successful reading. However, Honig (1996) claimed that if children manipulated sounds of unknown words, it could hinder their reading. "Sounding out words is a very slow and cumbersome process, and any student who must rely on only sounding out in order to read many words is not reading fluently enough to concentrate on meaning" (p. 20). He affirmed that impediments in word recognition and reading comprehension among poor readers represented problems when spelling sounds. This means that teachers must look to the prerequisite skill of phonemic awareness before focusing on phonics instruction.

We might bear in mind the research on how people learn their first and following languages in child and adulthood. For example, Lightbown and Spada (2006) demonstrated that children acquire their mother tongue by mastering basic structures and rules that govern the language. There is, of course, a real relation between oral language and the reading and writing process. Oral language is the verbal context for literacy and helps to guarantee success in reading and writing in the future. The teacher's role is very important to increase the oral interaction and develop strategies to use the language. Recognition of phonemes, the fluency in reading aloud, and recognition of letters in words are skills that are very important in Infant Education. However, the acquisition and retention of vocabulary, phonological memory and reading comprehension is less clear. Indeed, it is not until the fourth course of Primary Education or later that the real effects of work on vocabulary knowledge (particularly academic vocabulary) and knowledge of discourse become evident.

The research literature has identified a number of approaches to teaching reading comprehension based on oral language. An example is instructions that teach students how to

use comprehension strategies on a text. Despite the fact that some studies involving early learners have yielded disappointing effects for discussion-based strategies on children's reading comprehension, researchers strongly recommend the use of comprehension strategies that place a strong emphasis on oral language usage.

### **3.4. Phonics approaches**

According to Adams (1994), phonics is the method of teaching reading that is based on the alphabetic system in which the main objective is to teach the relationship between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciations. That is to say, phonics refers to associating letters or letter groups with the sound they represent. The phonics method refers to a technique for teaching speakers of English to read and write that language. It teaches them how to connect the sounds of spoken English with letters or groups of letters and teaches them to blend the sounds of letters together to produce approximate pronunciations of unknown words. The phonics method is about understanding letter-sound relationships between written words and spoken language and the applications of these letter-sound connections in reading and spelling.

According to Gunning (2000), all the phonemes, or varieties of graphemic units, are derived from 26 letters. Generally, the graphemic units of English can be classified into six categories: single consonant (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z), consonant digraphs (ch, sh, ng, th, ph, wh), consonant blends (r-blend, l-blend, s-blend), single vowels (a, e, i, o, u), vowel digraphs (ea, ee, ay, oa) and vowel diphthongs (oy, oi, ou). When reading an alphabetic language like English, it is important for learners to understand the alphabetic principle, in which letters or letter sequences in printed words represent sounds. For Blevins (2006), phonics instruction, which primarily focuses on the teaching of letter-sound correspondences, can help language learners get the idea of the alphabetic principles.

There are several different types of phonics approaches that can analyse how the combination of letter-sound is showed to the student. For example, in the synthetic phonics approach, students are able to put together individual letters with their own sound and then blend the sounds to form words. In the analytic approach, students first learn the entire word and then link each letter with its appropriate sound.

<p>Analogy phonics</p>	<p>When students start to know the familiar word, they can associate part of this word with an unfamiliar word and then blend the new structure with the new word. For instance, learning ‘while’ by recognizing ‘wh’ in the known word ‘whale’, or reading ‘skip’ by analogy to ‘ski’.</p>
<p>Analytic phonics</p>	<p>Students are able to analyse the relationship between sounds and letters by means of words that have been learnt in order to avoid the use of isolated sounds.</p>
<p>Embedded phonics</p>	<p>Teaching inserted phonics instructions in a text in an inferable way where incidental learning is produced</p>
<p>Phonics through spelling</p>	<p>Teaching the cutting of words into phonemes and selecting letters for these phonemes, that is, teaching students to spell “sit” by means of phonemes such as “s-i-t”. Once children can read ‘pin’, they need to use their knowledge of sounds to break it down to /p/ /i/ /n/ in order to write the word.</p>
<p>Synthetic phonics</p>	<p>Teaching to convert letters into sounds and then blending sounds to form words. Similar to phonics through spelling but using blending.</p> <p>Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word then running them together to make the word. For instance sounding out d-o-g and making the word ‘dog’. It is a technique every child will need to learn, and it improves with practice. To start with you should sound out the word and see if a child can hear it, giving the answer if necessary. Some children take longer than</p>

others to hear this. The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder. Try little, common words like b-u-s, t-o-p, c-a-t and h-e-n.

Table 1: Phonics approaches (The National Reading Panel)

Contrary to these approaches, some educators such as Horace Mann suggested that (as cited in Margaret, M.,1997, p.4) the whole-word approach should become more widely used in U.S. schools. By the 1930s and 1940s, according to Chall (as cited in Margaret, M.,1997, p.4) most publishers of beginning reading instructional programmes for children designed programmes that taught children to read whole words and de-emphasized letter-phoneme, or phonics, instruction.

However, Durkin (1987) affirmed that publishers' textbooks produced reading programmes methods that included the whole language programme and the phonics method. Referring to Allington & Hierbert (1983), at that time, phonics was taught through workbook exercises but the reading planning was organized around the principles of whole words. In addition, students with difficulties worked with phonics instructions and reading stories. This was the dominant method of instruction in the US schools during a time when today's generation of parents, journalists, and policy makers attended elementary school. Although they are different, both the phonics approach and the whole word approach were studied from the pre-research era and actually share a basic idea: both approaches take into account that learning to read is the basis of the whole process. As children learn how to read letters or words, they understand the message.

According to Goodman (as cited in Margartet, M., 1997, p.17) found that children read printed words better within the context of a story than outside of the context and are able to understand new words without knowing the meaning. If the children had used letter-sound correspondences alone to read the words, they would have read the word in the lists as well as they read them in the stories. He gave us a clarification that is widely accepted today. Before he did the experiment, Goodman demonstrated the idea that the children would do better identifying unfamiliar words in the stories than in the lists because "in lists, children had only cues within printed words while in stories they had the additional cues in the flow of the language" to help them figure out new words.

### **3.5. What do we know about how to teach phonics?**

Phonics instruction provides students with a cognitive clarity. That is, a student could figure out and follow the teacher's instruction because he or she knows what the teacher is trying to teach and transmit. Downing (1979) defined cognitive clarity as "a technical label for the psychological components that lie behind what the layman might refer to as 'clear understanding,' 'clear thinking,' [or] 'grasping the problem'" (p. 5). According to Rayner et al., (2002) "Teaching that makes the rules of phonics clear will ultimately be more successful than teaching that does not. Admittedly, some children can infer these principles on their own, but most need explicit instruction in phonics, or their reading skills will suffer" (p.89).

The National Reading Panel<sup>4</sup> talks about different early reading programmes that do not teach phonics explicitly and systematically. In whole-language programmes, the main objective is based on reading and writing activities. Phonics instruction is integrated into these activities but it is not planned, rather it depends on the pronunciation needs of the students. Basal programmes consist of a teacher's manual and a complete set of books and materials that guide the teaching of beginning reading. Some basal programmes focus on whole-word without much attention to letter-sound of words or no instruction of how to blend letters to pronounce words. Referring to these word programmes, children begin by building a reading vocabulary of 50 to 100 words, and then later they learn about the alphabetic system. These types of non-phonics programmes were among those taught to children in the control groups of experiments examined by the NRP.

Phonics programmes have been used to teach young children to read and control the progress through Primary Education and offer a solution to difficulties. The Panel studied the productivity of phonics programmes with three types of problem readers: children in kindergarten or 1st grade who had problems or were developing reading problems; older children who reached objectives but were not making normal progress in reading, and older children who had difficulties in reading and other academic areas.

For children to learn to read, several capabilities must be developed. The focus of systematic phonics instruction is on helping children acquire knowledge of the alphabetic

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4 National Reading Panel (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read. An evidence-based. assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human development.

system and its use to decode new words, and to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically. Knowing how letters correspond to phonemes is important for beginning readers to learn in order to segment and blend parts to form recognizable words. Alphabetic knowledge is needed to figure out new words by analogy and to help beginners remember words they have read before. Knowing letter-sound relations also helps children to be more accurate in predicting words from context. To sum up, if students know the alphabetic system, they are able to read isolated words or connected text.

To study whether systematic phonics instruction improves children’s ability to read words in various ways, different measures have been used. Children were tested to read spelled words and vocabulary. In addition, they were controlled in oral reading, text comprehension and spelling. In order to obtain solid evidence, some experiments were carried out to test the effects of systematic phonics instruction on reading acquisition. Assignment of students to treatment was random, and control groups were assigned. According to the results, phonics instruction improved children's ability to read and spell words, and most of the studies were done with beginning readers. The investigation lasted an academic year and findings confirm that systematic phonics instruction makes a bigger contribution to children’s growth in reading than alternative programmes providing unsystematic or no phonics instruction (The National Reading Panel, 2000., p.2-90)

	Whole-words	Phonics
Presentation	A word is presented as a whole. Teachers often use flashcards to introduce new words.	When presented, each phoneme of a word is first introduced and the phonemes are combined to read the word.
Practice	Look-and-Say method	Phonemic awareness activities

Product (Result)	The children are expected to guess and recognize the words they have memorized	The children are expected to break down words into their component sounds and/or blend them when reading new words.
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Table 2: Whole-approach vs Phonics ( The National Reading Panel)

### **3.6. Why do we use phonics to teach reading and writing?**

National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) stated that:

...teachers provide systematic, direct and explicit phonics instruction so that children master the essential alphabetic code-breaking skills required for foundational reading proficiency. Equally, those teachers provide an integrated approach to reading that supports the development of oral language, vocabulary, grammar, reading fluency, comprehension and the literacies of new technologies. (p.9).

When we have learned the meaning of a word by means of letters, we can build it in our memory and recover it. It helps us to have a clear concept in our mind. We should take into account that isolated letters cannot do their function, they have to link sounds to form a consistent group. People who can reproduce this junction between sounds and letters in a correct way can store a large number of words depending on their level and read them properly. Familiar words are accessed quickly, as the information has been learnt and located in our brain, and students acquire techniques to take in new words even when they do not know all the meanings in the story.

In some languages, such as Spanish, Finnish and Italian, the connection between sounds and letters is very harmonious; what you read and write is what you say and hear. In English, the phonetic links between sounds and letters have been affected by historical events and long-term changes in speech and pronunciation. Therefore, phonics is a crucial method to learn English as our brain has to adapt to interpret the meaning of the letters rather than simply translate letters into sounds and vice versa. Teachers and experts should pay attention when we teach phonics, because of the way students could mix up two words that are pronounced in a similar way but the meaning is different such as “soup” and “soap”.

In 1934, Paul McKee, one of the most prominent experts of his day, wrote the following:

The question of instruction in phonics has aroused a lot of controversies. Some educators have held to the proposition that phonetic training is not only futile and wasteful but also harmful to the best interests of a reading programme. Others believe that since the child must have some means of attacking strange words, instruction in phonics is imperative. There have been disputes also relative to the amount of phonics to be taught, the time when the teaching should take place, and the methods to be used. In fact, the writer knows of no problem around which more disputes have centred. (p. 191)

### **3.7. Techniques and activities of phonics instructions**

The most common resource is “Big Book reading”<sup>5</sup> which is a way to transmit knowledge between teachers and pupils in the class. Students’ attention is attracted by a text with engaging pictures that they can understand very well. Students not only discover the meaning but also associate the words with the illustration and the sound, mentally. In the past, teachers prepared their own Big Books in pieces with enormous size. Nowadays, however, Big Books are produced commercially. We could use this book in a routine where pupils read it each day and they could review each sound depending on the level of students. There are several stages at which we can use it. Firstly, the teacher reads out loud from the book to the students, then with the class and finally, students read it individually.

Teachers could read from the book each day in a session lasting four days, and then replace the Big Book with another one. Frequently, teachers may highlight some letters and sounds of the text by means of a picture, or explain several characteristics such as unfamiliar vocabulary, stress, vowels or consonant blends. The main characteristic is that the teaching of phonics is not well-defined. Students learn phonics without realizing in relation to the context. The teacher is responsible for showing them the link between letter and sound. For example, *cat* starts with c but it is not acquired as a phonological process in a clarified way as in “c-a-t.” However, teachers encourage students to practise the first letter or letters of a word and a sentence with a picture to analyse unfamiliar words. Hence, reading the Big Book does not teach what sound corresponds with a letter in an explicit way, but rather helps to use the initial letter sounds and consonant blending (sh, sn, sp). In this way, pupils discover several prompts

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5 Lloyd, S. (1998) *The Phonics Handbook*. London: Jolly Learning.

to know how to decode words with phonics but they are not directly taught to sound out the entire word. The procedure is that pupils use the initial letters of the word and a picture or a specific movement of the hands or something like that to work out the meaning of the word. By practising continuously, students acquire phonological rules to decipher several letters.

The most common Big Book is *Jolly Phonics*. The main objective is teaching to convert letters into sounds and then blending sounds to form words. With actions or pictures for each of the 42 letter sounds, it encourages the teaching-learning process, and it shows productive results. The letter sounds are divided into seven groups of sounds. It shows a way to develop the main skills: listening, speaking reading and writing. Moreover, in later courses, it allows that student to learn essential grammar, spelling and punctuation skills. Some strategies to take into consideration are:

- Order of Letter Sound Groups

The letters are in groups of six. They have been carefully selected to help the learning. The first six letters can be used to make many simple words, e.g. 'pin' and 'sat', so that letters can quickly be turned into words. The letters that get easily confused are not too close together, such as 'b' and 'd'. The 'c' is introduced early on, as it forms a template for writing the letters 'd', 'a', 'o', 'g', and 'q'. The letter sound groups, listed below, are used throughout the Jolly Phonics material.

#### Letter Groups

1. s, a, t, i, p, n
2. c k, e, h, r, m, d
3. g, o, u, l, f, b
4. ai, aa, le, ee, or
5. z, w, ng, v, little oo, long oo
6. y, x, ch, sh, voiced th, unvoiced th
7. qu, au, ue, er, ar

- Letter Names

When the first three groups of letter sounds have been taught, the children can be told that the letters have names as well as sounds. They need to know both sounds and names. A good way of introducing the letter names is through the alphabet. This can simply be sung or recited.

- Alternative Spellings of Vowels

Once the children have learnt the 42 letter sounds in the initial programme, they need to be

made aware of the alternative ways that some of the vowels can be written.

- Learning letter formation

For young children to learn fluent, neat handwriting they need to be taught how to hold their pencil, and form their letters correctly. Early mastery is well worth the extra effort. Anyone who has tried to correct an older child's bad pencil grip or incorrect training, knows how difficult, if not impossible, it can be. It is much better to get it right from the start.

- Identifying the sounds in words

The main phonic skill for writing is to start with the spoken word, then listen, identify and write the sounds in that word. This ability to hear the sounds in words is called phonological awareness. For example, with the word 'bin', if you listen you can hear the sounds 'b. i. n'. Then if you know how to write those letter sounds, you can write the word 'bin' without help. This is the opposite of the skill needed for blending.

- Tricky words

Irregular words are known by the children as 'tricky words'. However, some part of a tricky word will be regular. For example with the word 'come', the 'c' and 'm' are regular. Children are more able to read and write irregular words when they have knowledge of letter sounds and can relate the sounds to symbols. The children look carefully at the words. They find it amusing to look for the irregular part. It is the start of analysing words. The extra attention to the details helps to save it in their memory.

- Playing with Phonics

This has to do with the motivation of children to learn and participate using amusing phonics games, for instance where children have a chart or a bingo card and they can circle and identify different sounds. Each week they can practice a different game with different sounds such as hangman or phonics soup.

- Phonics worksheets

Phonics worksheets have different pictures which are associated with a skill such as identifying or saying phonics. Then, they must fill in the worksheet according to the instructions.

- The box

It can be used as a “sound corner” where each sound is kept in a box and it is presented with a huge illustration to identify the sound. For example, the “s” sound is related with a snake.

According to Cunningham, P. M., & Cunningham, J. W. (2002)<sup>6</sup>, we might take into consideration a selection of main activities that help teachers and students to use and learn phonics:

- Making Words

It is an activity in which students associate a sound pattern with other words that have a similar sound so a letter of the word is changed to form another different word. Each “Making Words” lesson has three parts. First, children change letters to make a set of words including a “secret” word made from all the letters. Next, they classify the words into patterns. Finally, they acquire a path to phonological awareness by means of rhyming words that they have prepared and worked.

To plan a “Making Words” lesson, we begin with the secret word. Here is an example for a “Making Words” lesson in which the secret word is *carrot*. This word was chosen to fit a theme, *fruit and vegetables*, and it allows us to make words we can then sort for the *c-r-t* blend and lots of rhymes. Using the letters in *carrot*, we choose 10 to 15 words that will give us some easy and harder words, some *c-r-t* words, and several sets of rhymes. We then decide on the order in which words will be made, beginning with short words and building to larger words. We write these words on flashcards to be collected in the classroom.

As the children make each word, we choose one child who has made it correctly to come and make it in a pocket chart. As the lesson begins, the letters *a*, *r*, *c*, and *t* are in the pocket chart. The children each have the same letters and a holder. The teacher leads them to make words by saying the following: take two letters and make *cat*: the cat meows. Now, change just one letter and you can spell *car*: the *car* is red.

- Practising with Known Words.

The purpose is that students practise with words that they know and have learnt to identify and spell, and introduce new words. For instance, using the known words *snake* and *sheep*; firstly, a chart is divided into two columns and each column is labelled: *snake* and *sheep*. The students then copy these columns onto a piece of paper. The teacher reminds them that this is the *s* sound but there is a peculiarity when they are pronounced. The teacher and the children underline the spelling patterns and students will be shown some words. They should write these words under the word they recognize as having the same spelling pattern. The teacher then shows them written words on flashcards that have one of these patterns. Students write these words on their papers in the correct columns and the teacher chooses a student to write

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<sup>6</sup> Cunningham, P. M., & Cunningham, J. W. (2002). What we know about how to teach phonics.

each word on the chart. After each word is written on the chart, students pronounce the word that labels the column and new words have been introduced.

Next, we can say that these peculiar sounds of these words can help you to spell words. Therefore, teachers introduce words and students classify the learnt sound and use the spelling pattern to spell them. Then, students write these words in a chart in the correct column. Thus, they are learning how to write and pronounce words at the same time.

- Reading/Writing Rhymes.

Students practice all patterns that they have learnt before of a given number of words. While all patterns are brought forth, students write rhymes using these words and then read one another's rhymes. Because writing and reading are connected to every lesson, students learn how to use these patterns as they actually read.

<p>Say that sound</p>	<p>Hold up the sound cards one at a time for the children to see. Ask the children to say the sound as quickly as they can. Older children can say a word that contains the sound.</p> <p><u>Sound and action game</u></p> <p>Hold up the sound cards that you have covered one by one at random. Have the children say the sound and do the action in quick succession.</p>
<p>Jump and hop! Where will I stop?</p>	<p>Place one sound card per child in a large circle on the floor. Children step from card to card while singing, <i>Jump and hop! Where will I stop?</i> Go around the circle asking each child to name their new sound.</p>
<p>Musical sounds</p>	<p>Extra materials: a feely bag, objects with initial sounds to match cards, lively music.</p> <p>Show the objects to the children and ask them to identify initial sounds. Place the objects in the centre of the circle. Place the sound cards in the feely bag. Pass the feely</p>

	<p>bag around the circle in time to the music. Pause the music. The child holding the feely bag should pick out a card, identify the sound and place it next to the corresponding object. If you don't have objects, children can move around the classroom placing cards next to classroom items.</p>
Sound chain	<p>Have the children sit in a circle. Begin to pass the sound cards around. Give the first sound card to the child on your left and say the sound yourself. The child should pass the card to their left, saying the sound. Wait until the card has gone all the way around the circle before starting with the next one. Once you can see that the children have got the idea, you can have three or four sound cards moving around the circle at the same time.</p>
Which one's missing?	<p>Set out the sound cards in a row. Children say the sound and do the action for each one collectively. Ask the children to close their eyes. Remove one of the cards and the children say which one is missing.</p> <p>Extension: instead of removing a sound card, add one.</p>
Throw the die	<p><u>Extra material: a large die</u></p> <p>Make a large die from a card. Stick a sound card on each face. Older children can say a word that contains the sound. Children roll the die to each other and identify the sound card at the top when the die stops.</p>
Swat the sound	<p>Stick the sound cards that you have</p>

	covered on the board. Choose two volunteers to come out and give each a flyswatter. Say a sound and the children ‘swat’ the corresponding sound card.
Flashlight sounds	Have your chosen sound cards on display. Turn off the lights and shine a torch on each sound card in turn. The children say the sounds that are illuminated. They could make words.

Table 3: Phonics sound card and word card games (Macmillan Publishers 2014.)

### **3.8. Synthetic Phonics in English-speaking countries and Spain**

According to Wyse, D., & Goswami, U. (2008)<sup>7</sup>, the importance of systematic phonics instruction in relation to the teaching of reading has been increasingly recognised by English-speaking countries. According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] (2000), the USA’s National Reading Panel proposed systematic phonics instruction as the main component of the reading programme for teachers. Referring to the Australian Government, Department of Education Science and Training (2005), the Australian government enquiry affirmed that systematic, direct and explicit phonics instruction was important as part of an integrated approach to teaching reading. In England, the government enquiry into the teaching of early reading supported Rose's recommendation. Rose (2006) suggested that the systematic phonics approach selected by schools should be synthetic phonics.

The National Reading Panel in the United States indicates that training in the synthetic phonics method produces meaningful benefits to Primary Education students and students that have difficulties in the reading process. Recently in Spain, private and state educative centres teach synthetic phonics in Primary Education. However, it is not easy to find students based in Spanish educative system that indicate advantages or disadvantages of the use of this

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<sup>7</sup> Wyse, D., & Goswami, U. (2008). “Synthetic phonics and the teaching of reading.” *British Educational Research Journal*, 34 (6), 691-710.

methodology.

However, according to personal experiences and the observation of various materials that are used in Spain and second language speaking countries, several advantages can be noted, such as:

The use of gestures, movements, songs, stories and the reception of body language and facial expressions that students repeat allows them to learn what the teacher shows them, as we find in some theories that the learning is based on an imitation of sounds and words (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). In support of these theories, children mimic the speaking from listening to adults and they have no difficulties learning by means of this methodology.

There are several differences, according to Fleta Guillen, MT (2006). Obviously, the acquisition process of English as a foreign language in non-native students is longer than that of native students. The exposure of the foreign language is lower than with English-speaking students. Therefore, teachers have a limited time in class to show pronunciation, vocabulary and so on. According to Kuhl (2004), good interaction is very important. There are a lot of studies to test to what extent interaction facilitates the learning process.

Another difference that can be observed in Spain is the creation of specific, artificial situations to produce the learning of English, given that children learn the mother tongue when they experiment by practising, talking and taking risks (Brewster & Girard, 1992).

### **3.9. Myths about Phonics**

For several decades, the teaching and learning of phonics has been an important topic to be dealt with. There are several opinions. Therefore, we are going to deal with some of the *myths* about phonics teaching and learning which have almost become accepted as *truths*.

According to the Department of Education and Training Learning and Development (2005), some of these *myths* are included with the intention for teachers to examine and reflect on their classroom practices.

Myths	Truths
Teaching only one letter-sound per week taking into account the alphabet as an effective way to start teaching phonics in Infant Education.	If teachers introduce particular groups of letter-sound relationship, it will make beginners start blending and segmenting words as soon as possible.
Phonics, phonemic awareness and	The three terms are not the same thing.

<p>phonological awareness are one and the same thing they all have something to do with sounds and/or letters.</p>	<p>Phonological awareness is a broad concept that not only includes phonemic awareness but also encompasses awareness of things like words, rhyme, and syllables.</p> <p>Phonemic awareness is a sub-skill of phonological awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words while phonics involves making connections between sounds and letters when reading and spelling.</p>
<p>Students need to know all letter-sound relationships before they begin learning about other aspects of literacy, such as comprehension.</p>	<p>As we know a number of categories of reading and writing are essential to achieve early literacy success. Phonics is one of these aspects. It should be taken into account in the literacy programme that students need to learn phonics at the same time as reading comprehension or copying a written text. Indeed, it serves to develop the rest of skills.</p>
<p>Phonics knowledge is caught not taught. Students will discover phonics knowledge simply with practice, and fun activities such as: playing word games and doing letter/sound matching activities or cutting out pictures of things that start with particular sounds.</p>	<p>Letter-sound correspondences are arbitrary and therefore difficult to discover without explicit teaching. Many students would acquire phonics knowledge too slowly or fail to learn it at all.</p>
<p>Teaching phonics can impede the reading process because of the way students concentrate on decoding and not enough on reading for meaning. It prevents students understanding what they have read.</p>	<p>Effective phonics teaching helps students to recognise and produce familiar words immediately and easily and to identify and produce words that are new to them. This automatic word recognition will support and enhance students' comprehension skills.</p>

Table 4: Myths about phonics (NSW Department of Education and Training Learning and Development)

#### **4. Methodology: CLIL lessons plan proposal**

This lesson planning was based on this bibliographical reference (Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D., 2010, p 80 & 81) in order to compare how the phonics method improves the pronunciation and reading of words in the second cycle of Primary Education when they face new and specific contents.

**DIDACTIC UNIT 1: (SEP. '16)**

**TITLE: WHAT ARE ECOSYSTEMS?**

**1. TRANSVERSALITY:** ♦ Co-education ♦ Moral and Civic Education ♦ Environmental Education.

**2. LEVEL:** 4th year of Primary Education (2nd cycle).

#### **3. TEACHING OBJECTIVES:**

##### **Content**

- Introduction of the topic.
- What ecosystems are.
- Features of ecosystems.
- Animal adaptation.

##### **Cognition**

- Provide learners with opportunities to understand the key concepts and apply them in different contexts.
- Enable learners to identify living things in specific ecosystems.
- Encourage knowledge transfer about living things and predictions using visual images.
- Vocabulary building, learning and use.
- Arouse learner curiosity – creative use of language and learner questions.

##### **Culture**

- Identify living and non-living things from the ecosystems of their own country and other countries.
- Become aware of the importance of respecting the environment (especially the fact of

wasting too much water).

- Understand that they can learn, no matter which language they are using.

#### **4. AIMS FOR THESE PARTICULAR LESSON PLANING:**

- To present the content of the unit.
- To introduce the concept of the Ecosystem and its main features.
- To make learners aware of and build on prior knowledge of ecosystems and living things.
- To help learners understand that learning can be achieved in a second language.
- To help learners understand that keeping a record of new words is important (their very own top ten word chart).

#### **5. KEY COMPETENCES:**

- C1 (Linguistic communication).
- C3 (Knowledge of and interaction with the physical world).
- C5 (Social awareness and citizenship).
- C 6 (Artistic and cultural awareness).
- C7 (Learning to learn).

#### **6. BLOCK OF CONTENTS:**

<b>6.1. The environment and natural conservation</b>	-Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of ecosystems and its related features. -Demonstrate that ecosystems include the places and the living things that inhabit them.
<b>6.2. Diversity of living beings.</b>	-Distinguish between living things and non-living things. -Describe heat and why animals adapt.

## **7. LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

(What learners will be able to do by the end of the lessons)

- By the end of the unit learners will be able to:
- Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of ecosystems and its related features.
- Distinguish between living things and non-living things.
- Demonstrate that ecosystems include the places and the living things that inhabit them.
- Describe heat and why animals adapt.
- Classify information.
- Successfully engage in visual matching between concepts and images.
- Interpret visual information.
- Use language creatively.
- Ask and respond to wh- questions about their work.
- Use a class vocabulary record of new words.

## **8. LANGUAGE OF LEARNING.**

- Key vocabulary: plants, ecosystem, living things, non-living things, pond, savannah, grass, bushes, dry places, wet places, animal adaptation...
- Asking each other questions: What do you know about...? Can you tell me something about...?
- Classifying: The different elements / animals in an ecosystem are...

Other:

- How do you spell...?
- What does...mean?

## **9. RESOURCES:**

Teachers: •Flashcards •Posters •worksheets • Realia • Computer.

Students: •Worksheets, •notebooks, •games, •ICTs.

## **10. PREDICTING LEARNERS DIFFICULTIES:**

- Establish differences in pronunciation.
- Spelling words.
- Disruptive behaviour from some students in the “game activity”.

## **11. ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY:**

- Pairwork: weak and strong students in class or boy and girl.
- Individual worksheet.
- Quick learners do cards about vocabulary or help to other students.

## **12. EVALUATION:**

### Evaluation Criteria

- Understand ecosystems.
- Distinguish between different types of ecosystems.
- Recognize and classify living things.
- Identify how animals adapt.
- Construct and use a KWL chart (what I know, what I learned).
- Contribute to and use the classroom vocabulary chart.

### Instruments of assessment

- Teacher monitors group and individual activities.
- Learners successfully play a matching game.
- Learner's interaction with a partner (speaking creatively).
- Learner's participation in all tasks and activities.
- Learners complete information gaps.
- Learners complete a self-assessment sheet.

## **13. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**

<b><i>LESSON 1 (45')</i></b>	<b><i>LESSON 2 (45')</i></b>
- <u>Warm up</u> : Children see a powerpoint to a general overview of the unit.	- <u>Starting routine</u> : What can you remember?
- <u>Previous knowledge</u> : Starting a KWL chart. Learners see and listen to different features of animals.	Questions: Does an elephant live in the same place as a polar bear? Can a red rose live in a desert?
- <u>Game</u> : In order to check their comprehension, learners play a game	Do all animals eat the same things? - Whole class: Ecosystems

<p>called “Guessing question game”.</p> <p>- <u>Ending the lesson</u>: Learners think about animals that might live in dry/ cool places.</p> <p>-<u>Glossary</u>: Time to think about new words which learners don't know. One of the learners write down which words they decided to choose.</p>	<p>-<u>Handout</u>: Classify living and non-living things. Handout (speaking and writing activity) and pair work.</p> <p>- <u>Thinking activity</u>: The teacher asks “How do you think animals adapt to their ecosystems?”</p> <p>-<u>Learners play a matching game</u>. Then the teacher writes down the correct matches. Learners copy them into their notebook.</p> <p>-<u>Ending of lesson. Glossary</u>: Time to think about new words which learners don't know. One of the learners writes down which word they choose.</p> <p>-<u>Self-assessment</u>.</p>
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This investigation has been done in a state school which is composed of all levels of Primary Education. This is an educative centre that has two classrooms per level and in total there are 325 children. The CLIL methodology is applied from the beginning of this stage. Children have three sessions of foreign language and two sessions of Science in English.

In the first two months of this academic course (2016/2017), a comparative analysis has been carried out in a group of 25 children of the fourth grade. Specifically, 4A has been using the Phonics method since the first cycle and another group of 23 children (4B) have not applied it. The experimental group has obtained higher results in literacy than the control group. In the second cycle, there are two teachers employing the CLIL method and two tutors. One of them has experience in this method and she has done the course planning although each one followed their own activities. These teachers share their timetable between two groups of their level. It should be pointed out there is a good coordination between teachers. Thanks to this coordination some decisions have been made regarding contents and activities about ecosystems in the CLIL lesson and in which group the Phonics method was introduced, what materials, objectives and how to arrange activities.

The synthetic phonics programme has been developed by means of activities lasting 20 minutes each session. From the first course, in the experiment group, several sounds were taught by means of stories, songs and gestures. Each week, students practised three sounds

and reviewed the known sounds. In the first cycle, the experimental group practised the first and the second group of Jolly Phonics method. In the second cycle, the third and the fourth group of sounds and in the third cycle the fifth, sixth and seventh group. When they finished this stage, they might know the 42 sounds that form this foreign language and they can practice blending, segmenting, reading, handwriting, tricky words and phonics games and activities. Therefore, the teacher removes the central importance of the alphabet.

Throughout the levels of Primary Education, several data have been registered related to the pronunciation and production of different sounds and the development of the reading and writing process. For this, a table has been created to register each student individually and the direct observation to check when activities should be changed (see Appendix evaluation register Phonics).

## **5. Data analysis**

After the first cycle using this method, students know sounds and practice segmenting, blending, letter formation and identify sounds in words, according to letter formation, in spite of having been taught to hold the pencil properly from the beginning, they have difficulties in forming some letters correctly, therefore, the regular letter- sound dictation is possible in some letters.

As we have said before, students have learnt the first and the second group of phonics, they are able to differentiate these sounds in easy words when they read a text, they interpret these sounds with movements and know the meaning because of the way, the sounds are presented with a flashcard where a picture and the letters are appeared. Moreover, students and teachers use new technologies, they listen to sounds, write words on the digital blackboard and say them. Then, they follow with a finger to practice handwriting. Some tricky words are taught and teacher shows a big poster on the wall about awkward bits of tricky words for reading and spelling, they can identify and learn these words.

Students follow the “Read, Write and Revise” approach, the focus is an interactive learning. However, teachers observed students with difficulties who have poor visual memory and advanced students that read at a different level to their own. Students with difficulties have reinforcement and extra practice with the tutor and Language Assistant. After this proposal of both groups, the improvement of pronunciation of certain phonemes has been observed in the experimental group. Furthermore, students might differentiate the letter sound association between Spanish and English.

The experimental group knows all shown sounds, although they confuse diphthongs in segmentation like *food chain*, due to the fact that they are the last sounds that they practise and they have more than one symbol. Learners often associate certain orthographical features and sound production in English. For example, a student may not realise that /ai/ in words such as *chain*, *rain* correspond to the /ei/ rather than the /ai/ diphthong. Most of them do activities and games without difficulties and they show interest. Failure is avoided, therefore, by having them work in groups or pairs when they use memory games or flashcards.

On the other hand, the control group have acquired a lot of vocabulary and structures by means of stories, songs, activities, videos or input received from their teachers. However, they recognise words of a specific vocabulary but not phonemes. In line with the result, English teacher should be able to create their own way to hold students attention in following English classes by means of the relationship between the spoken and written language. Students need enjoyable and not monotonous learning experiences.

When the CLIL method is employed in the experimental group, they work phonetic aspects related to contents that they are learning in that moment. Students know sounds and practice blending and segmenting. Therefore, they are able to decipher words of flashcards that are presented and write words by means of blending. Moreover, the teacher dictates words and sentences and they are able to write them. Besides, real objects or posters are shown when they do not know the meaning.

With respect to the experimental group, on the one hand, students read faster and with confidence. They do not have difficulties in the pronunciation of /v/ in *living*, *savannah* and they know perfectly the /s/ sound in *species* or the /h/ sound in *herbivores*. This group comprehend the principal ideas of the text and they maintain an oral interaction when speaking to others. Moreover, stress, rhythm and intonation are also better in longer words such as *carnivore* and *herbivore*.

On the other hand, the control group tends to ask the teacher questions as they are very dependent. They sometimes stop if they do not know the meaning of a word because they have not learned the pronunciation pattern. When they do not recognise the sounds or they make mistakes, teacher does not correct them. In words such as *species*, they tend to pronounce the initial sound as /es/ instead of /s/ and the teacher never corrects mistakes while reading, Spanish words never start with an “s” sound, and words which are similar to English tend to have an initial /es/, this is very common in Spanish speakers' pronunciation. Additionally, they do not pronounce the plural of *place/places* properly.

In conclusion, most evaluation criteria that are shown in this topic about ecosystems were

achieved by students of 4A, they are able to evaluate their classmates and themselves, they have the ability to pronounce and write words in English with fluency, they are capable to recognise the meaning of a certain amount of words. However, in group 4B, results in utilization and recognition of vocabulary is lower than 4A (see Appendix unit 1. What are ecosystems? Evaluation register).

## **6. Conclusions**

Teachers should be conscious of the different learning strategies in order to select our best work. Most teachers have been using traditional methodologies when teachers should really be focusing on new techniques to avoid the same mistakes with the purpose of directing students and helping them to take an active role in the class.

In light of analysed results in both groups of study the following conclusions can be made about the benefits of using the Phonics method to solve reading or writing difficulties when students cope with CLIL classes. The principal goal of the work was to use a methodology to improve students' fluency, vocabulary, reading, writing and communicative skills in the foreign language by means of the phonics method.

As we have seen in the results, the experimental group was able to pronounce, read and write words better than the control group in the CLIL class due to the fact that they got used to sounds. The continuous use of strategies and activities to teach the phonics method such as segmenting or blending in the first and the second cycle made students skilful at recognising new words. Therefore, the improvement of pronunciation has been observed in the experimental group. Although the control group was able to recognise the vocabulary and grammar, it could be difficult for teachers to understand them because of their pronunciation. Learning to pronounce English words properly could be one of the hardest tasks of the learning process. The English language has sounds that Spanish does not, and students have to learn how to identify new sounds. Some words are said in the same way but they are written differently. As we know, the main difference between sounds is the position of our tongue. Therefore, if students learn how to utter English sounds, they will gain ground in the learning process.

The use of this method as an approach in CLIL classes makes students able to succeed in bilingual schools in Spain. It is obvious that the sooner students start to be careful with the pronunciation and reading techniques, the fewer difficulties they will have in writing and reading skills in CLIL classes such as always using the Spanish pronunciation pattern instead

of the correct English phonemes or have reading comprehension problems.

It can be concluded that the phonics method is a motivational technique for students and teachers to value effort as calmly as possible when they face new concepts in class. We should know that the incorrect pronunciation of a word can lead to miscommunication, where you express a different meaning to what you are actually trying to say. Therefore, this is the importance of knowing how to pronounce sounds correctly in a conversation. In addition, this methodology helps students by reinforcing reading and writing skills in CLIL.

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## 8. Appendices

### EVALUATION REGISTER. PHONICS.

Names	Group 1						Group 2						Group 3						Group 4				
	s	a	t	i	p	n	C	e	h	r	m	d	g	o	u	l	f	b	ai	aa	ie	ee	or
1. Daniel	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	/	X	-	-	-	/	/
2. Julia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	/	-	-	-
3. Teresa	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
4. Carla	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	/	-	-	-	/	-
5. Adrián	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	/	-	/	-
6. Gustavo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	-	/	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	/
7. Nazareth	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	/	-	/	-	-	-	/
8. David	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. Alonso	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. Sergio	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	/	-	-	/	-
11. Manolo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	/	-	-	-
12. Alfredo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	/	/
13. Juan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	/	-	-	/
14. África	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	/
15. Amalia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	/	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
16. Esther	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	/	-	-	/
17. Mónica	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	/	-	/	-
18. Pablo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	/
19. Wiam	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	/	-	/
20. Dolores	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	/	/	-	-
21. Alejandro	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	-	/	-	/	-	/
22. Guillermo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	/	-	-	/
23. Inmaculada	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	/	-
24. Pilar	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	/
25. Beatriz	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	-

X: Achieved.

-: In process.

/: Not achieved.

## UNIT 1. WHAT ARE ECOSYSTEMS? EVALUATION REGISTER

GROUP: 4A	Understand ecosystems	Types of ecosystems	Recognize and classify living things	Identify how animals adapt	Construct and use a KWL chart	Contribute to and use the vocabulary
1. Daniel	X	X	X	-	-	X
2. Julia	X	X	X	-	-	X
3. Teresa	X	X	X	-	-	X
4. Carla	X	X	X	-	-	X
5. Adrián	X	X	X	-	-	X
6. Gustavo	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Nazareth	X	X	X	X	-	X
8. David	X	X	X	X	-	X
9. Alonso	X	X	X	X	X	X
10. Sergio	X	X	X	X	X	X
11. Manolo	X	X	X	X	X	X
12. Alfredo	X	X	X	X	X	X
13. Juan	X	X	X	X	X	X
14. África	X	X	X		-	X
15. Amalia	X	X	X	X	-	X
16. Esther	X	X	X	X	X	X
17. Mónica	X	X	X	X	X	X
18. Pablo	X	X	X	X	X	X
19. Wiam	X	X	X	X	-	X
20. Dolores	X	X	X	X	-	X
21. Alejandro	X	X	X	X	-	X
22. Guillermo	X	X	X	X	X	X
23. Inmaculada	X	X	X	-	-	X
24. Pilar	X	X	X	-	-	X
25. Beatriz	X	X	X	X	X	X

X: Achieved.

-: In process.

/: Not achieved.

## UNIT 1. WHAT ARE ECOSYSTEMS? EVALUATION REGISTER

GROUP: 4B	Understand ecosystems	Types of ecosystems	Recognize and classify living things	Identify how animals adapt	Construct and use a KWL chart	Contribute to and use the vocabulary
1. Carolina	-	-	-	-	-	X
2. Antonio	-	X	-	-	-	-
3. Jesús	X	X	/	/	/	/
4. Ana	X	X	-	-	X	-
5. María	X	-	-	-	X	-
6. Carmen	X	/	X	/	X	/
7. Carlos	X	-	X	-	X	X
8. Esteban	-	-	X	X	X	X
9. Nadia	-	X	X	X	X	-
10. Olga	-	-	X	X	X	X
11. Ángela	-	-	-	X	X	X
12. Daniela	-	X	-	X	X	-
13. Hugo	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. Olivia	-	-	-	-	-	X
15. Olivia	-	-	-	X	-	-
16. José	-	-	-	X	-	-
17. Fátima	X	-	-	X	-	-
18. Ramón	-	X	-	X	-	-
19. Rocío	/	-	/	/	/	/
20. Adriana	-	-	-	-	-	X
21. Rafael	-	-	-	X	X	-
22. Isaac	-	X	-	X	-	X
23. Sara	X	-	-	X	-	-
	-	-	-	X	-	-

X: Achieved.

-: In process.

/: Not achieved.