



UNVEILING A COVERT BUT COMMON PRACTICE: Child Language Brokering in the province of Barcelona

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MIRAS

Mediació i Interpretació:
Recerca en l'àmbit social

NPIT5

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Previous research



- Research conducted in other countries is more fruitful (Harris, 1976; Valdés, 2003; Hall & Sham, 2007; Orellana, 2009; Cline et al, 2010; Antonini, 2015, etc.)
- But it is scarce in Spain:
 - García-Sánchez (2010):
 - Observation + recording (audio + video) of the routines of six children during a period of 6 months (+ 100h. of recording)
 - CLB is considered one of the tasks children take on at home
 - Foulquié Rubio (2015):
 - Questionnaires distributed among teachers with specific questions regarding children as natural interpreters
 - Higher frequency of CLB (3,45 / 5) than professional interpreting (1,45 / 5) when teachers need to communication with parents with limited language proficiency
 - Pena (2019), Santamaría Ciordia (2021)
 - CLB is also mentioned in studies conducted in the fields of Anthropology or Sociology [e.g. Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López (2001); Arrasate (2018)].

Young natural interpreters: child language brokering in education, social services and healthcare settings



- To describe Child Language Brokering (CLB), a practice that has become common in our society but that is largely unexplored to date.
- To provide objective, empirical information about the extent and characteristics of Child Language Brokering among the major migrated communities.
- To raise awareness of the risks of this practice beyond communication to conduct minor bureaucratic tasks.
- To empower children and teenagers in the new society through the revaluation of heritage languages.
- To introduce the Interpreting profession and its various modalities among young students who already have a high level of competency in two or more languages, and among their parents and supervisors.



Research method

INTERVIEWS

- exCLB (19)
- parents (9)



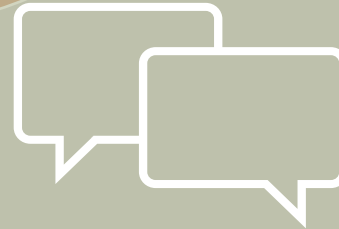
QUESTIONNAIRES

education (60)
social services (96)



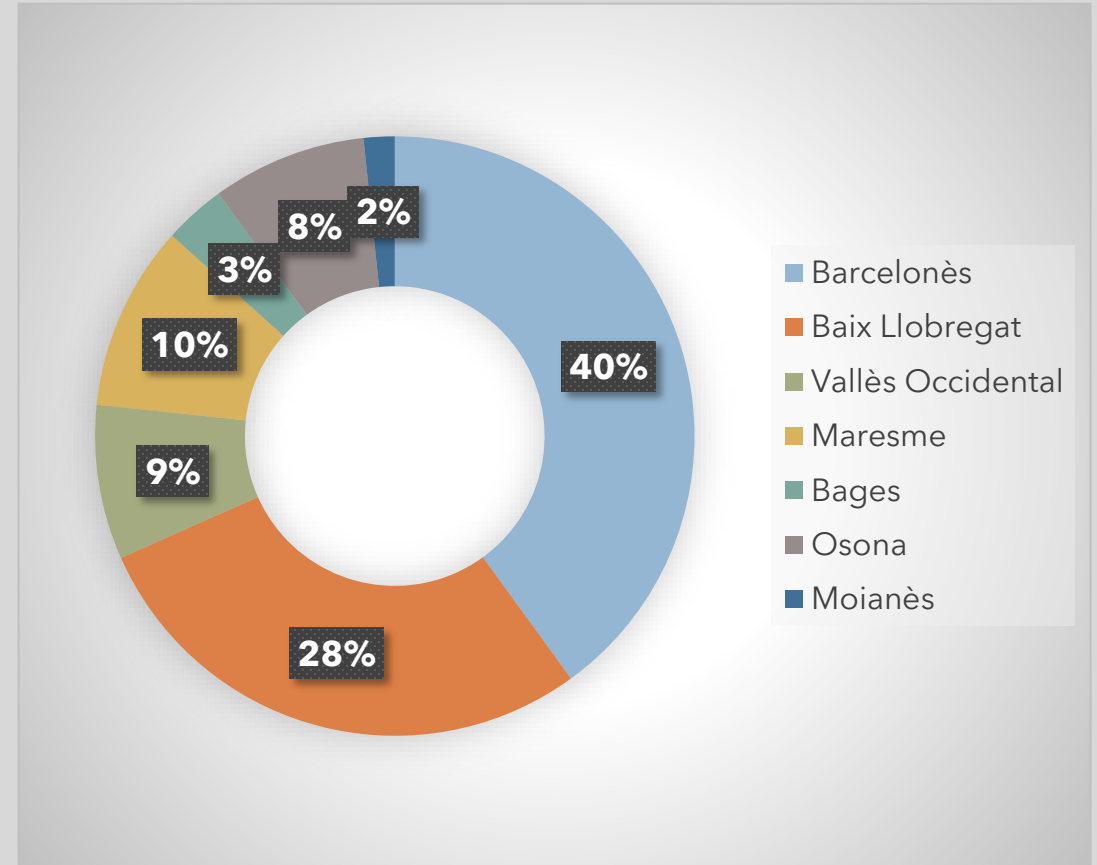
FOCUS GROUP

(6 participants)



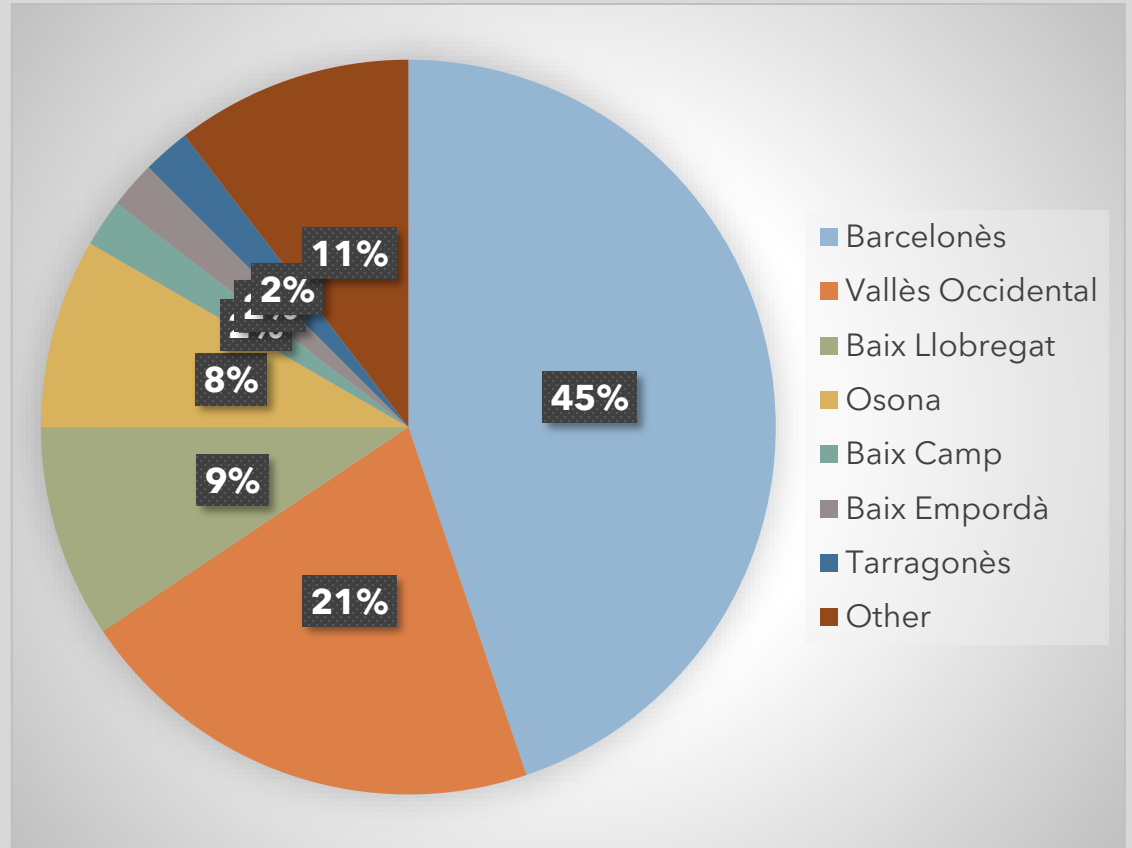
Distribution of questionnaires (education)

1. Contact with the Catalan Departament of Education
2. The questionnaire is sent to 116 secondary schools (considered of maximum and high complexity) in the province of Barcelona
3. Period to answer: 20 January 2020 - 17 February 2020
4. Sample: 60 questionnaires of 7 counties



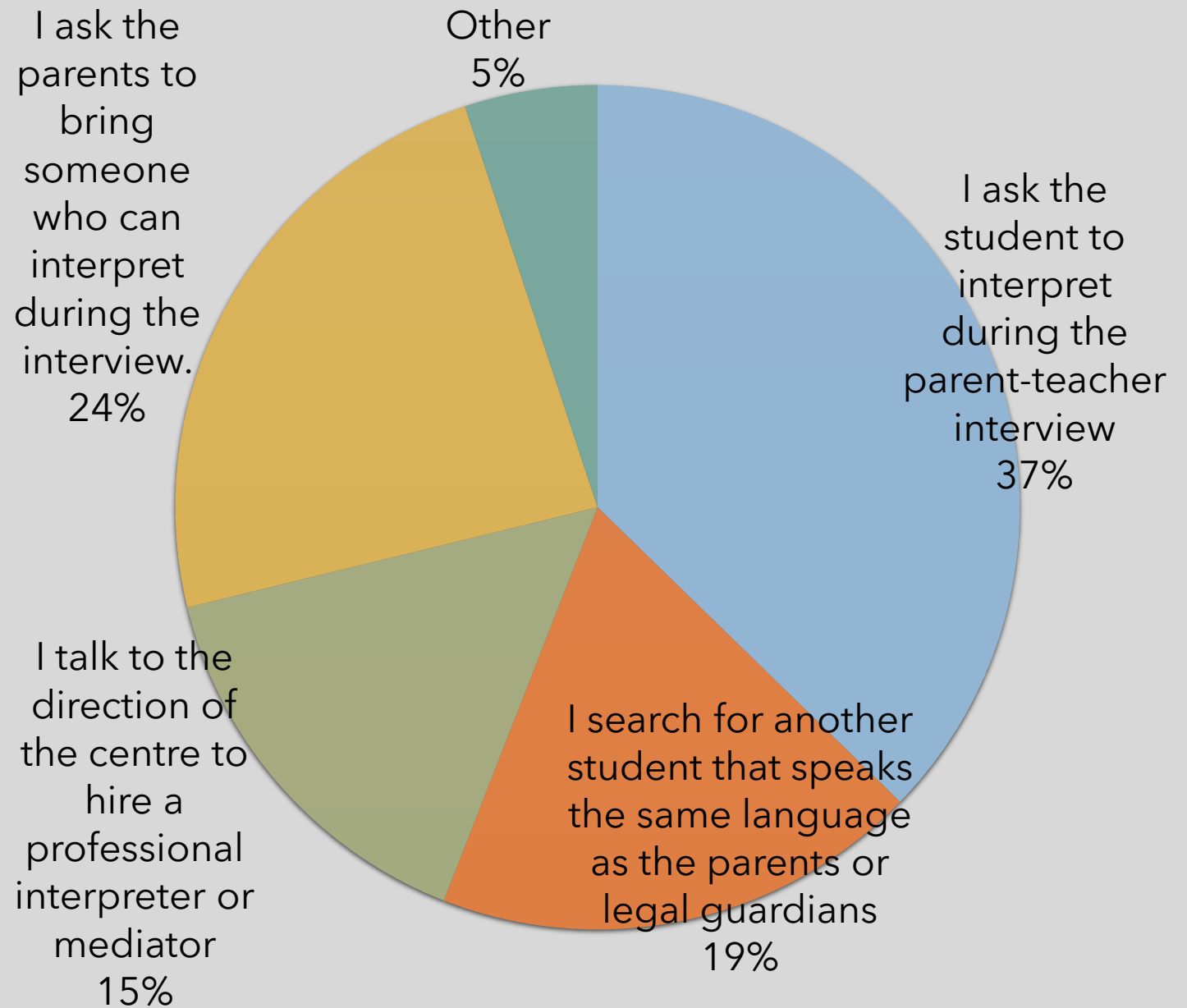
Distribution of questionnaires (social services)

1. Contact with the General Director of Social Services in Catalonia
2. The questionnaire is sent to 106 "basic areas" of social services in Catalonia
3. Period to answer: 4 February 2021 - 30 March 2021
4. Sample: 96 questionnaires from 17 counties (not only BCN province)

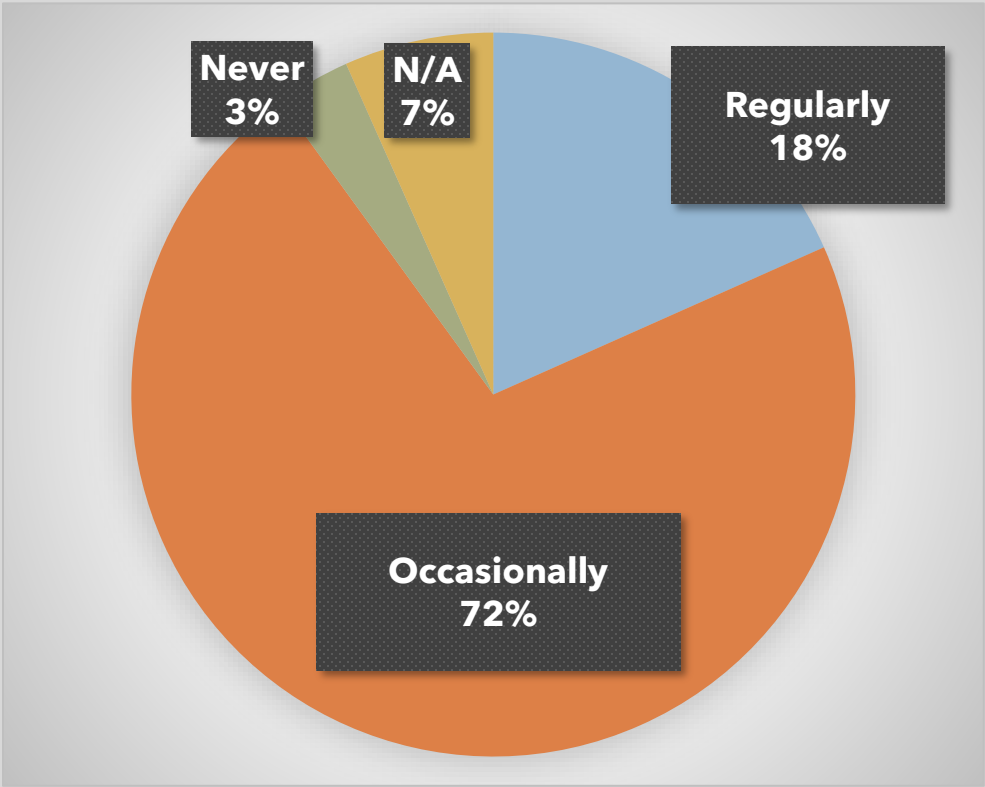


When you need to communicate with a student's parents or legal guardians and they have limited competency in Spanish or Catalan, what do you do?

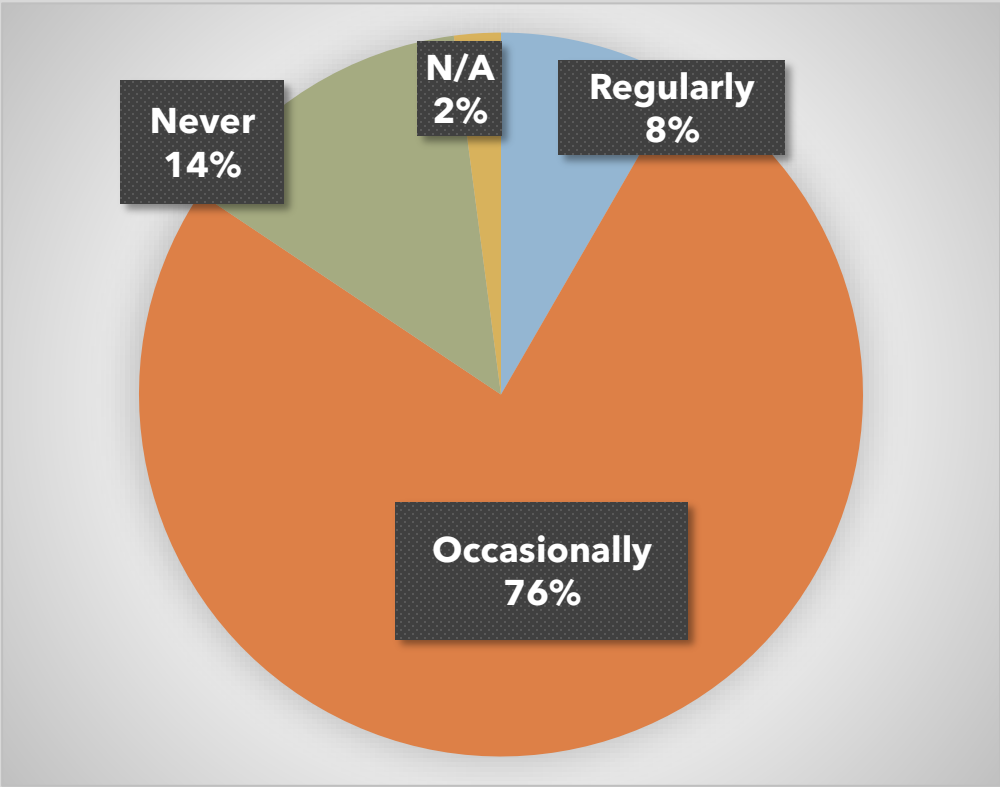
(only education)



How often does CLB occur in your centre?



Education



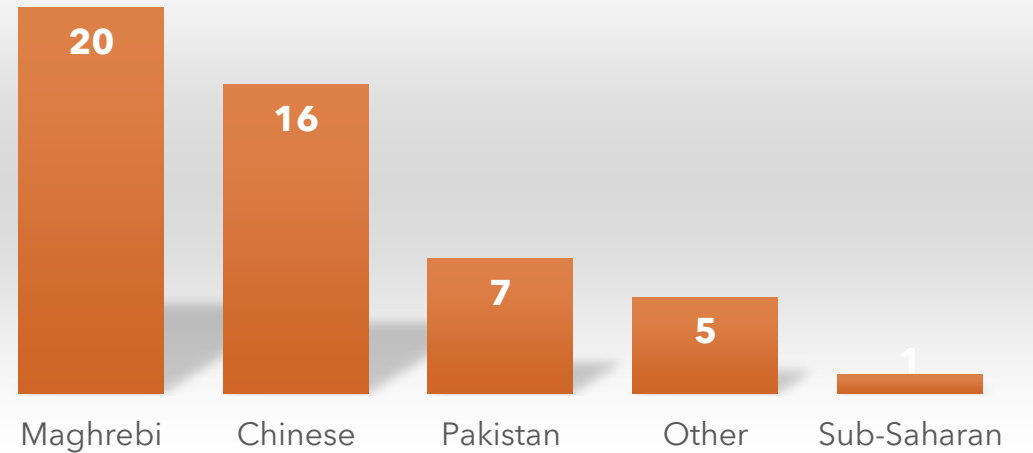
Social services

Which community uses CLB most frequently?

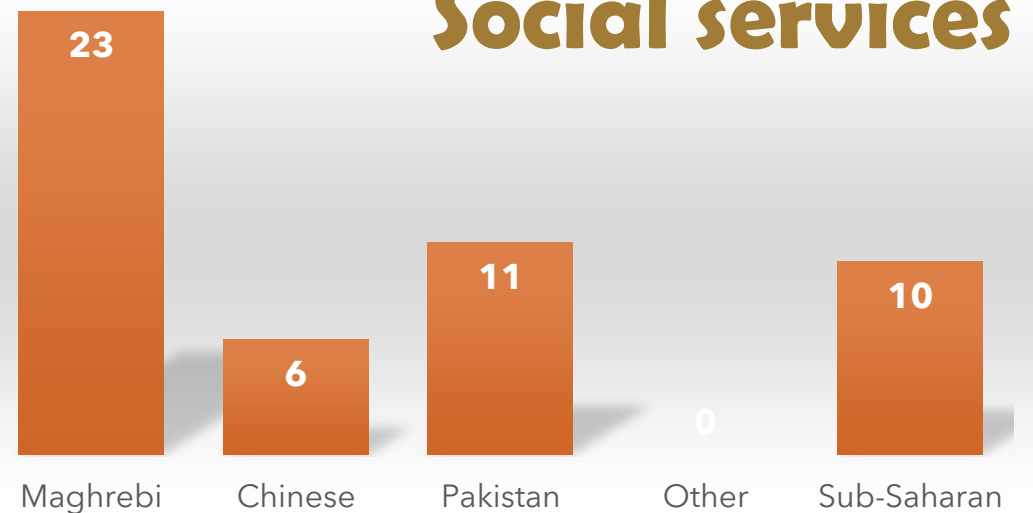
3. Ordeneu els col·lectius següents segons la freqüència d'ús de la ILM. (5 = el més freqüent, 1 = el menys freqüent)

	1	2	3	4	5
Magribí	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Subsaharià	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paquistanès	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Xinès	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Altres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Education

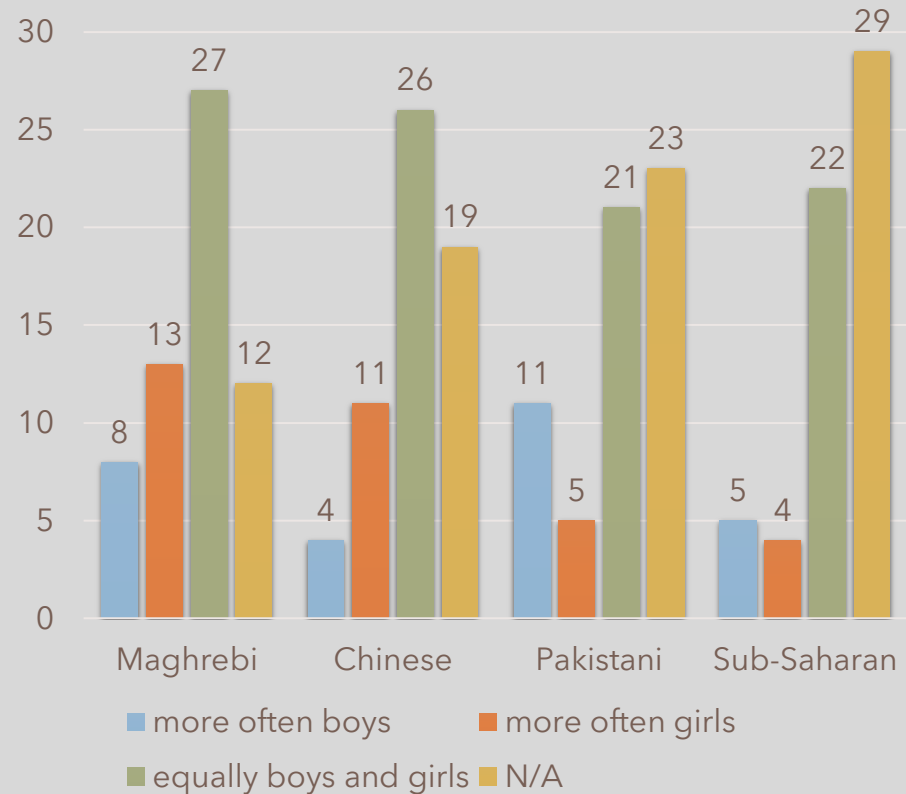


Social services



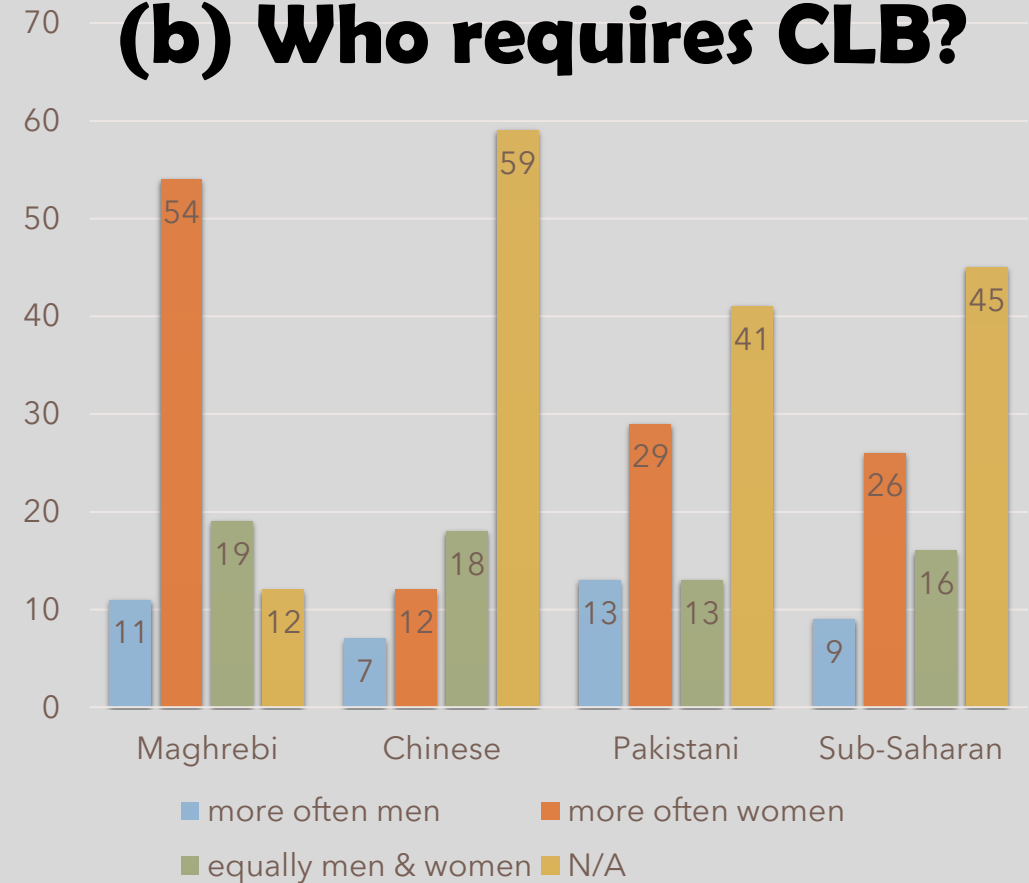
Gender issues

(a) Who performs CLB?



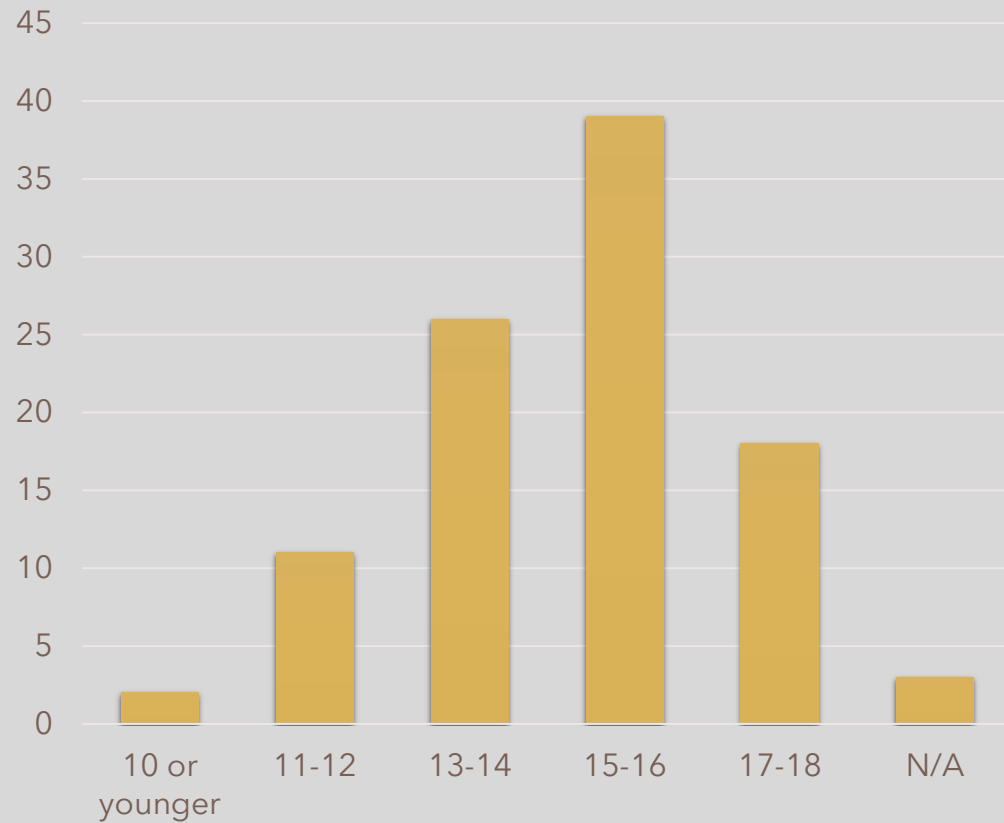
Education

(b) Who requires CLB?

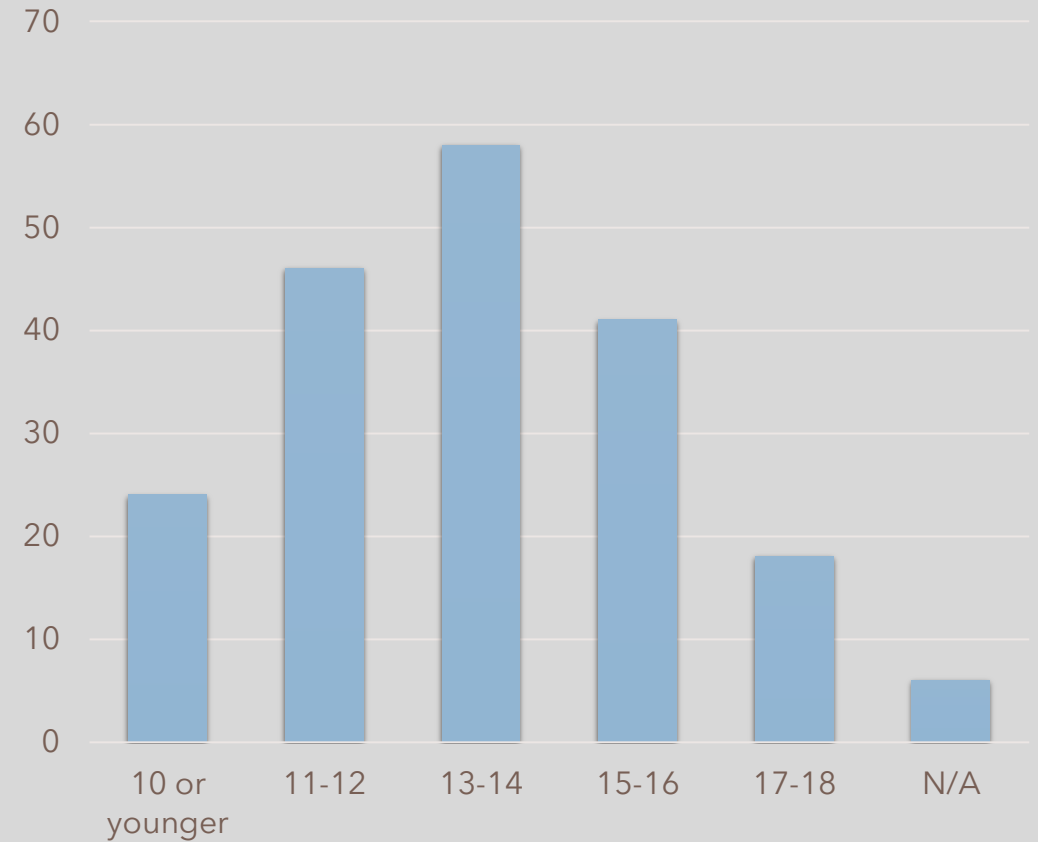


Social services

What is the most frequent age range?

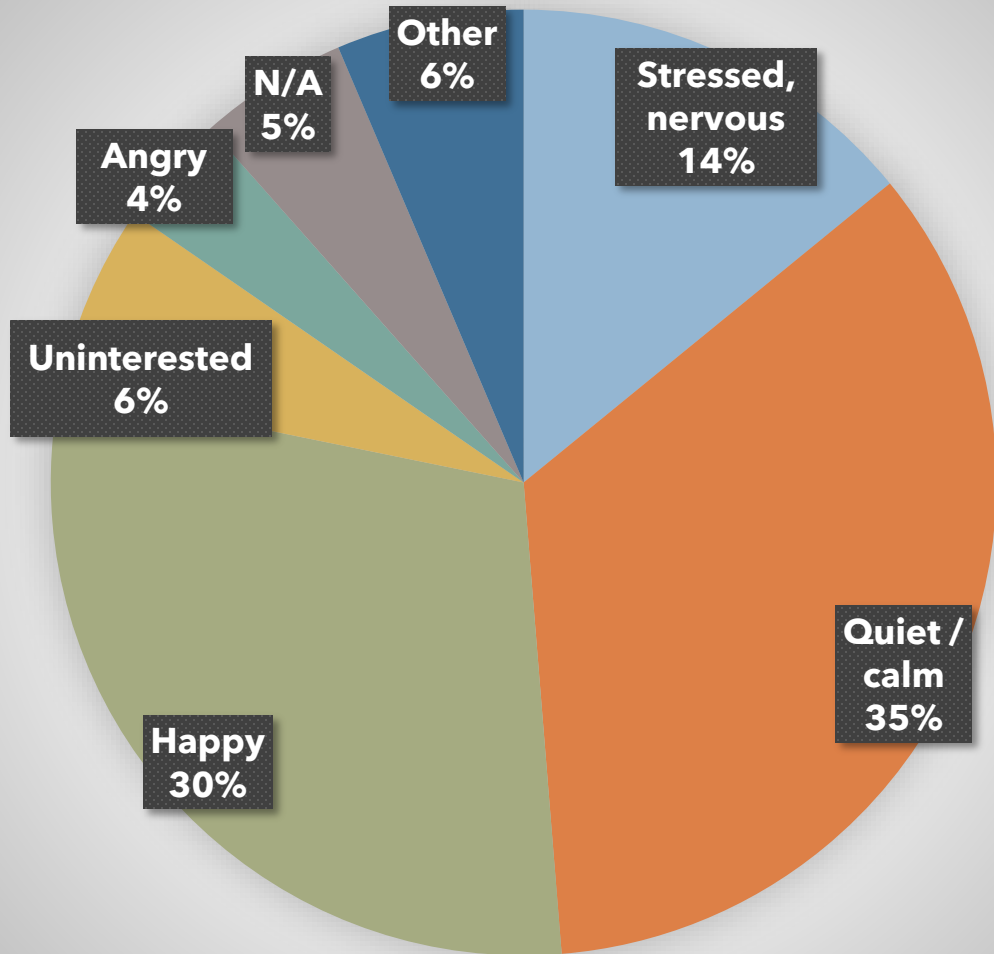


Education

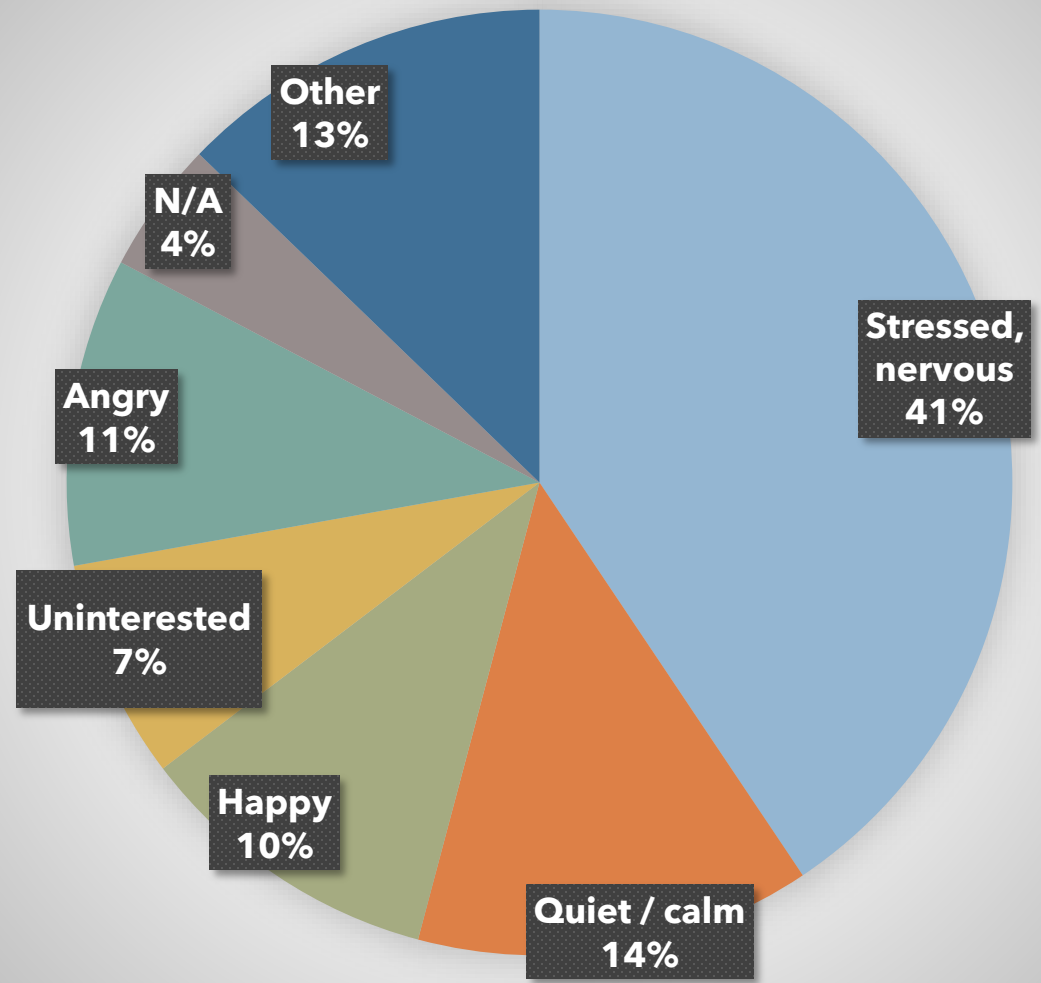


Social services

Emotional impact



Education



Social services

Emotional impact

In the interviews

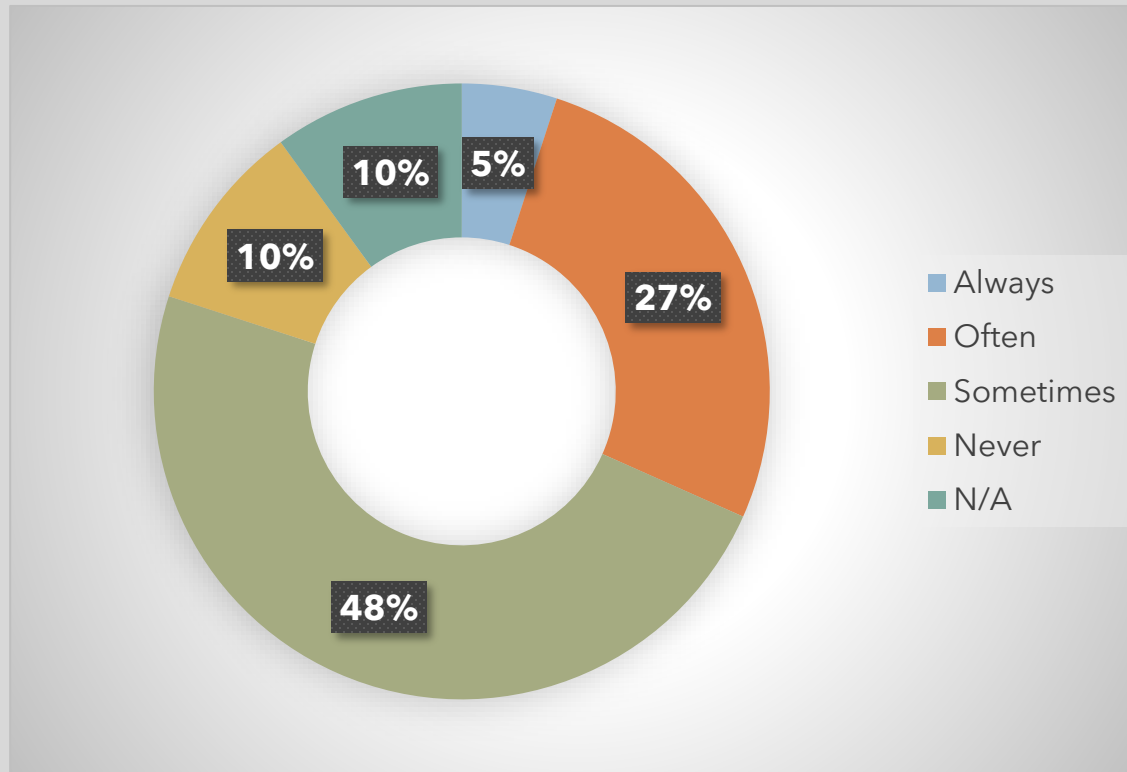
- **Positive feelings:** privileged practice; being able to help others; feel good; rewarding; gained prominence and felt recognized; being proud of themselves.

Aisha: Yes, it was rewarding, as a fact of contributing and being able to help another who is in the same situation as you, when you arrived.

- **Negative feelings:** obligation; problem; discomfort; concern; guilty; responsibility (to others when help needed, to the community, not prepared for, not enough knowledge or skills, shame and embarrassment).

Li Hua: I saw myself responsible, but it's a responsibility that forces you... you don't get it... I was too small and I thought I shouldn't play that role, that role of translator, because I wasn't ready yet.

Does CLB affect teacher-student relationship?



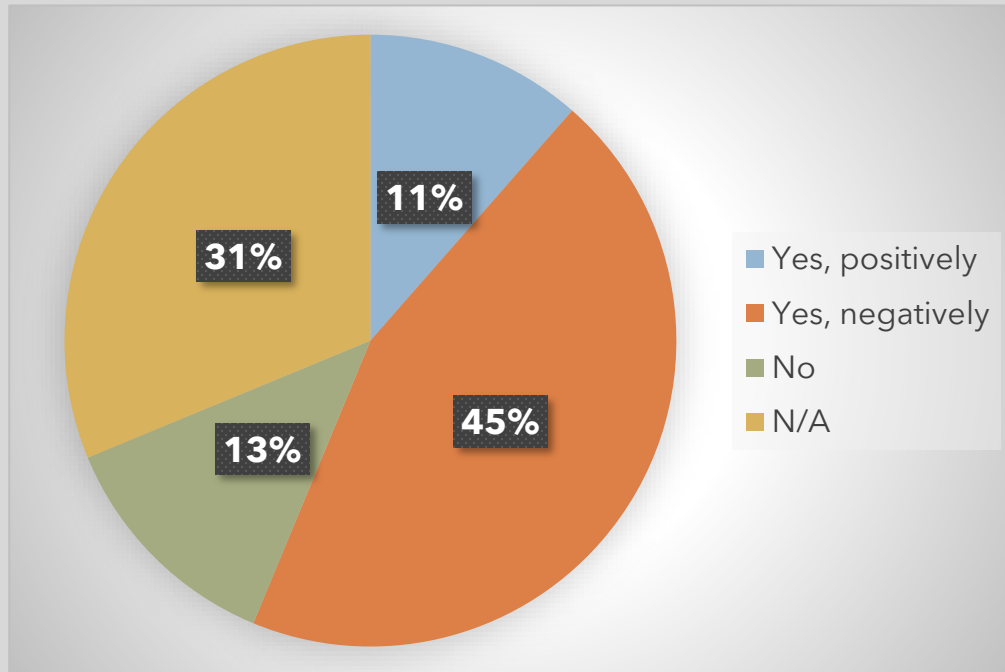
Education

Interviews:

- relationship improved
- feeling of being trusted
- feeling of being valued

Meiling: of course, if the teacher is asking you to do an intercultural mediation task, that's because they trust you, otherwise they wouldn't tell you. So yes, there is this feeling that "ah, he trusts me, that's why he asked me, otherwise he wouldn't ask me, he has confidence that I'm going to do it right, that's why he's asking me".

Does CLB affect children's emotional and intellectual development?



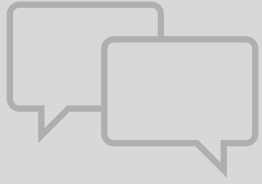
Social services

Interviews:

- learning experience: being able to empathize with others, improvements in their ability to communicate

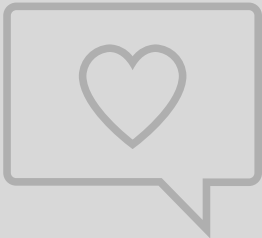
Yue: I saw a change in this... because I was very shy, I was afraid to speak to the public and with this practice I was being forced. Over time you also mature and feel that it's easier ... easier ... yes.

Open comments in questionnaires (education)

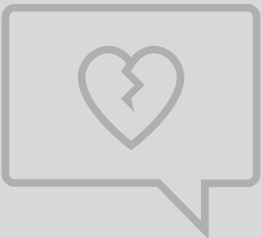


I never know if he/she's translating what I'm really saying, he/she doesn't generate much confidence.

When I have found myself in such situations, the interview has proved chaotic and non-effective.



In general, these are positive experiences for students, as long as they are not disciplinary meetings (...). They feel valued.



This task is not shared among students of the same origin, it always falls to the same person in particular, the student who is most trusted (...). This creates exhaustion and anger when it involves missing class and the student does not want to.

Conclusions

1. Common practice with little visibility
2. CLB incidence is proportional to the presence of the group
3. Perspectives on emotions collide: positive for teachers, negative for exCLBs (but possible bias due to the type of question)
4. Need of more qualitative studies in our context
5. CLB as a proposal for training and raising awareness
6. Work-in-progress – stay tuned!



Literature

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Thank you!



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<https://pagines.uab.cat/eylbid/es>