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Maria del Carmen Méndez García & Víctor Pavón Vázquez

Departamento de Filología Inglesa, Universidad de Jaén, Jaén, Spain
Departamento de Filologías Inglesa y Alemana, Universidad de Córdoba, Córdoba, Spain

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Investigating the coexistence of the mother tongue and the foreign language through teacher collaboration in CLIL contexts: perceptions and practice of the teachers involved in the plurilingual programme in Andalusia

María del Carmen Méndez Garcíaa* and Victor Pavón Vázquezb

aDepartamento de Filología Inglesa, Universidad de Jaén, Jaén, Spain; bDepartamento de Filologías Inglesa y Alemana, Universidad de Córdoba, Córdoba, Spain

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In content and language integrated learning (CLIL), as in any other type of bilingual education, two languages are used to promote cognitive and language learning. Whereas in the bilingual classroom the two languages are always present, in CLIL they may appear together or be used in totally separate circumstances. Although the relationship between languages is different, in CLIL, where the foreign language is the minority language employed, we uphold that the purported benefits of combining both languages should not be underestimated in this type of education. The objective of this study is to find out if the collaboration among teachers, particularly between language assistants and content teachers, with the subsequent use of two languages in the same classroom, may result in the development of strategies that will ultimately contribute to the improvement of the teaching process, the learning of content matter and also the development of language skills and language awareness. By analysing the perceptions and reflection on the actual performance of teachers involved in CLIL programmes in Andalusia, a Spanish monolingual autonomous community, this article aims to identify the existence of collaborative work among teachers, the advantages of such collaboration and the benefits of using the two languages.

Keywords: bilingualism; content and language integrated learning (CLIL); mother tongue; foreign language; methodology; language competence; language learning; BICS/CALP

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the educational proposal known as content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has been flourishing and has made a noticeable impact on educational policies. CLIL has become an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of educational programmes and initiatives based on the transmission of academic content by using a foreign language in the classroom. There seems to be a common agreement on the fact that ‘experience with teaching content matter through more than one language is bringing new insights into improving general education programmes’ (Baetens-Beardsmore 2001, 10). CLIL programmes are seen

*Corresponding author. Email: cmendez@ujaen.es
as an innovative idea to promote the learning of foreign languages in monolingual environments (Snow and Brinton 1997; Stryker and Leaver 1993).

More specifically, as studies on CLIL suggest, the benefits of these programmes are noticeable in the psycho-affective dimension and for the development of linguistic competence. Students in CLIL classes are attributed with significantly more positive attitudes towards language learning. Indeed, CLIL classes seem to exert a positive influence on students’ desire to learn and develop their competences in the foreign language (Marsh 2000; Merisuo-Storm 2007). In addition, CLIL students are likely to exhibit a higher overall language competence in the target language. It is reported that they attain language competence well above that of students enrolled in regular monolingual courses, especially in speaking (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency and content) and writing (content, organisation, vocabulary and use of language) (Lasagabaster 2008). Further areas that tend to be strengthened by such programmes are receptive skills, vocabulary, morphology, creativity, risk-taking, fluency and affective outcomes (Dalton-Puffer 2007; Genesee 2002). CLIL students are credited with greater awareness of language patterns and a more efficient (strategic) use of the resources at hand to facilitate discovery of new concepts, both at translinguistic and interlinguistic levels (Moore 2006). Similarly, CLIL has the potential to boost risk-taking, problem-solving and vocabulary learning skills, grammatical awareness, linguistic spontaneity and motivation (Marsh 2008). Furthermore, CLIL programmes constitute an attempt to remedy the poor results of educational programmes employed for the learning of foreign languages in some countries (Coyle and Baetens-Beardsmore 2007; Marsh 2002).

2. Bilingualism, CLIL and the Andalusian context

2.1. Bilingualism and CLIL

Bilingual education – ‘the use of two languages of instruction at some point in a student’s school career’ (Cummins 2008a, xii) – and teaching through CLIL – ‘any learning activity where language is used as a tool to develop new learning from a subject area or theme’ (Coyle et al. 2009, 6) – reveal evident similarities, although the relationship between the mother tongue and the other language(s) is far from being the same. The interrelationship between these two languages can be seen in the two main types of bilingualism: ‘subtractive’ bilingualism, whose main purpose is to make students use the dominant language and abandon the mother tongue; and ‘additive’ bilingualism, which aims to add a new language to the students’ mother tongue. All teaching approaches under bilingualism and CLIL struggle to achieve the best results by combining the use of both languages, irrespective of whether they are considered as two separate monolingual or two interdependent and interrelated codes, whether they are seen as totally detached from or restricted to academic life, or whether they interact in the learners’ community.

This article looks into the way two languages coexist in the CLIL class and the strategies that content teachers and language assistants utilise in their everyday practice. For the purpose of this study, we will consider a teaching and learning CLIL environment that could be termed ‘additive dynamic bilingualism’ (Baker 2001). It is not ‘immersion’ for the following reasons: (1) additive bilingualism is seen as a non-elitist extra resource for all students; (2) it protects and favours the development of the mother tongue and considers it an important learning tool; (3) the academic
content is not taught exclusively through the foreign language and flexible time-frames and resources are offered; (4) the foreign language is also taught as a parallel subject; (5) teachers should have a high level of proficiency but not a near-native command of the target language; and (6) the mother tongue and the foreign language do not necessarily need to be used in separate situations and can be present in the same classroom.

Consideration of the language is actually one of the main underlying tenets of CLIL, even though it does not constitute the real target: ‘CLIL [...] is entirely subject-led and the subject dictates what language support is needed. The language is one part of the process, rather than an end to itself’ (Deller and Price 2007, 6). In some aspects, this context is similar to what García (2009, 127) calls ‘partial immersion bilingual education’, a kind of immersion programme specifically for students who have already acquired a good command of their mother tongue. Nonetheless, it differs essentially from immersion in a crucial way, namely the relationship and co-existence between the mother tongue and the language of instruction in the same class. In the context of this study, it is how both languages intertwine in CLIL or plurilingual programmes in Andalusia. It must be highlighted that the use of the term plurilingualism has important connotations here. Following the linguistic policy in Europe, plurilingualism differs from multilingualism in that the latter makes reference to learning two or more foreign languages, whereas plurilingualism refers to the capacity to use the language appropriately in its diverse cultural contexts. Languages and cultures are not kept in separate mental compartments but their fusion ‘rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes’ (Council of Europe 2001, 5).

2.2. CLIL programmes in Andalusia

Andalusia is a monolingual Spanish region. The design of the Plan para el Fomento del Plurilingüismo (Plurilingualism Promotion Plan, Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Educación 2005; henceforth, The Plan) came into effect in 2005. The Plan follows the recommendations of the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, with a view to promoting a supranational language policy in favour of plurilingualism, linguistic diversity and mutual understanding (Council of Europe 2001, 3). The main aims of The Plan are to improve the language skills of the Andalusian population in their mother tongue and, at the same time, to provide them with plurilingual and pluricultural skills.

To achieve the status of a bilingual institution, it is necessary that primary and secondary schools coordinate and apply for approval from the educational authorities. This ensures the continuity of the bilingual groups throughout all the stages of compulsory education. However, becoming a bilingual institution does not guarantee that all learners follow the CLIL programme. In general, at least during these first stages of implementation of The Plan, most schools are only able to offer the CLIL programme to one or exceptionally two groups per grade level. The premise of the programme is that being exposed to the target language in at least two content disciplines will significantly enhance learners’ language competences. In terms of teaching frames, Spanish was initially used in two-thirds of the class. However, as the CLIL experience of each institution increases, the time devoted to
the instruction through the foreign language is also being significantly augmented up to 50 or 70% of the total teaching time.

In order to participate in the programme, content teachers have to document their achievements in the target language. It is of no surprise, therefore, that emphasis has been placed on language refresher courses. However, an unresolved matter thus far is teacher training in specific CLIL methodology and pedagogy (Pavón and Rubio 2010).

To endow the CLIL programmes with satisfactory language standards, language assistants are assigned to bilingual schools and, together with language teachers and especially content teachers, they put into practice a team teaching model or become mixed teaching teams. This constitutes a first instance of collaboration. Special emphasis is laid on the coordination between content teachers and language teachers, on the one hand, and language/content teachers and language assistants, on the other hand. Among the measures and actions related to the development of The Plan in schools, there are two that specifically concern the targeted population of this study: Action 17. ‘Incorporation of language assistants into Bilingual Schools’; and Action 28. ‘Incorporation of the figure of the assistant into language classes in Bilingual Schools’. The role of the assistants is to facilitate oral production in the classroom, help teachers elaborate teaching materials and provide an insight into the culture of their community. In 2006, the regional government regulated the organisation, provision and activity of language assistants in schools and signed agreements with foreign institutions. Language assistants cannot be responsible for the control of the learning process of students, which means that they always need to be accompanied by the language or content teacher.

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) programmes have undeniably given an unparalleled boost to staff interdisciplinarity or ‘globalized teaching’ in Spain (Segovia et al. 2010, 155). The teaching staff of linguistic and non-linguistic areas involved in bilingual education are also encouraged to coordinate so as to design the Integrated Curriculum of their institutions required by the Educational Authorities. Teachers are requested to produce an articulated curriculum that incorporates the contribution of linguistic and non-linguistic disciplines partaking in the programme. When it comes to teaching in the target language, the topics or subject areas are selected in a process similar to the search for cross-curricular themes (Pavón and Rubio 2010). In all the CLIL courses, language or content disciplines are required to incorporate language objectives. The specific language goals of each subject are established with the guidance of language teachers and are only given their go-ahead in the integrated curriculum after teachers have reached an agreement.

In this context, two major shortcomings can potentially be detected. The first concerns the profile of language assistants. As the agreement with the foreign institutions does not oblige schools to recruit language assistants who are specialist foreign language teachers, some might exhibit a lack of competences and skills in this area. To compensate for this deficit, language assistants are given an initial preparatory course on their functions and roles before actually joining the schools. Unfortunately, this one-day course seems to be insufficient preparation to teach in CLIL programmes. The second deficiency regards collaboration between language and content teachers, weekly meetings that are crucial for the effectiveness of the teaching process (Pavón and Rubio 2010). Teachers and language assistants are not provided with a comprehensive set of guidelines to explore how to collaborate in
class, nor does there seem to be a delivery model. As to scheduling, in some schools, all language and content teachers taking part in CLIL programmes have a one-hour slot in their schedule assigned to coordination. To get the most out of their collaboration and to consistently maintain communication and an exchange of ideas, content/language teachers and language assistants need to rely on their intuitions, knowledge and expertise to effectively design co-planning strategies for teaching and assessment purposes.

3. The coexistence of L1 and L2 in the CLIL class

Any type of bilingual education, whether CLIL or other, implies the use of two languages in the classroom. Nonetheless one must be aware that bilingual programmes differ greatly from initiatives intended exclusively to teach foreign languages. The latter endeavours to achieve linguistic goals, whereas the target of the former is to make students achieve academic progress in the subject area. There has been much debate about the influence of using a foreign language as a medium of instruction and about its combination with the mother tongue for students’ cognitive development. Some claim that maintaining instruction through the mother tongue for as long as possible is one of the most important factors contributing to academic success in the bilingual class (Collier 1995). Others state that the acquisition of the mother tongue does not need to be fully completed before the foreign language is introduced into schools. Indeed, Cummins (2000, 25) argues that ‘rather the first language must not be abandoned before it is not fully developed, whether the foreign language is introduced simultaneously or successively, early or late, in that process’.

What we cannot ignore is that every measure to promote cognitive development, including the use of the mother tongue, should be welcome. As Irujo (1998, 6) and Deller and Price (2007, 9) suggest, if the mother tongue can help students learn, there is no reason to abandon its use as a supportive learning tool.

Many have advocated the separation of languages in pure bilingual education and in CLIL on the basis that keeping the languages separate helps the child (Creese and Blackledge 2010). Thus, it was claimed that bringing the two languages into the classroom might result in weaker academic results (Cummins and Swain 1986). The reasons for this long-established attitude are that students will learn both languages in a mixed and contaminated way, which will interfere with their linguistic development and prevent them from achieving mastery in either language. As Blackledge and Creese (2010) point out, these views emerge directly from the fields of language education and language teaching which uphold that the best way to learn a language is merely to use it as much as possible. The learning of bi/multilinguals is maximised when they are allowed and enabled to draw from all their existing language skills (in two languages), rather than being constrained and inhibited from doing so by monolingual instructional assumptions and practices (Hornberger 2005). Nevertheless, the parallel use of both of them in CLIL environments, where the mother tongue is the social language, requires further insights and specific research.

In the 1980s, Edelsky (1986) demonstrated that the use of two languages was not a factor for failure in bilingual classes and that the use of one’s mother tongue does not interfere with the acquisition of a foreign language. Therefore, it was possible for bilingual children to succeed in school, in contrast to what was previously thought. Her research put forward language strengths rather than limitations from the
combination of both languages under adequate pedagogical conditions. In addition, keeping the two languages separated may give way to what Cummins (2008b, 65) has described as ‘the two solitudes assumption’, with instruction carried out exclusively through the foreign language and where the mother tongue has no place in teaching. He claims that there is not sufficient research to support the idea that languages must be taught independently. On the contrary, there is extensive research strengthening the fact that the interdependence of the two languages will help students to gain knowledge through both. This assumption can also be found in the studies by Garcia (2009), Tucker (2008) and Creese et al. (2006).

Particularly relevant to outlining the principles for a successful coexistence of the mother tongue and the foreign language is the assumption that there exists a ‘Common Underlying Proficiency’ (Cummins 2000), which advocates the existence of a shared and not disconnected language proficiency in the two languages. Cummins (2000) illustrates this idea with the image of ‘the dual iceberg’, the two languages appearing as separate on the surface but sharing a common body underwater. This idea posits a tremendous potentiality in terms of collaboration between teachers using the two languages in the classroom. Indeed, the most important aspect of this collaboration is that knowledge is transferred through languages, which means that what has been learned in one language does not need to be learnt again, as it is transmitted to the other language. Consequently, the main dilemma is to find the words that best label this common knowledge.

4. Structuring teacher collaboration in the CLIL class

The key issue in the debate about the use of the two languages in any form of bilingual education, CLIL included, is the decision to maintain languages as separate or to allow their use concurrently in the classroom. There are many suggestions to help teachers plan and coordinate collaboratively utilising both languages. As depicted by Jacobson (1990), languages can be separated by person, with each teacher mainly using one of the languages; by topic, deciding that some subjects should be taught in the different languages; by location, using different classes or places; or by time, giving instruction to students in different languages during alternative periods.

Pérez-Vidal and Campanale (2005, 40) also report on the wide variation of teaching modalities in CLIL, where we can find language teachers teaching part of or all the content subjects, native teachers working as content teachers or as language assistants, or language and content teachers struggling to teach together in the same classroom. Among all these initiatives, separation by person involving some kind of team teaching is especially interesting for this study. Our view is that, along with the language support provided by the teaching of the second language as a subject, which is an important asset of CLIL programmes, the decision to use native teachers/assistants who collaborate with content teachers in the same class greatly contributes to increasing the quantity and quality of the language support necessary in conditions where exposure to the language is limited.

It should be noted that there might be some confusion with regard to the use of the terms ‘team teaching’ and ‘co-teaching’. Although the first one generally refers to the collaboration between content teachers and language teachers, some observe (Cook and Friend 1995) that it is just one strategy embedded in a larger variation of measures. Despite the fact that team teaching involves planning and putting together
two kinds of teaching, it does not necessarily refer to shared instruction in the same class. This is why the term ‘co-teaching’ suits this study better because it denotes the specific blended instruction that occurs in a class with two teachers, ‘co-teaching occurs when two or more professionals jointly deliver substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space’ (Cook and Friend 1995, 1). According to these authors, there are several ways of implementing the concurrency of content and language in the same classroom: (1) ‘one teach, one drift’, where one teacher is responsible for teaching while the other one provides unobtrusive assistance to students as needed; (2) ‘parallel teaching’, with the class divided into two groups and two teachers teach the same information simultaneously; (3) ‘alternative teaching’, similar to the previous one but with the difference that one teacher focuses on a larger group while the other practitioner works with a smaller group; and (4) ‘team teaching’, with both teachers delivering the same instruction at the same time. This analysis and its corresponding suggestions originate from the field of education for students with special needs, although the objective is the same in the CLIL class: to plan and perform instruction in a coordinated way with two teachers entwining two areas of expertise, content matter and language use in order to ensure the success of all students (Bahamonde and Friend 1999). It seems clear that this pattern can be applicable to the world of language education and CLIL, and could be a sound basis for the establishment of a set of principles guiding the collaboration between content teachers and language teachers/assistants.

One of the most relevant contributions to the explanation of how languages behave in bilingual education is Cummins’ distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Strategies (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 1981). BICS is the language employed in interpersonal and contextually situations, whereas CALP occurs in classroom discourse, which is subsequently academic and decontextualised. As García describes them, BICS comprises ‘practices that are supported by meaningful interpersonal and situational cues’, whereas CALP ‘both oral and written, is associated with higher-order thinking, including hypothesizing, evaluating, inferring, generalizing, predicting, or classifying’ (2009, 37). This distinction may well be utilised as the basis for the collaboration between teachers and language assistants regarding the use of the two languages in the CLIL classroom. Thus, the language teacher/assistant would be responsible for the control of the BICS dimension, always employing the foreign language, and the transmission of content could be the result of a translanguaging collaboration between the non-native content teacher and the language assistant.

In the Andalusian context, there does not seem to be much evidence about the effectiveness of bringing the two languages into the CLIL class. We owe much to the seminal study by Lorenzo et al. (2009), who carried out research in 403 schools in Andalusia. Lorenzo et al. (2009) demonstrated, along with the outcomes of studies previously mentioned here, that the two languages help each other in the processing, understanding and storing of academic content, and that CLIL students show greater linguistic gains than their monolingual peers. More interesting still, they evince a positive transfer from the use of the mother tongue and the foreign language(s). The recognition that the languages do not affect one another negatively but help each other in instructional settings has an immense impact on education planning; it opens the door to the benefits of the coexistence of languages, where Lorenzo et al. (2009) declare that CLIL conflates with language development
initiatives such as Languages Across the Curriculum. Finally, the most relevant
discovery for the present article was the recognition that the coordinated work
between content and language specialists holds significant potential for education
planning. However, little has been said about the coordination strategies between
teachers and language assistants.

5. Research methodology

5.1. Goals and research questions
The main objective of this study is to analyse the principles or strategies that content
teachers and language assistants follow when bringing the two languages, the
students’ mother tongue and the foreign language, into the CLIL classroom. Our
assumption is that the effectiveness of teaching resides in the strength of this
collaboration. Through the analysis of teachers’ perceptions of how this co-existence
is structured and implemented, we aim at elucidating the background knowledge
they possess, the collaborative methodologies that they regularly implement when
teaching together, and the mechanisms implemented when using the two languages to
transmit academic or cultural content.

In order to fulfil these general and specific objectives four research questions were
established:

1. How much do teachers and language assistants know about the benefits of
using both the L1 and L2 in the same class?
2. What is their grounding in the principles of collaboration among instructors?
3. What type of collaboration is commonly set up and when?
4. What language strategies are commonly associated with L1 and L2?

5.2. Research tools, data collection and data analysis
The principal research method used in this investigation is interviews. Semi-
structured interviews were specially designed for this qualitative research which was
to elicit accounts of beliefs and practice from the participants in CLIL programmes
in Andalusia. We are well aware of the limitations in capturing the complex reality
of what is going on in the CLIL classrooms, where two teachers and two languages
coexist, but the valuable insights shared by the informants during the interview
process – allowing us to check, explore and expand on key aspects raised by the
interviewees themselves – cast precious light on this fascinating complexity.

Interviews were conducted in the institutions of the informants, in the seminar or
classroom of their choice, an aspect that undoubtedly lessened the anxiety produced
by the fact that most of them were unfamiliar with the researchers and that their
conversations would be audio-recorded. Some of the key guiding questions – which
the informants were clearly instructed to feel free to depart from, expand on or
clarify during the course of the interview – are:

- What are, in your opinion, the main goals of plurilingual programmes?
- Has it been necessary to adapt the curriculum in order to implement the
  programme?
What specific discipline content, academic language knowledge and pedagogical skills do teachers need in order to teach in these new bilingual programmes?

To what extent has teaching through CLIL changed your methodology?

What is the role of the mother tongue and the foreign language in the class?

How do you coordinate to co-teach and to design the integrated curriculum?

The average length of each interview ranged from 25 to 55 minutes. The enormous pool of information generated during data collection was followed by the transcription of the data on the part of the researchers, a time-consuming process that presents the obvious advantage of allowing researchers to reach a high degree of familiarisation with the data. The interviews were transcribed in their entirety, and the transcription truthfully reflects the interactions among researchers and teachers.

The fact that interviews were carried out among all the teachers who shared the CLIL classrooms benefited the study. There was a need to validate the emergent themes and the information obtained during the process of data collection, which revolved around two axes: the clarification and verification of the data yielded by each informant with herself/himself during and at the end of each interview; and the comparison and contrast of viewpoints about key findings raised by other participants to discard or to corroborate hypotheses.

Regarding data analysis, grounded theory (Mackey and Gass 2005), an inductive approach which allows for the surfacing of categories rather than having them rigidly established beforehand, was considered to be the most suitable method. Trustworthiness was achieved by approaching the data yielded by the interviews individually. Emergent themes and subthemes were pinpointed by each of the researchers in a different document. These working documents merged into one unique file as agreement was progressively being reached. The process followed consisted of different stages. First of all, the main categories were discovered. Second, subthemes were ascribed to each of these overarching categories. Finally, relevant quotations extracted from the interviews were reproduced in order to illustrate each theme and subtheme. As a sample, Figure 1 illustrates one of the major themes and the corresponding subthemes identified.

5.3. Participants and contextualisation

Before conducting the interviews, the researchers contacted the Education Delegation, the body on which Government-funded schools depend. The participants attended some CLIL seminars organised by it, which not only provided them with a sound theoretical and practical knowledge of how CLIL programmes are being implemented in Andalusian schools, but also allowed them to network with CLIL teachers in different institutions.

The authors decided that informants should ideally be located close to the working institution of at least one of them. Jaén was considered to be a key area in that it was the last province to join the piloting of CLIL programmes in Andalusia and its first piloting schools, with a French-Spanish programme, were located in Mancha Real, a rural area 19 km away from the institution of one of the authors. Before the application of the interviews in the two pioneering schools of Mancha Real, ‘San José de Calasanz’ Primary School and ‘Sierra Mágina’ Secondary School, it was deemed that the validity and reliability of the study would be enhanced by the
piloting of the research tool, the semi-structured interview, in a different but similar school: ‘Almadén’ Primary School, situated in the city of Jaén, which was the first CLIL institution offering French-Spanish programmes in the city. After a conversation with the headmaster of the school, the researchers decided to interview the language assistant following the advice of the headmaster and some in-service teachers, as she was reported to have a global view of the programme that other teachers would not be able to offer. The wealth of information yielded by this piloting interview was not rejected. The authors are aware that qualitative research greatly differs from quantitative research. Among many other factors, qualitative research does not discard the data obtained in the piloting process (Dörnyei 2007).

For ethical reasons, the researchers contacted the headteachers and all the teachers involved in the CLIL programme by telephone and in writing. A letter was addressed to the headmasters explicitly asking for permission to interview both teachers and learners. Two focus group interviews were conducted among learners, even though this study centres exclusively on the data yielded by teachers. The letter addressed to teachers and assistants not only expressed the goals of the study but also the guiding questions that would be used during the interview.
The criteria for recruiting informants were established at the very early stages of the research design. For reasons of validity and reliability, at least one teacher belonging to all the departments involved in the CLIL programme in question had to be interviewed. In some cases, and depending on teachers' availability, the researchers managed to interview more than one teacher per department. Thus, informants are instances of typical sampling (Dörnyei 2007): language teachers, content teachers and language assistants involved in the development of CLIL programmes in Andalusia. Fifteen teachers from all the disciplines partaking in the CLIL programme of two schools (plus one interview with a language assistant in a different school where the research instrument was piloted, as specified below) were interviewed from 2007 to 2010, a number that clearly exceeds the figure of informants suggested by Dörnyei (2007) for qualitative research on the basis of interviews and which fluctuates from 6 to 7 subjects.

The schools and the teachers who participated in the study are summarised in Table 1. Most interviews took place individually, with the exception of T3, T4 and T6, since these teachers explicitly expressed their preferences to be interviewed in pairs due to their interest in providing the researchers with more detailed and in-depth information. The informants were in their late thirties and in their forties and fifties, with the exception of the language assistants who were in their twenties.

It is worth emphasising that the informants work in collaboration at all levels. In terms of educational stage, primary and secondary school CLIL teachers and language assistants hold several meetings a year. As to curricular design, all language and content teachers of each institution participate in the elaboration of the school’s

<table>
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<th>Table 1. Informants participating in the study.</th>
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<td><strong>Language assistants</strong></td>
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<td>T1. One language assistant (F)</td>
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<td>T3. One language assistant (F)</td>
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<td>T2. One French language assistant (F)</td>
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| **Language teachers**                       |                           |                           |
| T6. Two language teachers of French (F and M)|                           | T7. One language teacher of French (F) |
| T7. One language teacher of French (F)       |                           | T8. One language teacher of French (F) |

^F stands for female and M for male participants.
Integrated Curriculum. When it comes to lesson planning, language and content teachers regularly meet language assistants. Finally, professionals check the development of the programme and its achievement in the weekly slots of their timetable allotted to CLIL coordination. Probably due to the close relationship among all of them, no evident power issues could be inferred from the interviews. In spite of the different expertise, age, gender and status of language assistants and teachers, the need to collaborate to make the programme successful seems to remove or lessen all the obstacles that such personal and professional diversity may engender. It is obvious that language assistants follow language and content teachers’ guidelines, but it is likewise noticeable that they are treated as equals and that they are also encouraged to act on their own initiative and bring their own materials into the classroom.

6. Presentation of findings and discussion

The presentation of findings has been organised according to the four research questions posited in this study (see Section 5.1). The analysis is intended to gain an insight into the processes and practices produced in the classroom. Questions (1) on teachers’ familiarity with the benefits of using the mother tongue and the foreign language in the class and (2) about the importance attached to collaboration both focus on knowing (see Section 6.1), whereas questions (3) on the kind of collaboration chosen and (4) about language strategies used in L1 and L2 are centred on doing (see Section 6.2). An outline of key opinions is now explained in detail.

6.1. Familiarity with the benefits of using the two languages in a collaborative way

In general, content teachers, even though aware of the fact that CLIL entails the incorporation of important changes in their everyday practice, do not seem to have given as much consideration to language issues as language teachers themselves. Nonetheless, content teachers concur that coordination with language assistants is essential for the effectiveness of the teaching process:

Something fundamental is that we have to be coordinated and that we constantly need to know when each of us has to perform. We likewise have to select the activities to be done in Spanish and in French. (T4)

Language assistants, though teachers with a special status in the schools, do not seem to be generally conscious of the intricacies of the connection between content and language in the CLIL class, not having a clear idea of the role language plays in the learning process:

In Social Sciences we deal with other countries. I do not know the goals underlying the course, but I know that linguistic goals have to be added to these and they are given importance. (T2)

It is evident that lack of experience in the schooling system in Andalusia and training are fundamental factors. Indeed, some content and language teachers are likely to have received specific training in CLIL, a training from which the language assistants have not greatly benefited. The methodology of language assistants arises merely
from previous general pedagogical training in their universities, which implies that their only option is to learn how to teach through CLIL out of their own teaching practice in Andalusia:

No training, which is a pity. You go into the classroom without knowing how to behave and you have to learn on the spot. (T3)

What language assistants clearly emphasise is that the programme has noticeable effects on their own teaching practice (see Table 2). They learn a lot about the official language of the country, vocabulary in particular (quote 1) and about the way concepts and ideas are codified in the two languages (quote 2). It seems that a profound language reflection takes place both in preparation for and as a result of current teaching. CLIL learners are very specific groups of students in Andalusian Primary and Secondary School institutions. Their familiarity with the target language leads to the formulation of language hypotheses that they seem to test with the language assistant who, in turn, considers this change of roles in the classroom as an excellent learning tool for themselves (quote 3). What seems to make the CLIL programme particularly successful is that the whole teaching and learning communities are greatly involved, and this is the reason why participating in it becomes such a memorable plurilingual and pluricultural experience for language assistants (quote 4).

However, content teachers also highlight the effects the programme has on themselves, helping them increase their self-motivation and their professional development:

Every day, I see myself more self-confident and happier. I love participating in the CLIL programme, but language has been a stumbling block. And now I feel very much at ease. (T12)

Likewise, there is a common agreement on the advantages CLIL entails for students. As illustrated in Table 3, there is a clear development, mostly unconscious, of language awareness both in the foreign language and in the mother tongue (quote 1). Learners seem to need to strive and make more efforts to understand the content expressed through the target language (quote 2), but this helps them consolidate both language and content, which tends to become more solid (quote 3). Language assistants are surprised to see that learners’ knowledge of the foreign language is far superior to what the very learners expect (for example, when it comes to coping with

Table 2. The effects of the Andalusian CLIL programme on assistants’ language awareness.

| Quote 1: Preparing lessons I learn many things in Spanish, plenty of vocabulary. (T1) |
| Quote 2: In Spanish you say ‘luchar por la paz’ (to fight for peace), whereas in French we say ‘lutter pour la paix’. The change of preposition shows a change in the view of the event: for Spanish people, the instigator is peace and in French peace is the goal. And this happens on many occasions. (T2) |
| Quote 3: When you speak your own language you don’t question what you say, why you use a word, and when the children ask me I cannot explain the reason. And they themselves strive to find a solution and I learn a lot from them. Now there is a change of roles and they explain their hypotheses about my language and they help me realise things I had never questioned. (T2) |
| Quote 4: CLIL is very motivating for the school. (T2) |
classroom routines), which results in an increase in their motivation to partake in classroom activities (quote 4).

It is worth highlighting that together with the reduction in students’ levels of inhibition to participate and use the foreign language, learners are reported to increase their oral competence and capacities (quote 5), they show much higher receptive skills (quote 6) and they are more able to justify their opinions and ideas (quote 7), acquiring the relevant skill of critical thinking (quote 8). Our sample corroborates the fact that the linguistic capacity of the agents involved in CLIL transcends the boundaries of the language class as both the language assistants and the content disciplines greatly determine the development of language awareness and metalinguistic awareness (Marsh 2008), a consciousness of language form and use that is extremely hard to achieve exclusively through traditional foreign language teaching. This advantage is crucial in educational contexts because, as Bialystok (2001) states, knowledge about the structure of the language may result in an improved academic development if properly established.

6.2. Practices underlying collaboration and language strategies

As for the most frequent type of collaboration established among teachers (see Table 4), instructors mainly implement collaboration as a means to boost the learning of vocabulary (quote 1), but not as commonly as a means of promoting other linguistic areas and skills. In terms of structuring the collaboration with content teachers, it must also be pointed out that the most prevalent attitude for language assistants is to review what the content teacher has previously said (quote 2), in this way helping learners to consolidate knowledge (quote 3). The frequent use of strategies that could be labelled as ‘poor’ in terms of linguistic results (for example,

Table 3. The effects of the Andalusian CLIL programme on learners.

| Quote 1: They learn French unconsciously without realizing that they are learning things. (T1) |
| Quote 2: They try to understand what I say, to get the words they understand. (T1) |
| Quote 3: They learn contents much better, as they learn it ‘twice’. (T1) |
| Quote 4: They always say ‘I don’t know any French’. ‘Of course you do’ and some of them know a lot. When I ask them to introduce themselves, to greet each other, to volunteer to do a role-play … And they are willing and keen to volunteer. (T1) |
| Quote 5: To lay emphasis on oral lessons. (T2) |
| Quote 6: They exhibit a very receptive attitude. (T3) |
| Quote 7: I invite them to think and reflect. I ask them to justify their opinions and sometimes they say ‘I don’t know. Things are the way they are’. And after a while they are ready to give a more sound opinion. (T2) |
| Quote 8: I believe that everything that enriches them, that the new knowledge that helps them reflect, compare and question different aspects is personally enriching, particularly at their age. (T11) |

Table 4. Structuring collaboration among teachers.

| Quote 1: I reinforce vocabulary in every single class, but expanding vocabulary and learners’ language resources falls within the realm of language teachers. (T4) |
| Quote 2: They revise the concepts with me after they have discovered them with the content teacher. (T2) |
| Quote 3: You repeat the explanation in French and I believe that it is very likely that the concepts are reinforced this way. (T11) |
excessive use of vocabulary activities) seems to reflect the absence of adequate training, which may specifically result in only a slight improvement in overall linguistic competence (grammatical, syntactic, semantic and phonological).

Regarding the perception of their own identity and teaching role, it is interesting to note that language assistants assume that the ‘serious’ side of the teaching process must fall into the hands of content teachers, the assistant’s main role being subsequently to promote, as much as possible, non-guided and spontaneous activities for playful and unconscious learning:

I have the feeling that we help students learn unconsciously, playing games. They want to know things about myself. I think that they are not aware that they are learning. (T2)

As a whole, all teachers make common use of learner-centred techniques and strategies (see Table 5), the majority agreeing that visual materials are one of the most effective ways to compensate for students’ linguistic deficiencies (quote 1). All teachers share the assumption that this context and the type of teaching proposed require a shift in their methodological procedures, from traditional teacher-fronted methodology towards more communicative approaches (quote 2). In addition, they find that uninteresting practices should be avoided in classes in preference for more relaxed and entertaining activities that help promote enjoyable learning (quote 3). They understand that the focus on the oral aspect of the language is the most successful tool to foster the progression of students (quote 4). Besides this, all teachers consider grammatical and functional explanations about the use of the language should be left in the background of their practices so as to stress the importance of fluent transmission of content (quote 5).

It has been highly enlightening to find a common and well-structured response to the question of how to manage the combination of the two languages, what kind of functions and content would be more suitably expressed in one or the other language and who would be the appropriate teachers to put this into practice. In line with our own beliefs that teachers and language assistants should have a protocol of use of the mother tongue and the foreign languages, it is significant to indicate that instructors agree that the main function of language assistants is to work with everyday, non-academic language. Intuitively, the conversational dimension of language is predominantly carried out in the foreign language, whereas the use of the mother tongue is allowed for the academic language. This attitude fits in totally with the type of management proposed by Cummins (1981) of the two distinctive uses of the language, BICS and CALP, that he claims are present in the bilingual class. Thus,

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 5. Strategies and techniques employed by instructors.</th>
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<td>Quote 1: When you teach in French you do it more visually so that learners can understand the explanation. (T5)</td>
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<td>Quote 2: I believe that it is paramount to communicate in French as much as possible so that words come to mind in French and everything flows very quickly. (T2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quote 3: And they say almost everything in French because they are playing and they are enjoying themselves. And I love it. (T2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quote 4: Oral language. We strive to make the lesson as communicative as possible employing not only the mother tongue but also the French language. (T4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quote 5: Language teachers generally teach grammar and further technical issues and I use the language as a springboard to other aspects. (T2)</td>
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</table>
language assistants (Table 6) tend to pay attention to the regular, non-academic (quote 1), conversational (quote 2) and real (quote 3) use of the language, leaving the exploration of the academic subject material to content teachers and the explanation of language issues to language teachers. The controversy over using or not using the mother tongue is easily resolved in the practices of all teachers. It is highly relevant to note that teachers, including language assistants, make effective use of their own knowledge of the students’ mother tongue (quote 4). A conscious and rewarding exploitation of the students’ mother tongue is present in their everyday practice and is successfully employed as an instrument of disambiguation to help them understand complex ideas and notions (quote 5).

Finally, it is worth emphasising that instructors are aware of the potential of making cross-linguistic comparisons to help students progress more easily (quote 6). In line with what was set forth by Cummins (2000, 2008b) and by Lorenzo et al. (2009) concerning the evidence of positive transference across languages in CLIL environments, teachers clearly perceive the benefits of linguistic comparisons as a means to strengthen the use of two or three languages (quote 7). They welcome the process by which languages help each other and assist in the assimilation and consolidation of academic content (quote 8), in this way fostering the understanding and storage of data, concepts, events, processes and notions. In other words, what is being disclosed is the construction of knowledge previous to verbalisation, what Cummins (1981) depicted as the ‘Common Underlying Proficiency’ with his dual iceberg hypothesis. In sum, teachers appreciate the presence of cross-language transfers, they perceive and value the favourable combination of the two languages in the CLIL class and they recognise the advantages of using them to stimulate the learning of both language and content.

### 7. Conclusion

With regard to the first two research questions, neither teachers nor language assistants seem to have been explicitly trained in the principles and benefits of using
the two languages in the classroom. With respect to the final two research questions, teachers report not being given consistent instruction on the practices that should be observed for effective co-teaching strategies. The result is that their teaching practice is mainly based on their intuitions and on the previous knowledge they may have acquired. It is evident that the guidelines on the functions of language assistants provided by the regional government of Andalusia may not suffice for the implementation of effective co-teaching and profitable use of the two languages. Contrary to the recommendations of the ideal pattern for collaborative teaching (Adams, Cessna, and Friend 1993; Murawski and Dieker 2004), teachers do not share the same level of knowledge, expertise and skills about the special type of instruction and assessment required. And what is more important, there is no regulation concerning the definition of classroom roles and responsibilities, which could prove detrimental for the successful handling of the two languages.

However, and on a more positive note, from the samples above it is remarkable to observe that, even though it is a project in its initial phases, the CLIL programme in Andalusia is positively and profoundly affecting the linguistic and cultural profile of the teachers and learners involved. There are also a series of gains that are to be mentioned. Firstly, instructors have a clear idea that collaboration is the key to success, a source of motivation for all teachers and beneficial to the school. Secondly, students tend to work harder and better with the foreign language; they are reported to exhibit higher language awareness and to have a less inhibited response to its use. Finally, collaboration between teachers and use of distinct languages entail profound changes in the way the content is taught and learned: teachers carry into effect compensatory mechanisms by using both languages; activities become more communicative; resources become more illustrative and attractive; and the use of the foreign language is more spontaneous and enjoyable.

Furthermore, it seems that CLIL presents an enormous potential when it comes to understanding concepts and notions which are not self-evident in the vocabulary and linguistic patterns of a given language, but which are better understood by means of another linguistic code. This tallies with Cummins’ (2000) dual iceberg, a ‘Common Underlying Proficiency’ that accounts for learners’ cognitive development through both languages and that enables individuals to transfer the information learnt in one language to another. Undoubtedly, it is one of the phenomena about which CLIL has a lot to say. In a sense, this study endorses previous research carried out on language use in Andalusian CLIL programmes. We concur with Lorenzo et al. (2009) that the coexistence of languages will result in a consolidation of language use in both of them. This coexistence will not only help students consolidate the two linguistic structures, but it also has the potential to ultimately foster a more effective assimilation of academic content.

Language use differs among practitioners, with teachers of linguistic and non-linguistic areas employing the target language for content-centred teaching (activities, consolidation and revision); language teachers for feedback and evaluation; and language assistants maximising the use of the L2 (Lorenzo et al. 2009). All of them have been reported to utilise the target language for formulaic expressions and classroom management, whereas language and content Spanish teachers acknowledge that the times in which they resort less frequently to the L2 is when telling anecdotes and using routine language, which falls within the domain of language assistants. Consequently, content teachers tend to work at the textual level, language teachers work on sentence-level and represent semi-immersion, and
language assistants provide opportunities for immersion and focus on conversational style, in line with Cummins’ (1981) BICS and CALP distinction. For this reason, ‘CLIL has the potential to provide an extremely rich language learning environment’ (Lorenzo et al. 2009, 16), assisting and motivating the teaching professionals to function as a community of practice (Costa and D’Angelo 2011).

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