

Teachers' perceptions of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in primary schools in Andalusia

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ABSTRACT: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been deemed to be a promising and innovative approach to teaching foreign languages and has received unanimous endorsement by virtually all educational authorities in the European Union. Yet, notwithstanding the numerous benefits the programme offers, it is not free from difficulties. Thus, the main objective of this qualitative study was to examine the teachers' perceptions of CLIL implementation with the major focus on the shortcomings detected and outlined in the previous studies. Data were obtained from an *ad hoc* online questionnaire filled out by 203 in-service teachers from bilingual English primary schools in the eight provinces of Andalusia (i.e., Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga and Sevilla) in the year 2020. The picture emerging from the results of the study is not positive as it reflects growing concern over the paucity of teacher training programmes, insufficient coordination, lack of attention to diversity, inadequate textbook design, and above all, students' low English proficiency and class size, factors which might impede the proper development of the programme. Moreover, content teachers as well as those with lower language competence and less experience in teaching appear to be in dire need of more training and support. These findings merit further consideration and should govern educational decisions in order to ensure the feasibility of the project.

Key words: CLIL, bilingual education, implementation, teachers' perspectives, Andalusia.

Percepciones de los profesores sobre el Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE) en los centros de Educación Primaria de Andalucía

RESUMEN: El Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE) se ha considerado un enfoque eficaz e innovador para la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras y ha recibido el respaldo unánime de prácticamente todas las autoridades educativas de la Unión Europea. Sin embargo, a pesar de las numerosas ventajas que ofrece el programa, no está exento de dificultades. Por eso, el objetivo principal de este estudio cualitativo fue examinar las percepciones de los profesores sobre la aplicación del AICLE, centrándose principalmente en las deficiencias detectadas en los estudios anteriores. Los datos se obtuvieron a partir de un cuestionario *ad hoc* online que cumplieron 203 profesores

de centros bilingües de inglés de Educación Primaria en las ocho provincias de Andalucía (Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga y Sevilla) en el año 2020. En cuanto a los resultados, el panorama que se desprende del estudio no es positivo, ya que existe una creciente preocupación por la escasez de programas de formación del profesorado, la insuficiente coordinación, la falta de atención a la diversidad, el inadecuado diseño de los libros de texto y, sobre todo, la escasa aptitud lingüística de los alumnos y el tamaño de los grupos, factores que podrían impedir el correcto desarrollo del programa. Además, los profesores de área no lingüística, así como los de menor competencia lingüística y experiencia en la enseñanza, parecen necesitar urgentemente más formación y apoyo. Estas conclusiones merecen una mayor consideración y deberían regir las decisiones educativas para garantizar la viabilidad del proyecto.

Palabras clave: AICLE, educación bilingüe, implementación, creencias de los profesores, Andalucía.

1. INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the new millennium, the emergence of a new paradigm in the linguistic arena triggered by the ever-increasing human mobility across the borders and further accentuated by the development of communication technologies has become a hallmark of society. The phenomenon of globalization has changed the course of the world and had a significant bearing on multiple domains of our lives, heralding in a new era in language policy. Therefore, in the light of the increasing demand for multilingual citizens, the global economy and the proliferation of intercultural contacts (Baker & Wright, 2017), the dire necessity to attain proficiency in at least two foreign languages has been stressed (European Commission, 1995).

Nonetheless, on account of the widespread discontent with the traditional language teaching practices, mainstream education in virtually all European countries had to undergo a radical transformation of its practices with the aim of mitigating the consequences of a linguistic deficit. It is against this background that Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) firmly positioned itself on the European stage as a result of an active pursuit of more efficient methods of foreign language teaching. In response to the enormous upheaval in the language teaching arena, conspicuous strides have been made by the European member states to modify their linguistic policies in the curricula (Marsh, 2002) and the majority of schools seem set on pursuing the latest educational initiatives to cater for language education in diverse settings (Eurydice, 2006). CLIL has been deemed to be a “European solution to European need” (Marsh, 2002, p. 1) and has received unanimous endorsement by virtually all educational authorities in the European Union (EU). Despite numerous and diverse definitions of the bilingual project that have burgeoned over the past decades, they all concur in laying emphasis on the dual nature of the approach, which entails teaching content and foreign language simultaneously (Coyle et al., 2010).

The provision of CLIL, which is progressively becoming an established method to teaching subjects through a foreign language in each European country, has spawned considerable interest among researchers and resulted in numerous publications. Nonetheless, while

CLIL was initially “embraced quickly and enthusiastically by stakeholders: parents, students, language/educational policy-makers all over the world” (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016, p. 1), the boundless enthusiasm amid CLIL advocates was soon dampened and the new paradigm raised a storm of controversy (Pérez Cañado, 2016a). The *pendulum* has swung back to the other extreme and a radical change of attitudes towards the bilingual project has been detected (Pérez Cañado, 2016a).

One of the core issues of the bilingual approach that has been met with considerable scepticism is the lack of a clear-cut scope, which often results in its fundamental characteristics being misunderstood and misapplied by the chief stakeholders (Cenoz et al., 2014). Even though the flexibility of the project has also gained approval by those who espouse the idea that it might be embedded in diverse educational contexts (Lorenzo et al., 2009), it has also been argued that its lack of precision could hinder the appropriate development of the CLIL project (Cenoz et al., 2014).

2 MAJOR CHALLENGES CLIL TEACHERS FACE

Although the implementation of the dual-focused approach had a massive impact on all the stakeholders involved in the project, the cohort of teachers has indisputably been most deeply affected. Given that teachers are the main agents of this paradigm shift and have to face the reality in the classroom (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017), they are more aware of all the benefits and shortcomings CLIL implementation entails. Thus, in view of the complexity of the bilingual programme implementation, the viability and sustainability of the project largely depend on the teachers' expertise, commitment and motivation. Thus, an ever-growing body of research into the topic of the teachers' perspectives on CLIL development has been well documented (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020; Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018; Pérez Cañado, 2018b).

Even though it has been proved beyond doubt that CLIL is already reaping its benefits, the project still has many areas in which difficulties persist (Pérez Cañado, 2018a). There is widespread concurrence among stakeholders as regards the shift from traditional teaching methods to a more innovative, collaborative, student-centred and experiential methodology (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020). However, although great strides in the employment of CLIL pedagogical principles in class have been reported (Pérez Cañado, 2018a), there is still an urgent need to equip CLIL teachers with proper skills and knowledge to ensure a success-driven implementation of the project. In fact, it transpires from the previous research studies that in view of the widespread acceptance and rapid dissemination of the project, the provision of well-qualified teachers has become one of the major hurdles that most institutions have to face (Pérez Cañado, 2016b). Thus, owing to mounting concern over limited methodological expertise and poor linguistic competence, the dire necessity for the provision of well-designed training programmes to enhance teachers' performance has been stressed by numerous studies (Lancaster, 2016; Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018). In fact, scarce knowledge of how to efficiently put CLIL into practice may be counterproductive

and put its effectiveness in jeopardy (Pérez Cañado, 2018a). Furthermore, scant expertise in methodological aspects may lead to erroneous assumptions and different realizations of the project (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020), which eventually might prove to be a hindrance to the proper implementation of the programme. Yet, it has to be borne in mind that although a considerable number of teachers expressed deep unease over a paucity of teacher training schemes offered to them prior to the commencement of work (Alcaraz-Mármol, 2018; Custodio Espinar & García Ramos, 2020; Porto Currás et al., 2019), the in-service training programmes have also come under harsh criticism. According to the chief stakeholders, the training courses are insufficient or do not address their needs (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020).

Another major hurdle often cited in the literature has to do with a shortage of well-designed textbooks (Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2020). CLIL teachers have adopted a critical stance towards publishing houses and claim that textbooks are not created in accordance with the CLIL methodological principles (Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2020), are often a mere translation of their Spanish counterparts (Durán-Martínez et al., 2016), do not provide guidelines in Spanish (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020) and fail to cater for all students' needs (Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018). Thus, a dearth of appropriate textbooks might negatively impinge on CLIL teachers' motivation as they are often left to their own devices and have no option but to create their own materials, which considerably increases their workload (Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018).

In view of the complexity of the project and the profound impact it has had on the whole institution, a general consensus concerning the need for enhanced collaboration has been reached (Lova Mellado & Bolarín Martínez, 2015; Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017; Vázquez et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, coordination and teamwork are of paramount importance to ensure the effectiveness of the bilingual programme (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020). As CLIL is said to be a collective endeavour, interactions among teachers should be fostered (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020). Nevertheless, despite its immense importance, numerous studies attested to scarce or even no collaboration in many centres (Moreno de Diezmas, 2019). Furthermore, teachers have expressed dissatisfaction towards legislation as it has not allowed for coordination in the timetable, placing the burden on them to make the coordination a reality. In fact, administration and educational authorities have come under criticism for the scant support offered to CLIL teachers who demand more incentives and recognition for their hard work (Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017).

It is notable that despite the complexities of these innovative practices, numerous studies have revealed that the overall evaluation of the project is positive (Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2016; Lancaster, 2016) and the overwhelming majority of teachers have expressed willingness to take on a new challenge (Guillamón-Suesta & Renau, 2015). Yet, they all concur that affiliation to the bilingual programme considerably increases their workload (Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017), and thus they demand more support and incentives in order to avoid the burn-out syndrome (Fernández & Halbach, 2011). Nevertheless, these findings are not congruent with the results of other studies where the overall assessment of the project is negative (Quero Hermosilla & Gijón González, 2017; Brady & García Pinar, 2019). Terms such as "average", "low" or "very low" have been used in order to evaluate

the project (Quero Herмосilla & Gijón González, 2017). In fact, neoliberal language policy has been met with scepticism and resistance by those who consider that the project is too ambitious and complex. A great number of CLIL teachers argue that bilingualism has become an emblem of prestige, underscore its marketization and believe that schools have become more competitive and insular (Brady & García Pinar, 2019).

Regarding the students, it has been proved beyond doubt that CLIL implementation has had a positive impact on their outcomes (Fernández & Halbach, 2011). Although the acquisition of the language proficiency seems to be the most palpable benefit (Brady & García Pinar, 2019; Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2020), participation in the project is thought to have increased students' motivation (Brady & García Pinar, 2019), self-confidence (Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018), intercultural competence (Pérez Gracia et al., 2017) and the development of cognitive skills (Méndez García, 2014). Nonetheless, it has been argued that on account of the excessive number of students per group, pupils' heterogeneity and their low aptitude in English (Méndez García, 2014), a great number of students are at risk of lagging behind (Romo Escudero & Durán Martínez, 2019). In fact, many scholars and teachers have voiced concern over the lack of attention to diversity (Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2020; Soler et al., 2017), which, if not addressed properly, might perpetuate inequalities among students thus jeopardising the basic tenet of state education aimed at providing everyone with equal opportunities.

It is noteworthy to mention that numerous studies brought to light significant differences in the teachers' perceptions of different aspects concerning CLIL implementation. By way of illustration, in Custodio Espinar and García Ramos's (2020) study, it transpired that there were statistically significant differences between teachers who received the pedagogical and language training prior to the commencement of their work and those who received only the linguistic training. These findings were substantiated in another study carried out by Alcaraz-Mármol (2018) who again pointed to a considerable difference between those who received the training and those who did not. The results of the study revealed that teachers who were qualified appeared to have a clear notion of theoretical foundations, as opposed to those without prior training whose knowledge of CLIL underpinnings was vague. As regards the materials, those who received methodological training seemed to make use of a wide range of additional materials and resources while the less qualified teachers relied solely on books. Furthermore, those with training opted for more semi-controlled and free production oral activities and limited their use of mother tongue in class to solving problems, unlike those without training who appeared to resort to L1 more frequently.

Durán-Martínez et al. (2016) detected another variable that could possibly explain the teachers' divergent opinions on various CLIL aspects, namely experience. The findings of the study evinced considerable differences between novice and expert teachers in terms of how they perceive the integration of content and language learning. The latter group appeared to be more aware of the challenges of the dual-focused approach implementation, giving precedence to methodological training over language competence and content knowledge, and also adopted a more critical stance towards publishing houses complaining that the materials lacked innovation. Moreover, expert teachers accentuated the importance of teamwork,

coordination, and joint commitment in order to ensure the viability of the project. Experience as a factor which could account for the discrepancy in opinions has also been stressed in the study conducted by Campillo-Ferrer et al. (2020). It has been argued that more experienced teachers used activities to foster the development of cognitive skills more often than those with less experience. Furthermore, teachers with more experience appeared to appreciate the use of language assistants to a greater extent and were said to make use of a more diverse range of instruments to assess students' knowledge (Campillo et al., 2019).

In the study conducted by Pérez Cañado (2018b) equally remarkable findings came to light since the greatest number of within-cohort differences gathered around three main variables: type of teacher, level of English and teaching experience in the bilingual programme. The study revealed that content teachers harbour more positive views on their students' productive skills as opposed to language teachers who seemed to be more critical on that score. Furthermore, the study showed that content teachers have a lower English level and hence are in dire need of enhanced training. As a matter of fact, the study clearly showed that the higher the language level of the teacher, the more positive the evaluation of the CLIL initiative was. Similarly, the more experienced the teachers were, the more positive outlook on all facets of CLIL implementation they had. By way of illustration, those teachers with more than 5 years of experience had a more positive stance on such aspects as coordination, evaluation, or students' language competence.

Against the background of the evidence gathered from the above-mentioned research, the main objective of the present study was to conduct a large-scale evaluation of bilingual education in the eight provinces (i.e., Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga y Sevilla) of Andalusia (Spain). The study aims to examine the public, private and charter primary school teachers' perceptions of CLIL implementation in a monolingual community with the main focus on the deficiencies of the bilingual programme detected by previous research studies. Thus, the present investigation seeks to find out if the major shortcomings of the CLIL project have been addressed or continue to persist. Moreover, this in-depth analysis aims to provide a comprehensive picture of how CLIL is currently playing out at the grassroots level. Consequently, the two major objectives which have become the cornerstone of the present study are as follows:

Objective 1 (Needs analysis) was to examine teachers' perceptions as regards:

- 1.1. Teacher training programmes
- 1.2. Their language competence
- 1.3. Collaboration in their centres
- 1.4. Materials employed in the classroom
- 1.5. Class size and students' level of English
- 1.6. The overall evaluation of the project

Objective 2 (Within-cohort comparison) was to determine if there are potential differences within the cohort of teachers in terms of age, gender, teaching experience in the bilingual programme, type of school, type of teacher and teachers' level of English.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Instruments

Data were obtained from an *ad hoc* questionnaire administered in Spanish. Previously, the questionnaire was qualitatively validated in Spanish by both experts and teachers. The questionnaire comprised two parts: the first part included background questions, while the second part consisted of 22 items, further subdivided into six categories. The answers were measured with a 6-point Likert scale ranging from “I strongly disagree (1)” to “I strongly agree (6)” (except for the general category, i.e., item 22, that ranged from “Deficient” to “Excellent”). At the end of each category, an open-response question was introduced to provide the respondents with an opportunity to comment on those aspects that they deemed necessary. For the purpose of this investigation, only closed-response questions were analysed. After the validation by three experts, a piloting procedure of the questionnaire took place prior to the data collection. A pilot sample of in-service teachers from bilingual English primary schools was asked to fill in the final version of the questionnaire together with an evaluation grid designed in Google Form. Though the informants have unanimously agreed on the validity and applicability of the study, minor modifications were suggested. After a few slight adjustments (e.g., one item was deemed redundant and thus removed, and some sentences were reformulated to make them clearer), a final version of the questionnaire was drawn up.

3.2. Sample

After a pilot study, the principals from all private, public and charter English bilingual schools in Andalusia were contacted and informed about the procedures and goals of the investigation, obtaining consent to conduct the study. The email to all schools was sent during the month of October (2020) and contained the link to the questionnaire designed in Google Forms. Nonetheless, due to the low return rate (105 respondents), a reminder was sent during the month of November allowing the study to work with a bigger cohort of teachers as the number of informants rose to 203 in total. The average age of the teachers was 39.5 (SD = 8.5; range = 25-67) and the vast majority of respondents were women (74.4% women and 25.6% men). All the teachers were Spanish, except one that was from the USA. As regards the type of teachers, 49.3% were English teachers and 50.7% were content teachers. Out of all the informants in the present study, the most representative cohort worked in public schools (59.6%), followed by charter (37.9%) and private schools (2.5%). These percentages of respondents were representative of the type of schools in Andalusia (i.e., 63.5% public and 36.5% charter/private schools). On average, most of the teachers polled had a teaching experience in the bilingual programme equal to 6.1 years (SD = 4.0) and taught about 40-60% of the lesson in English (Figure 2). As can be seen in Figure 1, most teachers reported a B2 level in accordance with Order of 28 June 2011, regulating bilingual education in schools in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, which requires teaching staff to accredit competencies of at least level B2 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) as from the academic year 2013/2014 (Consejería de Educación, 2011). However, the same order states that teachers who were already teaching

by that time and had a lower level may continue to impart classes but they are required to complete the training until they obtain a B2 level (Consejería de Educación, 2011).

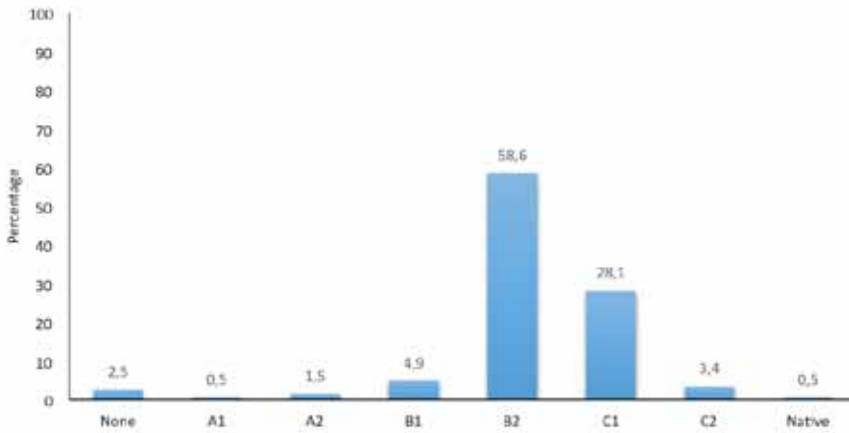


Figure 1. Percentage of teachers with official English certificates

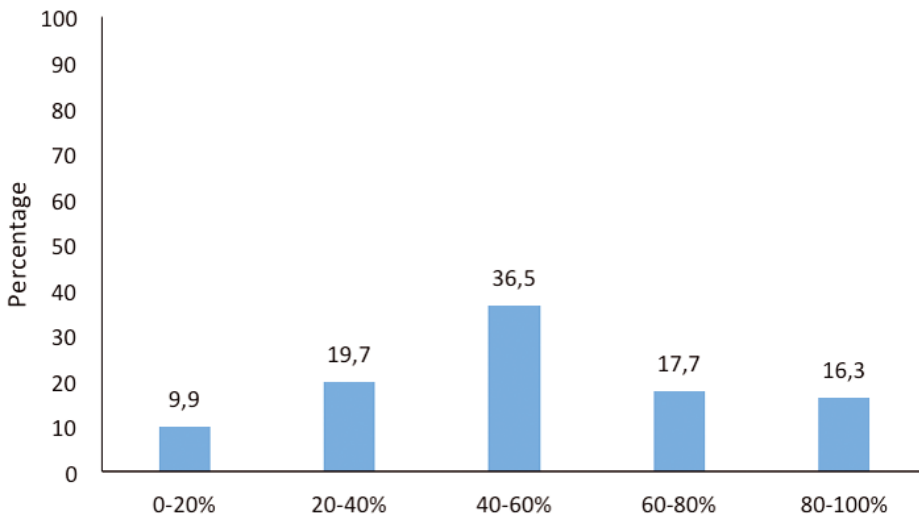


Figure 2. Percentage of a lesson taught in English

3.3. Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation or percentage) for the general introductory questions were calculated. Afterwards, to examine the first objective of the present study descriptive statistics (mean, standard error and percentage) of the 22 items were calculated. Furthermore, in order to examine the second objective of the study, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA; or one-way ANCOVA when the covariable/s were statistically

significant) were performed to compare the scores reported in the 22 items between categorical variables (i.e., Gender: Men and women; Teacher: English and Content teacher; School: Public and Charter/Private). Potential confounding variables considered were the following: age, gender, teacher, school, teaching experience in the bilingual programme, and level of English. Given that private schools represent less than 3% of the total, they were conflated with charter schools in order to make the groups more comparable. As a sensitivity analysis, the results of the one-way ANOVA/ANCOVA comparing the scores from teachers of public and charter schools (i.e., removing those from private schools) were similar. Following this, simple linear regression analyses between teachers' age, experience in bilingual education and an accredited level of English (i.e., non-categorical variables) and the questionnaire items were also performed. Effect sizes were estimated using the partial eta squared (η_p^2). All statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS version 25.0 for Windows (IBM® SPSS® Statistics). The statistical significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Objective 1: Needs analysis

Table 1 shows a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire for the total sample. As regards the teacher training in pedagogical principles which underpin CLIL implementation, the results of the study revealed that, on average, CLIL teachers appear to be pretty complacent about their knowledge of CLIL methodology (4.3). However, concomitantly, the respondents acknowledge that they did not receive adequate training in bilingual methodology prior to the accreditation process (2.1), and they express slight disappointment with the provision of the in-service training programmes (3.4), as well as with their inadequate design for bilingual education (3.4). These findings mirror those of the latest investigations in which a considerable number of teachers expressed apprehension about a paucity of teacher training programmes before they commenced work (Custodio Espinar & García Ramos, 2020; Porto Currás et al., 2019) and after they embarked on the project (Barrios & Milla Lara, 2020; Pérez Cañado, 2018a).

With regard to the teachers' language competence, conspicuous progress has been documented. In general terms, the mean reveals that the respondents harbour a positive outlook on their levels of language attainment and its use in class (4.7). Data also show that they do not concur with the idea that a higher command of English would ease the workload (2.9). These findings are in line with the previous research studies where CLIL teachers reported a greater level of satisfaction with their English level (Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2016). Regarding the idea of upgrading language skills in order to increase the effectiveness of the lesson, the mean result might seem to show a neutral position amongst the informants on this matter (3.5). However, taking into account that a "neutral" score was not available in the possible responses, the result is indicative of the fact that there is a great number of teachers who show a desire to attain higher levels of English skills in order to optimize their teaching practices, an issue highlighted in the previous research studies (Lancaster, 2016; Pérez Cañado, 2018b; Porto Currás et al., 2019; Quero Hermosilla & Gijón González,

2017). However, despite teachers’ willingness to upgrade their language skills, the cohort under scrutiny expresses mounting concern over the scarcity of the language training courses offered to them (3.0). Hence, the present study confirms the need to provide CLIL teachers with extended opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge as well as to fully prepare them to participate in the bilingual project.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of the questionnaire for the total sample (N = 203)^a

VARIABLES	MEAN (SD)	Percentage of the respondents’ answers					
		I TOTALLY DISAGREE (1)	I DISAGREE (2)	I SLIGHTLY DISAGREE (3)	I SLIGHTLY AGREE (4)	I AGREE (5)	I TOTALLY AGREE (6)
<i>Teacher training</i>							
1. I have adequate training in the methodological aspects to teach in bilingual education	4.3(1.4)	4.4	6.4	15.3	18.7	34.5	20.7
2. I received adequate training in bilingual methodology in my university studies	2.1(1.4)	48.8	19.2	13.8	10.8	3.9	3.4
3. Teachers are offered sufficient in-service training courses in bilingual methodology	3.4(1.5)	15.8	12.8	24.1	22.7	17.2	7.4
4. The training courses in which I participate are well designed for bilingual teaching	3.4(1.4)	15.3	13.8	18.2	29.6	18.7	4.4

Teachers' linguistic competence

5.I have an adequate level of English to teach in a bilingual programme	4.7 (1.3)	3.9	3.9	8.4	15.8	35.0	33.0
6.If I had a higher level of English, my students could learn more	3.5(1.9)	21.2	18.7	10.3	15.8	11.8	22.2
7.If I had a higher level of English, my job would involve less of a workload	2.9(1.7)	29.1	19.7	13.8	16.3	10.3	10.8
8.Teachers are offered sufficient language training courses	3.0(1.5)	22.2	16.7	25.1	19.7	10.8	5.4

Coordination

9.Bilingual teaching increases the workload	5.0(1.3)	3.9	2.5	6.9	10.3	32.0	44.3
10.Collaboration with other teachers helps to reduce the workload	4.6(1.4)	4.4	3.4	11.8	20.7	26.1	33.5
11.The time dedicated to collaboration among teachers in my centre is sufficient	3.3(1.5)	18.2	13.3	20.7	24.6	14.8	8.4

Materials

12.Textbooks are properly designed for bilingual teaching	3.0(1.5)	21.2	18.7	23.6	20.2	10.8	5.4
13.Bilingual teaching materials have a communicative approach	3.2(1.4)	15.8	17.2	25.1	21.7	14.8	5.4
14. I need to adapt and develop my own materials for proper teaching.	5.1(1.1)	0.5	1.5	8.4	14.8	31.5	43.3

15.The adaptation and elaboration of my own materials is too time consuming	5.3(1.0)	0.5	1.0	3.4	13.8	21.2	60.1
16.Bilingual teaching materials are adapted to meet the needs of all students	2.6(1.4)	28.6	24.6	20.7	14.8	7.4	3.9
<i>Group size and students' English level</i>							
17.Group size makes it difficult for the teacher to teach in the bilingual programme	5.2(1.2)	1.0	2.5	6.9	12.8	19.7	57.1
18.Group size does not allow students to sufficiently practice oral skills in English	5.1(1.2)	2.0	2.0	5.4	15.8	20.2	54.7
19.Reducing the size of the group would allow me to serve the students with the greatest difficulty and the most capable ones	5.6(0.9)	1.5	1.0	1.0	3.0	16.3	77.3
20.The difference in English proficiency among students in the same class makes my teaching difficult	4.8(1.3)	1.5	4.9	10.3	19.7	26.6	36.9
21. The introduction of bilingual teaching at the early childhood education stage would improve students' language proficiency which would facilitate the teacher's work	5.0(1.3)	1.5	4.9	8.4	12.8	19.7	52.7

<i>General evaluation</i>	Mean (SD)	Deficient (1)	Bad (2)	Inadequate (3)	Adequate (4)	Good (5)	Excellent (6)
22. In general, how would you rate the functioning and development of bilingualism at its centre?	3.9(1.1)	5.4	5.9	15.8	42.4	27.1	3.4

Note. SD = Standard deviation; ^a the questionnaire was translated to English for the purpose of this article but it has been only validated and administered in Spanish

The result of the present study also revealed widespread unease amongst the informants due to insufficient coordination in their respective centres. A general consensus has been reached as regards the importance of teamwork since, with an average result of 4.6, the respondents express the desire to enhance collaboration with the aim of reducing the workload. Yet, in concurrence with the existing literature (Moreno de Diezmas, 2019), the teachers polled slightly agree that the time allotted to coordination does not suffice (3.3), and thus, they call for improvement on this front. Furthermore, owing to the fact that bilingual teaching irrefutably increases the amount of work, as confirmed by the teachers surveyed (5.0), the respondents appear to be in dire need of more support and incentives to persevere with the complex task of putting the CLIL project into effect.

Even less positive results emerge regarding the textbooks used in the classroom. As the mean results indicate, little headway has been made on this score. The respondents acknowledge that textbooks have not been designed in accordance with the theoretical foundations of bilingual education (3.0), and they indicate that bilingual materials do not cater for all students' needs (2.6), a fundamental issue which has also been stressed in the previous studies (Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018). Furthermore, on average, the teachers report that a communicative approach, which serves as a cornerstone of the bilingual programme, has somehow been neglected in the design of the materials (3.2). These findings tally with the results of the latest investigations where a paucity of well-designed textbooks has become a source of concern (Durán-Martínez et al., 2016; Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2020; Guillamón-Suesta & Renau Renau, 2015; Pérez Gracia et al., 2017). In view of the foregoing, CLIL teachers are required to adapt and create their own resources (5.1), which is time-consuming (5.3) and hence, they continually have to cope with an ever-expanding workload. These findings are consistent with the previous studies in which a great number of practitioners asserted that the dearth of well-designed textbooks significantly increased the volume of work (Durán-Martínez et al., 2016; Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018).

Nevertheless, the area in which the cohort under scrutiny expresses their deepest concern has to do with students' heterogeneity and group size. What the mean shows us is that CLIL teachers almost unanimously agree that the high ratio of students constitutes a serious

impediment to the effectiveness of their teaching practices (5.2) and the difference in English proficiency among students further exacerbates the situation (4.8). In fact, as the mean result indicates, the teachers polled fully agree that the class size hinders the proper development of students' linguistic competence (5.1) since due to such a high ratio of students, the time allotted for communicative tasks is insufficient. In addition, the findings of the present study revealed that according to CLIL teachers, splitting the classes into smaller groups could be a possible strategy for addressing the issue of catering for learner diversity since it would allow teachers to assist not only the students with special needs but also high achievers so as to help them develop their potential to the full (5.6). The findings of the present study are in accord with those of the recent investigations where the lack of attention to diversity has been underscored and become a matter of concern to many scholars (Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2020; Pérez Cañado, 2018b; Soler et al., 2017). A plethora of previous investigations have also highlighted the need to reduce the student ratio since the high number of students might prove to be a hindrance to the effective development of the project and put its sustainability into question (Moreno de Diezmas, 2019; Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2016, 2020). Moreover, on average, the respondents concur with the idea that the introduction of bilingual teaching at the early childhood education stage could narrow the gap between the students' levels of proficiency, which would significantly facilitate teachers' work (5.0).

Yet, it transpires that, despite its major shortcomings, the overall evaluation of the programme is positive considering that the mean result for this item is 3.9. Although there are many areas in which difficulties persist, teachers appear to be aware of the enormous potential that the programme has and show eagerness to partake in the innovative educational venture. This positive outlook is congruent with the previous studies which underscore the teachers' endorsement of the programme and where general satisfaction towards CLIL development has been reported (Durán-Martínez & Beltrán-Llavador, 2016; Lancaster, 2016; Vázquez et al., 2019). Yet, the findings of the present investigation are not consistent with the study conducted by Quero Hermosilla and Gijón González (2017), where the overall assessment of the project is rather negative. The type of cohort under scrutiny could possibly account for the discrepancy as the above-mentioned study aimed to canvass teachers' opinions at a secondary school level while the focus of this investigation was on primary school teachers. CLIL at secondary school might be met with more resistance and scepticism as the content that students have to acquire is far more complex, and thus, higher language proficiency is required from teachers and students. This could result in more tensions and dilemmas and could become the reason why secondary school teachers show less satisfaction. Yet, this conclusion is only speculative and further research is needed on this point, which could constitute another line of investigation for future studies.

4.2. Objective 2: Within-cohort comparison

The one-way ANCOVAs results showed statistically significant differences in all the identification variables in at least one item ($p < 0.05$) (Table 2). Regarding gender, statistically significant differences have emerged only in item16 which is related to the design of the textbooks and, more specifically, whether they *cater* for students' *diverse learning needs*. As

the results indicate, women seem to be slightly more critical on this matter than men. As regards the type of centre, CLIL teachers belonging to private and charter schools appear slightly more positive towards the provision of in-service bilingual methodology training courses in bilingual methodology than those who carry out their professional activity in public centres. Similarly, those working in the private/charter sector express more satisfaction towards the time allotted to coordination and are slightly less critical of the number of students per group. This could be possibly explained by the fact that CLIL teachers who liaise with their colleagues to a greater extent are more capable to cope with challenges that arise in class as collaboration meetings allow them to discuss a wide range of issues and look for possible solutions. That is why, the ratio of students per class is not considered to be such a hindrance to them, as compared to those whose liaison with other stakeholders is scarce, requiring them to deal with all the obstacles on their own. As a matter of fact, it has been argued that enhanced collaboration is one of the key factors which contribute to the successful development of the project (Durán-Martínez et al., 2020) as it fosters interactions among CLIL teachers who exchange opinions, share experiences, and adapt resources, which consequently facilitates their teaching practices (Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017). Thus, those who collaborate more seem to harbour a more positive outlook on numerous facets of the programme.

Table 2. Within-cohort comparison of the questionnaire scores ($N = 203$)^a

GROUP/ITEM	MEAN (SE)	MEAN (SE)	ONE-WAY ANOVA/ ANCOVA ^b		
			<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>			
	(<i>n</i> = 151)	(<i>n</i> = 52)			
Item 16	2.5 (0.1)	3.0 (0.2)	5.663	0.018	0.028
<i>Type of teacher</i>	<i>Content teachers</i>	<i>English teachers</i>			
	(<i>n</i> = 103)	(<i>n</i> = 100)			
Item 1	4.0(0.1)	4.7(0.1)	12.618	0.000	0.060
Item 2	1.7(0.1)	2.6(0.1)	23.495	0.000	0.105
Item 4	3.0(0.1)	3.7(0.1)	8.763	0.003	0.042
Item 5	4.5(0.1)	5.0(0.1)	11.644	0.001	0.055
Item 12	2.6(0.1)	3.3(0.1)	11.707	0.001	0.055

Item 13	2.8(0.1)	3.5(0.1)	12.504	0.001	0.059
Item 16	2.4(0.1)	2.8(0.1)	5.042	0.026	0.025
Item 21	4.8(0.1)	5.2(0.1)	4.563	0.034	0.022
Item 22	3.7(0.1)	4.1(0.1)	9.058	0.003	0.043
<i>Type of centre</i>	<i>Private/Charter</i>	<i>Public</i>			
	(n=82)	(n=121)			
Item 3	3.7(0.2)	3.1(0.1)	6.032	0.015	0.029
Item 11	3.8(0.2)	3.0(0.1)	13.001	0.000	0.061
Item 17	5.0(0.1)	5.3(0.1)	4.410	0.037	0.021

Note. SE = Standard error; ^a Due to the extension of the analysis, in the present table only the statistically significant results were reported (i.e., 13 out of 66 comparisons); ^b One-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) or covariance (ANCOVA; i.e., when the covariable/s were statistically significant).

As regards the type of teacher, statistically significant differences were found in 9 different items. It transpires that English teachers harbour a more positive outlook on their knowledge of bilingual methodology as well as their language competence, as compared to content teachers. Besides, they are less critical of the methodological training received prior to the accreditation process and express greater satisfaction regarding the design of the training programmes offered to them after they commenced work. Due to the fact that three of the items, in which statistically significant differences were detected, refer to teacher training needs, the study reveals that content teachers seem less qualified to partake in the bilingual programme and, thus, they are in greater need of acquiring a sound knowledge of bilingual education and upgrading linguistic skills. These outcomes mirror the results of prior investigations where content teachers also harboured a more sceptical outlook on their language aptitude and pedagogical knowledge (Lancaster, 2016; Pérez Cañado, 2018b).

The teachers also differed in their perceptions of the bilingual education materials employed in class. Content teachers adopted a more negative stance towards the design of these materials, criticising them for not conforming with bilingual education principles, and, concomitantly, they expressed greater discontent for the low emphasis on the development of communicative competence in the textbooks and the scant attention paid to catering to diversity. Furthermore, language teachers favour to a greater extent the introduction of bilingual teaching at an early age. This could be explained by the fact that as language experts, they are more cognizant of the importance and benefits of learning a second language at an early age. Divergent opinions were also observed in the general assessment of the programme since content teachers adopted a slightly less positive stance towards CLIL implementation, thereby confirming the need for heightened attention, more assistance and incentives for this cohort.

As regards the results of the simple linear regression, the data showed that teachers' age had a statistically significantly positive relationship with items 3 ($\beta = 0.140$; $R^2 = 0.019$; $p = 0.047$), 12 ($\beta = 0.179$; $R^2 = 0.032$; $p = 0.010$) and 13 ($\beta = 0.138$; $R^2 = 0.019$; $p = 0.049$). Thus, the results indicate that as the age increases, CLIL teachers show greater satisfaction with the provision of in-service training courses in bilingual methodology (item 3). This could be attributed to the fact that age is often associated with experience and, thus, the older the teachers are, the more experience they might have. This means that older teachers might have benefited more from the teacher-training programme schemes due to their longer participation in the programme and hence, seem to be less critical on this score. Furthermore, the data show that there is a positive correlation between the age and the proper design of the textbooks (item 12) as well as between the age and the emphasis on a communicative approach in their design (item 13). This may also be attributed to longer experience in teaching and, hence, better familiarization with the materials and a much better ability to select the most relevant activities and adapt them. Besides, younger teachers might be more critical of the textbooks given their limited experience and they could be placing too much reliance on them. These findings concur with the results of the study conducted by Pérez Cañado (2018b) where teachers over 40 years old appear to be more familiar with the theoretical underpinnings of bilingual education and seem to use authentic materials in class to a greater extent than those under 40 years old.

Regarding the teachers' experience in the bilingual scheme, the results of the simple linear regression showed a statistically significantly positive relationship with items 1 ($\beta = 0.317$; $R^2 = 0.100$; $p < 0.001$) and 5 ($\beta = 0.138$; $R^2 = 0.019$; $p = 0.049$), and negatively with item 7 ($\beta = -0.251$; $R^2 = 0.063$; $p < 0.001$). The experience seems to exert a positive impact on teachers' knowledge of bilingual teaching methodology (item 1), as well as their language proficiency (item 5). In fact, the negative correlation with item 7 is indicative of the fact that the less experienced the teachers are, the more they agree with the idea that having a higher level of English would involve less of a workload. Thus, similarly to the conclusion drawn above, the findings of the present study demonstrate that those who have participated in the bilingual programme for a longer period appear to have taken more advantage of all the teacher training initiatives and, thus, possess greater expertise with regard to methodological aspects, a finding substantiated in a previous research study by Pérez Cañado (2018b).

The results of the simple linear regression showed that teachers' accredited level of English had a statistically significantly positive relationship with items 1 ($\beta = 0.279$; $R^2 = 0.078$; $p < 0.001$), 2 ($\beta = 0.178$; $R^2 = 0.032$; $p = 0.012$) and 5 ($\beta = 0.515$; $R^2 = 0.265$; $p < 0.001$), and negatively with items 6 ($\beta = -0.237$; $R^2 = 0.056$; $p = 0.001$) and 7 ($\beta = -0.206$; $R^2 = 0.042$; $p = 0.004$). Data show that there is a correlation between the language level and teachers' expertise in pedagogical principles, indicating that the higher the proficiency level of the respondents, the more satisfied CLIL teachers seem to be with their knowledge of methodological principles (item 1) as well as with the teacher training received before they commenced work (item 2). Needless to say, the positive relationship with item 5 indicates that those with higher accredited English levels harbour a more positive outlook on the adequacy of their language skills to teach in a bilingual scheme. Furthermore, a statistically significant negative association with items 6 and 7 reveals that CLIL teachers with a poor command of the target language agree more with the idea that if their language level was

higher, their students could learn more (item 6) or their job would be less demanding (item 7). The overriding conclusion drawn from these analyses is that CLIL teachers with a better command of the target language seem more content with numerous facets of the programme, a finding in line with the previous study by Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa (2018). This explains why, given that an adequate language proficiency seems to be a *sine qua non* for the success of bilingual education, the enhancement of language skills should still be an issue requiring further attention. In concurrence with the study of Pérez Cañado (2018b), our data show that language level and experience are essential for the bilingual programme to be fully appreciated. Yet, since official accreditation might not always reflect the actual level of English that CLIL teachers have, caution should be taken in the interpretation of these findings.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study has enabled us to paint an up-to-date picture of how CLIL is playing out in the region of Andalusia in the year 2020 with the emphasis on the major shortcomings reported in the previous studies. Unfortunately, notwithstanding a positive overall evaluation, the picture which emerges from the study is not so positive. Little strides have been made in the teacher training arena since the informants underscore the paucity of methodological and language courses on offer. Widespread discontent has also been reported as regards insufficiency in the areas of coordination, attention to diversity, textbook design and the constant need to adapt the materials, which increases teachers' workloads. More worryingly, no progress has been documented in terms of students' heterogeneity and group size. Regarding the within-cohort comparison, it transpires that teachers with lower English proficiency are clearly in greatest need of being provided with more linguistic and methodological training. Similarly, content teachers and those with less teaching experience need to realign their perceptions of the bilingual programme in order to see the project as a worthwhile endeavour. Thus, they are in dire need of more training as well as more incentives and support from the educational authorities.

The results of the present investigation have allowed us to ascertain that the major drawbacks documented in the previous studies have not been addressed properly. These findings increase our understanding of the complexity of the project and merit further consideration since teachers' role in the proper development of the project is of the utmost importance. Thus, empirical data similar to that provided with the present study should govern educational decisions, the aims of which are to facilitate teachers' work and ensure the feasibility of the project. Furthermore, teachers should have greater participation in the decision-making process, especially when these decisions affect them directly.

As regards future research, continuous stocktaking is required in order to determine if the outcomes are in line with what has been ascertained in the present study. Also, further assessment of the programme is necessary to find out if the failings detected in the present investigation have been addressed and to identify other limitations which might curtail the proper implementation of the CLIL practice. Furthermore, as mentioned above, it would be worthwhile to compare teachers' perceptions in two different settings, namely in primary and

secondary schools to find out if they share the same opinions on the dual-focused approach development, and to compare how CLIL is playing out at each level, taking in account the benefits as well as the deficiencies of the project. Additionally, canvassing students and parents' opinions would also prove to be useful and would allow us to see how the bilingual programme is perceived from a different perspective.

Some limitations to the study must be acknowledged. First of all, given the pandemic situation, numerous schools declined to participate in the present study, which might have lowered the sample size. They claimed they were going through a difficult time and, therefore, could not contribute to the study. Yet, taking into account the return rate in other topic-related studies (e.g. Milla Lara & Casas Pedrosa, 2018; Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017; Pérez Cañado, 2018b), the sample in this study still appears to be numerically substantial. Furthermore, due to the lack of a longitudinal focus, the study has enabled us to shed light on the teachers' perceptions of CLIL implementation at present. Consequently, it has to be borne in mind that due to the fact that the study was conducted only in the primary school setting in a monolingual region of Andalusia, it is context-bound, and the present sample is not representative of CLIL teachers as a whole.

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