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CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHERS' REALITY

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The teaching of English as a foreign language in the Ecuadorian public schools contemplates as one of the core principles the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. Therefore, knowledge about CLIL plays an important role in the teaching-learning process and it is fundamental to define if English teachers are prepared to apply it. So, the aim of this research is to determine the knowledge and understanding of English teachers regarding this methodology, taking into consideration that teachers are crucial for its implementation inside the educational framework. The method of investigation is inductive where information from educators is collected in order to evidence their real expertise and consequently, the effective application of this educational approach. This study has been carried out in a public educational institution, with 10 participants, between 25 and 45 years old, female gender and superior educational level. The present study employs a survey-based research methodology modeled and the scaling method used to measure teachers' answers was Likert scale. Results show teachers have a scarce knowledge of the features and principles associated to this educational approach. This limited understanding affects the roles that professors have to accomplish for an appropriate involvement of CLIL in their current teaching practice. Based on the results, it is possible to conclude that CLIL is barely applied by teachers, and its implementation is restrained to the guidelines defined in the teacher's guide without having a profound comprehension and without recognizing its benefits for students.

KEYWORDS: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); CLIL core features; CLIL teacher´s roles; National Ecuadorian curriculum; English as a Foreign Language.

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RESUMEN

La enseñanza del Inglés como lengua extranjera en las escuelas públicas ecuatorianas contempla como uno de los principios centrales el Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenido y Lenguas (AICLE). Por lo tanto, el conocimiento sobre CLIL juega un papel en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje y es fundamental definir si los docentes de Inglés están preparados para aplicarlo. Así, el objetivo de esta investigación es determinar el conocimiento y entendimiento de los docentes respecto a esta metodología, considerando que los docentes son cruciales para su implementación dentro del marco educativo. El método de investigación es inductivo donde la información proporcionada por los educadores es recopilada con el fin de evidenciar su real experticia y consecuentemente, la aplicación efectiva de este enfoque educativo. Este estudio se ha desarrollado en una institución educativa publica con 10 participantes, entre 25 y 45 años, de género femenino y nivel educativo superior. El presente estudio emplea una metodología de investigación basada en encuestas y el método de escala utilizado para medir las respuestas de los maestros fue la escala Likert. Los resultados muestran que los maestros tienen un escaso conocimiento de las características y principios asociados a este enfoque educativo. Esta comprensión limitada afecta los roles que los profesores tienen que cumplir para una participación adecuada de CLIL en su práctica docente actual. En base a los resultados, es posible concluir que los maestros apenas aplican CLIL, y su implementación se limita a las pautas definidas en la guía del maestro sin tener una comprensión profunda y sin reconocer sus beneficios para los estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenido y Lengua (AICLE); Principios de AICLE; Roles de los docentes AICLE; currículo nacional ecuatoriano; Inglés como Lengua Extranjera.

INTRODUCTION

The Ecuadorian government has implemented from 2016-2017 a new curriculum which establishes the application of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from second grade in primary schools, where the goals for proficiency are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The core principles in this new curriculum are communicative language approach, international standards, thinking skills, learner-centered approach and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). Most of these principles have been considered for some years in the academic instruction except the CLIL approach.

The communicative language approach has been promoted inside the teaching-learning process from 2010 promulgating the acquisition of language by means of interactions rather than memorization, and involving the four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. At the same time, national policies have constantly advocated to international standards so as to measure the foreign language proficiency. Also, as a complement of the communicative

approach, the educational policies have included the students' voice in the learning process in order to promote the autonomous learning, taking into consideration that learners are the center of the instruction.

Nevertheless, CLIL is only included in this last curriculum where an additional language is used to promote both content and language acquisition. This model also involves four interconnected dimensions (4 Cs): content, culture, communication and cognition. Thus, the curriculum states ¨The methodology and classroom procedures to be applied when teaching within a CLIL model form part of the teaching and learning specifications of this curriculum¨ (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). Furthermore, this curriculum involves the development of thinking skills which are contemplated in the cognition component of the CLIL framework allowing to students to move on from the understanding to the creation of knowledge.

Hence, the teachers' comprehension about the CLIL approach is essential for the consecution of students' achievements regarding the English language acquisition which is focused on learners reach a B1 level at the end of their secondary education. Nonetheless, according to the official website devoted to teachers' training and belonging to the Ministry of Education, there are not training programs for English teachers focused on the comprehension of CLIL fundamentals which allow them to develop competences for the implementation of a successful CLIL lesson. Current conferences, discussions or workshops endorsed by national authorities are centered in general guidelines. So that, it is difficult to determine if public schools and its teachers are prepared to put into practice the CLIL approach in accordance with the principles outlined in the national curriculum.

Consequently, it is relevant to formulate some questions such as: do Ecuadorian teachers know about CLIL or do they only ignore this term? Do teachers recognize the main features of the CLIL approach? Are teachers prepared to apply CLIL in an effective way? Are teachers aware of the competences that they have to develop for a successful instruction under the CLIL standards? What are the roles that CLIL teachers have to assume in their current practice? Answers to these and other questions allow evidencing the teachers' current knowledge regarding CLIL and provide a more real perspective about the application of this approach in public educational institutions.

Furthermore, according to Hanushek and Rivkin (2016) "teachers are central to any consideration of schools, and a majority of education policy discussions focus directly or indirectly on the role of teachers" (p. 1053). For that reason, it is imperative to recognize what the teachers' understanding of CLIL is, because they are the ones who guide and support the learning process, by engaging and motivating students to attain their goals. Thus, teachers with a lower performance influence their students' performance, and this performance is not only linked to academic achievements, but also encompasses personal and professional accomplishments throughout the development of knowledge, skills and values.

This research was centered in a public school since in keeping with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in Ecuador "Enrolments in private schools have been fairly stable in recent years, while public enrolments have risen" (British Council, 2015, p. 16). Moreover, the public school considered for this investigation is part of the eighty-two "millennium" schools built by the government with a modern structure (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2017). Nonetheless, learners in different grades of instruction have demonstrated a basic level (A1) in EFL which must vary in accordance with the curriculum. So, a test taken by Education First in 2016 showed the same level (A1) for students in both tenth and eighth grade (Education First, 2016).

Therefore, it is necessary to examine all elements implicated in the teaching-learning process in order to distinguish the factors associated to the students' low performance in the target language. Thus, this investigation aims to identify the teachers' expertise with regard to CLIL as an indicator of their performance in current practices recognizing their limitations so as to support and scaffold students in the foreign language acquisition, taking into account that the CLIL approach constitutes a remarkable principle of the national English curriculum which encompasses notions, strategies and activities to be applied for the consecution of students' academic achievements.

DEVELOPMENT

Marsh (1994) states that Content and Language Integrated Learning "refers to situations where subjects, or part of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with a dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneously learning of a foreign language". Also, Coyle, Hood, & Marsh (2010) claims that "CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (p. 1). Then, CLIL seeks the acquisition of new academic content and linguistic competences by means of an additional language. Further, "CLIL plays an important role providing a pragmatic response towards overcoming linguistic shortcomings, and in promoting equal access to education for all school-aged students, including those with additional support needs" (Coyle et al. 2010).

Additionally, Lightbown and Spada (2006) declare that "CLIL provides the basic conditions under which humans successfully acquire any new languages: by understanding and then creating meaning" (p. 16). Since "whereas methodology relies heavily on specific conditions for successful implementation, CLIL is instead guided by six relational pedagogical principles for integrating language and content that work across different contexts and settings, while incorporating all four key elements of 4Cs framework" (Cross and Gearon, 2013). The 4Cs framework endorses the development of content, communication, cognition and culture. These dimensions are strongly interconnected and should not be observed as standing alone. This framework

is a tool for planning CLIL activities and for boosting the learners' potential at dissimilar levels and ages.

Thus, an effective CLIL practice should combines the four dimensions: content, communication, cognition and culture (British Council, 2006). Content refers to knowledge, skills and understanding associated to subject matters of the curriculum. Communication declares the usage of language as a vehicle for learning whilst it is developed the target language by itself. The involvement of Cognition implicates the development of thinking skills while is promoted an additional language and academic content. Culture is the core of this framework and promotes the understanding of both local cultures and foreign cultures (British Council, 2006). Thereby, the development of a subject knowledge and linguistic skills foster critical and creative thinking skills with cultural awareness.

Moreover, Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) also determine six core features of CLIL methodology: multiple focus, which obeys to the integration of diverse academic contents from different subjects; safe and rich learning environment, which claims to the implementation of meaningful activities using appropriate materials; authenticity, which refers to the learners' involvement in real life situations where they are able to interact with others in different contexts; active learning, which contemplates students as the center of the instruction where they work cooperatively; scaffolding and co-operation, which endorse the supporting to learners taking into consideration their learning styles, interests and needs; and cooperation, which insists in the collaboration of the educational community for the students' improvement. (Moya, 2015)

Furthermore, Marsh, Coyle, Kitanova, Maljers, Wolff and Zielonka (2005) point out that CLIL involves some variants, some of which are oriented to language teaching whilst others are centered in content teaching. Its main feature is the application of a new educational approach which encompasses both subject and language teaching, by transcending traditional approaches. According to Prasetianto (2015) there are three kinds of CLIL: Soft CLIL, Mid CLIL and Hard CLIL. Soft-CLIL asserts the teaching of academic topics from the curriculum during a language course. So, this CLIL version is language-driven since the teaching and learning is focused on language. On the other hand, Hard CLIL sustains the teaching of half the curriculum in the target language inside of partial immersion programmes. Thus, this CLIL version is content-driven since the target language is only used as a tool for the learning of content. Finally, Mid CLIL supports the teaching of a subject for a certain numbers of hours in the target language (Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament d' Educació, 2008).

Therefore, the development of a successful CLIL lesson involves some concepts such as critical thinking, multiple and emotional intelligences, scaffolding, cooperative learning and collaborative work, which teachers should consider in order to encourage students' knowledge and skills in a second language. Additionally, teachers should master content and have linguistic competence in order to produce functional language required for the teaching of that content

(Papaja, 2013). Hence, CLIL demands from teachers, linguistic skills in the foreign language as well as a certain proficiency level in subject-content. Besides, teachers need to be aware of methodological changes because this approach differs from the way of learning languages as well as from the way of learning regular non-linguistic subjects.

Frigols, Marsh, Mehisto and Wolff (as cited in Pavon & Ellison, 2013), state that "the pedagogical qualification of teachers giving instruction through a second language and the accuracy of the language itself is of paramount importance for the success of CLIL programmes" (p. 70). Thus, the professional development of CLIL teachers are crucial to promote a deep understanding in students. "Meaningful professional development encompasses more than a simply adding new knowledge and technical skills to teachers' existing repertoires" (Luna Scott, 2015). According to Bull and Gilbert (2012), it requires teachers to "shift the paradigm - to break with and replace their past ways of thinking and knowing with a totally new understanding of their role and its purpose" (p. 6).

The European Centre for Modern Language established a European Framework for CLIL Teachers Education (EFCT). This publication proposes "a teacher training curriculum for CLIL that may be linked to learners' curricula" (Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff, & Frigols Martín, 2011, p. 3). "Marsh (2002) report lists the theoretical and methodological competences for a CLIL teacher who is not expected to have either native speaker or near-native speaker level of the target language" (Pistorio, 2009, p. 2). In this way, CLIL teachers will be able to develop professional competences aligned to students' needs as well as content and language aims defined in the curriculum, by closing the gap between language policy theory and classroom learning practice.

The target professional competences that a CLIL teacher should attain according to the EFCT are: personal reflection, CLIL fundamentals, content and language awareness, methodology and assessment, research and evaluation, learning resources and environment, CLIL classroom and CLIL management (Marsh et al., 2011). These competences endorse an effective instruction. Also, Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff and Frigols (2010) point out: Teachers undertaking CLIL will need to be prepared to develop multiple types of expertise among others in the content subject; in a language; in best practice in teaching and learning; in the integration of the previous three; and, in the integration of CLIL within an educational institution (Marsh et al., 2010, p. 5)

Further, Coonan (2013) states that CLIL teachers have to play eight different roles: Planner, focused on the lesson planning taking into account the development of both content and language and embracing a critical thinking; Language user, centered in the teachers' language expertise to use an accurate language in different academic sceneries and according to the students' levels; Language promoter, oriented to the employment of strategies designed to motivate the production of the target language; Discipline protector, tied to the

implication of students' needs and interests in the teaching-learning process; Material designer, related to the creation of engaging materials; Team partner, associated to the collaboration with colleagues so as to foster the students' comprehension based on the curriculum; Evaluator, linked to the designing of assessment involving content and language; and Methodological innovator, allied to self-reflection on applied methodology.

The implementation of CLIL in Ecuador is very new, at least in public educational institutions although this approach appeared around 1990 as a result of multiculturalism in Europe and the necessity of improving learners' skills in the 21st century by taking into account different contexts and realities. In fact, the CLIL approach only emerges in the new curriculum guidelines defined in 2016 as a foremost principle to prepare learners for a "successful participation in a globalized, democratic society in the 21st century by focusing on the development of life skills, work skills, and entrepreneurship skills" (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016, pag.7).

The National English curriculum conceives the 4Cs framework (content, culture, communication, and cognition) conceptualized by Coyle (as cited in Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). However, its specifications determine the implementation of a language-driven CLIL approach, "where content from other disciplines is used for meaningful and purposeful language use" (Met, as cited in Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). Likewise, the Introduction of English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016), document that stipulates the general guidelines of English curriculum, defines "CLIL as a means to access and learn English in an authentic, meaningful context. Thus, the focus will be on language and language use, rather than knowledge of content" (p. 17). Therefore, the methodology and procedures to be applied for teachers will be oriented to the enhancement of English linguistic competences using cross-curricular topics, fostering culture and promoting the students' cognitive skills.

The development of learner's cognition will be promoted throughout the use of Bloom's Taxonomy, since the new English Curriculum states that "The integration of critical thinking skills as defined in Bloom's Taxonomy and the development of communicative linguistic competences are presented in this proposal as interdependent processes within a CLIL model" (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016, p. 3). Hence, content will be the vehicle for the context in which the language will be practiced, and through CLIL, learners will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their thinking skills. Additionally, considering that the Ecuadorian population is linguistically and culturally diverse, the Ministry of Education (2016) indicates that "this curriculum presents a rationale and framework for learning English while acknowledging authentic, culturally relevant production and practices in order to facilitate educational inclusion of learners regardless of their L1" (p. 2). So, the learning of language is integrated with cultural and cognitive aspects where the language acquisition serves as a driver for learners' development.

In order to guarantee the accomplishment of curriculum goals, the Ministry of Education implemented some official programs for teachers so as to improve their English language proficiency and their methodology for instruction. The first one was called “Go Teacher” where educators had opportunities to acquire English language abroad and to obtain a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate. Nevertheless, this project was only carried out until 2015 incorporating to 1047 English teachers (La Hora, 2018). Another project, “It is time to teach in Ecuador”, was launched in 2016 with the objective of improving English language teaching in public schools incorporating native English language speakers in classrooms (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). However, at the end of 2017 this project was cancelled (El Telégrafo, 2018).

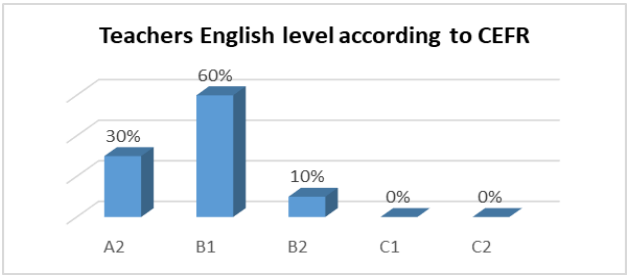
Apart from that, the Ministry of Education launched the Standards of Educational Quality (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2012), which establish five areas in which Ecuadorian English teachers must excel: language, culture, curriculum development, methods and technology, assessment, and professionalism and ethical commitment. Concerning to language, this standard determines the importance of the learners' first language for the second language acquisition. Regarding culture, teachers are expected to boost culture as scaffolding for the students learning. Curriculum development refers to teachers’ understanding about different principles and theories outlined in the curriculum. Assessment determines the usage of accurate instruments to measure students’ progress. The last standard, Professionalism and ethical commitment appeal to the participation of educational community.

The application of the Ecuadorian English language curriculum involves the instruction of three hours per week in primary education and students have to reach an A1 level at the end of this academic period. Before 2016 the teaching of English was optional in primary schools. At the same time, learners in secondary education must receive five hours per week and they have to attain a B1 (Threshold) level at the end of high school, demonstrating an ability to interact quite clearly, confidently, and appropriately in a range of formal and informal social situations with a limited but effective command of the spoken language (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). Nonetheless, two big issues threaten these goals. Firstly, the lack of educators in this area since the national educational authorities claim the necessity of 4.273 English teachers for public schools. Secondly, the teachers’ low linguistic competences inasmuch as only 34% of English teachers reach a B2 level according to CEFR (La Hora, 2018).

Thus, this study is conducted through a quality paradigm because it involves the use of some data collection instruments in order to evidence the current knowledge of English teachers about CLIL fundamental and principles as well as their roles and competences developed for the implementation of the CLIL approach. It uses a survey-based research methodology modeled on that used

to prepare the 2006 CLIL report by the European Union's research bureau (Eurydice, 2006). Questionnaires used in the current study included simple factual information requiring yes or no responses, complex factual questions which required some interpretation or analysis by the reader, and opinion or attitudinal questions which required more alternatives and deeper concentration. The scaling method used to measure teachers' answers was Likert scale.

The present study employs the descriptive method to evaluate the features of 10 English teachers in the public school ¨Dra. Guadalupe Larriva¨ which is located in Jaramijó, Manabí, a small town with 18,500 habitants (Fundación Wikimedia, Inc., 2017). This institution was inaugurated in 2016 based on quality standards for infrastructure. This public school is not considered bilingual since it does not accomplish the policies outlined for this. However, in concordance with the new national curriculum, it is supposed to implement at CLIL in practical lessons. This public school offers to the local community an educational service for learners in kindergarten, primary and secondary education. In every academic year, this institution caters for more than two thousand students with a medium-low socioeconomic status. This research also involves an inductive method which allows reaching general conclusions after results gained from data collection.

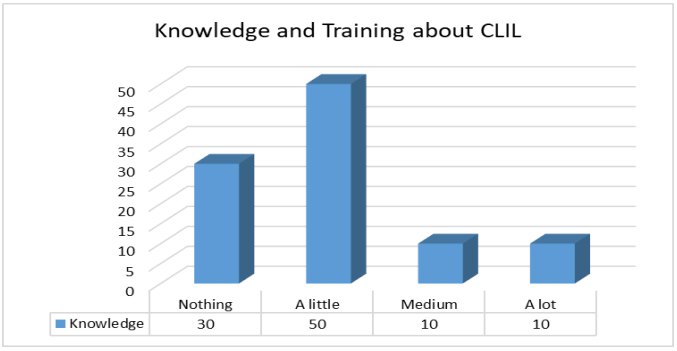


Results showed that 30% of teachers have an A2 level while 60% have a B1 and only 10% indicated a B2 level of proficiency in English a foreign language. No one stated a C1 or C2 level. These results contrast with the requirements defined in the national English curriculum which demands that English teachers must have a B2 level. Likewise, the outcomes evidenced a non-fulfillment of the Standards of Educational Quality which specify the teachers' expertise in the target language considering that an A2 or B1 level of linguistic competence is poor in order to provide rich and comprehensible input to students for learning (Krashen, 1981).

Apart from that, the implementation of CLIL also requires of the second language domain bearing in mind that this approach comprises the instruction of subject matter. And, even though the national guidelines settle the application of a Soft CLIL, language is used for different purposes in different contexts such as academic or social. It is important to mention that most of teachers have a third level of academic instruction with major in Education. However, these results also reflect a huge necessity of improving the linguistic competences by teachers.

Concerning to teachers' knowledge about CLIL, the findings evidenced that 30% of English teachers do not recognize this approach. Therefore, they do not have any idea about its principles, methodology or benefits and they do not apply it

in their formal instruction. Also, 50% of participants declared to have a little understanding about this approach. They expressed that they found this terminology in the new national curriculum and the information was concise for them. So, the understanding is restricted to the curriculum guidelines.



Further, 10% of surveyed people estimated to have a medium comprehension about CLIL and its implications, but in a general way. Additionally, they indicated that the most understanding was gained throughout non-official web sites, so that they do not feel sure about the information acquired. Finally, only 10% of the respondents manifested to have an enough comprehension about CLIL approach due to professional training received. These participants declared that guidelines in the curriculum do not include a vast of information regarding this.

Data also revealed that only 10% of English teachers have attended to specialized training with regard to CLIL which have been supported by personal efforts in order to acquire an appropriate knowledge. This is consistent with teachers who declared a profound comprehension of CLIL. Moreover, 10% of participants have only searched information about this methodology on their own, guided by a self-training decision. However, they expressed that information on internet is scarce. This is a positive factor but it can mean a lack of appropriate proposals. As Hillyard (2011) defined, the competences needed for carrying out CLIL require a long assimilation time so that they can be confident about integrating content and language.

Also, 50% indicated that they have acquired information regarding CLIL asking to other colleagues but they are not sure about the information gathered. Finally, 30% of polled people indicated that they had not attended to any formal or informal training. These outcomes are directly proportional to teachers' self-confidence regarding CLIL where 50% affirmed to have a little comprehension and 30% uttered a lack of knowledge. It was also evident that no one has attended to a CLIL training set up by national authorities. Surveyed people indicated that they have not been notified about some training organized by the Ministry of Education.

The same question also reveals an interesting issue. This is that most of English teachers who have a scarce or any information about CLIL are centered in primary school whilst teachers with more understanding are positioned in secondary education. This information suggests that teachers need an urgent training to improve their skills regarding this approach since everyone must have the same knowledge level in order to guarantee an appropriate application. All participants expressed their willingness to know more about

CLIL. Nonetheless, when they were questioned about their interest in the teaching of subject-content, most of them manifested a negative decision. Among their allegations are:

This approach is completely new for them and official web sites belonging to Ministry of Education do not provide extra information of this framework and its implementation in classroom. There are not activities or resources to carry out lessons under this approach. Apart from that, teachers have not received neither face-to-face nor virtual training which guide them in the CLIL implementation and help them to clarify their doubts. Even, they have not received any training focused on both linguistic competences or principles described in the new English curriculum, according to their statements.

Some participants also declared that the inclusion of academic content obviously involves specialized vocabulary or terms. As a result, this would demand them an additional preparation for the lesson planning which could take them more time and effort without taking into consideration the creation of needed material for fostering the students' learning. Likewise, teachers stated limitations in their times due to they have to accomplish some administrative functions which restrain their time for the researching and acquisitioning of new professional skills.

The knowledge about CLIL for teachers has a direct impact in the teaching of academic content in their practical lessons. Even, when the English book assigned by the Ministry of Education includes the teaching of academic topics for the development of linguistic skills, results evidence that 60% of teachers do not include academic topics in their instruction. In contrast, 40% of the surveyed people expressed the implementation of academic content in their lessons. They alleged that the teachers' book provides them some useful information that guides them in the development of academic topics. The participants who have taught academic topics in their instruction are those who have a medium or high comprehension of this approach.

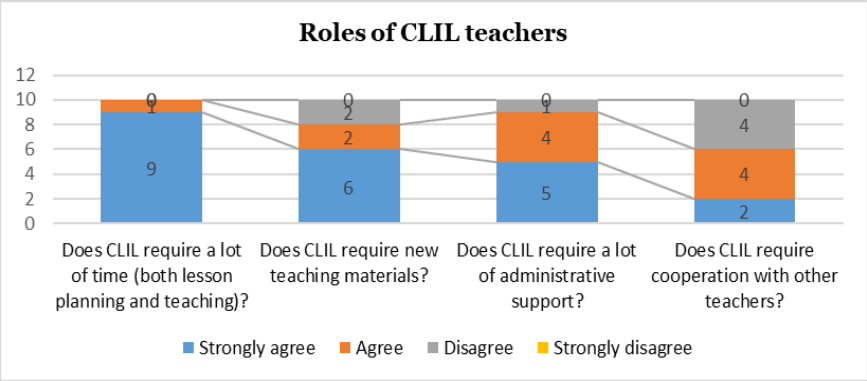
This is an indicator that most of teachers are not ready to teach subjects matters in English because most of them exhibit limited language proficiency and do not have a clear notion about the elements involved in CLIL approach. In spite of this, they have to teach some academic topics included in English books. A resource that supports their teaching process is the teachers' guide which specifies step by step activities that they have to develop during their instruction. Thus, although teachers do not have a strong knowledge about CLIL theories and other tenets encompassed in the curriculum, they follow the directives stated in their guides.

With regard to the teachers' perception about CLIL benefits, results confirm that 20% agreed on the good results that this approach can bring to students since these are oriented to the acquisition of English as a second language through content taking into consideration the development of students' creative and thinking skills. Otherwise, 80% indicated a disagreement which could be

related to 30% of teachers who do not know about CLIL and 50% who have a little understanding. For this same reason, it would be impossible for them evaluate the benefits gained by learners.

Similarly, participants' opinions about the appropriate age to implement CLIL revealed that teachers believe that the CLIL application is possible according to the students' educational level (kindergarten, primary, secondary) which is linked to language proficiency level in this educational institution. So, most of teachers (80%) agreed that CLIL can be applied in secondary schools for older students. This agreement decreased for young learners since 50% agreed with the CLIL instruction at primary level. And even, it was lowest for students in kindergarten since only 20% of participants agreed with the implementation of CLIL in this academic level.

Regarding the roles fulfilled by teachers, the tabulation of data displayed a homogeneous perception of 100% of surveyed people who strongly agreed that CLIL requires a deeper understanding of the methodology and content, so that CLIL teachers require more knowledge in both aspects. These outcomes are relevant because they reflect the teachers' need to receive CLIL training courses or workshops oriented to foster CLIL competences.



Surveyed teachers, who applied CLIL or have an understanding about it, expressed a high agreement (90%) about the time consumed in the planning and teaching of a lesson throughout CLIL. They indicated that time is usually limited because they have to comply with an annual plan stated in the national curriculum. Teachers conveyed their concerns about the time needed to embrace the 4Cs (communication, content, cognition, and culture) established in Coyle's framework. Most of teachers indicated that apart from investing a large quantity of time planning and developing a lesson, they have to lead with school authorities who do not recognize the needed time to carry out an effective instruction. This is something that influences teachers in adopting CLIL in classrooms.

Regarding the creation of new material for the development of CLIL lessons, 60% of teachers indicated that they create some additional materials in order to provide a deeper understanding to learners. Conversely, 40% manifested a usage of regular materials such as markers and books. However, all of them agreed on the necessity to produce new materials based on the students' needs. But, this is other factor that worries teachers since they mentioned the lack of

resources in public institutions for the development of activities. Apart from that, it is forbidden to ask students and parents for economic contributions or materials and teachers are not able to produce the required materials for two hundred students every day. However, most of them try to create comfortable environments with available resources.

As to CLIL requires a lot of administrative support, 50% of the participants declared they strongly agree with this premise whilst the other 40% indicated that they agree. Surveyed teachers highlighted the importance of this support for the application of this methodology. Additionally, some teachers indicated that administrative personal should also know about the implication of this methodology in order to promote and facilitate the needed tools for its successful implementation.

On the other hand, only 20% of the teachers strongly agreed with the cooperation of other teachers for a successful CLIL implementation whilst 40% agreed. According to some participants' statements although CLIL appeal to the cooperation, in this educational institution it is almost impossible to coordinate a meeting among teachers since practically all hours are dedicated to the practical teaching. They cited that frequent meetings only involve teachers of the same area without taking into consideration teachers of other subjects. Thus, although the national curriculum advocates the implementation of CLIL and students' books contains academic topics, teachers work independently. The teachers' meetings by grade or course are only developed for the analysis of students' academic and behavioral performance. For this same reason, 40% of respondents disagree with the requirement of teachers' cooperation.

Thus, we can observe that there is an opposite point of view between questions regarding teamwork and administrative support since in the first one, participants claim the supporting of administrators whilst in the second, teachers do not appeal to the cooperative work as an important aspect of the CLIL implementation and students' success.

In relation to the integration of several subjects, it is observable that this feature is not maximized in the current instruction since although 40% indicated "much" exposure to other subjects, 30% affirmed some integration and 30% indicated a sporadic inclusion of topics from other subjects. According to participants, this integration is carried out throughout cross-curricular activities where students are exposed to a wide variety of topics and activities from areas such as natural science, technology, social studies, literature, arts, etc. Thus, most of participants agreed that they do not promote the target language in content classes, rather they encourage content learning in language classes.

Regarding the creation of safe and rich learning environment, outcomes from surveys reflect that most of English teachers understand the importance of creating comfortable environment for learners in order to motivate them to take risks in language production. Thus, 80% affirmed to apply very much routine

activities and discourse to create meaningful conditions for learning. For this, participants consider the inclusion of multiples intelligences, recognition of students' progression, application of strategies for correction of students' mistakes and provision of permanent feedback. Additionally, they support the teaching practice in activities outlined in books which provide a model for lessons. These lessons follow predictable structure, namely Warm Up, Presentation, Practice and Application (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2015, p.8). Activities suggested in this structure involve students' prior knowledge, discussions and games. Based on this, 60% indicated a high integration of activities for building students' confidence while 40% manifested much implementation.

On the other hand, concerning the access to authentic learning material and environments, it is observable a decrease since only 20% manifested an inclusion of very much activities and 30% much. Consequently, 20% indicated some guide and 30% scarce access to authentic environments. According to the participants' opinions there is a lesson in every unit devoted to foster a real communication where students have the opportunity to establish dialogs related to cultural aspects fostering self-reflections and values. However, some teachers do not feel prepared to reproduce this kind of activities, especially in primary education.

With regard to the immersion of students in classroom's decisions, less than 50% do not involve students, and even 20% expressed a cero participation of students in decisions related to the classes' performance. Teachers immersed in this percentage also belong to primary education. They indicated to follow activities planned in the current English books.

In questions related to authenticity, answers revealed a deficit in this feature in practical instruction, since in the last three requests which were oriented to know the integration of students' lives in the learning, connections with other speakers of the CLIL language and usage of materials from media, around 50% of applicants declared an almost null implementation. Nonetheless, in the first inquire "let the students ask for the language help they need", 40% of respondents supported a very much encouragement while 40% sustained a much involvement and 20% declared some consent. Regarding the maximization of students' interest, 40% exposed a high application of activities based on learners' likes, interests and needs.

Results also reflect a limited usage of material from media since only 10% indicated a great integration of these in current practices, and 10% sustained "much" involvement. Simultaneously, 40% divided their opinions equally between some and not much implementation. But, a high percentage (40%) of surveyed teachers expressed a rare use. Participants commented that the incorporation of technology is complicated due to most students do not have access to technological resources in their homes and the implementation in classes become challenging due to the large number of students.

Other parameter that suggests a low level of authenticity is the connection with other speakers of the CLIL language since 50% of English teachers expressed a complete absence of this whilst 40% affirmed some and not much connections, and only 10% manifested an implementation like this. English teachers pointed out that they are not able to establish this type of connections because their schedules do not involve coordination with subject teachers, or covenant with other schools.

In relation to connections with students' lives, results show a balanced division of practices with 20% for every option. Therefore, it is feasible to deduce that the half of English teachers take into consideration real life situations for engaging students in the learning process. According to the Ministry of Education (2015) "one of the most important ideas in the application activities is that students have the chance to make personal connections with learning" (p. 9).

Likewise, concerning the maximization of students' interests, 40% affirmed to provide an instruction focus on students' interest, needs and likes while 40% expressed some incorporation, and 20% an unusual integration. Therefore, less than 50% estimated the impact that this feature produce in learning so as to engage students' attention and foster a deeper and faster comprehension. This result could be attributable that some teachers follow books' schemes where dialogs or reports are not meaningful for students.

Regarding active learning, there are similar responses in different items. In this manner, there are proportional percentage (20%) in the encouragement of active participation of students where teachers act as facilitators. These percentages are equal in listen actively students' ideas and opinions, promotion of students' self-reflection and self-assessment, and the assistance by students in the setting of language, content and learning skills. Teachers explain that every unit in books has a self-evaluation chart that provides an opportunity for self-reflection. This encourages students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, to direct their efforts towards the achievement of goals, as well as to be responsible for and committed to their learning. Nevertheless, not all teachers use it.

Otherwise, there is big difference in the creation of cooperative groups for interaction and participation since 40% foster very much the collaborative working, 40% much and 20% some. Cooperative learning is the basis of many of the activities in English books, since students adopt a variety of interaction patterns: individual, pair and group work, which are applied by teachers.

In the same way, negotiation for meaning is a parameter that participants consider during their instruction since 40% expressed a very much implementation and 40% much application. Respondents indicated the main activities focus on this feature are associated to asking for clarification, rephrasing, and confirming thoughts and ideas.

Scaffolding is a feature that shows diverse results. Thus, regarding students' prior knowledge 100% of participants use it as an instrument to engage students in the learning process. According to respondents, this is the first step in practice lessons which is known as WARM UP. "The purpose of the Warm Up stage is to assess students' prior knowledge, so that they become aware that they also have a lot of ideas to contribute to the class" (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2015, p. 7).

With respect to use of diverse resources, 50% sustained a "very much" and "much" inclusion of varied resources and 50% expressed a minority implementation. English teachers suggested that most of them work with books and those offer some strategies such as word bank, crossword and pictures, but sometimes they do not use them.

Regarding creative and critical thinking, 20% expressed a high involvement in activities to promote cognitive skills such as discussions or projects where learners are called to solve a problem. Similarly, 20% manifested much development, but the last 60% percentage were divided in 30% for some application and 30% for occasional application. A peculiar fact is that, although current written materials have been designed by educational authorities to foster thinking skills, many teachers are not aware about the implications of this theory. Likewise, most of English teachers are not familiarized with the Bloom's taxonomy.

With regard to the inclusion of different learning styles, all participants recognized that everyone learns differently. Thus, great percentage (60%) of participants affirmed to consider very much techniques in order to attend different ways of learning, while 40% confirmed much integration. Hence, answers demonstrate that English teachers appreciate the integration of diverse and varied resources to motivate the students learning and facilitate them the acquisition of new knowledge. Even, some of surveyed people highlighted the successful application of visual, kinesthetic and musical skills for the improvement of linguistic competences. Additionally, they asserted that teachers' English books explain in its general description that learning activities have been designed taking into account the theory of the Multiple Intelligences developed by Howard Gardner.

Results obtained in cooperation demonstrate a clear necessity to develop a plan to include the educational community. Since, in the three parameters used to measure the involvement of external support, only 20% of participants declared to involves "some" cooperation and 80% stated a limited or nothing involvement of educational community for promoting the teaching-learning process.

Finally, a summary of collected data reveals that some features need more attention than others. Thus, scaffolding and safe and rich learning environment are applied in more than 60%. Moreover, active learning, authenticity and multiple focus need to be developed since these features reach between 40% and 60% of implementation. However, cooperation need to be analyzed deeply

in order to promote methods of cooperation since only 20% indicated some integration of educational community.

CONCLUSIONS

Results revealed that Ecuadorian English teachers in public educational institutions do not have sufficient knowledge about the CLIL approach since 90% have not received a formal training. As a result, educators apply activities and strategies based on their own understanding from the information gathered. Apart from that, only 10% of English teachers have a B2 language level. This not only reflects the language proficiency but also exposes a reality opposite to the minimum international standards established in national guidelines for the teaching of English which require that all teachers demonstrate a B2 level according to CEFR. This limited preparation exerts a big influence in the implementation of CLIL core features which are aligned to the main features of English curriculum. Therefore, CLIL teachers need more professional orientation so as to improve their competences such as CLIL fundamentals and content and language awareness, for a successful application of this approach. It is important to mention that majority of the teachers are aware of their low knowledge since they reported the need to acquire more knowledge on methodology and/or subject.

Also, results gained in this study demonstrate that the CLIL core features applied in current classroom are safe and rich learning environment and scaffolding. This does not mean that teachers have an accurate understanding of these theories but implicates that they are able to apply some techniques linked to these features in order to improve the students' learning. Otherwise, results show that cooperation reaches a highest peak with less application and it is important that teachers find a mechanism to improve this ability since this deficiency affects both teachers and students. As is evident, most of teachers need a professional training in order to acquire an adequate understanding of CLIL and develop their teaching skills under the principles of the CLIL approach.

These results provide a first outlook at the implementation of CLIL in an Ecuadorian public school based on the teachers' knowledge. However, it would be interesting to examine the implementation of CLIL from students' perspectives taking into account the same fundamentals and principles considered in this investigation. Thus, it would be possible to have a complete view of the CLIL application as well as its successful in the teaching-learning process.

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