

Teacher perceptions on the role of language assistants in bilingual physical education

Percepciones del profesorado sobre el rol del auxiliar de conversación en la educación física bilingüe

Alfonso Francisco Ordóñez Dios*
Beatriz Polo Recuero**

Recibido: 07-11-2019
Aceptado: 23-04-2020

Abstract

The inclusion of Language Assistants as teaching support in different subjects has acquired a unique value up to the point of becoming a key element in different bilingual education programs such as that of the Community of Madrid. In this Community, this leading figure has acquired such relevance and presence that it is necessary to carry out studies to describe its impact on specific subjects like Physical Education as it is one of the most selected subjects to be taught in a foreign language within the bilingual program of this region. In this research, an 'ad hoc' questionnaire has been designed, validated and administered to 87 Physical Education specialists who carried out this subject in a foreign language and co-taught with Language Assistants in bilingual public schools during 2018-19 school year. Teachers recognized, among other things, poor knowledge of Language Assistants' roles, linguistic support for teachers as their main role, the assistant's lack of knowledge of Physical Education contents as the most restricting reason for their involvement in class, and a general view of scarce help in this subject. These results should draw teachers and administration attention requiring improvements not only in their employment in class but also in the process of hiring them to maximize their potential in this subject and justify the monetary effort.

Keywords

Physical education, Language assistants, Roles, Bilingualism, Teacher perceptions

Resumen

La incorporación de Auxiliares de Conversación como apoyo al profesorado especialista de las distintas materias ha adquirido un valor singular hasta el punto de llegar a ser un elemento clave en los diferentes programas de enseñanza bilingüe como el de la Comunidad de Madrid. En esta Comunidad, esta figura ha adquirido tal relevancia y presencia que resulta necesaria la realización de estudios que describan el impacto de esta figura en materias concretas como la asignatura de Educación Física al ser una de las más seleccionadas para ser impartida en otra lengua dentro de su Programa Bilingüe. Para esta investigación se ha diseñado, validado y administrado un cuestionario 'ad hoc' a 87 especialistas de Educación Física que desarrollaron esta asignatura en una lengua extranjera y colaboraron con Auxiliares de Conversación en colegios e institutos públicos bilingües durante el curso 2018-19. El profesorado encuestado reconoció, entre otras cosas, un escaso conocimiento de las funciones atribuidas a estas figuras, el apoyo lingüístico al profesorado como su principal función, la falta de conocimiento de los contenidos específicos de la materia como motivo más limitante para su aprovechamiento y una visión generalizada de poca ayuda. Estos resultados deberían ser motivo de cierta atención requiriendo la realización inmediata de mejoras no solo en el empleo sino también en el proceso de contratación de estas figuras para aprovechar al máximo su valor potencial en esta asignatura.

Palabras clave

Educación física, Auxiliares de conversación, Roles, Bilingüismo, Percepciones del profesorado

* Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
afordonez@educa.madrid.org

** Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

1. Introduction

The expansion of bilingual education programs is, today, a reality across Europe, with almost all European countries initiating and developing the implementation of programs in general education with the aim of promoting foreign language learning (Perez-Cañado, 2016). In Spain, its implementation has spread specially rapidly establishing itself as a trend in the regional educational systems (Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster-Herrarte, 2010) and, in the case of the Community of Madrid — hereinafter CM— where this study has been carried out, it has had an extensive implementation being established in 385 elementary public schools (46% of all public elementary schools) and in 166 public high schools (51% of all public high schools) which took part in both bilingual programs coexisting in this region in 2018-19¹.

In addition, to strengthen the implementation of these programs, the Department of Education and Research of the Community of Madrid has been signing annual agreements with the Ministry of Education allowing to annually select and manage the presence and collaboration of foreign Language Assistants — hereinafter LA —. They are young university graduates from English-speaking countries who support the work of teachers in the classroom, in addition to providing a valuable cultural and linguistic input who will dedicate 16 hours per week to support teachers over 4 consecutive days of the week (Comunidad de Madrid, 2019). Thus, their presence in the bilingual schools of this Community has grown considerably, going from 26 LA in 2004-2005 to 1477 and 797 in both educational stages, respectively (elementary and high schools) in 2018-2019²; becoming a fully established reality involving the 69% of the total budget for the Bilingual Program of his region³.

In this way, different studies define these resources as a very positive element for the teaching process in bilingual contexts (Llaneza-Villanueva, 2016; Buckingham, 2016, 2018a, 2018b) since, for instance, their presence brings a greater quality to the linguistic competence of non-native teachers which otherwise would be difficult to achieve (Gorsuch, 2002; Martin-Jones and Saxena, 2003; Carless, 2006; Caparros-Cabezas, 2010), improves students language proficiency by doubling the chances to interact with competent communicators, increasing the quantity and quality of inputs and outputs (Dafouz and Hibler, 2013; Tobin and Abello-Contesse, 2013; Gerena and Ramirez-Verdugo, 2014; Im and Martin, 2015) facilitating natural interaction in the second language during the teaching and learning process (Fernandez-Fernandez and Halbach, 2011), increases student motivation to use the foreign language (Scobling, 2011; Lova-Mellado and Bolarin-Martinez, 2015) and, finally, provides unique resources of their countries to attract and engage students in activities being considered as an element of cultural enrichment (Tobin and Abello-Contesse, 2013; Gómez-Parra, 2020).

However, despite being a figure increasingly defended and present in bilingual educational settings, no teaching background is required to become a Language Assistant in the CM (B.O.E., 2019) and their roles can be sometimes misinterpreted and misunderstood by teachers and LA themselves, causing underemployment and, often-undesirable results (Buckingham, 2016, 2018a). Even more in a subject such as Physical Education — hereinafter PE — which, despite being one of the most chosen subjects in bilingual programs (Ramos-Calvo and Ruiz-Omeñaca, 2011; Salvador Garcia, Chiva-Bartoll and Capella-Peris, 2019) and specially in the Bilingual Program of this region, not a single study analysing their presence and contributions has been found. In addition, the substantial budgetary effort that this Community is making, supports the importance of carrying out studies that analyse the possible roles and effects that LA are actually having in different curriculum subjects such as PE to find out to what extent their presence really does help and facilitate the teaching process for PE teachers.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this research was to understand and analyse PE teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the roles and tasks to be performed by the LA under current regulations and official documents⁴, to what extent such roles and tasks are carried out in fact in PE lessons and, finally, the utility of the LA in PE classes. To accomplish that, this objective was addressed and analysed around five dimensions:

- Teachers' knowledge about the roles attributed to the/a LA under current regulations and official documents.
- Teachers' co-working experiences with the LA in PE.
- The extent to which the LA roles and tasks are really fulfilled in PE lessons.
- Main reasons that may hamper the use of this figure in PE lessons.
- Overall teacher assessment on the utility and convenience of having the LA in PE lessons.

3. Methodology

For this research, an 'ad hoc' questionnaire was designed, validated and provided for a qualitative descriptive design.

3.1. Instrument

In order to carry out this study, the questionnaire was chosen for its ability to structure data and its high efficiency to obtain information from a large population. It also allows

retrieving information about respondents' past events such as their behaviour in the past and being able to adapt itself to almost any population (Garcia-Ferrando, Alvira-Martin & Ibañez-Alonso, 2010).

Regarding the sequence of questions, this questionnaire began with eight socio-demographic questions to obtain sample biographical information, and contained fifteen opinion-based questions to collect PE teachers' points of view about their experiences with the LA divided in five dimensions as mentioned above: degree of teachers' knowledge about the roles attributed to LA (one item), teachers' co-working experiences with LA in PE (one item), the extent to which LA roles and tasks are really fulfilled in PE lessons (nine items), main reasons that may hinder the use of LA in PE lessons (two items) and overall teacher assessment on the LA utility in PE lessons (two items). The type of questions used ranged from multiple-choice questions to Likert-type questions (rate on a scale of 0 to 3).

In order to validate it, standard procedures were followed prior to its application using the expert judgment procedure involving eight experts, four PhD in Physical Education and Sport from the Autonomous University of Madrid and the University of Barcelona with extensive experience in PE teaching and bilingual PE through a CLIL approach. The other experts were four teaching specialists in PE (two from elementary and two from secondary education) with over seven years' experience of teaching this subject in a foreign language (English) and co-teaching with LA for more than three school years. They were asked to provide feedback on the relevance, clarity, and suitability of the items and to offer suggestions for improvement. External experts unanimously agreed on the suitability of the questionnaire, length, content (no question was considered redundant), terminology and instructions, although some items were reformulated to make them more accurate and understandable.

Once the suggestions of the experts were introduced, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of ten specialists in bilingual PE who met exactly the same requirements of the sample under study. Their answers allowed us to continue to refine the questionnaire in terms of ambiguity, confusion or duplication and enabled the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha (.703) for internal consistency representing moderate reliability becoming an acceptable measuring instrument (Castañeda, Cabrera, Navarro and De Vries, 2010).

3.2. Procedure

After the questionnaire validation, contact was established with all primary and secondary bilingual public schools in this region in 2018/2019 (551 schools in total) through their institutional e-mail obtaining, in the end, 87 PE teachers who agreed to take part in this study. After getting their contact emails they were sent a link so that the members

involved in this study could complete the questionnaire through Google Drive between May and June 2019.

The data was collected, filtered, coded and finally analysed using the software package IBM SPSS Statistics (25.0). A descriptive and inferential analysis was performed. The mean was used as a measure of central tendency and standard deviation as a measure of dispersion, as well as frequencies and percentages. Also, in appropriate cases, possible associations between variables (chi-squared) were studied.

3.3. Sample

The final sample that was accessed using a non-probabilistic method was 87 PE specialists who delivered this subject in a foreign language in public schools (Primary and Secondary Education) during the year 2018/19 and who had previously worked together with LA in PE. During this school year, there were a total of 1103⁵ PE qualified teachers in a foreign language in this Region; however, not all of them met the requirements to participate in this study because, despite being qualified, many of them had never worked with LA. The socio-demographic characteristics of our sample are described in Table 1.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 87)

	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
1. Gender			5. Educational Stage		
Man	43	49.4	Primary	43	49.4
Woman	44	50.6	Secondary / High School	44	50.6
2. Age group			6. Linguistic Certification		
Less than 30 years	8	9.2	Regional Certification (until 2010)	18	20.9
Between 30 - 45 years	67	77.0	Regional Certification Test	27	31.4
More than 45 years	12	13.8	External Institution	41	47.7
3. Administrative Status			7. Teaching experience with LA		
Interim/Temporary	35	40.2	Less than 3 years	45	51.7
Civil Servant	52	59.8	Between 3 - 8 years	32	36.8
4. Teaching experience in bilingual PE			Over 8 years	10	11.5
Less than 3 years	29	33.3			
Between 3 - 8 years	43	49.4			
Over 8 years	15	17.2			

Source: Self-elaboration

4. Results and discussion

Apart from the socio-demographic characteristics shown in Table 1, the results obtained from the analysis are shown below.

4.1. Teachers' knowledge about the roles attributed to LA

In relation to the teachers' knowledge of the LA roles according to the current legislation and official documents, Table 2 shows how responses are polarised into two groups, with more than half of the surveyed teachers claiming to not know anything or only know a little about these functions ($x = 1.53$; $\sigma = 0.900$).

Table 2

Teachers' knowledge of LA roles (%)

	Not at all	A little	Some	Much
Total	11.5	40.2	32.2	16.1
Gender				
Man	16.3	46.5	18.6	18.6
Woman	6.8	34.1	45.5	13.6
Age				
Less than 30 years	25.0	50.0	0.0	25.0
Between 30 - 45 years	10.4	44.8	32.8	11.9
More than 45 years	8.3	8.3	50.0	33.3
Administrative Status				
Interim/Temporary	22.9	40.0	25.7	11.4
Civil Servant	3.8	40.4	36.5	19.2
Teaching experience in bilingual PE				
Less than 3 years	13.8	58.6	17.2	10.3
Between 3 - 8 years	11.6	32.6	39.5	16.3
Over 8 years	6.7	26.7	40.0	26.7
Linguistic Certification				
Regional Certification (until 2010)	5.6	22.2	33.3	38.9
Regional Certification Test	3.7	40.7	40.7	14.8
External Institution	17.1	48.8	26.8	7.3
Teaching experience with LA				
Less than 3 years	13.3	60.0	17.8	8.9
Between 3 - 8 years	12.5	18.8	53.1	15.6
Over 8 years	0.0	20.0	30.0	50.0

Source: Self-elaboration

Table 2 reflects how, referring to the administrative status, civil servants recognized a greater knowledge of these roles than temporary teachers obtaining significant differences ($p = .043$, $\alpha = 0.05$) in the same vein that teachers who achieved their linguistic accreditation through Regional Certification (until 2010) compared to their peers who obtained it through other procedures ($p = .028$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Finally, from the analysis of the age ($p = .060$, $\alpha = 0.05$), teaching experience in bilingual PE ($p = .182$, $\alpha = 0.05$) and teaching experience with an LA ($p = .000$, $\alpha = 0.05$) a similar trend is obtained, showing a greater awareness of these roles as these variables increased. Despite this, significant differences were only found in the last variable.

The knowledge of the roles and tasks assigned to LA by teachers has a great importance because, as Tucker (2009) and Codo and McDaid (2019) affirm, the lack of awareness of LA roles can cause significant stress on teachers when using this bilingual assistance and mismatch their expectations that should not be attributable only to LA. For instance, Llana-Villanueva (2016) detected a widespread feeling among teachers, administrators and LA, by which the role of the latter in the school and classroom was not sufficiently defined, in line with other research which showed how this situation of uncertainty was usually fairly widespread (Tobin and Abello-Contesse, 2013; Ohtani, 2010).

4.2. Teachers' co-teaching experiences with LA in PE

Concerning the results, of this dimension, the line in Figure 1 represents the answers obtained when teachers were asked about what their experiences were like with an LA in PE in general terms and up to that point. More than half of the teachers recognized that these experiences were only somewhat positive ($\chi = 1.23$; $\sigma = 0.758$).

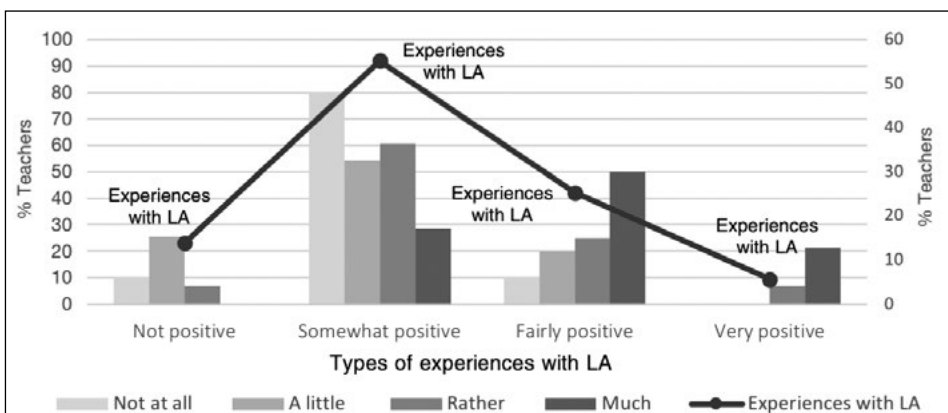


Figure 1. Experiences with LA in PE (%) and Experiences with LA in PE regarding teacher knowledge about LA roles (%). Source: Self-elaborations

Consequently, if a broad profile can be made of PE teachers who acknowledge the best experiences with LA, it might be said that those who were older ($p = .163$, $\alpha = 0.05$), civil servants ($p = .082$, $\alpha = 0.05$), with more than eight years' teaching experience in PE in a foreign language ($p = .536$, $\alpha = 0.05$), who taught in Primary Education ($p = .190$, $\alpha = 0.05$), who obtained their linguistic accreditation through the Regional Certification (until 2010) ($p = .022$, $\alpha = 0.05$) and, above all, with more than 3 years of experience working together with the/an LA ($p = .001$, $\alpha = 0.05$) are likely to have a positive experience.

Moreover, Figure 1 shows how, if teachers' knowledge of LA roles correlates with the type of co-teaching experiences with them, significant differences are obtained ($p = .006$, $\alpha = 0.05$). As the teacher's knowledge of these roles increased, their co-working experiences with LA improved. Therefore, the more clearly the teacher sees the roles that can be performed by LA, the more positive and productive the experiences with these figures will be.

4.3. Extent to which the LA roles and tasks are really fulfilled in PE lessons

After studying the LA roles in different schools of the CM, Buckingham (2016) concludes that despite teachers and LAs having common expectations at the beginning of the school year regarding the LA's role, these do not always correspond to the roles they perform in reality. There is a mismatch sometimes between the descriptions of their role and those in the official documents. In this regard, Table 3 shows the teacher's opinions about the extent to which the LA roles and tasks established by Order 2670/2009 (B.O.C.M., 2009) and Official Documents (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019; Comunidad de Madrid, 2019) are really fulfilled in PE lessons.

Table 3

Extent to which LA roles and tasks are really fulfilled in PE (%)

	Never (0)	Rarely (1)	Often (2)	Quite Often (3)	Mean	SD
1. Help teachers plan their lessons providing ideas, changes and other views	42.5	46.0	10.3	1.1	0.70	0.701
2. Help teacher in the creation of teaching materials in the foreign language	36.8	37.9	18.4	6.9	0.95	0.914
3. Incorporate cultural aspects as different kinds of sports, traditional games or dances.	32.2	37.9	17.2	12.6	1.10	1.000

Continue in the following page >>

>> *Continued from previous page*

4. Work on their own with a small group of students under teacher supervision	14.9	27.6	29.9	27.6	1.70	1.036
5. Help students individually when it is necessary providing an extra support to students with more difficulties	18.4	31.0	28.7	21.8	1.54	1.032
6. Teach alongside the teacher and under his/her supervision (explanation and implementation of specific content in the foreign language)	11.5	32.2	34.5	21.8	1.67	0.948
7. Reinforcing the student's oral skills in the foreign language	11.5	27.6	44.8	16.1	1.66	0.887
8. Encourage students' interest in the use of the foreign language	14.9	26.4	33.3	25.3	1.69	1.015
9. Provide teacher linguistic support in the classroom	6.0	32.1	39.3	22.6	1.79	0.865

Source: *Self-elaboration*

The results shown in Table 3 reflect how the linguistic support provided by them in the class was the most frequent role done in PE classes with more than 60% of teachers recognizing that this task was frequently or very frequently done. This role is also highlighted by Martin-Jones and Saxena (2003) and Caparros-Cabezas (2010) who support the presence of an LA in the classroom providing higher quality in the teacher's linguistic competence which otherwise would be difficult to achieve. Likewise, this function was chosen by most teachers with more experience working with LA since about 90% of them confirmed this role often or quite often ($p = .147$, $\alpha = 0.05$). These results also match the results obtained by Gorsuch (2002), who, after interviewing a total of 884 Japanese English teachers, showed that those teachers who had been in touch the most with LA reported perceived higher levels of oral proficiency in English in class than teachers with limited or no contact with this leading figure, so their presence might involve or require greater use of English in the educational context.

Secondly, the opportunity to use the LA to work in smaller groups is the second most commonly reported role in PE assuming that their presence represents an additional resource always working under the teacher's supervision. That entails the chance to provide a deeper individual attention that cannot be disregarded or ignored by teachers (Llaneza- Villanueva, 2016).

Another LA role commonly carried out in PE is the increase in student motivation and interest in the use of the foreign language in class. This role seems to be more acknowledged by Primary teachers than the Secondary ($p = .027$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Thus, this motivational aspect is studied by different researchers who, among other things, found a positive impact for students in two main areas: a greater motivation for production and a greater comprehension capacity (Carless, 2006; Carless and Walker, 2006) by offering a real and authentic context, forcing the student to employ the foreign language and make an effort to express him or herself and be understood (Caparros-Cabezas, 2010; Lova-Mellado and Bolarin-Martinez, 2015; Llana-Villanueva, 2016) in a more positive and natural situation (Tajino and Tajino, 2000).

However, among the less performed roles by LA in PE, Table 3 shows how a large majority of teachers recognized that the assistance in planning lessons and providing ideas, changes, and other views was never or rarely carried out. These results should not be surprising since there is no requirement in the hiring process of foreign LA⁶ including any training or teaching experience or knowledge of the subjects put in practice, so it is to be expected that this figure is not used as an aid for planning lessons of this or other subjects. Nevertheless, these results differ from those obtained by Carless (2006) who recognized that the presence of LA was useful in planning and implementing new ideas and activities, defining them as a force of change pushing teachers to reflect on their own teaching methods.

Regarding the creation of teaching materials in the foreign language, promoting initiatives to support the teaching and learning process of languages and becoming a source of ideas and creativity to generate new resources, is recognized as one of the possible functions for LA. However, Table 3 shows how this role is the second least performed by LA in this subject where more than one-third of the respondents recognized that they never used them for it and a similar percentage on rare occasions. This may be an area for improvement, since, as stated by Salvador Garcia and Chiva-Bartoll (2017), the use of a foreign language in PE tasks and the lack of specific materials for this subject, require a greater effort to ensure a proper understanding of the explanations delivered in this language; so the collaboration of these figures in this field can be very useful.

Finally, the inclusion of cultural aspects (sports, traditional games, dances, etc.) seems to be the third least role performed by LA in PE lessons where two out of three teachers surveyed reported never or rarely employing LA in this task, despite being one of the most important reasons for their presence in our education system. In this sense, Tobin and Abello-Contesse (2013) consider their presence as a benchmark for the development of a language under the idea that they contribute to a more natural approach to the reference countries defining them as "cultural ambassadors". So, this role should be exploited in this subject because the practice of different kinds of sports, games or dances can perfectly complement the curriculum of this subject.

4.4. Main reasons that may hamper the use of LA in PE lessons

Regarding the level of difficulty experienced by teachers integrating these figures in PE lessons, teachers recognized to have or to have had some difficulties in it, in particular, a significant number of teachers (43%) admitted to having many difficulties ($x = 1.42$; $\sigma = 0.913$).

Referring to the main reasons that may have made the LA inclusion more difficult in PE, teachers were given the option to select four potential reasons for the total submitted in order to establish a hierarchical order with those selected the most. The results obtained are presented in Table 4 where the percentages are based on the number of cases, that is, the percentage of teachers who selected each reason.

Table 4

Main reasons that may hamper the use of LA in PE (% cases)

1. Lack of specific PE contents knowledge by LA	54.7
2. Lack of specific PE terminology knowledge by LA	48.8
3. Lack of teaching training in PE by LA	46.5
4. Certain difficulties to maintain their authority over the class-group by LA	46.5
5. Almost all activities are based on motor skill	38.4
6. Lack of time to plan and organize LA roles and tasks in PE lessons	36.0
7. Lack of interest to collaborate in PE lesson by LA	26.7
8. Lack of methodological teacher training to properly work with LA	29.1
9. Communication and understanding problems with LA due to the language (teacher-LA)	0.0

Source: Self-elaboration

As Table 4 shows, the reasons hindering the use of LA chosen by a higher percentage of teachers are the lack of specific PE contents knowledge, lack of specific PE terminology knowledge by LA, and their lack of teaching training in PE, as well as the LA's difficulties to maintain their authority over the class-group. Indeed, the specific characteristics of this subject make it necessary, to not only have a basic knowledge of the different contents and specific terms to establish fruitful interactions with students, but also to master and apply a number of specific teaching strategies due to its practical essence, which differ considerably from those applied in the conventional classroom.

These results support those obtained by Liu (2008), Scobling (2011), Tobin and Abel-lo-Contesse (2013), Gerena and Ramirez-Verdugo (2014) and Buckingham (2016) who recognized that among the possible difficulties encountered in working together with an LA, the lack of teaching experience and teaching training from this figure was seen by the

teachers as an important deficiency. This difficulty was also found by Ohtani (2010) after analysing the LA figure in the Japanese Exchange Program and Training, claiming that many of the assistants who took part in this program had a scarce background and experience in the learning and teaching process, which hindered their inclusion and optimal performance of their duties. On the contrary, these limitations did not appear in the studies carried out by Carless (2006) and Carless and Walker (2006), in Hong Kong, since all NETs (Native English Teachers) Programs carried out hired only trained and experienced native teachers. So this fact can be a key element to optimize their collaborative activity.

In this way, Laorden-Gutierrez and Peñafiel-Pedrosa (2010), Llana-Villanueva (2016) and Buckingham (2016) suggest that to make a proper use of LAs as a valuable human resource³, a review of the LA training process is necessary by firstly, defining the ideal roles of the assistants by organizations and, secondly, balancing them with what happens in the reality of the different subjects. This must be effectively communicated in the program documentation to find the formula to more accurately assess the LA teaching training and receive appropriate training to support and prepare them.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that no teacher saw communication and understanding problems with LA due to the language as a reason to hinder its use in PE. The same is true of the lack of interest to collaborate in PE; it is not considered a problem. This differs from Ohtani's (2010) finding that some teachers had difficulties in working together with LAs because they felt that some of them were not really interested in teaching. Furthermore, the possible poor methodological teacher training to properly use this resource in PE lessons was selected as the third least impactful reason that may have an influence on the use of LA. This also differs from Gerena and Ramirez-Verdugo (2014) and Buckingham (2016) findings where, despite the assistant functions or roles being clearly defined, the lack of knowledge or lack of teacher training was an important handicap in order to optimise their presence.

A deeper analysis of the results is shown in Table 5 which reflects how these reasons may vary depending on certain factors such as age, teaching experience in bilingual PE and educational stage.

Table 5

Main reasons that may hamper the use of LA in PE depending on age, bilingual experience in PE and educational stage (% cases)

	Age			Bilingual teaching experience PE			Educational Stage	
	< 30 years	30-45 years	> 45 years	< 3 years	3-8 years	> 8 years	Primary	High school
Almost all activities are locomotive-type	37.5	37.9	41.7	35.7	46.5	20.0	39.5	37.2
Lack of methodological teacher training to properly work with LA	62.5	27.3	16.7	50.0	23.3	6.7	34.9	23.3
Lack of teaching training in PE by LA	12.5	51.5	41.7	35.7	48.8	60.0	51.2	41.9
Lack of specific PE contents knowledge by LA	37.5	60.6	33.3	64.3	51.2	46.7	39.5	69.8
Lack of specific PE terminology knowledge by LA	62.5	45.5	58.3	53.6	41.9	60.0	41.9	55.8
Certain difficulties to maintain their authority over the class-group by LA	25.0	51.5	33.3	39.3	48.8	53.3	39.5	53.8
Lack of interest to collaborate in PE lesson by LA	0.0	30.3	25.0	10.7	37.2	26.7	25.6	27.9
Communication and understanding problems with LA due to the language (teacher-LA)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lack of time to plan and organize LA roles and tasks in PE lessons	62.5	33.3	33.3	35.7	39.5	26.7	39.5	32.6

Source: Self-elaboration

According to age, Table 5 shows how the younger teachers (under 30 years) chose the lack of methodological training to properly use this figure in their PE lessons along with the lack of time to organize and plan its roles and functions as the main reasons. On the contrary, older teachers centered their choices around the lack of specific PE contents knowledge and lack of specific PE terminology knowledge by LA. Despite the aforementioned, and besides the possible roles and functions established by the administrations, how and when this relationship and planning should be done is not specified. This is an important gap, since, as Ohtani (2010) stated, neither teachers have the time necessary to coordinate and plan the different lessons with the LA, nor do they have the adequate training to assist and use this figure in the common progress of the lessons. Therefore, to overcome this training limitation and enrich their experience, it is necessary to emphasize Liu's work (2008) that adapted co-teaching models from a special education context (Cook and Friend, 1995; Thousand, Villa and Nevin's, 2006) to a bilingual setting describing a sequence of four different co-teaching models (one teaching-one assisting,

alternative teaching, station teaching and team teaching) according to the LA's teaching experience to maximize both co-teachers' teaching competence.

Regarding teaching experience in bilingual PE, it stands out that a significant percentage of teachers with less experience in this kind of education selected LAs' lack of methodological training to properly use assistants in their PE lessons as one of the main reasons, which is drastically reduced when experience increases. Finally, it seems these reasons may change according to educational stage,. Specifically, primary teachers chose the lack of teaching training in PE as the most important reason, while secondary or high school teachers selected the lack of specific PE contents knowledge by the LA. Therefore, the knowledge of methodological strategies to keep students' attention and facilitate their understanding of what is explained is essential at an early age and may explain why primary teachers highlight it as the main reason, while in secondary schools, due to an increase and specificity of content, a deeper content/subject? knowledge may be required to help the learning process. Similarly, the percentage of teachers who chose the LA's ability to maintain authority in class grows as the educational stage changes.

5. Overall teacher assessment on the LA usefulness and convenience in PE lessons

More than half of the surveyed teachers recognised that this degree of usefulness depended on who the LA was and what they were like, just as obtained by Buckingham (2016) who stated the great importance of adapting the selection process of these assistants to the specific and required needs of each subject to optimize the LA resource in lessons. Moreover, it is surprising how such a small percentage of teachers (12.6%) recognized, after having worked with them, a more positive assessment about their usefulness than at the beginning, which is similar to the percentage of teachers who confessed to having had an even more negative view after having worked with them (11.5%).

To conclude, teachers were asked about the extent to which the LA's presence had been, in general terms, a supporting resource for their PE lessons in a foreign language. In this way, Table 6 shows how slightly more than half of the surveyed teachers acknowledged that their presence was found not as supportive as it may be thought with only one-third of teachers confessing that these assistants were fairly or very helpful ($x = 1.38$; $\sigma = 0.831$).

Table 6

Level of LA support perceived by teachers in PE (%)

	Not at all	A little	Some	Much
Total	9.4	56.5	21.2	12.9

Source: Self-elaboration

These results are somewhat more critical than those presented by Hernando-Garijo, Hortigüela-Alcalá and Perez-Pueyo (2018), who confirmed how the optimal perception of this subject was associated with a greater use of the LA role.

6. Conclusions

The Bilingual Program is, today, fully introduced in the reality of the education system in the CM where LAs have become a key element and a valuable resource, thus settling their presence in many schools of this region. Because of the investment and effort involved to ensure their presence and participation in the classrooms, conducting research to analyse the contributions and effects that LAs may be having in this program as a whole and in specific subjects such as PE, becomes very necessary. Therefore, despite this significant expansion, it is worth considering whether their presence is really justified not only in terms of academic and linguistic benefits for teaching different subjects, such as PE, but also in terms of the budgetary effort required.

Accordingly, this study has tried to investigate the extent to which the different roles and functions assigned to LAs by the regulations and official documents take place in the reality of PE lessons. As shown, half of the surveyed teachers claimed to not know anything or only know a little about LA functions and how administrative status, linguistic certification and teaching experience with LAs correlate significantly with positive experiences with them. It is also shown how, as the teachers' knowledge of these roles increased, their co-working experiences with the LA improved. Therefore, the more clearly the teacher sees the roles that can be performed by the/an LA, the more positive and productive the experiences with these figures will be. This is why providing PE teachers with enough training opportunities to learn how to work with this figure in this specific subject is strongly advised to.

According to LA roles and tasks in PE lessons, the inclusion of cultural aspects (sports, traditional games, dances, etc.) seems to be the third least role performed despite being one of the most important reasons of their presence in our education system. Thus, PE teachers should take advantage of this role because the practice of a cultural variety of sports, games or dances can perfectly match the PE curriculum.

Lastly, more than half of the surveyed teachers acknowledged that the LA's presence was not found as supportive as it may be thought. So, although such findings cannot be compared with previous studies because of the lack of similar research on this subject, this should clearly receive due attention since evidence coming from this study shows that, in the case of PE, there is a certain disparity in the acknowledgement and degree of the LA's usefulness due to, mainly, their lack of specific content knowledge and experience in this subject. Therefore, there is an immediate need to make improvements, not only in the daily use of the LA, but also in the hiring process—a more exhaustive selection is recommended since, in most cases, LAs do not have previous pedagogical training. This issue becomes essential to make the most of the substantial investment made by the CM and the potential value of LAs in student education.

Finally, there are some limitations in this study, for example, the nature of the selected sample. However, this study is part of a broader research project where other research techniques will be applied. These may help to triangulate the information already obtained in combination with the analysis of opinions and perceptions from other groups involved in this teaching and learning process, such as students and LAs.

7. References

- B.O.C.M. (2009). *Orden 2670/2009, de 5 de junio, por la que se regula la actividad de los auxiliares de conversación seleccionados por el Ministerio de Educación y por la Comisión de Intercambio Cultural, Educativo y Científico entre España y los Estados Unidos de América, en centros docentes públicos de la Comunidad de Madrid*. Boletín Oficial de la Comunidad de Madrid, 9 July 2009, Núm. 161, pp. 18-21
- B.O.E. (2019). *Extracto de la Resolución de la Secretaría de Estado de Educación y Formación Profesional, por la que se convocan plazas para auxiliares de conversación extranjeros para el curso académico 2020-2021*. Boletín Oficial del Estado, 24 de diciembre de 2019, Núm. 308, pp. 72221 a 72221.
- Buckingham, L. (2016). *The role of language assistants in a bilingual primary school: theory, practice and recommendations*. (Tesis Doctoral). Madrid: Universidad de Alcalá de Henares.
- Buckingham, L. (2018a). Defining the role of language assistants in the bilingual classroom. *Revista Tecnología, Ciencia y Educación*, 9, 38-49. Retrieved from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6247302>.
- Buckingham, L. R. (2018b). Language assistants' views on the training provided by bilingual programs in Madrid. *PULSO. Revista de Educación*, 41, 225-250. Retrieved from: <https://revistas.cardenalcisneros.es/index.php/PULSO/article/view/305>.
- Caparros-Cabezas, C. 2010. El auxiliar de conversación: una figura necesaria. *Espiral. Cuadernos del profesorado*, 3(5): 36-43. Retrieved from: <http://repositorio.ual.es/bitstream/handle/10835/5627/902-3266-1-PB.pdf?sequence=1>.

- Carless, D. (2006). Collaborative EFL teaching in primary schools. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 328-335. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccl023.
- Carless, D. & Walker, E. (2006). Effective team teaching between local and native-speaking English teachers. *Language and Education*, 20(6), 463-477. doi:10.2167/le627.0.
- Castañeda, M., Cabrera, A., Navarro, Y. & De Vries, W. (2010). *Procesamiento de datos y análisis estadísticos utilizando SPSS*. Porto Alegre: Edipucrs.
- Codo, E. & McDaid, J. (2019). English language assistants in the 21st century: Nation-state soft power in the experience economy. *Language, Culture and Society*, 1(2). John Benjamins.
- Comunidad de Madrid. (2019). *Language Assistant Handbook*. School Year 2019-2020. D.G. de Bilingüismo y Calidad de la Enseñanza/Consejería de Educación y Juventud.
- Cook, L., & Friend, M. (1995). Co-teaching: Guidelines for creating effective practices. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 28, 1-16.
- Dafouz Milne, E. & Hibler, A. (2013). 'Zip your lips' or 'Keep quiet': Main teachers' and language assistants' classroom discourse in CLIL settings. *The Modern Language Journal*, 97(3), 655-669. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2013.12026.x.
- Fernandez-Fernández, R. & Halbach, A. (2011). Analysing the situation of teachers in the Madrid bilingual project after four years of implementation. En Ruiz de Zarobe, Y., Sierra-Del Plo, J.M., Gallardo del Puerto, F. (Eds). *Content and foreign language integrated learning. Contributions to multilingualism in European contexts*, (241-270). Bern: Peter Lang.
- García-Ferrando, M.; Alvira Martín, F. & Ibáñez Alonso, J. (2010). *El análisis de la realidad social: Métodos y técnicas de investigación* (3ª Edic). Madrid, España: Alianza Editorial.
- Gerena, L. & Ramírez-Verdugo, M.J. (2014). Analyzing Bilingual Teaching and Learning in Madrid, Spain: A Fulbright Scholar Collaborative Research Project. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal*, 0 (8 Jan-Jun), 118–136. Retrieved from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=4774797>.
- Gómez-Parra, M. E. (2020). Measuring Intercultural Learning through CLIL. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 9(1), 43-56.
- Gorsuch, G. (2002). Assistant foreign language teachers in Japanese high schools: Focus on the hosting of Japanese teachers. *Jalt Journal*, 24(1), 5-32.
- Hernando-Garijo, A., Hortigüela-Alcala D. & Perez-Pueyo, A. (2018). Percepción de coordinadores de programas bilingües y docentes de Educación Física en inglés en secundaria sobre el proceso de implantación y desarrollo del bilingüismo en la Comunidad de Castilla y León. *Retos: nuevas tendencias en educación física, deporte y recreación*, (33), 63-68. Retrieved from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6367727>.
- Im, S. & Martin, S. N. (2015). Using cogenerative dialogues to improve coteaching for language learner (LL) students in an inclusion science classroom. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 355-369.
- Laorden-Gutierrez, C. & Peñafiel-Pedrosa, E. (2010). Proyectos bilingües en los centros de la Comunidad de Madrid: Percepción de los equipos directivos. *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, 28(2), 325-344. Retrieved from: <https://revistas.um.es/rie/article/view/98101>.

- Liu, L. (2008). Co-teaching between native and non-native English teachers: An exploration of co-teaching models and strategies in the Chinese primary school context. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 103-118.
- Llaneza-Villanueva, J. A. (2016). *El ayudante lingüístico en los primeros años de la implantación de un programa AICLE y su proyección en el aula de primaria*. (Tesis Doctoral). Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Lova-Mellado, M. & Bolarin-Martinez, M. (2015). La coordinación en programas bilingües: las voces del profesorado. *Aula Abierta*, 43(2), 102-109. doi:10.1016/j.aula.2015.03.001.
- Martin-Jones, M. & Saxena, M.(2003). Bilingual resources and 'Funds of Knowledge' for teaching and learning in multi-ethnic classrooms in Britain. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*6 (3-4), 267-82. doi:10.1080/13670050308667785.
- Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional (2019). *Guía del Auxiliar. Auxiliares de Conversación en España 2019-20*. Gobierno de España: Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional.
- Ohtani, C. (2010). Problems in the Assistant Language Teacher System and English Activity at Japanese Public Elementary Schools. *Educational Perspectives*, 43, 38-45. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ912113>.
- Perez-Cañado, M. L. (2016). From the CLIL craze to the CLIL conundrum: Addressing the current CLIL controversy. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature*, 9(1), 9-31. Retrieved from: <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Bellaterra/article/view/306902>.
- Ramos-Calvo, F., & Ruiz-Omeñaca, J. V. (2011). La educación física en centros bilingües de primaria inglés-español: de las singularidades propias del área a la elaboración de propuestas didácticas prácticas con AIBLE. *Revista española de lingüística aplicada*, (24), 153-170. Retrieved from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/3886031.pdf>.
- Ruiz de Zarobe, Y., & Lasagabaster Herrarte, D. (2010). *CLIL in Spain: Implementation, results and teacher training*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Salvador-García, C., & Chiva-Bartoll, O. (2017). CLIL in teaching physical education: views of the teachers in the Spanish context. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport (JPES)*, 17(3), 1130-1138. doi: 10.7752/jpes.2017.03174.
- Salvador-García, C., Chiva-Bartoll O. & Capella-Peris, C. (2019). Bilingual physical education: the effects of CLIL on physical activity levels. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1-10. doi:10.1080/13670050.2019.1639131.
- Scobling, C. [2011]: *El auxiliar de conversación como herramienta de motivación en la enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en la educación secundaria y bachillerato en España*, Universidad Internacional de La Rioja. Retrieved from: <http://bit.ly/2oh6Tme> [Search: September 29, 2019].
- Tajino, A. & Tajino, Y. (2000). Native and non-native: What can they offer? Lessons from team-teaching in Japan. *ELT Journal*, 54(1): 3-11. doi: 10.1093/elt/54.1.3.
- Thousand, J. S., Villa, R. A. & Nevin, A. I. (2006). The many faces of collaborative planning and teaching. *Theory into practice*, 45(3), 239-248.
- Tobin, N. A., & Abello-Contesse, C. (2013). The Use of Native Assistants as Language and Cultural Resources in Andalusia's Bilingual Schools. *Bilingual and Multilingual Education in the 21st Century: Building on Experience*. U.K.: Multilingual Matters.

Tucker, S. (2009). Perceptions and reflections on the role of teaching assistant in the classroom environment. *Pastoral Care in Education An International Journal of Personal, Social Emotional Development*, 27(4), 291–300. doi:10.1080/02643940903349294.

-
- 1 Resolution October 22, 2018, BOCM, No. 260, pp. 97-260. Annex 6. Public schools with bilingual Spanish-English education.
 - 2 Data provided by the Subdirección General de Programas de Innovación de la Comunidad de Madrid General.
 - 3 "Evaluation of the Community of Madrid bilingual program" submitted by the Ministerio de Educación, June 2018.
 - 4 Orden 2670/2009 (BOCM June 5, 2009), Orden 162/2011 (BOCM February 16, 2011), Orden 6684/2011 (BOCM December 27, 2011) and Language Assistant Handbook school year 2019-20 (Community of Madrid and Ministry of Education).
 - 5 Data provided by the Subdirección de Gestión del Profesorado Primaria (departamento de Habilitación Bilingüe) and the Dirección General de Recursos Humanos (departamento de Habilitación Bilingüe) de la Comunidad de Madrid.
 - 6 BOE nº 82 of April 5, 2019.

Sugerencia de cita:

Ordóñez-Díos, A.F. & Polo-Recuero, B. (2020). Teachers perceptions on the role fo language assistans in bilingual physical education. *Pulso. Revista de Educación*, 43, 75-97

ANEXO

Cuestionario a cumplimentar por docentes que se encuentren impartiendo la asignatura de Educación Física en centros públicos de Educación Primaria y Secundaria de la Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid

Estimado compañero/a.

El siguiente cuestionario, está realizado con la finalidad de conocer qué efectos está teniendo la implantación de la enseñanza bilingüe en los centros escolares de la Comunidad de Madrid, en lo que se refiere a la funcionalidad de la figura del Auxiliar de Conversación creada para favorecer dicha implantación. La realización completa del cuestionario no te llevará más de 10 minutos. Los resultados de este cuestionario permanecerán en todo momento anónimos. Muchas gracias por tu colaboración.

Variables de identificación

1. ¿Eres...?:

- Maestra/Profesora Maestro/Profesor

2. Edad:

- < 30 años 30-45 años > 45 años

3. ¿Tu situación administrativa actual es...?:

- Interino/a Funcionario/a

4. ¿Cuántos años de experiencia tienes en total como especialista de Educación Física...?:

- < 3 años Entre 3 y 8 años > 8 años

5. ¿Cuántos años llevas impartiendo la asignatura de Educación Física en una lengua extranjera (contando el curso actual):

- < 3 años Entre 3 y 8 años > 8 años

6. ¿En qué etapa educativa impartes Educación Física en una lengua extranjera?:

- En Educación Primaria En Educación Secundaria

7. ¿Cómo conseguiste la habilitación para impartir docencia en el Programa Bilingüe de la Comunidad de Madrid?

- Mediante la habilitación de oficio (cursos de formación de la Comunidad de Madrid, hasta 2010)
- Por superación de prueba de conocimientos realizada por la Comunidad de Madrid
- Por estar en posesión de certificaciones emitidas por otras instituciones

8. ¿Cuántos cursos académicos (incluido éste) llevas trabajando con Auxiliares de Conversación en Educación Física?

- < 3 cursos
- Entre 3 y 8 cursos
- > 8 cursos

9. ¿En qué medida conoces las funciones que debe realizar el Auxiliar de Conversación en las clases, según la normativa vigente (Orden 2670/2009, de 5 de junio, de la Consejería de Educación)?

- Nada
- Algo
- Bastante
- Mucho

10. ¿Podrías decirnos cómo han sido, en términos generales y hasta el momento, tus experiencias con los Auxiliares de Conversación en la asignatura de Educación Física?

- Nada positivas
- Algo positivas
- Bastante positivas
- Muy positivas

11. ¿En qué medida tienes o has tenido dificultades a la hora de integrar al Auxiliar de Conversación en tus clases de E.F.?

- Ninguna
- Algunas
- Bastantes
- Muchas

<p>A continuación se indican las diferentes funciones o tareas que debe realizar en las clases un Auxiliar de Conversación, según la Orden 2670/2009, de 5 de junio, de la Consejería de Educación y diferentes documentos oficiales (Guía del Auxiliar de Conversación, curso 18-19)</p> <p>¿Podrías decirnos, de acuerdo con tu experiencia con el o los Auxiliares de Conversación con los que has trabajado en tus clases de Educación Física, en qué medida han cumplido realmente, en tus clases, dichas funciones o tareas?</p>	Nada	A veces	A menudo	Mucho
<p>12. Ayudar en la planificación y desarrollo de las diferentes sesiones, aportando ideas, cambios y otros puntos de vista</p>	0	1	2	3
<p>13. Ayudar a la creación de materiales didácticos en la lengua extranjera</p>	0	1	2	3
<p>14. Incorporar aspectos culturales propios como diferentes tipos de deportes, juegos tradicionales, bailes...</p>	0	1	2	3

15. Posibilitar trabajar en grupos más reducidos durante la sesión ya que son capaces de desarrollar determinadas actividades con pequeños grupos (refuerzo vocabulario, por ejemplo)	0	1	2	3
16. Ayudar a alumnos individualmente cuando es necesario suponiendo un apoyo extra para alumnos/as con más dificultades	0	1	2	3
17. Apoyar o complementar las clases, desarrollando, bajo tu supervisión, la explicación y puesta en práctica de contenidos específicos en la lengua extranjera	0	1	2	3
18. Reforzar las destrezas orales del alumnado en la lengua extranjera	0	1	2	3
19. Aumentar la motivación del alumnado en el uso de lengua extranjera	0	1	2	3
20. Asistir a los maestros y profesores en el aula como apoyo lingüístico	0	1	2	3
21. Ayudar en la traducción de contenidos específicos de la lengua extranjera	0	1	2	3

22. ¿Cuáles, de los que se indican a continuación, crees que son los principales motivos que te han hecho o te hacen más difícil el aprovechamiento de la figura del Auxiliar de Conversación en tus clases de Educación Física (EF)?

(puedes marcar hasta cuatro motivos como máximo)

- El hecho de que casi todas las actividades que se realizan en la asignatura sean de carácter motor
- Me falta formación metodológica para utilizar adecuadamente al Auxiliar de Conversación en mis clases de EF
- Al Auxiliar de Conversación le falta formación didáctica en EF
- Al Auxiliar de Conversación le falta conocimiento sobre los contenidos a desarrollar en EF
- Al Auxiliar de Conversación le falta dominio de la terminología específica de EF
- Al Auxiliar de Conversación le resulta difícil mantener su autoridad sobre el grupo de clase
- Al Auxiliar de Conversación le falta interés para colaborar en las clases de EF
- Tengo problemas comunicativos y de entendimiento con el Auxiliar de Conversación debidos al idioma
- Me falta tiempo para planificar y organizar la actuación del Auxiliar de Conversación en mis clases de EF.

23. Con respecto a tu valoración global sobre la utilidad del Auxiliar de Conversación en tus clases de Educación Física, desde que empezaste a trabajar con ellos, ¿podrías decirnos cuál de las siguientes respuestas se ajusta más a dicha valoración?

- Ahora es más positiva
- Es igual que al principio, positiva
- Es igual que al principio, negativa
- Ahora es más negativa
- Mi valoración positiva o negativa depende de quién sea el Auxiliar de Conversación.

24. Para finalizar, podrías decir en qué medida la figura del Auxiliar de Conversación ha supuesto, en términos generales y globales, una ayuda para tus clases de Educación Física en lengua extranjera?

- Ninguna ayuda
- Poca ayuda
- Bastante ayuda
- Mucha ayuda