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ÍNDICE

EXPLORING TEACHERS' ROLE AND STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING IN CLIL[17]

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INTRODUCTION

Within the legislation released in 1995, called the Resolution of the European Council, the need to teach subjects in additional languages to foster multilingualism was encouraged. Similarly, the *White paper on Education and Training* (*Teaching and Learning-Towards the learning society*, 1995) noticed the need to employ well-prepared language teachers, in order to achieve the idea of 2+1, where all citizens should know their own language plus two additional ones. At the same time, acquiring foreign languages was paramount among the citizens to achieve a successful career in the new European Union (EU). In the same line, the 21st century has entailed a more globalized and technological world in which mobility, diversity and Educational programs have been considered. All these changes triggered new educational demands to prepare future generations for a complex and challenging world.

Those educational demands may explain that teaching has also experienced a revolution in the 21st century, influenced as new discoveries in the areas of linguistics and pedagogy have appeared. From this perspective, new approaches such as Content and Language Integrated

Learning (henceforth: CLIL) or Task-based Language Teaching (henceforth: TBLT) are presented as alternatives to traditional methods such as the grammar-translation or the audio-lingual method. Both CLIL and TBLT follow the principles of Communicative language teaching (adapted from Doughty & Long, 2003): Teaching is organised by means of tasks, learning by doing is promoted, and input needs to be authentic, rich, elaborated, comprehensible and meaningful. In other words, the use of tasks in CLIL classrooms helps students use their language skills to achieve an established goal, and by doing it learners, on the one hand, acquire content knowledge, and on the other hand, they use language for the creation of meaning, which potentially results in improving the communicative competence.

Besides, the implementation of school subjects taught through a second language, commonly named CLIL, has been claimed to achieve success in content and language learning (Marsh *et al.*, 2015). In the same vein, well-known researchers such us Marsh (2006) or Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) refer to CLIL programmes as the pioneers of globalization, where life at the 90s was taking important changes, and society was seeking for quality education (Mehisto *et al.*, 2008, p. 10). Nowadays, CLIL programmes are "mushrooming in many different contexts" (Merino & Lasagabaster, 2015, p. 79), and they are "growing exponentially" (Juan-Garau & Salazar-Noguera, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, we can claim that CLIL is a well-established approach throughout Europe, which may be adapted to the context where it is implemented.

Due to the fact that CLIL is a well-established approach, CLIL programmes have been applied in many countries due to several reasons. Among them, "The earlier the better" assumption (García Mayo & Garcia Lecumberri, 2003; Muñoz, 2006; Angell *et al.*, 2006), alongside with the idea that all learning should be learned as naturalistic as possible (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In the area of pedagogy, the implementation of the CLIL approach has motivated the attention of scholars, such as Coyle's (1999), who suggest that CLIL sessions should integrate the 4Cs 'need to be interrelated and integrated: content, cognition, communication and culture. Regarding Content, it refers to the content covered on topics, tasks or projects (Coral & Lleixà, 2013).

The teacher plans how the content is going to be covered through tasks, engaging students and motivating them. Content involves skills, understanding, and knowledge linked to a defined curriculum for a school year. The features of Cognition, within the 4Cs, is related to how content and cognition engage learners to think deeply over knowledge construction, while students regulate their own learning processes. In addition, learners are challenged and construct their knowledge from lower to higher thinking skills. The last two features are Communication and Culture. Communication refers to language competence, but this notion goes beyond grammar and vocabulary. Culture is also a crucial variable to take into account when planning a CLIL lesson, not only because it promotes learners' self-awareness, but also because it encourages learners to have positive attitudes towards languages. In fact, for most European policies one of the principal concerns is how to teach intercultural awareness, and, as a consequence, being aware of the intercultural aspects. As Coyle (2006) reflects in her framework, studying a subject through the language of a different culture paves the way for understanding and tolerating different perspectives (Ruiz de Zarobe & Jiménez-Catalán, 2009, p. 50).

Additionally, another aspect that has been considered is the need to integrate language and content in CLIL classrooms. In fact, CLIL has been defined by many researchers as a "dual-focused" approach (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2011; Ioannou-Georgiou, 2012; Sylvén, 2013; Soler *et al.*, 2017; Alcaraz-Mármol, 2018; Reitbauer *et al.*, 2018) aiming to find a balance between language and content instruction.

However, on the one hand, researchers such as Llinares *et al.* (2012); Llinares (2015); Nikula *et al.* (2016), have shown concerns about the balance and the planification of content and language classes. Similarly, Dalton-Puffer (2007), Mehisto *et al.* (2008), Pérez-Vidal and Juan-Garau (2015) claim that it is complicated to accomplish an equal balance between content and language. It seems that while content teachers are concerned about limiting the cognitive complexity of the subject, due to the reduced linguistic competence of both students and teachers, language teachers prioritize language-related goals above content subject-related ones. According to Coyle (2007), one possible solution to

achieve the dual-focus is using tasks in CLIL settings. From a TBLT approach "students are likely to learn more if they are not simply learning a language for language's sake, but using language to accomplish complete tasks and learn new content" (Mehisto *et al.*, 2008, p. 11).

Since tasks are the instruments of the field of TBLT methodology, special attention has been paid to define the term "task". One of the first definitions was proposed by Long (1996), who claimed that tasks are those things that people do every single day. A more recent definition is reported by Van den Branden (2016), who refers to tasks as those activities that stimulate and support the students in order to reach their language goals. In addition, it is acknowledged that teachers' and students' engagement in task performance is critical for learning. In this line, Ellis and Shintani (2014) suggest different options for task implementation: The students perform the task in pairs, the teacher guides the task performance or one student takes the role of the teacher and guides the whole class implementation of the task. In the present study, the performance of a writing task is carried out under two different conditions: students perform the task in pairs and the teacher guides the task performance.

Furthermore, it is worth pointing out the importance of communication and the role of interaction in the TBLT approach. This is acknowledged by Alcón-Soler (2018) claiming that while completing a task, students engage in interaction and opportunities for the creation of meaning and language learning are observed. However, in spite of the potential advantages of using a TBLT approach in language learning, there is a need to explore its implementation across educational settings. To cover this research gap, the present study aims to explore the impact of the TBLT methodology on students' writing skills in CLIL classrooms. While some researchers have established the existence of limited progress regarding writing in CLIL settings (Dalton-Puffer, 2005; Llinares & Whittaker, 2010), others have reported benefits of CLIL on students' written competence (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2011; Llinares *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, the existing body of research on students writing under the CLIL approach has been mainly conducted at secondary and tertiary level, only a few studies have been conducted in

primary education. To provide further insight on this issue, the present study will focus on how teachers' role in CLIL lessons using a TBLT approach influence students' perception of learning and learning outcomes.

With this in mind, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the study.

RQ1: Does the teacher's role during CLIL sessions have an impact on students' writing?

RQ2: Do students' perceptions of language and content learning differ regarding the teacher's role during CLIL sessions?

2. METHOD

The present study follows an action research approach. As proposed by Richards and Rodgers (2008), action research is relevant for the present study since we aim to explore how teachers' role in CLIL lessons using a TBLT approach influence students' perception of learning and learning outcomes. Findings from this study will also allow teachers to improve their teaching methodologies and provide researchers with potential issues for further empirical investigation.

2.1. SETTING AND PARTICIPANT

The sample consisted of a total of 50 primary-school students, who were in year 6 (11-12 years old) and whose gender distribution was 76% female (n = 38) and 24% male (n = 12). Participants were enrolled in two different multilingual public schools in the Valencian Community where the subject of science was taught in English. *School A* followed a TBLT approach but the teacher-led task performance, while in *School B* tasks were carried during student-student interaction. Participants' level of English proficiency was judged to be an A2 level from the Common European Framework, based on the standardized Quick Oxford Placement test (U.C.L.E.S., 2001).

2.2. PROCEDURE

The present study lasted two weeks and 10 CLIL lessons were observed in each school. Thus, during a total of 20 lessons participants performed different tasks. All sessions included a pre-task, where the topic was introduced through several tasks, a written task, which was later evaluated by the researcher, and the post-task, where the evaluation was conducted. It is worth mentioning that the written task was the same for both CLIL settings, and all sessions took place during regular classrooms, as part of a typical CLIL science session with a focus on writing. The two teachers from the different schools taught the same topic to all students but with a different methodology. Next, the methodologies applied by each teacher in each school will be explained.

School A (teacher-led task performance): During the pre-task, the teacher introduced the topic with a comprehension text and some questions to answer. Those questions were corrected as a whole class and the teachers highlighted some errors in the language. Also during this stage students carried out several activities such as crossword puzzles led by the teacher in order to gain vocabulary. Besides, in order to learn about the causes and consequences of air pollution, the teacher showed a video and the students had to take notes on the causes and consequences of air pollution. Besides, a listening activity was provided to further explore the content of the task. Finally, the main task was to create a poster explaining what to do to avoid air pollution in their city.

School B (student-student task performance): During the pre-task, the topic was discovered by the students. In groups, they had to look at some pictures and decide what the topic was about. Then, several activities were carried out in groups. For instance, in order to learn new vocabulary and expressions, they had to reconstruct a text related to air pollution. Besides, to be aware of the causes and consequences of air pollution they had to find the information on the Internet and share the information with the rest of the class. Furthermore, they had to prepare a text with the causes and consequences of air pollution. The main task, similar to the other group, was to create a poster explaining what to do to avoid air pollution in their city.

2.3. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND ANALYSIS

Data were collected during a total of 20 sessions in which Science was being learned through English: ten sessions in School A and ten sessions in School B. In order to answer research question 1 ("Does the teacher's role during CLIL sessions have an impact on students' writing?"), the posters produced by students in School A (teacher-led task performance) and School B (student-student task performance) were analysed using the taxonomy created by Jacobs *et al.* (1981). This Taxonomy included a five-component scale; content (how well they understood and developed the topic; 30 points), organization (how organized, fluent and cohesive the text is; 20 points), vocabulary (how sophisticated, effective and appropriate the vocabulary is; 20 points) language use (how well complex constructions and grammar are used; 25 points) and mechanics (how effectively punctuation and spelling are used; 5 points). They added up to a total of 100 points. Furthermore, students' writings were rated by the principal researcher and the two primary-school teachers. Following Cohen's (1960) procedure, raters coded independently students' writing according to the dimensions of Jacob's *et al.* (1981) taxonomy. Before coding students' writings, raters went through two training sessions in order to become familiar with the rating scale and to provide them with specific instructions on how the compositions should be assessed. Coding resulted in these agreements: 88% for content, 87% for organization, 91% for vocabulary, 83% for language use and 89% for mechanics.

In order to answer research question 2 ("Do students' perceptions of language and content learning differ regarding the teacher's role during CLIL sessions?"), learning diaries were used to get information on students' learning and perception of learning. After each session students were asked to answer the following two questions: What have you learned today; Explain how you learned it. Additionally, a total of ten students, five from each school, participated in the semi-structured interviews to confirm what they have reported in their learning diaries.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, the aim of the study was to explore how teachers' role in CLIL lessons using a TBLT approach influence students' perception of learning and learning outcomes. In relation to RQ1, which addressed whether the teacher's role during CLIL sessions has an impact on students' writing, Table 1, provides a summary of the scores obtained in each of the five components suggested by Jacob's *et al.* (1981) that we used to evaluate students' writing in both CLIL settings.

TABLE 1. *Mean scores in each of the components of the compositions.*

Written Dimensions	School A (teacher-led task performance)	School B (student-student interaction)
Content (30 points)	10%	35%
Organization (20 points)	15%	30%
Vocabulary (20 points)	30%	12%
Language use (25 points)	35%	15%
Mechanics (5 points)	10%	8%

As can be seen in table 1, we can observe that learners who followed a TBLT student-student interaction got better results in the evaluation of their writings. However, not in all dimensions, while participants scored higher in content (35%) and organization (30%), the dimension of language use (35%) and vocabulary (30%) were better performed by those learners who followed a teacher-led task performance approach.

This could be explained because, during the teacher-led task performance, the teacher emphasized the use of grammar and vocabulary and content and organization were most of the time ignored. In other words, it seems that in teacher-led task performance language-related goals are prioritized over content ones. In contrast, during student-

student task performance, the emphasis is on content and negotiation of meaning to complete the task, ignoring issues of language use if they are not necessary for task completion. Finally, both groups pay little attention to mechanics (punctuation and spelling).

Thus, summarizing results related to RQ1, can we claim that the teacher's role during CLIL sessions has an impact on students' writing. Our results are in line with Dalton-Puffer (2005) and Llinares and Whittaker (2010), who claim that students' outcomes are higher when they are involved in peer interaction. Similarly, our results support those reported by Alcón (2018), who showed the impact of the participatory structure on students' level of interactional engagement during task performance, which in her study have an impact on pragmatic learning outcomes.

Additionally, our findings are also in line with Mehisto *et al.* (2008), Menezes and Juan-Garau (2015) confirming that balance between language and content is difficult to achieve. As shown in the present study, the teacher's role may influence interaction in the CLIL setting, and, as a result, different types of interaction may result in paying attention either to language or content. In fact, while School A emphasizes language, School B prioritizes content learning.

In order to answer research question 2, which addressed whether students' perceptions of language and content learning differ regarding the teacher's role during CLIL sessions, learning diaries were used to get information on students' learning and perception of learning. After each session students were asked to answer the following two questions: What have you learned today; Explain how you have learned it. The following excerpts illustrate the comments of the students following a teacher-led task performance approach.

Excerpt from the student diary #12:

> Today I have learned about the causes of air pollution. We watched a video and answered some questions. The teacher corrected my questions and realized I write very badly in English. Then I had to copy my mistakes several times.

Excerpt from the student diary #09:

> Science in English is difficult, but the teachers told me how to write a sentence and little by little I learned new words and prepositional phrases such as in the middle/ at the side etc.

Excerpt from the student diary #03:

> I realized that I was able to understand what a text of causes and consequences was about because the teachers read it a lot and we all paid attention.

Excerpt from the student diary #10:

> Today we listened to a conversation and the teachers told us how to pronounce most of the words.

Excerpt from the student diary #36:

> Today I learned new verbs (throw, run, touch, protect etc.) used in present tenses… the teacher made us use them in sentences and practice the mistakes.

As illustrated in the comments above, students from School A, where the teacher led the interaction during task performance, reported learning language issues and referred to the topic of air pollution. In contrast, students' comments from School B, whether tasks were performed during student-student interaction, seem to have triggered attention to content, classroom management, or vocabulary. It is also interesting to point out that students reported not being aware/sure of learning during student-student interaction, while they reported learning in teacher-led interaction, which contradicts findings obtained in the evaluation of students' writings, being those that carried out tasks during student-student interaction the ones that got higher scores in their writings.

Excerpt from the student diary #38:

> Today we watched some pictures related to the world. I was thinking, what is the goal of the lesson? Then I answer some questions but most of the time I talk with my friend about it.

Excerpt from the student diary #33:

> Today we had to reconstruct a text to read it. I didn't know many words
> but in the group, we looked up the words in the dictionary. Also, we didn't
> learn much as most of the time we were discussing what text was going to
> be first.

Excerpt from the student diary #29:

> Today we had to find information in the ICT room. We didn't learn new
> words or anything, we just had to find information about causes and con-
> sequences and prepare to teach it to our friends.

Excerpt from the student diary #36:

> Today I really liked the class because I like going to the computers. We
> had to find information related to causes and consequences. We didn't
> learn much English, we just had to find information and prepare a presen-
> tation but I liked it.

Excerpt from the student diary #42:

> We had to put a text in the correct order and answer some questions. I
> was lost at the beginning as I didn't know what the goal was. Then we
> were discussing for most of the class as we had different points of view.
> Also to answer the questions we had to justify our answer to our friend. It
> was difficult and I'm not sure if we learned much.

Excerpt from the student diary #35:

> Today we talked most of the time and we were teachers. The teacher didn't
> teach us much as most of the time we were presenting but it was fun.

To confirm findings obtained in learners' diaries a total of ten students,
five from each school, participated in the semi-structured interviews,
where they further explained what they reported in their learning dia-
ries.

On the one hand, participants' responses in teacher-led task perfor-
mance confirmed that the teacher's role may draw learners' attention
to vocabulary by means of repetition or questions. For instance, S2 re-
ported: "I love listening to my teacher since she repeats words and helps

remember words that I don't know" or S8 claimed: "The teacher asked me I did not know but she told me that is not contaminated". Besides, students also reported that the teacher paid special attention to grammar and spelling. This is illustrated in the following comments: S3 claimed "I learned a lot of new words and had to copy my mistakes, I think I will write it correctly now" or S5 reported: "I thought that the word pollution* was written with one "l", but the teacher corrected me and I know that I have to write pollution".

On the other hand, students from School B performance, reported learning as a result of student-student interaction. This is illustrated in the following examples. S9 claimed: "I have learned the word" contamination" as my friend Victoria told me the meaning of it" or S6 mentioned: "I have learned about the causes and consequences because my friends had to explain it to all the class".

Thus, summarizing results related to RQ2, we can claim students' perceptions of language and content learning differ regarding the teacher's role during CLIL sessions. However, in the present study, we have only explored students' reported learning without looking at differences in terms of explicit and implicit knowledge. One tentative hypothesis to further explore is whether teacher-led task performance results in explicit learning while student-student interaction triggers implicit learning. This hypothesis is based on the grounds that, although reported learning is higher in teacher-led task performance, the evaluation of students' writing is better for students that engaged in student-student interaction. Thus, it seems that differences in the teacher's role also trigger different learning outcomes.

Additionally, although the present study does not explore teachers' strategies to draw attention to language and content, it is interesting to point out that students reported the use of teachers' questions and repetitions to draw attention to language and the use of students' negotiation strategies to draw attention to content. Thus, future studies are needed to examine where this potential correlation is observed in CLIL settings. If so, we would have information that could be used in teacher training courses enabling teachers to select and combine different

strategies that trigger attention to language and content at the same time. One of the strategies that have been examined in experimental studies is the use of recasts (Clark, 2014; Clarke *et al.*, 2017). Given the information provided in the present exploratory study in relation to the impact of repetitions on reported learning, it would be interesting to describe the use of recasts and their impact on learning outcomes in CLIL settings. By looking at the definition of recasts, which involve repetition and incorporation of target-like forms, they may be one of the strategies that CILL teachers need to be familiar with to achieve the aim of CLIL, that is to say combining language and content at the same time.

4. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this paper has been to explore how teachers' role in CLIL lessons using a TBLT approach influence students' perception of learning and learning outcomes. 50 primary-school students, who were in year 6 (11-12 years old) took part in the present study, and learning outcomes were measured by means of written tasks, while the perception of learning was analysed by means of learning diaries and semi-structured interviews. Findings from the present study show that the teacher's role during CLIL sessions has an impact on students' writing. Regarding the writing dimensions analyzed in the study, students following students-student TBLT interaction outperformed the teacher-led task performance group in content, and textual organization, but not in language use and mechanics, which was better performed by those following a teacher-led task performance. Classroom observation, learning diaries and semi-structured interviews confirm these results. It is observed that during the teacher-led task performance, the teacher emphasized the use of grammar and vocabulary, and content and organization were most of the time ignored. In other words, in teacher-led task performance, language-related episodes are observed and goals are prioritized over those with a focus on content. In contrast, during student-student task performance, the emphasis is on content and

negotiation of meaning to complete the task, ignoring issues of language use if they are not necessary for task completion.

Additionally, students' perceptions of language and content learning seem to differ according to the teacher's role during CLIL sessions. During teacher-led interaction attention to language is drawn out by means of repetition and emphasizing words. In contrast, during student-student interactions, it seems that procedural knowledge and content information is triggered, as well as students engage in negotiation of meaning and the creation of knowledge.

We are aware that the present study is exploratory and descriptive, and data has been collected in an ecologically valid way, providing us with information for further empirical research. Besides, the present study is subject to some limitations and care should be taken about generalizing the results. First, the number of participants is limited and the study was conducted in a particular context. In addition, although in this paper we have not looked at the use of different languages with different functions, translanguaging occurs during task performance, and following Portolés and Martí (2017), this is an issue that may be explored in future studies. Secondly, no recording during classroom observation was possible and we relied on students' perception of learning and classroom observation. Thirdly, we are aware that we only took into account one CLIL subject and future studies need to explore other subjects across contexts.

Our findings suggest some pedagogical implications be considered in CLIL settings. First, it seems that different methodological approaches trigger different learning outcomes. Since CLIL aims to foster the learning of content and language, there seems to be a need to draw attention to language and content. In this sense, combining activities with a focus on explicit and implicit learning may benefit students when they engage in task performance in CLIL contexts. Secondly, teacher training should focus on observing the use of strategies that draw attention to language and content and how to incorporate them in teachers' practices. In this line, further research is needed to examine the effect of specific strategies on drawing attention to language and

content at the same time, being recasts one of the strategies that are suggested to be examined across CLIL setting.

Finally, the present study suggests that task-supported language teaching may be effective for CLIL settings. Since the type of participatory structure (teacher-led task performance vs. student-student task performance) seems to have an impact on the completion of the written tasks, there is a need to pay attention both to task design and on-task implementation. In view of the results of the present study, the design of collaborative tasks are likely to trigger opportunities for classroom interaction, as well as the student-student participatory structure should be encouraged in CLIL settings to engage learners in collaborative dialogue while they construct both language and content knowledge.

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