

The impact and possible benefits of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands.

Amanda van Dijk-van 't Noordende

DECLARATION FORM



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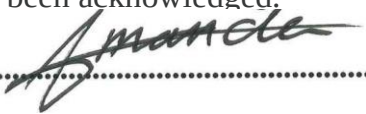
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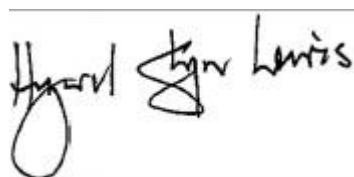
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Amanda van Dijk- van 't Noordende

Abstract

Bilingual education through a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach has been shown to be effective in earlier research that was mainly aimed at primary and general secondary education. Bilingual vocational education in the Netherlands through a CLIL-approach has been organised under a national standard. This study aimed to get insights into the perceived cognitive, economic and socio-affective benefits of this type of education. It aimed at answering the following research question: what are the perceived benefits and impact of CLIL in bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands?

Following a literature review, focus groups and interviews with 90 students, five lecturers, three coordinators and one CLIL-coach were conducted. This qualitative study, with an additional amount of quantitative data, was conducted at a regional college and involved two education programmes; one from International Business Studies and one from International Hospitality Studies. From both programmes, students in the bilingual programme as well as the Dutch-medium programme were interviewed in focus groups about the perceived benefits of this type of CLIL-education. Subject teachers, language teachers, coordinators and the CLIL-coach were also interviewed to gather insights that aimed to further develop this type of education.

A thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2006) revealed four main themes: cognitive benefits, economic benefits, socio-affective benefits and the impact of bilingual vocational secondary education. The results of this study concluded that there is indeed a perceived higher proficiency in the second language (L2) for the bilingual programme students in comparison to their Dutch-medium peers; also that the bilingual programme is found to be more cognitively challenging due to the CLIL approach, the additional diploma as well as the overall content of the curriculum. Socio-affective confidence was found to grow in the L2 as well as self-esteem. In addition, students felt the bilingual programme to have more economical benefits because of the international possibilities in the labour market. Economic factors are, in fact, the main reason for choosing a bilingual education. Furthermore, students were awarded higher roles in internships because of their higher proficiency in the L2. Students of bilingual secondary vocational education felt better prepared for a further study than their Dutch-medium counterparts. Students that enter from vocational CLIL-education felt a head start, due to the practical experience in combination with the skills learned and higher proficiency in the subject-specific L2. This study contributes to research that has been conducted on CLIL and on that undertaken in vocational secondary education.

Keywords: CLIL, bilingual education, vocational secondary education, the Netherlands.

Contents

DECLARATION FORM	2
Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	4
Acronyms	7
List of Figures	8
List of Tables	9
Chapter 1: Introduction to the research	10
1.2 The research in context	11
1.3 Relevance of the research	13
1.4 Focus of the research	15
1.5 Aims and objectives	17
Chapter 2: Review of bilingual education	19
2.2 Bilingual education models	20
2.3 Bilingual education in the Netherlands	20
2.4 CLIL in perspective	21
2.5 Language alternation	25
2.6 Motivation in CLIL-education	26
2.7 Conclusion	27
Chapter 3: Methodology	28
3.1 Introduction	28
3.2 Research design and methodology	29
3.3 Sample and sampling strategy	29
3.4 Focus groups	31
3.5 Interviews	31
3.6 Procedure	32
3.7 Data analysis	33
3.8 Data triangulation and limitations	37
3.9 Ethics	37
3.10 Transferability	38
Chapter 4: Results	39
4.1 Introduction	39
4.2 Cognitive benefits	39
4.2.1 Second language acquisition	39

4.2.2	Further studies.....	42
4.2.3	Academic challenge	45
4.3	Socio-affective benefits.....	46
4.3.1	Motivation	46
4.3.2	Self-esteem.....	47
4.3.3	Intercultural competences	48
4.4	Economic benefits.....	50
4.4.1	Job market	50
4.4.2	International student placement in bilingual studies	51
4.5	Impact of a bilingual education on students	51
4.5.1	Language alternation	51
4.5.2	Support of networks for the bilingual programmes.....	53
4.5.3	Teaching quality	55
4.6	Conclusion.....	55
Chapter 5: Discussion		56
5.2	Perceived effects of bilingual vocational education	56
5.3	Cognitive benefits	57
5.3.1	Second language	57
5.3.2	Further studies.....	58
5.3.3	Academic challenge	59
5.4.1	Motivation	59
5.4.2.	Self-esteem.....	60
5.4.3	Intercultural competences	60
5.5	Economic benefits.....	61
5.5.1	Job market	61
5.5.2	International students	61
5.6	Impact.....	62
5.6.1	Language alternation	62
5.6.2	Network	62
5.6.3	Teachers	63
Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations.....		64
6.3	Recommendations	65
6.4	Conclusion.....	66
References		68
Appendices		73
Appendix A.1: Interview and focus group guideline Dutch version.....		73

Appendix A.2:	Focus group and interview guideline English version.....	77
Appendix B.1:	Informed consent form Dutch version	81
Appendix B.2:	Informed consent form focus group/ interviews English version.....	83
Appendix C:	Coding scheme	85
Appendix D.1:	Dutch version Internationale projecten/samenwerkingen IBS	86
Appendix D.2:	English version International projects/collaborations IBS	89
Appendices:	Transcripts (separate document).....	93-811

Acronyms

CLIL	Content Language Integrated Learning
L1	First language
L2	Second language
CEFR	Common Framework of European Reference
LAP	Language for Academic Purposes
LSP	Language for Specific Purposes
CBI	Content-based Instruction
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
BTEC	Business Technology and Education Council
VTCT	Vocational Training Charitable Trust
SES	Social Economic Status
CUP	Common Underlying Proficiency
SUP	Separate Underlying Proficiency
BERA	British Education Research Association

List of Figures

Figure A:	The Dutch education system	p.13
Figure B:	Continuum of different bilingual programmes	p.23
Figure D:	The Language Triptych	p.25
Figure E:	Sector bilingual secondary vocational programmes.	p.29
Figure F:	Three-year overview of examination results of English subject	p.42

List of Tables

Table 1- Participants and corpus of the current study

p.31

Table 2- Themes and anchor examples

p.36/37

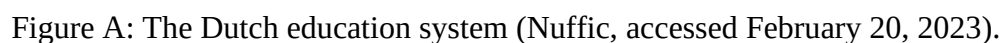
Chapter 1: Introduction to the research

This dissertation was an exploratory investigation into the perceived benefits and impact of bilingual vocational education for students in the Netherlands. Although bilingual education in the Netherlands has been put into practice for over 30 years, bilingual secondary *vocational* education is a relatively new concept. This particular type of education programme officially originated in 2017 (Nuffic, n.d.), when a network of bilingual secondary vocational schools was launched. Currently, the network consists of 43 bilingual education programmes spread over the Netherlands. Eight of those education programmes are accredited according to the standard determined by the network for bilingual secondary vocational education. This network is supported by Nuffic, which is a governmental organisation in the Netherlands responsible for internationalisation in education. Teaching vocational education through the medium of a second language has already been established for several years; however, it was not organised and held to a national standard. Bilingual education in the Netherlands, under the standard supervised by Nuffic, uses Content and Language Integrated Language (CLIL) as an approach. Therefore, if bilingual education is mentioned in this dissertation, it is always from this specific pedagogical approach. Secondary vocational education provides education for students who enter from pre-vocational secondary education, students who stream in from senior general secondary education, as well as young adults who enter at a later stage to prepare them for a profession and their future in society.

1.2 The research in context

Three educational goals are applicable to all types of vocational education in the Netherlands; being geared towards training for a profession, educating for higher education, and obtaining good citizenship. Four different sectors can be defined within Dutch secondary vocational education to ensure that the education itself is focused and aimed at a specific target group, and these sectors are guided by the current employment and education market;

- There are currently 504,300 students in secondary vocational education and, in total, these programmes educate 40% of the employability market (MBO-raad, 2022). It is necessary to address the Dutch educational system as a whole to give a clearer framework of where this present research is situated. One of the main characteristics is that secondary education in the Netherlands is highly streamed. The recommendation students receive from schools in relation to the level for secondary education occurs when they are, on average, 12-years-old, i.e. at the end of primary school, which is usually binding. There are three types of secondary schools in the Dutch education system, as is illustrated in Figure A.



Pre-vocational education is subdivided into four tracks, ranging from more practical to comprehensive and more academic education. Roughly 60% of primary students enter junior vocational education and, therefore, the majority of secondary education is junior vocational and diverse (Denman, Tanner and de Graaff, 2013). Students can opt for bilingual education in vocational education, next to Dutch-driven education, and with that they choose an extra academic challenge. That is a different approach in comparison to other countries. To exemplify, in the Basque autonomous community, the language of instruction can be either Spanish or Basque, and more than 90 percent of the students in the autonomous community have Basque as a language of instruction. That is a high percentage since there are only 30 percent of indigenous Basque speakers in the region. Also, the bilingual programmes are open to the whole school population that come from a broad socioeconomic background (Cenoz, Genesee, Gorter, 2013). CLIL education in the Netherlands has a targeted group, that is different from those of bilingual programmes such as in the Basque country. Even though there often is a minimum requirement for the level of English, bilingual secondary education is open to all students who want to rise to a challenge.

1.3 Relevance of the research

Due to the organisation of the subject of English in pre-vocational education, pupils' level of English in secondary vocational education differs highly. The majority of students enrolling in this type of bilingual education have a low level of proficiency in the second language (L2) due to the Dutch educational system, which devotes minimal attention to English and other foreign languages in the vocational stream (Jansma and Pennewaard, 2014). Results show that a large proportion of students that enrol in vocational secondary education have a lower development in English language skills, compared to those in senior general education and

pre-university education (Hofman and Spijkerboer, 2009). Explicitly in the grammar of this specific language there is a development gap. These students with a development gap for English are the target group for CLIL-education on a secondary vocational level, next to some students who stream in from general secondary education into bilingual secondary vocational education. The L2 of choice in bilingual education in the Netherlands is always English. Although other languages could be made available, globalized English is the main focus. It was fundamental to ascertain what the effects of CLIL-education are on this type of student, who enter bilingual vocational education with some deficit in the L2. There is an impressive amount of research which has been done on bilingual education in pre-university education worldwide and in the Netherlands in the last 30 years, and some on bilingual pre-vocational education. However, the same cannot be said for bilingual *secondary* vocational education. Van Daalen (2016) found a significant difference between bilingual education pupils in pre-university education in comparison to their Dutch-medium peers on:

- Grammar, vocabulary, accent, and speed of speaking in English.
- The motivation to learn the English language within bilingual education.

In all tested areas, it was proven that the students of bilingual pre-university education significantly outperformed their Dutch-medium peers in academic achievement. Since this research was only undertaken in bilingual *pre-university* education, it only proves that bilingual education is effective for students at that level. However, this study aligns with research carried out by Mearns, de Graaf and Coyle (2020) that shows that pre-vocational programmes are indeed fostering higher student achievement. The authors attribute '*successful linguistic, curricular, and pedagogical characteristics of bilingual education programmes*' to this type of student (Mearns, de Graaf and Coyle, 2020: p. 735). However, such research has not been executed for bilingual secondary *vocational* education and, therefore, the same conclusion cannot automatically be extended to this target group. Nevertheless, it raises the question whether this could also be true for students in bilingual

secondary vocational education. Some studies also found students of pre-vocational bilingual education to be more motivated than their peers in Dutch-medium education (Koert, 2020). Koert came to this conclusion in a mainly quantitative study, which corroborates the findings from previous studies (Mearns and de Graaf, 2017). However, this quantitative study requires further investigation, according to Koert, before generalised conclusions can be drawn from it. It is therefore maintained that the current research was necessary in closing the gap between previous findings in bilingual education in pre-university education, pre-vocational education and bilingual secondary vocational education, specifically with regards to benefits. Organising these bilingual programmes under a standard, such as the network of bilingual education programmes organised by Nuffic, makes it possible to research the overall impact, as well as on wider alleged benefits. Since all of these bilingual programmes have the same national organised standard for which they strive, it makes it possible to research the effects.

1.4 Focus of the research

There has been a turn in how bilingual education was historically perceived to be detrimental, to an accepted perception of how this type of education can be advantageous. The milestone moment was the research of Peal and Lambert (1962) on the relation between cognition and bilingualism. The comparison of 110 bilingual 10-year-old children with their monolingual peers in six French-immersion schools in Canada showed positive cognitive aspects in the outcomes. This research was a starting point for a positive outlook on bilingualism, as well as bilingual education, for decades to come, and still is regarded as such. There were three points on which the research of Peal and Lambert (1962) has been significant: Firstly, by overcoming many methodological deficiencies that were issues in earlier research. Secondly, when Socio Economic Status (SES) was controlled and language variables eliminated, it became evident that there was a positive cognitive advantage to bilingualism. Also, thirdly, methodological aspects of the research were taken more into account, next to the usage of IQ

tests. Since Peal and Lambert (1962), there has been a substantial amount of research on the positive effects of bilingual education. There is a different perspective on bilingual education in Europe and this type of education in North America. Even though scholars try to generalise views on bilingual education (García, 2011), it is undeniable that there are differences between bilingual education perspectives. There are many factors that have an effect on the way how bilingual education is perceived, such as attitude towards languages, educational systems and general views (Baker, 2011). Nevertheless, Bialystok (2018) claims, that even though research tends to conclude whether bilingual education is effective, neutral or ineffective, this is not the core issue. Beyond the cognitive benefits, that research has proven, Bialystok states that bilingual education has inevitable benefits:

...such as potential to connect to extended family, increased opportunity for employment in a global economy, facilitation of travel and broadening of social spheres, and enrichment from widened horizons from language, arts, and culture. When successful, bilingual education offers a unique opportunity to impart the resources to sustain a valuable lifestyle asset (Bialystok, et al, 2018: p. 679).

The focus of this study is, therefore, the perceived benefits and forthcoming impact of the effects of bilingual education in secondary vocational education. Within this research, a wide range of possible benefits were taken into account. Firstly, bilingual education can have cognitive benefits as it may positively affect relevant academic outcomes (Baker, 2017; Bialystok et al., 2005, 2008) that can result in better achievement, in comparison with Dutch-medium education peers. Research has indeed found evidence of several benefits for students, including improved cognitive development, academic achievement, and language proficiency (Cristoffels et al., 2015; Baker, 2011). Secondly, bilingual education can have positive socio-affective benefits, including increased self-esteem, cross-cultural understanding, and social-emotional development. Socio-affective benefits can be demonstrated in having more confidence in the use of the L2 and in one's self-esteem following educational achievement

(Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010; Martinez Agudo, 2020). Thirdly, bilingual vocational education could lead to a globalised profession and gives students an assumed advantage in their further careers. The economic benefits can be reflected in having better, wider and more employment opportunities. The choice for enabling bilingual vocational secondary education is connected with possible economic benefits, because of higher proficiency in the L2 and extra diploma and certification. Specifically, bilingual education can provide students with more competences needed in an international oriented labour market (Steehouder, 2020), including improved job prospects, increased earning potential, and enhanced competitiveness in a globalised economy. Staden and Hobbes (2020) concluded that, for the Dutch labour market, there is an increase in a request for internationalisation competencies in job advertisements, proficiency in the English language being one of them; the preferred second language after that being German. Even though employment is mostly found in a regional labour market, that specific market is increasingly internationally oriented. Although there is no further research specifically on the Dutch labour market, it is clear that bilingual secondary vocational education is a direct result of the globalisation of the vocational labour market.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The current study aimed at exploring the impact and possible benefits of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in bilingual vocational education in the Netherlands. The research objectives were to gather data on the perceived cognitive and socio-affective effects of this type of education on students of these bilingual programmes. This type of bilingual education has become increasingly popular in Europe and is still expanding, even outside the European border (Cenoz, Genesee, Gorter, 2014). More Dutch vocational programmes are aspiring to start with a bilingual version of their own education programmes. Therefore, it was important to have a closer look at the possible impact and effects. The expectations of this research were that the outcomes could be used in the Dutch bilingual

education system, with the aim of furthering the development of this education provision, specifically for CLIL-programmes in bilingual vocational secondary education. There is a dearth of research on Dutch bilingual secondary vocational education; therefore, this study was aimed at investigating the perceived impact and possible effects bilingual secondary vocational education can have, which could conceivably encourage new research and lead to policy improvements in the provision of bilingual education in the Netherlands. The expected outcome, possibly, give insight into further research opportunities related to this type of bilingual education, as it is clear there is a research gap that needs to be bridged. The aims of this research are addressed by the following questions:

- 1) What are the perceived benefits of bilingual secondary education?
- 2) What are the perceived cognitive benefits of bilingual vocational education in comparison to their Dutch-medium peers?
- 3) In what way has the self-confidence and motivation of the students grown?
- 4) Are there perceived economic motivations in pursuing a bilingual education, in comparison to a mainstream Dutch-medium education?
- 5) What elements of their bilingual education has had the most impact for students?

Chapter 2: Review of bilingual education

Since the 1990s, the development of bilingual education worldwide has grown immensely in popularity, especially in relation to growing globalisation. This educational phenomenon developed and expanded rapidly at the end of the 20th century (Sánchez-Pérez, Manzano-Agugliaro, 2021). Since the mid-1990s, bilingual education in western Europe, including the Netherlands, was developed specifically through the CLIL approach. The term CLIL was coined by David Marsh:

CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language (Marsh, 1994: p.1).

In CLIL education *‘the languages are used to teach subject matter content, rather than just languages themselves’* according to Baker (2011: p.6). Furthermore, he states that bilingual education is not only about education, it also relates to sociocultural, economic and political issues (2011). CLIL is a broad educational approach that integrates content learning with language learning through an effective learning environment. CLIL can be a means to improve, for example, L2 proficiency among students while also providing them with content knowledge. This approach is different to the classical drip-feed (Baker, 2017) approach to

language learning, where students are exposed to L2 in a minimal amount and separate from content knowledge.

2.2 Bilingual education models

There is a distinction between a classroom where bilingual students are present and a classroom where the instruction is provided bilingually and in which bilingualism is supported. Although both situations are often referred to as ‘bilingual education’, they are at different ends of the spectrum. The typology of models of so-called ‘bilingual’ education outlined by Baker (2017) can be divided in three categories: monolingual forms, weak forms of bilingual education and strong forms of bilingual education. In relation to this study, bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands is a strong form of bilingual education and is an additive bilingual education (Baker, 2017). Both languages are majority languages, and there is language acquisition while maintaining or enhancing the students’ L1. It must be acknowledged that models such as those discussed by Baker (2017) are static, while bilingual education and classrooms are also subject to change. It is also important to understand that there are numerous variations within a model. Models in themselves do not explain the success or failure of particular bilingual education programmes. Furthermore, for policy makers, administrators and teachers, it is not common to use these distinctions. Also, models often reflect varying political ideologies of countries around the world (Baker, 2017).

2.3 Bilingual education in the Netherlands

Within the context of the Netherlands, bilingual education is a widespread, well-known and tested form of education that has its origins in secondary education and currently comprises more than 130 secondary schools, 17 primary schools and 44 bilingual secondary vocational programmes (Nuffic, n.d.). All these education institutions offer an English-Dutch curriculum where at least 50% of content lessons is provided through the L2, English. For bilingual

primary school the ratio is 30% to 50% of the curriculum, and for bilingual pre-vocational education, the ratio is a minimum of 30% taught in the L2. Of the 130 secondary schools, all offer bilingual education on a pre-university level and 31 of these 130 schools offer bilingual education on a pre-vocational secondary level. Therefore, the students that are in bilingual secondary vocational education are not all likely to originate from a bilingual pre-vocational secondary school. Dutch bilingual secondary education is based on CLIL which is somewhat different from immersion and content-based education. The CLIL method teaches language and content simultaneously and is strongly based on the belief of immersion in the L2, while there also is a strong base of the L1 (de Graaff and Koopman, 2006). This type of education leads to better acquisition of both the second language (Krashen, 1982) and the subject content. However, Swain (1985) maintains that input also needs to be meaningful as well as comprehensible in order to lead to better language acquisition.

2.4 CLIL in perspective

CLIL is conceptualized in many different ways. Some find that its foundation lies in constructivism and L2 acquisition theories (Halbach, 2010; Ioannou Georgiou, 2012). Also, it is seen as an educational approach, as a pedagogical practice or as a whole program of instruction or, in contrast, even as isolated lessons or activities (Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter, 2013). As one of the most important CLIL scholars, Coyle (2008: p. 101) presses: *'there is a lack of cohesion around CLIL pedagogies. There is neither one CLIL approach nor one theory of CLIL'*. Though CLIL is considered a descendant from North America bilingual teaching models and French immersion programmes, it still continues to make an impact on bilingual programmes also outside Europe (Perez Canado, 2011). For instance, in Asia, the Ministry of Education of Taiwan, with the purpose of stimulating internationalisation, has promoted CLIL in higher tertiary education since 2010 (Yang, Gohsien, 2014). Within a spectrum of other variants of bilingual education, CLIL can be put in the middle of a

continuum of programmes (Yi Li, 2020). Conventional bilingual programmes such as Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and Language for Academic Purposes (LAP) have a language-oriented focus. Whereas English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) programmes have more of a content-oriented focus, CLIL can be seen as a balanced focus on language as well as content, in between Immersion and Content Based Instruction (CBI), as illustrated in Figure B below:



Figure B: Continuum of different bilingual programmes (Adapted from Macaro, 2018: p. 29).

This also means that CLIL education requires a specifically trained teacher that has detailed knowledge and skills of how to integrate subject knowledge and pedagogical methods. In the late 1990s, CLIL gained attention. As a conceptual framework, it was formed amongst others by Coyle (2007) with a holistic view on the balance between language and content. This is visualized in the 4Cs framework illustrated in Figure C:

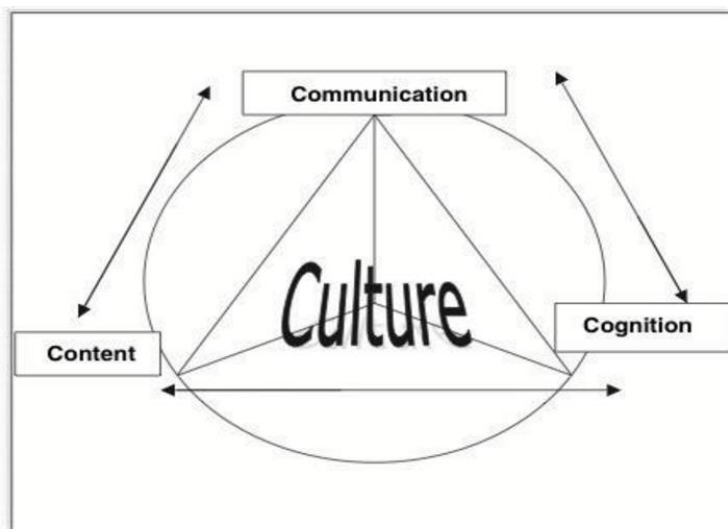


Figure C: The CLIL 4C's Framework (Coyle, 2007: p. 551).

The framework serves as a practical guidance tool for effective learning in a CLIL-classroom, as it combines learning and language theories, as well as the importance of intercultural awareness. The 'building blocks' are *culture*, *cognition*, *communication* and *content*. Culture refers to the learners' identity and promotes intercultural awareness and global citizenship. Cognition is about activation of intellectual processes and learning. Communication stands for learning a language through genuine contact. Content in CLIL is about learning contexts which are relevant and meaningful (Koert, 2020; Coyle, 2007). Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) conceptualized in 'the language triptych', as can be seen in Figure D, how L2 can be learned in a CLIL classroom:

It supports learners in language using through the analysis of the CLIL vehicular language from three interrelated perspectives: language of learning, language for learning and language through learning (Coyle et al., 2010: p. 36).

'Languages for learning' is the communication used by students in learning tasks, such as pair and group work. 'Languages of learning' is the language needed to access the topic or subject. 'Language through learning' is experienced by students when they come to understanding and thinking in the learning process. The language triptych raises awareness and understanding

for teachers of the integration of language and content. Also, it addresses the different types of language needed in a CLIL lesson, which highlights why a CLIL lesson is a different type of approach in comparison to lessons in Dutch-medium education programmes. In non-CLIL classrooms, most modes of instruction use ‘language of learning’ with a focus on vocabulary and short phrases. ‘Language for learning’ is often not addressed in a non-CLIL classroom. Furthermore, ‘language through learning’ is often ignored.

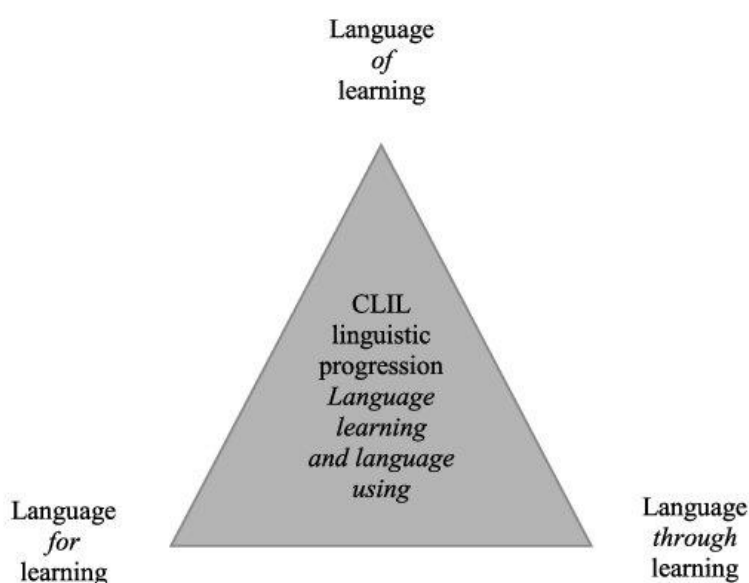


Figure D: The Language Triptych (Adapted from Coyle, Hood, and Marsh, 2010).

One could raise the question whether all CLIL-teachers are aware of those differences. It could be argued that theory and practice are not automatically parallel to each other. However, since vocational education, which is the research focus of this study, is focused on content of a specific branch or profession, there is more focus on learning through the content, and language is the vehicle to do so. CLIL-education is perceived to be more content-driven than language driven. Within a CLIL classroom, the different linguistic demands in combination with integration of the content is what makes CLIL a different form of effective education. Nonetheless, in vocational education, it can be questioned whether focus on the aspect of language itself is justified. In bilingual academic oriented education, a focus on

language is inevitable. Bilingual vocational education possibly does not benefit from such a focus as it is more of a practical oriented type of education.

2.5 Language alternation

In the research of Kontio and Sylvén (2015), there is a focus on language choice as a communicative strategy in the specific context of a CLIL vocational education. There is a distinction between learner-initiated and teacher-impelled alternations, that students use in the CLIL-classroom. Language alternation is the use of two or more languages within one and the same utterance. It describes the alternating use of two recognizable grammatical systems (Kontio and Sylvén, 2015) and the term relates to code-switching, which is the alternating of two languages within a conversation (Baker, 2017). Codemixing is the term Muysken (2016) prefers, and he distinguishes between three different forms:

- Insertions
- Alternation
- Congruent lexicalization

Insertions are the insert or borrowing of words when languages are uneven, alternation when both languages are stable and deliberate switching occurs, and congruent lexicalization is when languages are similar in grammar and alternating takes place (2017). The research of Kontio and Sylvén (2015) found that English-medium education does not mean, by definition, that only English is being used. Students use different strategies, including the use of another language to make sure they are understood. In a teacher-impelled communication, the student speaks the L2, which is not the case in a learner-oriented situation. Kontio and Sylvén found that:

The communicative focus gives the students a more relaxed approach towards language in the workshop. The jocular approach, the playing around with language and the sheer amount of spoken English here are something that has not been shown in previous studies made on CLIL in Sweden (Kontio and Sylvén, 2015: p. 281).

The amount of English spoken during bilingual vocational education has not been formerly addressed in other studies, which is scarce on multiple fronts. It can be explained by the context of this education. CLIL-programmes are, for the vast majority, academic programmes, which is also reflected in the spread of bilingual education in the Netherlands. Academic focused CLIL-programmes are text-oriented and not practical-oriented, as is not the case for bilingual vocational education. From the research of Kontio and Sylvén (2015), there are multiple interesting points that are raised regarding the differences between bilingual vocational and bilingual academic education. It, therefore, can be concluded that the language environment in a bilingual vocational secondary classroom needs more research in order to reach a significant conclusion that can lead to further insights into whether such language alterations are a positive or negative stimulus.

2.6 Motivation in CLIL-education

Earlier research showed that students in a bilingual stream are more motivated (Coleman, 2006; Sylvén and Thompson, 2015) and, in the Dutch context, this was also concluded by Mearns, de Graaff and Coyl (2017). However, one can argue that such a conclusion is inevitable when students have chosen specifically this type of education. The motivation of the student is, therefore, already present when starting with their bilingual programme. Motivation was placed in relation to learner environment, learner identities and learner engagement by Coyle (2011) in the ITALIC Research report, which examined 11 schools that taught through CLIL. This study concluded that, in general, students found CLIL-education more motivating and ‘more fun’ (2011: 3, 95). Importantly, learners felt more achievement as a result of the challenging content of the education. In contrast, lower-achieving learners could possibly experience a ‘motivational dip and language anxiety’ (Denmar, Tanner and De Graaff, 2013: p. 290), specifically in the early stages of CLIL education. This study was

aimed at young learners. However, in a study on motivation and locus control in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) involving older learners from 25-30 years-old, Hajmohammadi et. al. (2022) argue that English language is highly influenced by internal locus and is directly related to motivation. A sense of self-determination, autonomy, competence, and relatedness can facilitate English language learning in this older group of language learners.

2.7 Conclusion

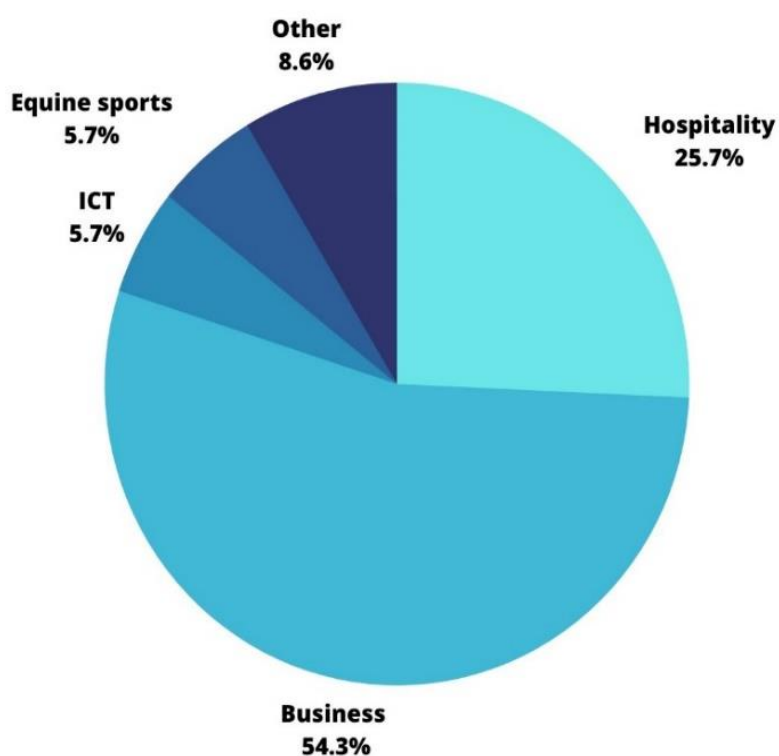
One could state that the CLIL-model of bilingual education that is strongly promoted in the Netherlands reflects a context of ‘additive bilingualism’ (Lambert, 1974) since it promotes the learning of a L2 without losing the skills of the L1. Within bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands, both languages are majority languages with a high status. Furthermore, most students in such CLIL-programmes have a varied multilingual and multicultural background. These languages, at the moment, are not taken into account. In bilingual education within secondary vocational education lessons are taught monolingually through the L2. Only, in language lessons such as German, Spanish, if provided in the curriculum, the L2 is then taught through the target language. Bilingual education has become an important approach to language and content learning in the Netherlands, providing students with valuable skills and knowledge for success in a globalised world. While challenges remain, the future prospects for CLIL in the Netherlands are promising with continued investment and attention to its implementation and effectiveness. Although much research has focussed on the effects of CLIL in bilingual education in primary and secondary bilingual education (Baker, 2017; Cummins, 2013; Coyle, 2008, 2011; Daalen and Denman, 2016; Tanner and de Graaff, 2013; Koert, 2020), less focus has been put on students’ perspectives on the benefits of secondary *vocational* bilingual education. In addition, fewer studies have focussed on investigating both perceived cognitive, socio-affective and economic outcomes of bilingual education. As such, the current study aims at investigating the possible

advantages of bilingual secondary vocational education, so that future bilingual programmes can benefit from it. Overall, this study intends to shed light on what the impact of bilingual vocational secondary education on students is in the Netherlands, in order to possibly strengthen future bilingual programmes.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This was an exploratory, qualitative study of the *perceived benefits of bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands*. It was conducted through ten focus groups comprising of 90 students of two education programmes, and 9 interviews with teachers and management at a regional vocational college in the Netherlands. In two different education programmes, focus groups were formed from the bilingual programme as well as the Dutch-medium programme. Two types of bilingual secondary vocational education programmes



were chosen, a business programme and a hospitality programme. The reason for choosing these two types was that these two sectors are used the most for bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands, as can be seen in Figure E:

Figure E: Sector bilingual secondary vocational programmes. Adapted from Nuffic, n.d.

3.2 Research design and methodology

The data collection of this study was carried out between the 3rd of October, 2022 and the 8th of May, 2023, and all focus groups and interviews took place at the location of this specific vocational college. This study was based on qualitative research since it *‘explores attitudes, behaviour and experiences through methods such as interviews and focus groups’* (Dawson, 2002: p. 12). The aim was to gain in-depth insights from students, teachers and management involved in the adoption of a CLIL pedagogical methodology in bilingual secondary vocational education. This empirical research aimed at results that are relatable to similar educational contexts, and therefore can lead to the transfer of knowledge. It does not aim at generalisability, as there are too many variables that need to be taken into account, when possibly aiming to reproduce this study in the future. Bassey (1981) suggests that, in educational research, the *reliability* of results in teaching is far more important than their generalisability:

I submit that an important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision-making to that described in the case study. The relatability of a case study is more important than its generalizability (Bassey, 1981: p. 75).

3.3 Sample and sampling strategy

As mentioned previously, from both education programmes, Dutch-medium groups as well as bilingual groups were selected. The Dutch-medium groups were meant to act as control

groups to compare data from the bilingual programmes' focus groups and interviewees. Three categories of focus groups were selected to give a complete overview of students' perspective on bilingual education and their vocational studies:

- Students that started with the study in the academic year
- Students in the final academic year of their education
- Alumni students

A purposive sampling strategy (Creswell, 2013) was chosen to select participants, based on their specific knowledge and experiences within either Dutch-medium or bilingual vocational education. This ensured a representative sample of students of the bilingual and Dutch-medium education programme (Bell and Waters, 2014). The sample chosen for interviewing was a stratified sample and included representatives of teachers, tutors and senior management of the education under consideration. A total of 99 participants took part in this study: 5 lecturers, teaching English or a subject, 3 coordinators, one CLIL-coach, and 90 students, 38 in bilingual education, 38 in Dutch-medium education and 14 alumni students. Table 1 contains an overview of the sample and the corpus of the present study.

Programme	Interview partners	Participants	Length interview	Codes
International Business Studies (bilingual)	Class 1st year	8	37 min.	B.B.1-B.B.8
	Class 3 rd year	7	59 min.	B.B.9-B.B.15
	Alumni	3	38 min.	B.B.16-B.B.18
	Language teacher	1	30 min.	E.1
	Coordinator	1	58 min.	E.2
International Business Studies (Dutch-medium)	Class 1st year	10	53 min.	B.D.1-B.D.10
	Class 3 rd year	7	59 min.	B.D.11-B.D.17
	Alumni	0	31 min.	
	Subject teacher	1	27 min.	E.3
International Hospitality Studies (bilingual)	Class 1st year	15	37 min.	H.B.1-H.B.15
	Class 4 th year	8	105 min.	H.B.16-H.B.23
	Alumni	8	38 min.	H.B.24-H.B.31
	Language teacher	1	27 min.	E.4
	Coordinator/subject teacher	1	48 min.	E.5
	Subject teacher	1	27 min.	E.6
International Hospitality Studies (Dutch-medium)	Class 1st year	13	31 min.	H.D.1-H.D.13
	Class 3 rd year	8	45 min.	H.D.14-D.D.21
	Alumni	3	38 min.	H.D.22-H.D.24
	Subject teacher	1	32 min.	E.7

General	Coordinator bilingual education	1	52 min.	E.8
	CLIL coach	1	36 min.	E.9

Table 1 – Participants and corpus of the current study

The students were interviewed as focus groups of seven to fifteen students. Only the Dutch-medium alumni focus group deviated from that number, which only had three participants, all from International Business Studies. This specific target group was difficult to reach, as they had already finished their education at the vocational college and their current contact details were not updated.

3.4 Focus groups

A focus group, used as a research method, can stimulate a discussion on the topic as it supports a wide response and group conversation. Next to the actual answers from participants, the participant interaction, as well as the group effect can be objective for analysing (Dawson, 2019). During the focus group discussions, the moderator, being also the interviewer, ensured focus on the topics related to the study. The moderator also made sure that everybody had a role in the focus group by asking questions to individuals before addressing the discussion as a group. The questions designed for the focus groups, that can be found in appendices A and B, were based on the deductive themes; cognitive, socio-affective, economic and the impact of bilingual secondary education. Overall, all the participants were asked what they perceived to be the benefits of bilingual secondary vocational education.

3.5 Interviews

This study also made use of semi-structured interviews in order to structure the interviews along themes, whilst still leaving room for participants to elaborate or to bring their own topics into the discussion (Dawson, 2019). There was an interview guideline that was used with every interview, which included the introduction to the research and explanation of the

framework of the interview as well as the guarantee of the anonymity of the participants. It also included the main issues addressed in this study (see appendices A and B) as well as the research questions. The interview guideline was also piloted with the participants beforehand.

3.6 Procedure

At every start of a focus group or interview, a participant filled an informed consent, which can be seen in appendices C and D. This made sure that the participant agreed with the recording of the interview and was aware that participation was voluntary. Also, participants were aware by means of the consent form in combination with the explanation of the researcher that outcomes were and all data were anonymised. Furthermore, participants learnt from this form that data would be deleted after analysing. The focus groups and the individual interviews were both audio and video recorded. The reason for choosing these two recording options was that, in case one of them had technical issues, the data would not be lost. By means of the software Audacity, the audio was recorded on a well-secured laptop provided by the researcher. The recordings were carried out using an external microphone to record all the participants' audio during the focus groups and interviews. It can be said that participants can be negatively affected by this type of data collection, since they can be intimidated by the presence of these instruments during a focus group or interview (Dawson, 2019; Bell and Waters, 2018). However, alternatively making notes during focus groups or interviews can be distracting for participants. Therefore, the choice was to record and explain in detail beforehand how the researcher handled the recorded data. The data gathered from the focus groups and the interviews were transcribed verbatim (Cohen, Manian and Morrison, 2018). Also, a small amount of quantitative data was received from the regional vocational college and the bilingual programmes that were involved in this study. The data that were provided showed insight into the examination results for the English language from the last three years of both the bilingual and the Dutch-medium programmes. The quantitative data from the

bilingual programmes contained information on the intercultural programmes as well as policy plans. All the provided quantitative data was anonymised.

3.7 Data analysis

This study was a qualitative investigation and used thematic analysing (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This specific method analyses, identifies and reports any patterns in the collected data by moving through six stages. Atlas.ti was used, which is an analysing software, to support the data analysing process. This software allowed the researcher to analyse the considerable amount of qualitative data, whilst also being able to maintain an overview of the aim of the research. Thematic analysis is a versatile method that is specifically suitable for qualitative research, and the outcomes are presented in a thematic form (Braun and Clarke, 2016).

Flexibility is one of the advantages of this approach, as well as a disadvantage, since it allows a broad range of themes to emerge. However, this wide range can perhaps be too broad from which the researcher can interpret and draw conclusions. According to Braun and Clarke (2016: 28): *‘thematic analysis is a flexible approach that can be used across a range of epistemologies and research questions.’* This study was performed through deductive analysing, which means through themes which emerged from the research questions and theory, such as:

- Cognitive benefits
- Economic benefits
- Socio-affective benefits
- Impact

By inductive analysing, which means through themes emerging from the data, data was coded using the six phases of deductive and inductive thematic coding. During the first phase, familiarising with the data by re-listening and re-reading was important to start the analysing process. In the second phase, the inductive coding took place by systematically going through all the obtained data. The data was revised multiple times by using Atlas.ti, as well as by hard

copy prints of the data to ensure all meanings and concepts were included that could have any relevance. Phase three was the generating of initial themes by carefully assessing the data and looking back at the research questions and deductive themes. This was drawn up in the coding scheme, the final version of which can be seen in appendix E. In the fourth phase, the themes were reviewed and changed if necessary for clarity of the coding scheme. Phase five was the refining of the analysis and in phase six, the writing of the analysis took place. Throughout the whole process there was a constant refining and tweaking of the analysis and themes, of which you can find quotes in the table below that are anchor examples of those which emerged.

Themes	Codes	Anchor examples
Cognitive benefits	Achievement L2	<i>We have consciously chosen to lift everything to B2 and therefore offer challenges to the student, because otherwise it is also a bit disregarded by all the units that are taught, where English is just up to standard. That was really the reason, because otherwise the English was really a lot easier than the rest (Teacher E).</i>
	Furthering studies	<i>They haven't had internships, they haven't had prior education like us. That's really a world of difference. Those are never going to have three internships either. It doesn't outweigh what all of us have done. So we'll always have more experience even though we completed the same study (Student h.31).</i>
	Academic challenge	<i>I know someone who does the bilingual programme and he showed all the assignments. It was really ten times more than what we did. He really had to work on it at home. I haven't gotten involved at home or done any homework (Student H.4).</i>
Socio-affective benefits	Self-esteem	<i>I have grown a lot as a person myself. I have become much more confident. You have more of a view of the world. Yes, I really come from a small village, so to speak. And now I lived in Antwerp for six months and now live in Amsterdam now. I really see more things that I would never have seen otherwise (Student H.B.28).</i>
	Intercultural competences	<i>We do think it's very important, of course, because if they choose bilingual education, they will want to go on work placements abroad later on and they will also have lessons in English, so they need to know more about it. For instance, if I am going to do business in China, how does it work there? Those are a little things we like to discuss with them (CLIL-coach E.9)</i>
	Motivation	<i>Surely you can say that the bilingual student is just a bit more active and motivated, because of course it also takes more effort to do the course in a foreign language. You can see that they often have more drive in them (Teacher E.6).</i>

Economic benefits	Job market	<i>The benefits of bilingual education are that you connect your students to a wider world, you prepare them for that international job market, and you also make them realise that the world is bigger than just where they live (Coordinator E.8)</i>
	Foreign students	<i>Research shows that, on balance, foreign students still have a positive contribution to the treasure chest. In the end, they bring in more than they cost. A very large proportion of foreign students who graduate in the Netherlands also often stay to work in the Netherlands, and we need them in the labour market. We would like to make sure that we bring those foreign students here more in vocational secondary education (Coordinator E.8).</i>
Impact	Language alternation	<i>When you're with friends among yourselves or going to the supermarket, for example, you also talk Dutch all the time. Then when you get to class... If we're told to speak English we all manage, but if we don't necessarily have to, speaking Dutch is still easier. Even though it's better to speak English (Student B.D.16).</i>
	Network	<i>The great thing is that we as bilingual programmes are working together more and more. There is now also a plan on how to raise the profile of these bilingual programmes. We also want people to know that it really is a conscious choice (Coordinator E.8).</i>
	Teachers	<i>Because we work like this, there is a scarcity of good quality bilingual education teachers, competent bilingual education teachers. That doesn't mean that I don't call a few colleagues competent enough, not at all, but getting a student there does require a certain teaching method and structure (Coordinator E.5).</i>

Table 2 - Themes with anchor examples

3.8 Data triangulation and limitations

This study used two different methods of data collection to enhance the reliability of the analysis. Next to focus groups, there was the use of interviews and, additionally, a small quantity of quantitative data. This made sure there was methodological triangulation (Cohen, Manion and Morisson, 2018) possible; therefore, it related to validity (Denzin, 1970). It is important to acknowledge that there was a possibility of bias on the part of the researcher due to also being a CLIL-coach in the field of vocational education in the Netherlands. This meant that CLIL itself as a pedagogical methodology could have been perceived as a positive approach in providing bilingual education. To ensure there was as little bias as possible, the research was conducted at a regional vocational college where the researcher had no prior experience and had not worked before as a CLIL-coach. By addressing this issue in preliminary talks at the vocational college, the researcher made sure that bias was reduced. Furthermore, using thematic analysis also ensured that analysing was done without preconceived ideas, and that there was a focus on themes emerging from the data collected (Bell and Waters, 2018).

3.9 Ethics

This study adhered to strict ethical principles of research, as provided by a body such as the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). It is important in educational research that the effect of the study on the participants themselves is taken into account and, consequently, the researcher has to ensure that the study is conducted with respect towards all concerned (Cohen, Manion and Morison, 2018). Due to adopting focus groups and interviews as a research methodology, the *confidentiality* rather than the anonymity of the participants was guaranteed, and that was also assured and emphasised in the written consent form used. It was

explained to all participants upfront that participating was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, the aim and objectives of the research were explained at the start of conducting focus groups and interviews.

3.10 Transferability

The criteria by which this study was conducted could be used to duplicate the current study by future researchers and could, possibly, also produce similar themes to those generated from the present data. However, it is important to realise that the bilingual programmes selected for this research both work in tandem with the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) as an additional diploma by own choice, next to the Dutch curriculum. BTEC qualifications on Level 3 are applied on top of the Dutch curriculum, and ensure additional knowledge, skills and attitude for a future profession or applied university education. The BTEC qualification leads to an extra diploma, and teachers are specifically trained for teaching and designing the BTEC content. It also has its own quality assurance process, which the bilingual programmes need to obtain. There are other bilingual vocational programmes in the Netherlands that operate with alternative organisations, such as Cambridge or VTCT. Therefore, there could be significant differences in the outcomes of this research, were it to be reproduced with bilingual programmes without a BTEC qualification. This aspect could be taken into account in future studies.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The current study investigated the presumed benefits, as well as the impact of CLIL in bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands. As more bilingual programmes may start in the future, it was valuable to assess the progress made since the inception of the network of bilingual vocational education five years ago, supported by Nuffic. The data was analysed and organised according to reflexive theoretical analysis, and had four overarching themes; cognitive benefits, socio-affective benefits, economic benefits and impact. The themes that were inductively obtained from the data can also be seen in the coding scheme in Appendix E.

4.2 Cognitive benefits

4.2.1 Second language acquisition

The first perceived cognitive benefit identified in the data related to second language proficiency. According to the quantitative data relating to the examination results of the subject of English, the level that was achieved by students in the second language was higher for students in the bilingual programmes in vocational secondary education in comparison with those in regular Dutch-medium vocational education. Data was provided by the vocational college which is visible in Figure F. In the central English language examination in secondary vocational education in The Netherlands, the minimum level for ‘speaking’, ‘writing’ and ‘conversations’ is A2 on the Common Framework of European Reference (CEFR). The central examinations, ‘listening’ and ‘reading’ for English are on a minimum level of B1 on the CEFR level, and it is possible to also obtain a higher B2 level on these exams (Ministerie van OC en W, n.d.). For the students of both programmes B2 there was a standardized level for the English

subject. There is a minimum requirement for the level of English before starting with a bilingual vocational secondary education, for this specific vocational college they requested a students has at least a 7 for their examination in pre-vocational secondary education. Therefore, students start from the beginning of their bilingual study at a higher level for the English language in comparison to their Dutch-medium counterparts:

Just presenting something in English, students always find that the most difficult. They don't have so many problems with writing and they also dare to make mistakes there. Then you give them feedback or take it up with a lesson. They find that relatively easy and you notice that they get better and better at it. Because we usually start with level B1 and the final level is really B2 and some of them are really over that. They find speaking the most difficult and we really have to help them with that, and when it comes to writing, you see that they are really developing in terms of language use (Language Teacher E.5).

From both the hospitality programme as well as the business programme, bilingual education led to higher level of English. The standard from the network of bilingual vocational secondary education, supported by Nuffic, states that a B2 level for the L2 has to be reached for the students at the end of their study. In one of the two bilingual programmes that is not yet accredited by Nuffic, the levels of English examinations were on a B2 level for the generic examinations of the subject English and for the vocational-oriented examinations of the English subject there is an ambition to start next year with B2 according to the language teacher participant referred to as E1:

People come in at B1 level. We want to examine everything on B2 from next year. According to the current qualification file, this is not necessary, only up to B1, but sometimes that becomes so boring for students. That is why we have said that we are going a step further. We do that because we are bilingual education, otherwise they don't learn anything (Language Teacher E.1).

Quantitative data obtained from this specific vocational college was to gain information regarding the ratio between Dutch-medium students and bilingual education students in obtaining the B2 level for English. The diagram in Figure F represents the level of English obtained over the last three academic years, as well as the grade level of the two specific bilingual programmes that were used for this study. As can be concluded from the diagram, the students from the bilingual programme obtained the B2 level for English more often in comparison to their mainstream peers and had achieved higher levels in the L2.

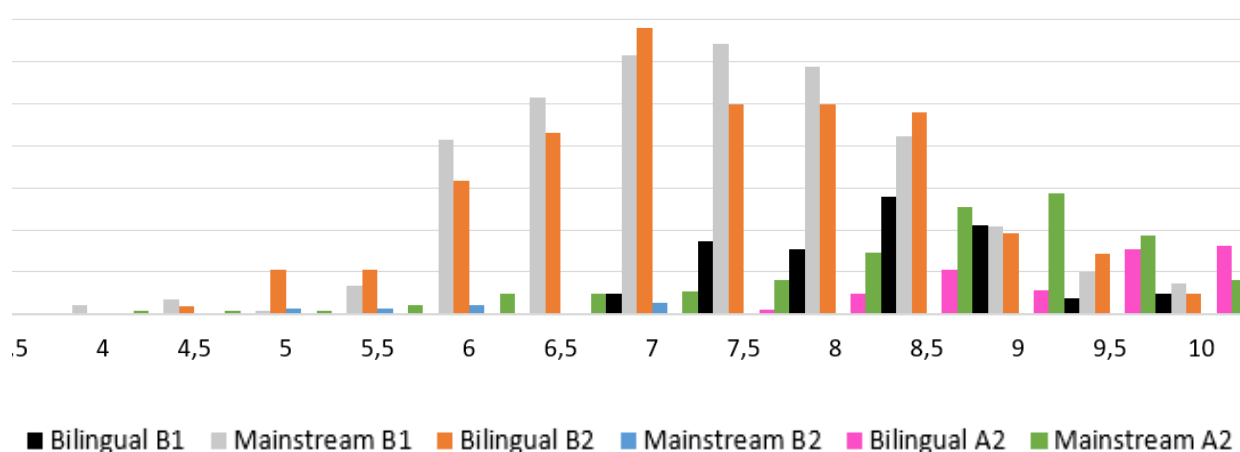


Figure F : Three-year overview of examination results of English subject

The B2 level is a direct consequence of the standard that is issued by the network of bilingual education supported by Nuffic; however, how the execute this is up to the bilingual programmes or vocational colleges themselves. According to English language teacher E1, this specific college also offers an option to prove a higher proficiency in English in the form of a Cambridge qualification in addition to the B2 English examinations:

On top of that we have the opportunity to do Cambridge, which is at C1 level. That, of course, is voluntary. This year, for the first time, we also have second year students who get the Cambridge lessons on Wednesday afternoons. My third-year students, more or less, have to do it themselves. Of the third-year students, about ten are going for C1. The

idea next year is to offer it to all our students here from this program (Language Teacher E.1).

For the participants in the alumni focus groups of both programmes, the Dutch-medium as well as the bilingual, it had already been possible to obtain a C1 level through Cambridge certification; however, it was often not chosen because it was not integrated in the curriculum according to the students.

4.2.2 Further studies

For all focus groups, one of the questions asked by the researcher was: *‘What in your opinion are the benefits of a bilingual vocational education’*. In all focus groups, one common answer was: *‘A better preparation for further studies’*. This was also the case when the same question was asked to the teachers and coordinators of both studies, who maintained that the bilingual vocational programme better prepares students towards further study, which could be a further study at an applied university. Students were better prepared due to their improvement in the second language, since study materials and also parts of university courses are in English. Secondly, the extra challenge led to improved research skills and, thirdly, students were more experienced in collaborative projects. They felt that they were better prepared because of the extra skills incorporated in the bilingual programme, next to the acquisition of the L2 on a higher level in bilingual education as the CLIL-coach of the vocational college explained:

The students’ English gets better. Students don’t realize this right away. You write a lot of reports in English, you hear a lot of English, you speak English from time to time, and that causes your vocabulary to become unprecedentedly high. You have an advantage when you’re in go to an applied university at some point. Also, there is better preparation for three-years, because you are more challenged by your fellow students. That’s an important contribution. There is much more self-

direction. That's an important aspect needed in an applied university (CLIL Coach E.9).

Alumni students also recognised the value of a bilingual programme for further studies, and, in a specific case for a Dutch-medium student, it led to the insight that a bilingual programme would have been a better choice, specifically because of the improvement in the L2. There was an advantage in preparing for further studies, and alumni students also acknowledged the different route a vocational student has in comparison to a student that streamed in from general secondary education towards applied university. The practical experience resulted in students feeling better prepared for further studies in the same sector, as well as for studying outside the sector. According to alumni students, bilingual secondary education had prepared them better towards applied university and this specifically led to a head start.

If I compare myself to other students, I did get a bilingual vocational degree. So, then you do something like four years in two-and-a half years. You then enter with the people who do it in four years and they come from general secondary education. There is really a big difference between the fast-trackers, as they call them, and the regular students who do it in four years. They haven't had internships, they haven't had prior vocational education. That's really a world of difference. Those are never going to have three internships either. There is only one internship to graduate. That doesn't outweigh what all of us have done. So, we will always have more experience even though we completed the same study. We have had a completely different experience (Student H.B.25).

According to the students, this had to do with the combination of internships, and *practical* experience, with the academic content of study. Students from the Dutch-medium programmes, in comparison to those of the bilingual programmes, more often chose a job after their vocational secondary education according to the coordinators and teachers. However, this was not known in exact percentages for this specific vocational college. Bilingual students'

ambitions were more often towards further study. According to the students in the focus groups, 71% of students in the bilingual programmes still studying, said they wanted to go to an applied university after graduating, which is the logical education after vocational secondary education, whereas only 34% of the students in the Dutch-medium programmes expressed their ambition for further study. This data was collected during the focus groups by asking the students the question; ‘What are your perceived plans after this study?’. Students answered either to go to a further study, to start a job or that they did not know yet what to do after their study, Dutch-medium students felt less prepared for further study, as one student explained: *You actually expect that the gap has become too big, because you have now done vocational secondary education and that is a difficult step to bridge* (Student H.B.27). Students of the bilingual programmes felt better prepared for applied university level because of being able to have responsibility on their own learning, more academic challenge, higher achievement in the L2, specifically in subject-specific vocabulary, and also because of the training in research and analysing skills. Most of all, the practical experience a student brings with him/her in a further study was a benefit felt by multiple students and expressed by an alumni focus group student:

If I look from my experience, there are a lot of bilingual vocational secondary education graduates who get through quite easily, because they are known to have quite a lot of practical experience. In almost all vocational studies, you do have practical experience and that's what they actually want. You don't necessarily have to have all the knowledge at certain jobs, as long as you do it and are willing to work hard for it. Know how to work, because of course that is also a profession in its own right. Sitting at your computer from nine to five is quite different from working shifts. You really notice that this is becoming more and more common now. That it's no longer just applied university education graduates who are wanted, but also vocational education graduates (Student H.B.26).

Students from both bilingual programmes believed that they were significantly better prepared than their Dutch-medium counterparts. The area for which students felt that they were not prepared was the amount of study materials used in applied university.

4.2.3 Academic challenge

The teaching of a second language was the main reason why the academic challenge was felt to be higher for students of bilingual vocational secondary education in comparison to their Dutch-medium peers, according to both the students and the teachers. These particular bilingual programmes require a minimum entry level for English in order to assure that students can manage the academic language challenge. Even though this is an advice level, it still does not ensure that every student can handle the L2 challenge that is offered. According to one of the coordinators who was interviewed:

If you offer 80 or 90 percent of your education in English, you notice that some students really get stuck and use Google Translate as a remedy. If you then read a piece of text from them and have a conversation about that piece of text in English and notice that they don't understand a word you say, then it becomes difficult to do all the other subjects (Coordinator E.5).

Next to the language, the *content* of both bilingual vocational programmes also offered more academic challenge. On top of the mainstream regular content, students are offered a BTEC diploma qualification that is integrated for the larger part with the Dutch curriculum. There is a deliberate choice to raise the academic bar in the bilingual programmes. These particular programmes use BTEC as a means to do so. Through the BTEC qualification, the academic skills are fostered in the programme, whilst aiming for a higher academic level, as Co-ordinator E5 explained:

When you have a group in there that is at the upper end of the market, it's also easier to challenge them more. There are research skills BTEC also asks for at three levels of assessment in which you can complete such a unit. That's a Pass, Merit or Distinction. Especially with Distinction and Merit, more research skills are developed. With BTEC's new system, there is also a certain holistic approach, where you go for that Merit and Distinction first and only do the Pass at the point of failure. That's different, instead of having to get a pass in reverse (Coordinator E.5).

Amongst students, there was an awareness of the different approach in academic challenges between mainstream and bilingual programmes. Some students in Dutch-medium mainstream education found the content of their education too simple and not academically challenging, whereas students in the bilingual programmes were challenged on multiple levels. The additional content connects when the student experiences new concepts on a practical level as well, as one bilingual programme student explained:

Sometimes, in school, I thought, what are they talking about; then, I really didn't get it. Now in my internships then, I finally understand. Oh, that's what they're talking about, and I find that such connections work really well (Student H.B.17).

4.3 Socio-affective benefits

4.3.1 Motivation

Teachers specifically acknowledged a different type of student who was more motivated to learn and had a different attitude towards his or her study. Before students enter bilingual education, they have an intake interview, a personal talk with the coordinator when they are asked specifically about their motivation. Also, teachers during the educational process itself are aware of a different type of student who is to some extent more motivated than the Dutch-medium counterpart. The coordinator of one of the bilingual programmes explained:

What you actually see is that these students are a lot more driven. Of course, they don't have to choose bilingual, they can also do a Dutch-driven language hospitality education; however we want to challenge them just a little bit more, because it's not their mother tongue, by giving them the knowledge of another language. So, you do notice that they are a bit more motivated (Coordinator E.5).

Also, the subject teacher of the Dutch-medium programme acknowledged differences between the motivation of bilingual and Dutch-driven students, whilst also stating that it can be generalising to do so:

Surely you can say that the bilingual student is just a bit more active and motivated, because of course it also takes more effort to do the course in a foreign language. You can see that they often have a bit more drive in them. It is generalising though. There are too, of course, students who do nothing, in general you do see a difference there (Subject Teacher E.7).

4.3.2 Self-esteem

One of the areas from which students of the bilingual vocational secondary education gained and experienced more self-esteem was in the use of the English language. Since they were more competent in the language, the use of English in internships and jobs led them to be more confident about themselves. One of the students clarified why he/ she thought his/her English had improved:

You are more involved with English and we have to do a lot of English reports, and I do notice that when you go on holiday, for instance, if you have to have an English conversation, it is a bit easier than before. Purely because you do it more often, so that does give me more confidence to speak English (Student H.B.26).

Also, self-esteem is raised in a wider area than just the language aspect of CLIL-education. Next to having acquired the additional language, students were more confident in presenting

themselves on multiple fronts. The L2 proficiency supports that as the language teacher explained:

The advantage is that our students are quite articulate and foreign-oriented. Once they get used to speaking English in addition to English classes, they become more independent, more confident and less afraid. I think these students are given the tools to be able to do it when it comes to a bilingual education; presenting yourself abroad, for example, going on an internship abroad, joining a foreign company, going to a university in Scotland or going to America for a year (Language Teacher E.1).

The self-confidence emanating from bilingual education was largely due to the extra skills gained, such as presenting, taking initiative and social skills, and not just because of the improved proficiency in the English language.

4.3.3 Intercultural competences

Both bilingual programmes as well as the Dutch-medium programmes have the same study travel possibilities because of the internationalisation policy of the vocational college. In three optional study trips, all students in three successive academic years develop skills while aiming for meaningful experiences in an international context. Next to these optional study trips, both bilingual programmes have exchanges and projects which also foster international competences mostly integrated into their curriculum. All the internationalisation activities aim to develop students' world citizenship skills. An example of the activities for the bilingual programme of International Business Studies can be seen in Appendices F and G. The possibility to work internationally is one of the main reasons mentioned by the students:

I chose this because I don't want to work in a normal market. I want to work internationally. Basically, I never want to stay in one place, because I want to explore working in the world (Student B.T.4).

In the bilingual programmes, students generally expressed more ambition to work abroad.

However, this was not true for all of them, as one of the bilingual students expressed:

I am not leaving the Netherlands. At least, I do want to live in the Netherlands. For example, I think it would be nice to go abroad for a while to sell things, but I don't want to live in another country, because you have friends and family here (Student B.BFF.5).

Also, internationalisation can be an important factor in a future work environment *locally* as well, because of globalisation.

If you have a job at a local company, you might be able to talk to customers and employees around the world all day in English. That doesn't always have to be abroad. You see that's getting more important every day (Subject Teacher E.8).

International students that follow either a part or the full programme are a positive factor for internationalisation within CLIL-classrooms. Teachers experience a positive influence from having international students in their classes. The coordinator bilingual education explained

Three students come here to follow the programme for a fortnight and three students of ours go to that country. When you talk about getting internationalisation more into the classroom, international students make it a lot easier (Coordinator E.8).

The bilingual programmes are a logical choice as a placement for foreign students of a similar education, since more than 50% of the lessons are taught through the English language. The international BTEC diploma offers the possibility to exchange for a specific unit between vocational colleges. Also, the BTEC is an internationally acknowledged diploma or certificate, which is of more value for international students than the Dutch equivalent.

4.4 Economic benefits

4.4.1 Job market

The bilingual programmes gave the students nationally and internationally more possibilities in the labour market:

I don't know how much an English-speaking vocational student differs from a Dutch-speaking vocational student. In the bilingual course, admittedly, there is more elaboration, because you understand it all better and can apply it a bit better. I think in that respect, you might be a bit better prepared for an international job, because if you just learn to apply it all better (Student H.B.29).

Current students of both bilingual programmes believed they had an advantage in the job-market when finishing this study. The extra diploma and certification is an advantage, not only for internationally-oriented jobs, but also for more management related employment. One alumni student expressed how there was an advantage for his current function because employers took into account that the student also had an internationally acknowledged diploma in addition to the regular Dutch diploma:

I do notice, from my perspective, that I was hired for the position I hold now because of that education. I already noticed that with my vocational degree, to put it that way, I have come quite far for my efforts (Student H.D.23).

Also, the added internationally acknowledged diploma, BTEC diploma, is beneficial for the job market possibilities of the students as the coordinator of the bilingual programme of International Hospitality Studies stated:

Especially also for the international labour market and if you want to continue studying in higher education. It is a diploma that is recognised

more quickly and people are also more likely to appreciate its value compared to the Dutch diploma. It is an internationally recognised diploma, so it is also easy to estimate around the world what that means then (Coordinator E.5).

4.4.2 International student placement in bilingual studies

In a bilingual programme, international students are seen as a positive factor for speaking more English in a bilingual class. Also, economically, international students can be beneficial when taken into account for the long run. Even though it can be challenging to practically house them, because of a shortage of student residences during their study, they more often end up in the Dutch labour market, being needed and appreciated as a much-needed addition and an economic benefit according to the bilingual education coordinator of the vocational college:

We have 115,000 foreign students, and we actually have 40,000 students who are still looking for accommodation. So, if you just do the subtraction, it is very easy to explain that there are, therefore, too many foreign students. However, research also shows that, on balance, foreign students still have a positive contribution to the treasury. Ultimately, they bring in more than they cost. A very large proportion of foreign students who graduate in the Netherlands also often stay to work in the Netherlands, and we need them precisely in that labour market (Coordinator E.9).

4.5 Impact of a bilingual education on students

4.5.1 Language alternation

In the bilingual programmes, during the bilingual classes, the students alternate between the Dutch and English language. Students speak English when the teacher asks; however, they do not speak English to their peers in class. The students described that as a consequence of also speaking Dutch to their peers in a social setting outside the class; for example, while going to a supermarket:

To the teacher, we do have to speak English. If we have a quick chat about school, it is often said, "Just in English.", but not always either. I think 80 percent of the class doesn't speak English among themselves (Student B.B.7).

Students do acknowledge that speaking English to their peers is a way of becoming more proficient in the English language:

At the beginning of the school year, I did speak more English to fellow students than I do now, but I think I need to make a switch there again. I am here to improve my English, so it is better if I speak English to my fellow students (Student B.B.7).

This language alternation was a factor that teachers were aware of. It had been something they were struggling with. Also, it was a perception by the students that they did not speak in English with each other all the time; however, that was not the view of the teachers and CLIL coach of the bilingual programmes, as the CLIL coach explained:

It is something that the teachers are battling and struggling with. I have seen teachers or lessons in which students speak English all the time to one another all the time. But there are also lessons where they don't, so when they say we never do, that's totally incorrect. If they say we always do, that wouldn't be true either, so it is something that teachers are working on (CLIL Coach E.10).

Dutch was also a support language when the content of the bilingual lesson was not understood by the students. One of the students explained this with an example of a business economics lesson:

They mostly said you would get a lot of lessons in English. In reality, not very much. Sometimes, but not a lot. Not that that's a bad thing, like with business economics, we do get a lot of the lesson in English. But if you ask questions, they explain it in Dutch more quickly (Student H.B.18).

Students themselves believed that it did help if the teacher was stricter in stimulating English speaking:

Bilingual teachers just need to be stricter; so, as soon as the lesson starts that no more Dutch is allowed to be spoken, done! English only, not even with each other (Student H.D.23).

Students reverted less to Dutch when a native English-speaking teacher taught the class. Also, students noticed that speaking more in English improved their proficiency in the English language. For students, it helped to improve the proficiency in the L2, if it was unavoidable to speak in English because of a teacher that only spoke in English:

That was totally the case last year when we had an English-speaking teacher who couldn't speak Dutch. Then you really only spoke English. Because now you still talk Dutch during class with the teacher and among yourselves, but last year we had to talk English when we had that teacher for six months. So, then you also talk English among yourselves, you learn it so much faster and talk easier. Then presenting in English is also no longer scary (Student B.B.12).

Students do have the tendency to fall back to the Dutch language during lessons according to the teachers. They find language alternation in class a challenging aspect in bilingual teaching:

As soon as you start talking Dutch as a teacher, the whole class starts talking Dutch. Talking English with me does go well, but getting them to talk English with each other as well, I really find that the biggest challenge, because as soon as I'm not paying attention, they start talking Dutch (Subject Teacher E.6).

4.5.2 Support of networks for the bilingual programmes

Bilingual education is part of other networks which was seen as a beneficial factor; for example, the Nuffic network for bilingual vocational education, with the standard that proved to be a

stimulating factor to professionalize the bilingual programmes. The coordinator of International Business Studies explained why the standard of the network of bilingual vocational secondary education organised by Nuffic helped to professionalize the CLIL-skills of the teachers:

We now want every teacher to have mastered CLIL, but also to be chosen and guided in it. We have organised this much better than we did before. Back then, some teachers said, "I do want to immerse myself in that and I would like to do that", but now it has really become a norm to definitely do that. With every teacher who joins us, those are also the conditions. That comes with the job when you join bilingual education (Coordinator E.2).

Also, the modular education of the BTEC diploma programme has made it possible to collaborate with teachers and other vocational colleges in other countries. Interchanging students for a module was already a possibility with which these bilingual programmes had positive experience. Furthermore, within all of the bilingual studies of the vocational college, teachers and management experienced collaboration to be beneficial, even though in the future this can even be more extended. The coordinator of one of the bilingual programmes expressed how this collaboration could work in the future:

What we hope to do in the future is that we do look at joint modules that are purely focussed on citizenship. The college is working specifically on citizenship: what do we want to teach and what do we want to focus on? That we take a standard and if you start looking at politics, for example, that you branch out from politics for the bilingual programme, that you not only look at Dutch politics, but also at the European Parliament and what is happening in world politics. The ideal dream would be that you teach those modules, and that it is a mix of students doing different bilingual studies (Coordinator E.5).

4.5.3 Teaching quality

Every teacher in this vocational college is visited by the CLIL coach twice a year. Starting teachers are visited even more to help them on the CLIL aspect of bilingual education.

Then you think just a bit more about how you teach it to your student in English, and that you don't immediately fall back to Dutch because you think they won't get it. You just try three or four extra times to do it correctly in English. I think that this change is the biggest side effect, especially for experienced teachers who already did a lot in English. That is because of CLIL (Coordinator E.2).

There is a demand for good quality teachers in the bilingual programmes. The recurring training of teachers is an important factor that differs from the training of teachers in mainstream Dutch-medium education.

4.6 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the data shows that there are cognitive, socio-affective and economic benefits for participating in a vocational bilingual programme, and that this type of bilingual education has impact for students. The data shows that, within the possibilities of the vocational college, students of bilingual programmes do achieve a higher level of English as prepare themselves better for a further study on several fronts.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study aimed to research the perceived benefits and impact of CLIL in bilingual secondary vocational education in the Netherlands, with the purpose of supporting further development of this type of bilingual education. Based on focus groups with students and semi-structured interviews with teachers and coordinators, the data analysis drew on the deductive themes of cognitive, socio-affective, economic benefits and the impact of such an education.

5.2 Perceived effects of bilingual vocational education

From the data, it can be concluded that a bilingual vocational education has several benefits that are experienced by students during and after this type of education, as supported and acknowledged by teachers and coordinators. Cognitively, those students are challenged and achieve a higher level in the L2 of English as well as being challenged academically that results in achieving higher results. Not only did their motivation grow, but also their self-confidence. Students of bilingual vocational education feel more confident in using the L2 as well as about themselves in a future profession and, therefore, it can be concluded that socio-affective benefits are present. Some results show that students in the bilingual programme are more confident and have more self-awareness. Students of Dutch-medium education feel less confident towards pursuing a further study. For students of the bilingual programmes, future job-market possibilities are a strong factor in opting for bilingual education. All students, even the

Dutch-medium education students, conclude that a bilingual education can be an advantage for a future profession. Therefore, the data proves that economic benefits are an important factor in the choice of bilingual vocational secondary education. The results of this study suggest that the impact of a bilingual education is significant, due to higher achievement academically both in the L2 and the content in combination with practical experience in the employment field where students have more opportunities. Students create a head start in their professional career in comparison to Dutch-medium vocational students, as well as Dutch-medium secondary students generally. These results are in line with the research of Mearns, de Graaff and Coyle (2020) which proved that bilingual education indeed could have beneficial effects on linguistic and curricular achievements as well as the beneficial effects on motivation which the research of van Daalen (2016) demonstrates.

5.3 Cognitive benefits

In general, this study does align with other research done on cognitive effects (Baker, 2017; Bialystok et al., 2005, 2008). Even though this type of education was aimed at a vocational (and thus more practical) curriculum, it did have beneficial cognitive effects. The higher achievement in the L2 as well as the skills learned through the academic challenging curriculum, led to more cognitive enhancement in general.

5.3.1 Second language

The data showed that in this type of CLIL-education in bilingual secondary education, students indeed achieve a higher level in English as an L2. Teaching content through the L2 has proven to be successful in the achievement of a higher linguistic proficiency. Students are not necessarily aware of the direct improvement. However, when applying the L2 in work, in

internships and jobs, they acknowledged the benefits. The '*simultaneous language and content learning*' (Marsh, 1994: p.1) takes place unconsciously for students. Communication proved to be an important factor in learning the L2, and that is what is different in the way of learning the L2 in comparison to bilingual education in general secondary education. Students acquire the L2 in teacher-impelled situations and not so much in peer-to-peer conversations. Even though students are not fully aware of the learning of language such as 'language through' and 'language for' (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010) they do achieve higher proficiency in the L2 as well as gain confidence in speaking and presenting in the L2.

5.3.2 Further studies

The data brings forth evidence that this type of bilingual education has significant advantages for further study. Students feel that they are better prepared in skills, and the benefits gained from the higher level achieved in the L2. Remarkably, Dutch-medium students also feel that bilingual education is an advantage and feel that their own education is not sufficient in preparing them for further study. This raises the question whether regular Dutch-medium education in itself could be ineffective and should be re-examined on certain point. Also, bilingual students feel that they have an advantage in further study not only because of advanced skills and L2 proficiency, but they also have an advantage because of the practical experiences they have encountered during internships and international trips. The advantage is that this specific type of education gives a head start in comparison to that of their mainstream Dutch-medium peers, who enter further study from secondary education, or from Dutch-medium secondary vocational education.

5.3.3 Academic challenge

The students that are the target group for this type of CLIL-education seem to benefit from the extra academic challenge that is brought by teaching through the L2 as well as the adjusted curriculum. From the data it can be concluded that CLIL-education targets a specific group of students who are at the upper end of the market. That also validates the minimum requirement of L2 proficiency; that this vocational college requests, as well as the intake interview on motivation that all students have before entering a bilingual programme. It does corroborate the research of Hajmohammadi et. al. (2022), where it was found that the motivation, autonomy and self-determination of this specific group of learners led to higher results in the L2. The extra academic challenge was also fostered by offering an extra diploma, such as BTEC. Academic challenge, therefore, was a significant difference between the two education programmes that are compared in this study. The extra diploma possibilities as well as the specific curriculum design make the academic challenge higher in a vocational bilingual programme, not only in the amount of work, but also by a more cognitively challenging content.

5.4.1 Motivation

It could be concluded from the data that students are more motivated for this type of education from the outset. This has an effect on the whole education in itself. The literature that is known on motivation of students in bilingual education corroborates these findings, even though they are from secondary education and not from bilingual *vocational* secondary education. The current study shows no ‘motivational dip and language anxiety’ (Denmar, Tanner and De Graaff, 2-13, 290) which also can be explained by the specific targeted group, since they are motivated from the start as well as that their L2 levels are of a certain standard when they start

their bilingual education. There is also the question of what happens to the motivation of regular Dutch-medium students if there is such a significant difference between these two programmes.

5.4.2. Self-esteem

The data shows that students indeed have more self-determination, autonomy, competence and confidence (Hajmohammadi, et al, 2022) in the L2 and more widely. This relates to the motivation of students as well as their self-esteem. The data shows that being able to communicate better in the L2 led to more self-esteem in general. Self-esteem, in turn, is an important factor in achieving higher results. Also, the higher proficiency of the L2 led to higher roles during internships, which also led to more confidence. All these factors ensures that students grow in self-esteem during their study.

5.4.3 Intercultural competences

The result of this study shows that the development of the intercultural competences of these students was important, since the possibility to work in an international setting is one of the main reasons for choosing this type of education. Even though possibilities to do study trips are the same for Dutch-medium and bilingual programmes, students from the bilingual programmes choose these experiences more often. There is more attention in normal class situations to enhancing intercultural competences, which also is important in the 4 C's framework of Coyle (2007). Culture is an important factor and also is aimed at the natural environment in which students study. Next to those possibilities for the teachers to address intercultural issues they are more motivated in class situations to improve cultural competencies; for example, by the presence of international exchange students.

5.5 Economic benefits

5.5.1 Job market

The results show that students experience an economic advantage from the bilingual programmes, not only nationally but internationally as well. Remarkably, even students that stay in the Netherlands stream in a work field that is not internationally oriented, still have an advantage and end up in higher roles than their Dutch-medium peers. Even though the bilingual education is aimed at an international career, there are not enough figures known if they actually end up in an international labour market. Bilingual education students do feel better prepared.

5.5.2 International students

It is evident that the presence of foreign students were a positive factor in language stimulation. Furthermore, economic benefits might be present as well if these students enter bilingual programmes and flow into the job market. From a student's perspective, there is the need expressed for more of this type of student and, to the vocational college, there is the overall economic benefit as well. The 'omkeerregeling' (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2021) could adhere more possibilities for international students to stream into bilingual education programmes, and having more possibilities on a language level to interchange subjects. The policy is not effective at the moment, however could possibly stimulate future international students to enter bilingual programmes. On a larger national level, this issue seems undervalued. Foreign students in a bilingual class are of great value, because they bring more culture to the actual lesson situation. There is more intercultural awareness that can be brought into the lessons themselves in this way.

5.6 Impact

5.6.1 Language alternation

During the focus groups conducted with students, the alternations between the Dutch and English language was an unanticipated recurring theme. Students do not always speak the L2 in a peer to peer situation. This aspect was also present in the research of Kontio and Sylvén (2015) which aimed to *‘describe and to understand in particular students’ oral language use in the sort of language environment that arises when English is the language of instruction’* (2015, p 3).

This study was done in an auto mechanics class in a Swedish bilingual vocational secondary school. There were similarities in teacher-impelled language alternations and differences in learner-initiated alternations. In the context of the Netherlands, teachers explain in Dutch when the content is too challenging and needs clarification, which is similar to the that alternations teachers apply in Sweden in a CLIL-classroom. Dutch and Swedish students do not speak English to their peers if not stimulated. Dutch students are aware of the fact that English speaking all the time does lead to a higher proficiency in the L2. Teacher motivation and stimulation is the most important factor for the students to speak the L2, specifically *native* speaker teachers as well as language-driven subject teachers, next to the presence of foreign students who are native speakers of the L2.

5.6.2 Network

The outcomes of this study shows that the additional networks adhered to bilingual programmes in the Netherlands, have a positive impact on the education for the student. The extra foreign diploma has a high impact on the quality of this type of education. There are more possibilities to collaborate nationally as well as internationally on a micro and macro level, which supports

the quality of the education in general, and specifically on intercultural competences. The standard, issued by the network for bilingual vocational secondary educations supported by Nuffic, that is at the base of the bilingual education assures the overall striving for quality of the vocational college. The focus on CLIL as an approach, the improvement of intercultural competences and the higher proficiency in the L2 are a direct result of this standard.

5.6.3 Teachers

The results of this study also showed that teachers themselves are also challenged to achieve a higher pedagogical standard for themselves. Teachers need to professionalise in the English language, as well as in the didactics of teaching through a second language which are addressed in CLIL. All of the bilingual teachers found this a beneficial aspect of working in a bilingual programme, next to the possibilities that were offered to work in international projects. The high expectations towards the students also reflect on the teachers that are working in this type of education. Therefore, it is an important development point for bilingual programmes to find good quality teachers. CLIL- teachers should foster cognition, communication, content and culture (Coyle, 2007) in all of their lessons, which has proven to be a challenge according to the data which shows that this is a weak point. Developing teachers on multiple fronts is a constant challenge. Furthermore, the data proves that the teachers themselves are the most important factor for students in achieving higher results academically as well as in the L2.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This study aimed at investigating the perceived benefits that a bilingual programme for vocational education could have for students in the Netherlands. CLIL-education in bilingual secondary vocational education, organised in a network, has been available for the last five years. To further develop this programme as well as strengthen the beliefs that CLIL-education can be beneficial to students of *vocational* education as well as those who are more academically oriented this research conclusions can and may be useful. This research has proved that there are numerous benefits that bilingual secondary vocational education fosters in the Netherlands.

There are cognitive benefits in the achievement of the L2 and academic skills that also lead to socio-affective benefits, such as higher self-esteem. It can also be concluded that further research is necessary to ascertain what the effects are of language alternation in bilingual vocational education. It seems that students already benefit from CLIL-education without the emphasis on speaking the L2 amongst themselves. However, they themselves also recognise that higher L2 proficiency could be attained, if they spoke more of the L2 in different domains. It would be interesting to research where this exact turning point of effectiveness is for these specific types of vocational secondary students. The students who are in this type of bilingual programme were more motivated from the outset, which leads to an overall higher achievement academically. The overall higher academic challenge leads to better preparation for further study as well as higher roles in the job market. Specifically, the job market needs to be researched further, since this type of student seems to fulfil employment needs. It is clear that research into the specific needs of the current globalised job market could lead to new possibilities for bilingual programmes as well as improvements in Dutch-medium education. Overall, it can be

64

concluded that this form of education confers an advantageous position to students in their pursuit of higher education and professional endeavours.

6.3 Recommendations

Since this specific type of education is beneficial on several accounts, such as cognitive, socio-affective and economic aspects, it is recommended to research it further in order to stimulate the development of more effective bilingual programmes. It should be acknowledged that bilingual CLIL-programmes could benefit from a national policy change, with more freedom towards examination of the second language English. This could also be supported by reconsidering the methods used to assess students in language subjects. Allowing more flexibility in the assessment process of the L2 would enhance the potential of these bilingual programmes.

Furthermore, there could potentially be valuable insights available for improving Dutch-medium education in itself; parts of Dutch-medium education could be offered through a second language without the emphasis on an extra academic challenge by means of a CLIL-approach. Students in Dutch-medium education have stated that they would like to see such possibilities in their practical lessons, in order to gain benefits from such an approach, for a further study of career as well as the improvement of the L2. Also, since the benefits from a student perspective are clear, it is recommended also to research the possibilities of expanding bilingual education to more practical levels of vocational secondary education in the Netherlands. Since this research concludes that the higher achievement of a L2 is specifically beneficial for careers, such as in hospitality or business, it could also be recommended that research could be aimed at researching if bilingual programmes in other vocational and professional areas would benefit from higher proficiency in the L2. It is important to develop CLIL-education in other sectors

that do not have bilingual programmes because of the wider benefits it could foster. For example, research could be done into the feasibility of a bilingual CLIL-programme for an International Business Studies in German, since it is the second most important language for trade in the Netherlands. Additionally, there could be research aimed at fostering Frisian-Dutch bilingual CLIL-programmes in the future, in the official Dutch bilingual province Fryslan, where a higher L2 proficiency would seem to be beneficial in studies aimed at the welfare sector. For the bilingual secondary vocational education where the L2 is English, it seems that these programmes could yield more achievement when the *subject* of English could be adjusted more towards supporting the L2 and not so much as aiming at the regular examinations. Since the benefits are clear for CLIL-education in bilingual secondary vocational education, it could be investigated if this CLIL-approach can also be beneficial in vocational education in the Dutch-Caribbean, where students from the onset are multilingual and could benefit from enhancing their L2 such as English or Dutch.

6.4 Conclusion

Overall it can be concluded that this type of CLIL-education yields benefits at cognitive, socio-affective and economic levels, with a significant impact on future studies and job prospects for students of bilingual vocational secondary education. This specific study addresses the attention to this group of students that had bilingual education through a CLIL-approach, which was not addressed before. It is important to have more studies in the future that are aimed at this specific group. Interestingly, benefits found in this study are not solely attributed to a higher proficiency in the L2. Even without complete immersion in the L2 during classroom situations, students still acquire extensive advantages. There could be more research done on the matter that follows this

conclusion; what are other factors, besides the acquisition of L2 that support beneficial factors in a CLIL-education? The academic challenge these students face, does enhance their skills and intercultural competences and provides them with an unparalleled edge. There are limitations to this study that should be taken into account. This investigation was performed with students whose study has been effected by the Covid-pandemic, which resulted in a different approach to their education for two years. Also, by focussing on the beneficial factors, it could be that negative factors were not taken enough into account. Furthermore, this research raised the question of whether or not the beneficial effects were cumulative for students that enter the CLIL programme with more motivation and a higher level of the L2. Additionally, it also raises the issue of whether or not it is an unequal situation towards Dutch-medium students, who are not offered education that fosters these benefits through academic challenge and through a L2. To conclude, it is evident, even with the limitations of this study taken into account, that the adoption of the CLIL-approach in bilingual education, within vocational secondary education in the Netherlands, has substantial benefits and impact for students. It does offer a solid head start for further studies or career that cannot easily be surpassed.

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Appendices

Appendix A.1: Interview and focus group guideline Dutch version

Focus groepen handleiding

The impact and possible benefits of CLIL in bilingual vocational education in The Netherlands.

Welkom

- Dankjulliewel dat jullie deel willen nemen aan deze focus groep. Mijn naam is Amanda van Dijk van 't Noordende en ik ben een student Bilingualism and Multilingualism aan de University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Daarnaast ben ik CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) coach in mijn eigen bedrijf Bilingual Education Projects.
- Graag leg ik kort uit waarom dit onderzoek plaats vindt. Dit onderzoek gaat over de vraag wat de mogelijke voordelen en de impact van tweetalig MBO onderwijs zijn. In deze focusgroep zullen de vragen daarover gaan.
- In deze focusgroep zal ik vragen naar de verwachtingen die jullie hadden van de opleidingen en naar de verschillen die jullie ervaren in de opleiding.
- Een focusgroep is geen discussie groep. Wel is het de bedoeling en krijgen jullie de gelegenheid om op elkaars antwoorden te reageren. Het is daarnaast ook mogelijk om advies of aanbevelingen te geven over de onderwerpen die aan bod komen.
- Graag vraag ik jullie om toestemming om deze focusgroep op te nemen middels beeld en geluid. Dat geeft mij de mogelijkheid om niets van jullie antwoorden te missen. Hiervoor

ontvangen jullie een formulier die jullie ter plekke ondertekenen voordat het onderzoek zal starten als jullie daarmee instemmen.

- Jullie gegevens worden geanonimiseerd en na het gebruik van het opgenomen materiaal wordt het vernietigd.
- Het zou kunnen zijn dat de gegevens in de Masterscriptie gebruikt worden in toekomstige publicatie en presentaties.

Deel 1

Openingsvragen

1. In welk jaar van de opleiding ben je nu?

Inleidende vraag

2. Waarom heb je voor deze specifieke studie gekozen?

Transitievraag

3. Hoe heb je kennis gemaakt met deze studie?

Deel 2

Kernvragen

4. Wat is volgens jou het grootste voordeel van deze (tweetalige) opleiding?

- Indien ja, kun je aangeven wat het voordeel of voordelen zijn?

5. Ben je van mening dat jou zelfvertrouwen gegroeid op het gebied van de Engelse taal vanwege je studie?

- Indien ja, kun je aangeven hoeveel je zelfvertrouwen is gegroeid?

6. Hoeveel is je kennis van het Engels verbeterd door deze opleiding?

- Is dat hetzelfde voor alle taalvaardigheden? (Spreken, luisteren, schrijven en lezen van de Engelse taal)
- Waardoor is je Engels het meest verbeterd ? Was dat de les, een docent of een project of iets anders?

7. Heb je tijdens je opleiding een certificaat zoals Cambridge behaald voor het Engels?

- Indien ja, heb je of verwacht je daar voordeel van?

8. Wat zijn je voorgenomen plannen na deze studie?

- Verwacht je dat je een goede aansluiting maakt naar het vervolg traject na deze studie?
- Gaat dat om een baan aansluiting of een studie vervolg?
- Indien een studie, welke studie gaat dit om?

9. Welke onderdelen van je studie hebben gaven de meeste positieve impact?

- Indien ja, waarom was dat?
- Was dat een specifiek vak?
- Was het een specifiek project?

10. Heeft deze opleiding je opgeleid tot een baan in de internationale markt?

- Indien ja, op welke wijze is dat gebeurt?
- Heb je meer contacten internationaal dan voordat je aan de studie begon?

- Was het genoeg ontwikkeling qua internationaal netwerk op dit vlak?

11. Heeft deze opleiding je blik op de wereld verruimd en internationaler gemaakt?

- Indien ja, hoe is je blik verruimd? Indien nee, had je daar graag meer input gehad?
- Kun je daar voorbeelden van geven?

12. Ben je cultureel sensitiever na deze studie? Heb je meer begrip voor andere culturen? Hoe heeft dat plaats gevonden?

- Waar heb je in je studie internationaal kennis kunnen maken met je toekomstige beroep?

13. Een tweetalige opleiding werkt met de CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) didactiek.

- Wordt er anders lesgegeven in de tweetalige lessen?

14. Zijn de docenten bekwaam in hun manier van lesgeven in deze opleiding?

- Maken de docenten gebruik van verschillende werkvormen in de les, die ondersteunen zijn aan de leren in de les?
- Zou je ook voorbeelden daarvan kunnen geven?

Deel 3

Eindvragen

15. Wat kan er verbeterd worden aan je opleiding?

16. Wat kan er beter op het gebied van tweede taal leren?

17. Wat kan er beter op het gebied van internationalisering?

18. Wat is volgens jou het grootste voordeel en impact van deze opleiding?

19. Wat zou je nog kwijt willen over dit onderwer

Appendix A.2: [Focus group and interview guideline English version](#)

Interview/ focus group guideline

The impact and possible benefits of CLIL in bilingual vocational education in The Netherlands.

Welcome

- Thank you all for taking part in this focus group. My name is Amanda van Dijk van 't Noordende and I am a student of Bilingualism and Multilingualism at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Besides my study, I am also a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) coach with my own company, Bilingual Education Projects.
- Before this research starts, I will explain what it is about. This research explores the possible advantages and impacts that bilingual MBO education has. In this focus group questions about this topic will be asked.
- In this focus group, I will be asking about your expectations regarding your study and what different expectations you had during the study.
- A focus group is not a discussion group. However, there is the possibility to comment on each other's answers.
- I would like to get your permission to record this focus group by recording sound and vision. This gives me the possibility to review every answer that will be given. You will receive a form that you can sign on the spot.
- The given answers will be anonymized and afterward the recordings will be deleted.

- There is a possibility that the data in this Master thesis could be used for future publications and presentations.

All questions and answers will fall under one of the following categories.

- Cognitive benefits
- Socio-affective benefits
- Economic benefits

PART 1

Opening questions

- In which year of your study are you? / What is your role if employee?
- How old are you?

Introductory question

- How did you get acquainted with this study?
- What was the reason for choosing this particular study?
- Did you go to an information meeting beforehand?

Transition question

- What were the first impressions that you had at the beginning of your study? (M.S)

PART 2

Key questions

- What do you think is the biggest advantage that this (bilingual) education has?
- How much confidence has this study given you to practice a second language within your working field? (M.C)
- How much has your English improved as a result of this study? (M.C)
Has your English improved the same amount for all language skills? (Speaking, listening, writing, and reading)
Was it because of the classes, the teacher, or a project? Something else?
- Were you able to get a certificate for your English level during your study?
If so: Did you notice any advantages because of it?
- What are you planning to do (or have you done) after your study?
Are you expecting a good affiliation with the following course after this study?
- Which parts of this study had the most positive impacts?
Why was that?
Was it a specific course?
Was it a specific project?
- Has this study resulted in a job in an international field?
How did that happen?
- Do you have more international contacts now than when you first started this study?
Did you develop enough on this level?

- Has this study broadened your look at the world and made it more internationalized?

How has it broadened your view?

Could you give an example?

- Have you become more culturally sensitive after this study?

Do you have more empathy for different cultures?

How did that happen?

During your study, where did you receive international knowledge for your future profession?

A bilingual study works with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) didactics.

- Are bilingual lessons taught differently compared to monolingual lessons?
- Are teachers skilled enough in their way of teaching in this study?
- Do the teachers make more use of workforms in their lesson compared to the regular lessons?

PART 3

Ending questions

- What can be improved in your study?
- What can be improved in terms of learning a second language?
- What can be improved in terms of internationalization?
- What has been the biggest advantage and positive impact that this study has given you?

- Is there anything else you would like to add to this topic?

Appendix B.1: Informed consent form Dutch version

Geïnformeerde toestemming:

Hierbij verklaar ik dat ik op duidelijke wijze ben ingelicht over de aard van dit onderzoek, het doel en de methode.

Ik begrijp dat:

- ✓ ik mijn medewerking aan dit onderzoek kan stoppen op elk moment en zonder opgave van reden;
- ✓ mijn gegevens anoniem worden verwerkt, zonder herleidbaar te zijn tot een persoon;
- ✓ dat de opname wordt vernietigd na analyse.

Ik verklaar dat:

- ✓ ik toestemming geef om dit interview/ focus groep op te laten nemen door middel van beeld- en geluidrecorder;
- ✓ de uitkomsten verwerkt mogen worden in een verslag en daarnaast gebruik mogen worden in een publicatie.
- ✓ Ik geheel vrijwillig aan dit onderzoek mee werk.

Naam	
Datum	
Rol/ functie	
Ervaring/ voorgaande opleiding	
Toegewezen code	
Handtekening	

--	--

Onderzoeker: Ik heb mondeling toelichting gegeven over het doel, de aard en de methode van dit onderzoek. Ik verklaar mij bereid toekomstige vragen naar vermogen te beantwoorden.

Naam	Amanda van Dijk van 't Noordende
Handtekening	

Mocht je verdere vragen hebben kuntje ten alle tijden contact opnemen met Amanda van Dijk-van 't Noordende info@bepavandijk.com Kopie wordt aan deelnemer gegeven

Algemene gegevens: Focusgroepen

Datum en tijd:	
Focusgroep	
Aantal deelnemers	
Naam onderzoeker	Amanda van Dijk-van 't Noordende
Moderator	
Toestemmingsverklaring ontvangen	Deelnemers ja/nee Onderzoeker ja/nee
Opname via	
Locatie	
Transcriptie datum	

Appendix B.2: Informed consent form focus group/ interviews English version

Consent form: Focus groups

I declare that I have been informed in a clear way of the reason for this research, the goal, and the method.

I understand that:

- ✓ I can stop my cooperation on this research at any moment without reason;
- ✓ My information will be anonymized, without it being traceable to a person;
- ✓ The recordings will be deleted after the analysis of the focus group.

I declare that:

- ✓ I give permission to record this focus group by sound- and vision;
- ✓ The results can be incorporated in a report and a publication;
- ✓ I work voluntarily on this research.

Name	
Date	
Inflow from	
Date of birth	
(Current) study	
Current school year	
Assigned code	
Autograph	

Researcher: I gave an oral explanation about the goal, the reason for this research, and the method. I declare that I am willing to answer any future questions if needed.

Name	
Autograph	

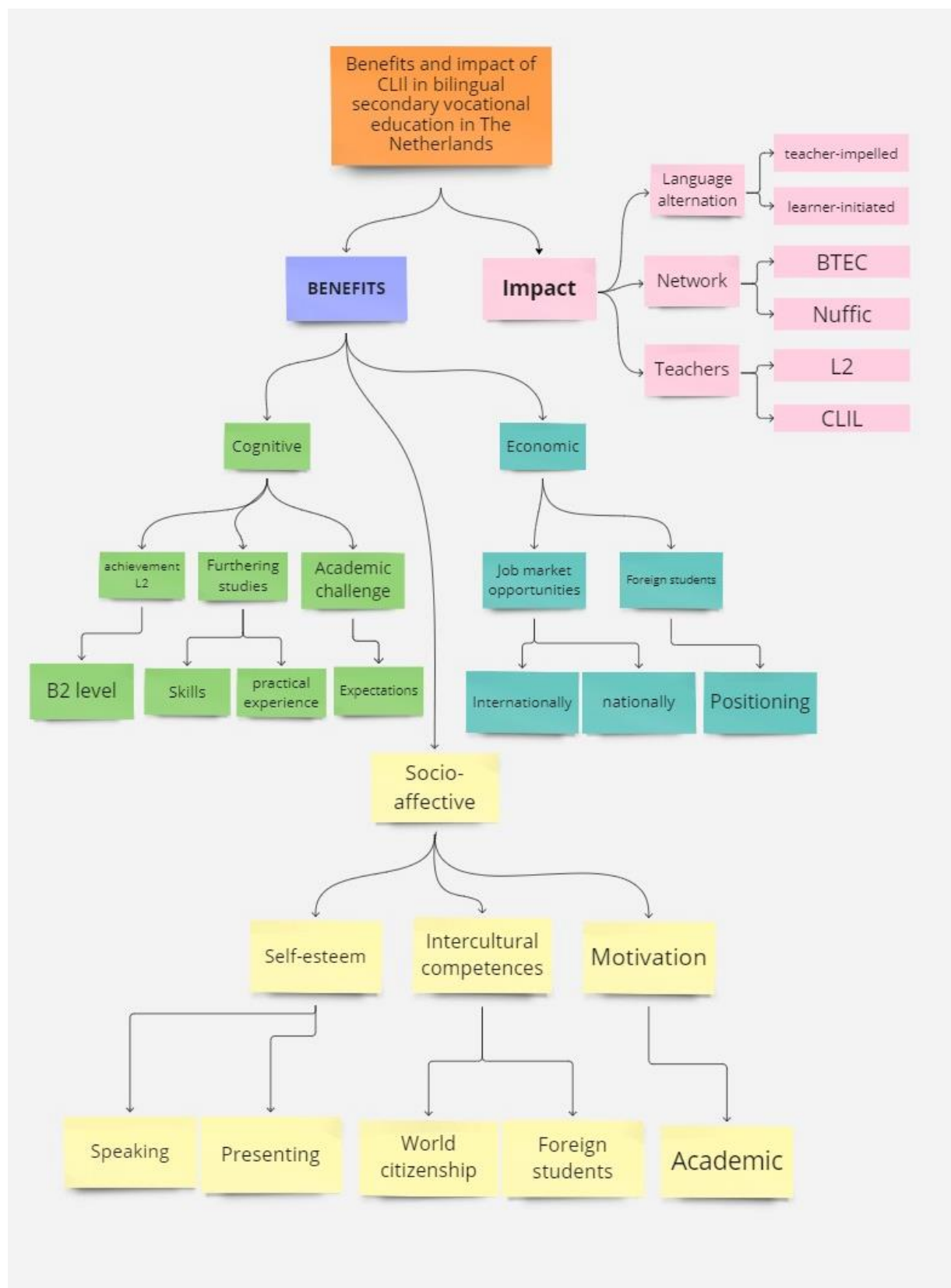
If you have any future questions, you can always contact Amanda van Dijk- van 't Noordende at info@bepavandijk.com

A copy will be given to the participant.

General Information: Focus groups

Date and time	
Focus group	
Number of participants	
Name of researcher	Amanda van Dijk-van 't Noordende
Moderator	
Consent form received	Participants yes/no Researcher yes/no
Recorded on	
Location	
Transcription date	
Comments	

Appendix C: Coding scheme



International Business Studies by coordinator International Business Studies

1. Uitwisseling Obchodní Akademie uit Praag:

Ieder jaar vindt er uitwisseling plaats tussen 1^{ste} jaars studenten van IBS 2^{de} jaars studenten van de uit Praag. Zowel de studenten uit Praag als de studenten van mbo volgen het internationale BTEC programma waardoor de onderwijsprogramma's vergelijkbaar zijn en uitwisseling dus eenvoudig. Studenten uit Praag wonen bij de IBS studenten middels home-stay. Om op deze manier zoveel mogelijk te laten leren over de gebruiken en cultuur van Nederland. Op school hebben de studenten uit Praag bij IBS de unit Digital Marketing gevolgd. Doordat de studenten verspreid over de verschillende IBS klassen plaatsnemen wordt het praten van Engels nog eens extra gestimuleerd omdat ook in de pauzes en tussen de lessen de voertaal Engels is. De IBS studenten gaan vervolgens ook naar Praag toe om daar de unit Managing and Event te volgen en af te sluiten. De studenten wonen middels de home-stay constructie in het huis van de gekoppelde student in Praag.

2. Mobility project:

Er komen 25-30 buitenlandse studenten uit diverse Europese landen naar Nederland. Deze studenten International Trade volgen bij ons een twee weekse "cursus" in het Engels vanuit Erasmus+. De eerste dag wordt er begonnen met een introductie, kennismaking en uitleg van de opdrachten. Daarna volgen 3 stagedagen waarbij de buitenlandse student gekoppeld wordt aan eerste jaarstudent die op stage is. Daarnaast zullen er op school lessen worden gevolgd in diverse vakken en werken de buitenlandse studenten samen met 2e jaars IBS studenten om opdrachten uit te werken. Verder worden er ook activiteiten in de lokale omgeving georganiseerd, waar de IBS studenten ook aan deel kunnen nemen. Aan het einde van deze twee weken worden de uitkomsten van de opdrachten gepresenteerd aan bedrijven.

3. Network of Networks:

Deze MBO is vanuit International Office aangesloten bij het Nederlandse netwerk The Dutch Alliance (TDA). De TDA stimuleert en organiseert internationale samenwerking. Vanuit de TDA werken we samen met het internationale netwerk 'Network of Networks'. Mbo-scholen uit Finland, Spanje, Noord-Ierland, Schotland en Nederland werken hierin samen. Momenteel werken wij gezamenlijk aan een internationaal KA3 project. Een van de deelprojecten hierin gaat over het promoten van het mbo doormiddel van evenementen. Met Finland, Noord-Ierland, Spanje en Nederland zijn goede voorbeelden rondom events uitgewisseld. Met als doel: van elkaar leren en een waardevol event uit een ander land ook zelf organiseren.

4. Netinvet:

Netinvet is een netwerk van Europese scholen met als doel studenten- en docentenmobiliteit te stimuleren. Dit netwerk is voornamelijk voor studenten Internationale Handel/International Business. Via dit netwerk ontvangen wij van partnerscholen studenten voor het Mobility Project en studenten voor inkomende mobiliteit. Onze IBS studenten kunnen via de iBPV coördinator van dit netwerk gebruik maken bij het zoeken naar een stageplaats in Europa.

Internationale Stages:

Binnen de opleiding IBS vinden er gedurende het curriculum twee stages plaats. De student heeft de mogelijkheid om in het derde leerjaar een stage in het buitenland te doen. Ongeveer 70% van onze student kiest voor een stage in het buitenland. Mocht de student geen buitenlandsstage gekozen hebben, dan is het dringende advies om een internationaal georiënteerde stage in NL te bemachtigen, bijvoorbeeld bij een bedrijf dat het kenmerk 'Internationalisation at home' op stagemarkt.nl heeft.

Studiereizen:

Vanuit de opleiding wordt er heel veel georganiseerd met betrekking tot studiereizen of projecten in het buitenland. Onderstaand hebben wij de twee prominente reizen omschreven:

Wij vinden het belangrijk dat het bedrijfsleven ook betrokken bij deze studiereizen zodat er kennis en ervaring uitgewisseld kan worden met buitenlandse bedrijven. De NBSO (Netherlands Business Support Office) en kamer van koophandel speelt hierin een belangrijke rol. De huidige reizen die we organiseren voor de derdejaars worden deels vergoed door de Erasmus+ subsidie en door een eigen bijdrage per student.

In ieder leerjaar bieden we studenten de kans om op reis te gaan:

- Eerstejaars: deze reis is kort, slechts 3 dagen daarom wordt gezocht naar een bestemming dichtbij de grens. Afgelopen jaren waren wij in Antwerpen, Bremen en Dublin. De steden moeten interessant zijn voor projecten of een te leren taal. Het algemene doel van deze reis is om culturele verschillen te ontdekken en taalvaardigheid te verbeteren.
- Tweedejaars: deze studenten ondernemen een reis van vijf dagen. De afgelopen jaren zijn we met de 3^{de} jaars studenten naar Barcelona en Berlijn geweest. De focus ligt op het bedrijfsleven en taal.
- Derdejaars: dit beslaat een reis van minimaal twee weken. Het doel is het uitwerken van een exportmarketing/importplan voor een zelf gekozen bedrijf. Vooraf aan deze

reis is er een lessenreeks geweest om studenten hierin te begeleiden. De studenten krijgen de keuze uit drie steden, Lissabon, Barcelona of München.

Keuzedeel Internationalisering:

Binnen de opleiding IHS geldt het dringende advies naar studenten om het keuzedeel Internationalisering Deel 2 te volgen wanneer zij een stage in het buitenland kiezen.

MBO breed:

Naast de internationalisering op het gebied van omgeving, wordt er binnen dit MBO college en onze opleiding aandacht geschonken aan internationalisering. Hierbij kan gedacht worden aan de mogelijkheid voor een Cambridge en/of Goethe diploma voor studenten. De lessen zijn voor elke student toegankelijk en worden beschikbaar gesteld door het regionale college. De student is alleen zelf verantwoordelijk door de examinering hiervan bij het externe instituut

International Business Studies by coordinator IBS

1. Exchange from Prague:

Every year an exchange takes place between 1st year students of IBS 2nd year students of the from Prague. Both the students from Prague and the students from our regional college follow the international BTEC programme so the educational programmes are similar and exchange is therefore easy. Students from Prague live with the IBS students via home-stay. This way, they learn as much as possible about the customs and culture of the Netherlands. At school, the students from Prague followed the Digital Marketing unit at IBS. Because the students are spread across the various IBS classes, speaking English is further stimulated because English is also the language of instruction during breaks and between classes. The IBS students then also go to Prague to attend and complete the Managing an Event unit. Using the home-stay construction, the students live in the paired student's house in Prague.

2. Mobility project:

25-30 foreign students from various European countries come to The Netherlands. These International Trade students join us for a two-week "course" in English from Erasmus+. The first day starts with an introduction, getting to know each other and explaining the assignments. This is followed by three internship days during which the foreign student is paired with a first-year student who is on an internship. There will also be lessons at school in various subjects and the foreign students will work together with 2nd year IBS students to work out assignments. Furthermore, activities will be organised in local environments, in which the IBS students can also participate. At the end of these two weeks, the outcomes of the assignments are presented to companies.

3. Network of Networks:

This regional college is affiliated from International Office to the Dutch network The Dutch Alliance (TDA). The TDA stimulates and organises international cooperation. From the TDA, we cooperate with the international network 'Network of Networks'. MBO schools from Finland, Spain, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands cooperate in this. We are currently working jointly on an international KA3 project. One of the subprojects is about promoting the MBO through events. Good examples around events have been exchanged with Finland, Northern Ireland, Spain and the Netherlands. The aim is to learn from each other and organise a valuable event from another country.

4. Netinvet:

Netinvet is a network of European schools with the aim of encouraging student and teacher mobility. This network is mainly for International Trade/International Business students. Through this network, we receive students from partner schools for the Mobility Project and students for incoming mobility. Our IBS students can make use of this network through the iBPV coordinator when looking for internships in Europe.

International Internships:

Within the IBS programme, two internships take place during the curriculum. Students have the option of doing an internship abroad in the third year of study. About 70% of our student choose to do an internship abroad. Should the student not have chosen a foreign internship, the urgent advice is to secure an internationally oriented internship in NL, for example with a company that has the attribute 'Internationalisation at home' on stagemarkt.nl.

Study trips:

A great deal is organised from the programme with regard to study trips or projects abroad. We have described the two prominent trips below: We think it is important that the business community is also involved in these study tours so that knowledge and experience can be exchanged with foreign companies. The NBSO (Netherlands Business Support Office) and chamber of commerce plays an important role in this. The current trips we organise for third-year students are partly reimbursed by the Erasmus+ grant and by an own contribution per student.

In each year of study, we offer students the opportunity to go on a trip:

- First-year students: this trip is short, only 3 days therefore a destination close to the border is sought. Last year we were in Antwerp, Bremen and Dublin. The cities should be interesting for projects or a language to be learned. The overall aim of this trip is to discover culturally different cities and improve language skills.
- Second-year students: these students undertake a five-day trip. In recent years, we have taken 3rd-year students to Barcelona and Berlin. The focus is on business and language.
- Third-year students: this covers a trip of at least two weeks. The aim is to work out an export marketing/import plan for a company of their own choosing. Prior to this trip, there has been a class series to guide students in this. Students will have a choice of three cities, Lisbon, Barcelona or Munich.

Internationalisation Part 2:

Within the HIS (International Hospitality Studies) programme, the urgent advice to students is to take the optional Internationalisation Part 2 when choosing an internship abroad.

Vocational college broad: In addition to environment-related internationalisation, attention is paid to internationalisation within the vocational college and our programme. This could include the possibility of a Cambridge and/or Goethe diploma for students. Classes are open to every student and are made available by the college. The student is only responsible by examining these at the external institute.