

Between egalitarianism and diversity in CLIL programmes: What do teachers think?

Entre el igualitarismo y la diversidad en los programas AICLE: ¿Qué piensan los profesores?

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Abstract

Voices have been raised warning of the possibility that the approach Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) may produce some differences between students, favouring those who are better prepared and leaving aside those who are not. This position is supported by studies, mostly quantitative, which try to demonstrate that this approach can lead to inequality in the classroom. We believe that to enrich knowledge about the extent of these potential problems it may be beneficial to have first-hand knowledge from teachers. To this end, the responses of 376 teachers from all monolingual regions of Spain and from all types of education (public, charter and private) were analysed to find out their perceptions of whether CLIL encourages segregation and neglect of disadvantaged students. The data obtained are quantitative in nature, providing relevant and complementary information on the role played by students' social extraction and the degree of teacher satisfaction with how CLIL addresses issues related to equality and inclusion. The results of this analysis show that there are notable differences in teachers' perceptions, but at the same time indicate that teachers are explicitly confident about the measures that need to be taken to prevent these potential problems from arising

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning, egalitarianism, socio-economic status, segregation, learning differences, teachers' concerns.

Resumen

La enseñanza a través del inglés en las universidades españolas se ha extendido desde el año 2007 cuando España se adhirió al Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior. En las dos últimas décadas hemos asistido a un debate sobre los retos y los beneficios asociados al Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE), así como sobre algunos potenciales problemas derivados de su aplicación. De hecho, han aparecido opiniones alertando de la posibilidad de que este enfoque pueda producir diferencias entre los alumnos, favoreciendo a los que están mejor preparados y dejando de lado a los que no lo están. Esta postura viene avalada por estudios, en su mayoría cuantitativos, que tratan de demostrar que este enfoque puede provocar desigualdades en el aula. Creemos que para enriquecer el conocimiento sobre el alcance de estos posibles problemas resulta beneficioso contar con el conocimiento de primera mano de los profesores. Con este fin, se han analizado las respuestas de 376 profesores de todas las regiones monolingües de España y de todos los tipos de enseñanza (pública, concertada y privada) para conocer su percepción sobre si AICLE fomenta la segregación y la desatención de los alumnos desfavorecidos. Los datos de naturaleza cualitativa obtenidos proporcionan información relevante y complementaria sobre el papel desempeñado por la extracción social de los alumnos y el grado de satisfacción de los profesores con la forma en que el AICLE aborda las cuestiones relacionadas con la igualdad y la inclusión. Los resultados de este análisis muestran que existen notables diferencias en las percepciones de los profesores, pero al mismo tiempo indican que son conscientes claramente de las medidas que deben adoptarse para evitar que surjan estos posibles problemas.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas, igualdad, estatus socioeconómico, segregación, diferencias de aprendizaje, preocupaciones del profesorado.

Introduction

The emergence of the educational approach known as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Language) has brought about a shift in the positioning and consideration of foreign language learning (Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter, 2013; Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010; Marsh, 2013). Despite its purported benefits, it is not easy to find a consensus about the results

of these programmes (Bauer et al., 2021; Cenoz, Genesse and Gorter, 2013; Cumming, 2012; Dalton-Puffer, 2008; Dalton-Puffer et al., 2014; Dalton-Puffer, 2018; Pérez-Cañado, 2018; Pérez-Cañado, 2020; Rodríguez Bonces, 2012; San Isidro, 2019).

Especially in the Spanish context, there have been some voices warning of the shadows and dangers of implementing CLIL, regardless of its characteristics (Anghel, Cabrales and Carro, 2016; Bruton, 2011, 2013, 2015; Martín Rojo, 2015; Paran, 2013), or at least unveiling some negative aspects (Mediavilla et al., 2019; Rumlich, 2020; Sanjurjo, Fernández and Arias, 2017; van Mensel, 2020). In general, these critical opinions have in common the claim that the results are greater because the students are better from the outset, so that the bilingual programme cannot be credited with success (Broca, 2016; Relaño, 2015). In the same vein, at the international level, de Courcy, Warren and Burston (2002), Kuchah and Kuchah (2018), Landau, Albuquerque and Siqueira (2021), Rodríguez Bonces (2012), and van Mensel (2020) argue that in a bilingual programme there is a clear relationship between the existence of low socio-economic status (SES) and the achievement of poor academic results.

Given that most of the empirical data available are of a quantitative nature, we concur with San Isidro and Lasagabaster (2020) in that “future research should focus on longitudinal qualitative studies” (p. 14), accepting and appraising studies in which the focus is more on the interpretation, flexibility, experience, and the research situation. This article aims to explore two main questions: whether teachers perceive differences in learners’ achievement depending on differences in their families’ SES, and whether CLIL adequately meets the needs of students with different learning capacities. In addition, we will also address the solutions suggested by teachers to provide adequate support to learners of different abilities and to ensure an inclusive learning environment. In order to draw valuable conclusions on these two important questions, a substantial number of professionals with experience in bilingual education were asked to express their views freely and unrestrictedly.

The Current Study

The question of selection in CLIL

When assessing bilingual education programmes and CLIL, the results may be different depending on the socio-economic environment in which they are located (Lancaster, 2018) or whether they are in a rural or urban environment (Alejo and Piquer-Píriz, 2016; Pavón, 2018). In any case, it seems clear that whether for one reason or another, fully equal access to bilingual education is very difficult to achieve: “CLIL has still a long way to go to become mainstream and still relies excessively on students’ self-selection” (San Isidro, 2019, p. 35); which seems to determine the degree of effectiveness depending on who receives it.

In this context, within the areas of CLIL that are being researched, the study of the reasons why students with different social and educational characteristics may not achieve the same objectives are becoming increasingly important: “Attention has also been paid to egalitarianism: to the eligibility of students from different walks of life, their overt or covert selection, and the gradual attrition of the less privileged” (Lorenzo, Granados and Rico, 2020, p. 2). The concept of “egalitarianism” is understood here as the belief in or practising the idea that all people should have the same rights and opportunities.

With regard to a possible problem of self-selection associated to the students’ socio-economic status (SES), Mediavilla et al. (2019) state that SES plays a significant role in assessing the typology of students in bilingual schools, as these students come from families with a higher professional status on the part of their parents and with greater possibilities of extramural exposure. Furthermore, van Mensel (2020) concludes in a study on the typology of CLIL and non-CLIL students in Belgium that students with higher SES tend to choose bilingual education to a greater extent. As we can observe, this type of criticism positions the socio-economic element as one of the central factors affecting families’ choice of education.

Another important aspect related to the possible differentiation between CLIL and non-CLIL learners is the fact that families play an important role in the decision about whether or not to learn in a bilingual programme (Parkes and Ruth, 2011). The role of families, hence, should not be underestimated at all. In a comparative study on the motivations

and attitudes of students and parents towards CLIL, San Isidro and Lasagabaster (2020) concluded that the level of motivation of the families was higher than that of non-CLIL students: “This might possibly have to do with the higher socio-educational level of CLIL parents alongside the greater level of parental encouragement in the CLIL cohort” (p. 13).

Socio-economic status and learner capacities

When coming to the evaluation of SES in bilingual education and CLIL, the influence and value to be given to the importance of the socio-economic component has provoked a frontal positioning between two ways of judging this aspect. On the one hand, we find those conceptualisations of CLIL which state that CLIL provides an equal approach to foreign language learning for all learners (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010; Marsh, 2002). On the other hand, other authors (Bruton, 2011, 2013, 2015; Paran, 2013; Rumlich, 2020), claim that CLIL attracts the most advantaged learners and, therefore, fosters a kind of educational elitism that favours those who have had the resources to advance in foreign language learning and disadvantages those learners who have not had those possibilities. Thus, according to these authors, students who end up enrolling in bilingual programs in which there is self-selection tend to perform better than most students.

In line with these negative views, we can find voices that warn about the relationship between obtaining poor results and the existence of a low socio-economic level in CLIL compared to non-CLIL students (Anghel, Cabrales and Carro, 2016; Sanjurjo, Fernández and Arias, 2017). On the contrary, other authors affirm that there are no significant differences based on different SES between CLIL and non-CLIL students (Hallbach and Iwaniec, 2020; Lorenzo, Granados and Rico, 2020, Pérez-Cañado, 2016; Rascón and Bretones, 2018; Shepherd and Ainsworth, 2017).

Another controversial aspect of CLIL is that pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds are often less able to deal with academic and disciplinary language competence. In this situation, it is essential that schools propose a response to overcome language problems that may compromise the learning objectives of the whole programme. In this respect, attention to the development of disciplinary languages or pluriliteracies is a highly effective approach to reducing this deficit (Coyle and Meyer, 2021).

However, there is a final problematic area concerning the students' characteristics, regardless of their SES. Nowadays, one of the main problems for any educational proposal is that under the umbrella of "special needs" we can find a wide variety of needs. For instance, students with physical and cognitive problems (Rieser and Mason, 1990), multi-ethnic students (Blair et al., 1999), students with emotional problems due to family problems (Christenson, 1992), or students with high or low learning capacities (Sebba and Ainscow, 1996). It seems clear that one of the major difficulties of the CLIL approach is to offer the same learning opportunities to students with different abilities and, above all, to students with special needs (Durán-Martínez and Beltrán-Llavador, 2016). Even though there are promising projects in the field attention to diversity in CLIL such as the ADIBE project (adibeproject.com), in general, specific research, guidelines and suggestions regarding how to deal with this reality in CLIL are not frequent (Benito, 2014; Madrid and Pérez-Cañado, 2018; see the special issue of the International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism on the ADIBE project in 2021).

Moreover, the importance of attention to this type of student is crucial to prevent problems of segregation and elitism. Many families may feel that their children's learning will be slowed down by sharing a classroom with pupils who need specialised attention, so they may choose to enrol their children in other schools where there are no such pupils (de Courcy et al., 2002).

Method

Objective and research questions

The goal of this study is to investigate, through the analysis of the opinions of experienced teachers, how CLIL teachers perceive the programmes and how the different characteristics of students are handled in these programmes. More specifically, three research questions have been established:

1. To what extent teachers believe that CLIL may segregate children and that there may be a connection between socio-economic status and success in CLIL?

- 2. How satisfied are teachers with the way CLIL deals with students with different learning capacities?
- 3. What measures should be taken to favour egalitarianism, equity and inclusion in CLIL?

Research design

We have opted for an interpretative paradigm as we believe that qualitative studies can contribute to offer a useful and interesting approach that is gaining more and more ground in the field of education, and which helps to acknowledge “a deep understanding of the diverse contexts and contingencies in language education” (Zappa-Hollman and Duff, 2019, p. 1030).

We also believe that providing qualitative data from a large group of participants will help to complement the interpretation of the findings from purely quantitative studies by offering a more internal and personal view of a given educational reality. Beyond collecting a large number of more or less targeted responses, the interest of this study, therefore, was to gather their opinions and views from a more reflective, interpretative and judgemental point of view.

Context and participants

The data have been extracted from a nationwide investigation to be published of the quality of bilingual education programmes led by the authors of the study presented here. Part of the vast amount of data collected related directly to their perceptions of possible problems of segregation in CLIL programmes and was specifically chosen to address this issue. The target audience was teachers working in bilingual schools from different Spanish regions. 421 primary education teachers participated in the study, whose objective was to find out the teachers’ general assessment of the bilingual programmes in which they were involved.

Among the different questions, the teachers were asked to openly and reflectively respond to these two related to the scope of the study: a) does bilingual education lead to segregation?; b) do you agree with the criticisms of bilingual education? In both cases they were invited to give

reasons for their answer. The questions were provided in Spanish and the teachers were invited to respond either in English or in Spanish. The teachers were also informed that the research complied with the ethical commitments of scientific research in the field of education, and that the researchers guaranteed the privacy of the students and the confidentiality of the data collected.

Several teachers' responses were excluded from the analysis because they did not meet two essential conditions. One was to be a foreign language specialist, being a content specialist, or being both at the same time; and the second was to be working in a monolingual community.

The total number of teachers was 376. 73.7% foreign language and content teachers, 17% teaching only content through, and 9.3% only teaching the foreign language. 79.2% were teachers in state schools and 20.8% were teachers in charter schools. Their linguistic level ranged from B2 to C2, more precisely, 17% of the teachers had a C2 level, 67.8% had a C1 level, and 15.2% of the teachers had a B2 level. Also, 26.3% of the teachers stated that they had a very good knowledge of the CLIL programme in which they were involved, 21.3% that their understanding was good, 36.7% said that it was average, and 15.7% claimed that they did not have a good knowledge. This is interesting information for further interpretation of the results, as only less than 16% of the teachers alleged, they did not know the programme well. Officially bilingual regions were left out for their lack of responses and because they depict different realities. In these regions there are two official languages and the foreign language as an additional language, as opposed to the monolingual communities participating in the study, where there is only one mother tongue and one additional language.

Data collection procedure

The survey from which the data has been collected consisted of a questionnaire with 36 items distributed online to all the members of the association. The topics covered questions about organisational, managerial, or methodological aspects, and a specific question to find whether they considered bilingual programmes to be promoting segregation, an inquiry which obviously became our guiding quest in the analysis. This questionnaire also included an open section in which the respondents

could express their opinions about different aspects addressed in the questions.

The data analysed in this article corresponds to the answers provided by the teachers in this open section specifically about the topic regarding the existence of possible segregation. We would like to make it clear that the researchers have made a particular effort to collect the opinions as neutrally as possible, trying to ensure that the translation from one language to another was not contaminated by subjective considerations. Rather than adopting previous assumptions on the thematic variation that could be found in the teachers' excerpts, we have followed an inductive grounded-theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to generate theory from data. There were not categories generated previously, the coding was made inductively, based on the exploration of the data. Two researchers carried out the analysis of the teachers' responses separately.

Each one of them was grouping the opinions of the teachers in terms of frequency and similarity; later on, the categories, themes and sub-themes identified were compared and agreed on. Three main themes emerged from a first analysis of teachers' answers: the possible existence of segregation in CLIL, attention to diversity, and potential solutions, which became the objectives in this study. Based on these three dimensions, different emergent thematic and sub-thematic divisions were ascribed to each of them in view of the specificity of the comments made by the teachers (see Table I).

TABLE I. Coding framework, emergent themes and sub-themes

Coding	Emergent Themes	Emergent Sub-themes
Segregation and SES	Acknowledgement of segregation	Leaving students behind, wrong organisation, geographical considerations, impact on motivation, migrants.
	Relevance of SES	Socio-economic and cultural reasons, lack of support, sense of inferiority.
	Positive views	Segregation is natural, great opportunities, fruitful, linguistically rewarding, intrinsically good.
Attention to diversity	Failure to cope with diversity	Disadvantaged students, feeling outside the programme, feeling of abandonment and frustration.
	Not successful	Special needs, late enrolment, poor handling, problems with the mother tongue.
	Lack of support	Lack of resources, lack of specific support, need for compensatory measures.
Solutions	Organisation	Possibility to choose, flexible itineraries, possibility to drop out, early start, reduction of content subjects in the foreign language, continuity between levels, same as in non-bilingual education, more investment.
	Definition	Information to families, correct naming, quality control, not obligatory, (but) obligatory for all.
	Support	Team teaching, individual support, small groups, more linguistic support, qualified teachers.

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Results

Data obtained from the teachers' opinions are detailed below. The qualitative results of this study are presented following the codification established by the three research questions posited. The quotes have been chosen and labelled according to this code categorisation and to the emergent themes and sub-themes identified. All the quotes have been identified with a code (T1, T2, ...). A quantitative analysis of the frequency of occurrence of the categories is also shown at the beginning of each section.

Segregation and SES

From the outset, we could find negative comments about the lack of equality in the CLIL programmes. The concept “segregation” appeared in 73% of the comments provided by the teachers, and 68% of the negative comments included the term “socio-economic status”. Thus, some teachers clearly pointed out that these programmes are segregating: “Bilingual education is segregating, many students are left behind.” (T12). In addition, some of these comments included serious negative statements, alluding to the lack of opportunities for all students and, probably for all these reasons, the absence of a compulsory degree of quality: “All this, in my opinion, has made the result a disaster. A great name but very poor quality.” (T4).

When analysing the reasons why some teachers argued that bilingual education is in essence segregating, most of their views emphasised that differences are created due to the existence of a different socio-economic situation: “I think it varies a lot from one school to another, depending on the socio-economic situation of the pupils.” (T41). In the light of the opinions expressed by teachers, it seems clear for some of them that there is a visible link between the success of these programmes and the presence of students from more advantaged backgrounds: “Only those who have the means are going to succeed in this system, and they are not usually the most disadvantaged.” (T7). Clearly, we are confronted with vehemently negative opinions, which also point out that in many cases families make a great effort to prevent their children from being sent to classes where pupils they considered problematic or lazy are grouped together: “Families have to make a financial and time effort so

that their children don't end up in the non-bilingual section where they think 'the outcasts, the troublemakers and the lazy ones' will be." (T10).

However, the terms "segregation" and "socio-economic status" were not always associated with negative visions and 21% of the teachers' comments exuded a positive view. Thus, for some the existence of this issue is natural and ordinary in education since it cannot be denied that students inherently possess different abilities: "Segregation does not happen because of the bilingual programme, segregation has always existed. It is absurd to think that all pupils are the same and have the same abilities." (T20). Other teachers emphasise the fact that, notwithstanding the difficulties, this type of programme is beneficial for the pupils: "Despite all the difficulties, the bilingual programme is bearing fruit." (T29). Finally, it must also be said that there are those who clearly separate the suitability of this type of programme from its actual implementation, pointing out that the problems derive from the inability to apply bilingual teaching correctly: "Appropriate bilingual teaching is good; the problem is that it is not being implemented properly." (T1).

Attention to diversity

The terms "diversity" and "different abilities" were present in 68% of all the teachers' comments, whether from a negative or positive perspective. Most negative comments have focused on the inability of bilingual programmes to deal equally with students with different abilities: "It's very difficult to deal with students who have difficulties." (T13). Thus, this lack of adequate attention causes students to feel abandoned and frustrated: "The bilingual system tends to exclude students with learning difficulties, which makes them feel frustrated." (T31). This alienating effect which seems to occur in this type of programme is a pervasive theme, as they stress that the students who really benefit from them are those with the best abilities while the rest are left aside: "Only useful for a sector of the student body (the most privileged in terms of abilities) leaving the rest abandoned." (T4).

Moreover, criticism has not only been directed at the problems of bilingual programmes in responding adequately to the different abilities of students. In fact, teachers repeatedly point out that such programmes also lay aside students with special educational needs: "Students with special educational needs are excluded or disadvantaged by bilingual

programmes.” (T21). Similarly, they warn about the problems that exist when welcoming immigrant pupils: “There are students who cannot succeed in a bilingual programme: for example, late entrants to the Spanish education system (those who, for example, come from other countries).” (T3).

As for the reasons why the teachers believe that bilingual programmes are not coping with this reality properly, in many cases it is claimed that the main reason is that they do not have adequate resources: “The fundamental shortcoming I see in bilingual teaching is the lack of means and personal resources.” (T23). This refers to the difficulty of dealing correctly with diversity, an argument which is repeated when teachers identify problems with special needs students: “Mainly, support is needed to attend to pupils with needs so that they do not fall behind, as they lack support in the classroom.” (T17). It is important to note that we have also found some teachers who believe that. Although there is no segregation in principle in bilingual programmes, we can find it with students with learning difficulties: “I just want to say that it does not produce segregation in itself, but it does indirectly produce segregation for children with learning difficulties or special needs who do not have support at home.” (T45). We should also note, anyway, that there are teachers who defend the idea that bilingual education caters for all pupils equally, regardless of their educational needs: “My experience in Bilingual Education for 22 years has been fantastic [...], the results are good even with children with special needs.” (T40).

Possible solutions

After reviewing teachers’ perceptions, the term “solution” was by far the most frequent in general (84%), and particularly associated to the problems of the lack of egalitarianism and adequate attention to diversity. For example, a series of recommendations emerged regarding the necessity of facilitating the incorporation and exit of students from the bilingual programme: “Necessary issues such as flexible itineraries, the possibility to enter or leave the programme, smaller groups, etc. are not addressed.” (T30), but also the advisability of starting the programme from the infant education stage: “I believe that the bilingual programme should start at infant education.” (T27). On the other hand, some suggestions were

aimed at strengthening foreign language teaching to the detriment of the teaching of content. “An increase in the number of hours of English and a decrease in the number of non-linguistic subjects would help these programmes.” (T38). Also, they acknowledged the fact that it all comes down to the educational institutions being fully involved: “In the end, it depends to a large extent on the economic investment.” (T32).

Interestingly, the teachers warned of the need for a clearer definition of the bilingual programme and for more accurate information to be disseminated to society and provided to families: “There is a need for a foreign language learning system that is not called bilingual so that there is no confusion, as the environment is not conducive to bilingualism as a result of this type of education.” (T14). They also suggest that this clarity of definition should be present even when a school is called a bilingual school: “Perhaps if the name were ‘language reinforcement plan’ it would be more in line with reality.” (T11). On the other hand, to prevent disadvantaged students or those with learning difficulties from being obliged to pursue bilingual education, many teachers believe that participation in this type of programme should be optional: “In my opinion, primary schools should offer bilingual education as an option.” (T33).

We would like to draw attention to those suggestions and proposals which have the teachers themselves as the main asset to offer possible solutions. For example, some teachers believe that the problem of coping with a possible segregation and with diversity lies in the implementation of a correct pedagogical model: “The difference lies in the didactic approach, not in the fact that bilingualism is not compulsory.” (T35). Therefore, if the aim is to offer an education in which the different abilities of students are dealt with more adequately, what is necessary is to train teachers more adequately: “The training of teachers and the option of non-bilingualism for students experiencing difficulties are very important.” (T23). More specifically, teachers believe that it is vital to have well-qualified support teachers, especially at the earliest ages: “Bilingual education in infants should be introduced through a support person who carries out daily and globalised activities in infants.” (T14). In fact, many of the comments were along the line that having qualified teachers is vital for the success of the programme: “This is the main problem with bilingual teaching, that we do not have qualified teachers.” (T2).

Discussion

As we have discussed in the theoretical section of this article, the discussion about the existence of possible segregation in CLIL programmes is a hot debate which is currently wide open and to which experts, educators and researchers are increasingly contributing their opinions and the results of their studies.

Progress in the implementation of CLIL has often been driven by the opinions of recognised experts who have been setting the standards in publications and books. At the same time, there has been a huge increase in research on the effects of this approach in recent decades, which we believe is also having an impact on the way in which CLIL is implemented. However, particularly when it comes to investigating what its effects are from a social perspective, there are not many studies that delve into this question, let alone consider the personal view of teachers. Unfortunately, CLIL is often seen as a monolithic approach that must be assumed and applied as it is, without taking into consideration either the context in which it is to be carried out or the participants who are involved. It is therefore necessary to explore in depth all aspects related to the essence of CLIL, but also to the problems that may arise from its imposition.

In the light of the data obtained in this study from the direct opinions of CLIL teachers, we can say that the confrontation referred to in the theoretical section is repeated in the same way. Thus, those who argue that segregation exists in CLIL (sharing the vision exposed by Bruton (2015), Paran (2013) and Sanjurgo, Fernández and Arias (2015), for example, affirm that there is a clear lack of attention to students who are falling behind in their learning or who started CLIL on a lower level of linguistic and/or cognitive ability, which has a very negative influence on their motivation and causes a feeling of frustration and inferiority that inevitably ends up affecting their performance. The fact is that the enrolment in CLIL programmes may or may not be determined by a decision of the families and learners themselves, and questions arise about the appropriateness of implementing such an education, as some authors have warned (Martín Rojo, 2015; Mediavilla et al., 2019). However, we have identified a second group of opinions, teachers who recognise some potential dangers associated with CLIL but are more focused on highlighting its benefits. They point out gains related to the opportunities CLIL offers students to learn academic content more effectively, together

with the substantial improvement it brings to foreign language learning. These positive views are in line with the findings of other studies. For example, Rascón and Bretones (2018) reported that successful results might encourage families with low SES not to give up their intention to have their students enrolled in CLIL, given that the academic results are no worse.

With respect to the relevance of SES, some teachers' opinions corroborated the findings in Anghel et al. (2016), who pointed out in their study that there was a notable difference between the learning objectives of CLIL learners with low SES and those with high SES, clearly in favour of the latter. However, the same authors pointed out that in cases where the quality of teaching, determined above all by the qualifications and experience of the teachers, was high, these differences were clearly attenuated. This raises the question of whether the differences in students' learning are solely due to different SES or whether other factors objectively determine students' learning in CLIL as, for example, shown by Hallbach and Iwaniec (2020) and Lorenzo, Granados, and Rico (2020). Therefore, whether from quantitative or qualitative studies, the evidence suggests that such is the amalgamation of variables that it is impossible to attribute responsibility for behaviour to a single set of factors.

It is clear that the possible levelling effect the CLIL may be due to other factors, for example, the obligatory nature of starting CLIL at an early age, since the level of linguistic competence is generally low and therefore homogeneous and, in addition, the influence of some of the different factors that make up the SES (parents' income and job's position, ethnicity, background, or neighbourhood) may not be fully at work, as stated for example by Hallbach and Iwaniec (2020) and Lorenzo, Granados and Rico (2020). If anything, it would be CLIL itself has brought about or accelerated these benefits, so probably for some teachers the question has been: why disdain or renounce its positive influence?

All that has been said so far would also apply to students with special needs, a problem which varies in importance according to the number of students with these characteristics that teachers must accommodate in their classes, a special concern for most teachers. It is not only that teachers have to cope with the difficulties arising from teaching to linguistically heterogeneous classes or with students exhibiting different learning styles. We concur easily with these opinions, what CLIL would require is the application of an educational policy of inclusion like that which is

carried out in non-bilingual schools, without the need for it to be special because it is a form of bilingual education. All in all, perhaps a flagrant lack of resources and support has led teachers to express their concern in this aspect. We can infer from this view that the inadequacy of CLIL to handle these circumstances is not intrinsically a flaw in this approach but the result of not providing the necessary compensatory measures to the students who require them.

Many of the negative opinions we have found are also because teachers are sometimes not prepared, do not receive support from institutions and do not know how to implement CLIL correctly, which results in pupils not achieving the desired objectives. Taking teachers' opinions into account can help to improve the quality of programmes, provide better training before, during and after. Another idea that can be inferred from the results is that those teachers need training by the very institutions that implement bilingual programmes, and that this should be carried out by means of study leaves or paid training. Attention to diversity is a key pillar of education today, it will remain so in the future, and it is our responsibility to ensure that all needs are equally addressed.

However, it is not all impediments and difficulties, and we believe that some of the teachers' suggestions might do well to the development of CLIL. For instance, naming bilingual schools to schools in which an additional language is used to teach several subjects generates a great deal of confusion among families and, also, among some of the teaching staff. Many of these parents and teachers believe 'bilingual education' is equivalent to 'bilingualism' and that they will finish the educational stage with a similar proficiency in two languages. That conception is not only dangerous as an idea because, for many, belonging to CLIL means much more than having more possibilities to learn a foreign language: "General academic excellence is at stake, because families and teachers often perceive the CLIL group as the 'good group'" (Llinares and Evanitskaya, 2020, p. 4). Informing families properly is an easy task that would help them really understand what CLIL is and would prepare them better for its lights and shadows. The problem would be that a particular policy seeks to promote this idea.

Another of the proposals to which teachers refer most often and which would have a positive impact is that concerning teacher training. Certainly, all the problems associated with the different abilities of learners, whatever their nature, could be adequately addressed if teachers were

equipped with the knowledge and resources to deal with this diversity. It is obvious to say that it is essential to train teachers to make them properly qualified in terms of the use of the foreign language, and regarding the methodological apparatus necessary to use it in content classes.

As one of the teachers rightly expounded it, everything will be more difficult if the necessary investment is not granted. As a final personal note, we believe that authorities might do well to think in the long term. What they are saying now will probably demand more investment in the future, leaving aside the damage we are doing to the learning process regardless of the type of CLIL programme they are running.

Conclusion

As noted throughout this article, there is a growing awareness of the importance of analysing context and social factors before even thinking about implementing CLIL. More particularly, many authors warn of the need to attend to the socio-educational characteristics of learners if CLIL is to be successful. Whether in a European context, for example in Britain, Belgium, Austria, or Spain, or in a more international context, for example in Brazil, Nigeria, Colombia or Japan, there is growing concern about the social effects of CLIL. Teachers are preoccupied about the relationship between results and student characteristics, irrespective of the context and country where CLIL is being implemented. The question of whether CLIL produces segregation or elitism and whether students' outcomes are subject to their social and educational characteristics have become a major concern for educators. In this context, we strongly believe that it is also important to listen to the teachers' voices, and we have modestly aspired with this investigation to complement with qualitative data the results obtained in other studies.

We are aware of the limitations of this study. The teachers who took part come from all the monolingual regions of Spain, which presupposes a certain geographical representativeness. However, the design of CLIL programmes and their subsequent implementation can be very different, so the results could be interpreted differently if correlated with other important variables such as years of experience, training, and pedagogical approach. In fact, one of the future lines of research that opens up

after this study is the possibility of conducting research with smaller groups of teachers with similar characteristics in terms of training and experience. As well as to address more specific studies in contexts with homogeneous characteristics, for example in schools located in socially and economically disadvantaged environments..

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