

**A Case Study on Successful Educational Actions  
in a Bilingual and Learning Community Primary School  
of Andalusia**

Master's Degree in English for Professional Qualification

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## ACRONYMS

|      |   |
|------|---|
| IGs  | Interactive Groups                            |
| LC   | Learning Community                            |
| LCs  | Learning Communities                          |
| PE   | Primary Education                             |
| PPM  | Plan for the Promotion of the Multilingualism |
| SEAs | Successful Educational Actions                |

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, countries' boundaries are blurred and migration flows are increasing; especially within the European Union (Cots *et al.* 15). Freedom of movement together with the emergence of new technologies leads to an increasingly multilingual and intercultural society. As the globe becomes more and more connected, it is even more imperative to make ourselves internationally competent; to ignore international plurality is to isolate oneself. Learning English is an essential aspect to this process, for it is a language in which a large percentage of the world operates (Lewis *et al.* n. pag.). Modern society is no longer a question of different countries and languages but a global community with English bridging the cultural and linguistic division.

Children of today and generations to come need to develop their linguistic competence (European Council 179; Ley 17/2007 de Andalucía 14) as never before. In this way, they will be able, not only to compete alongside their fellow world citizens in professional opportunities, but to learn, comprehend, and value, the richness and importance that our mutual cultures offer; and what is more important, by speaking a different language, we are able to perceive a somewhat different world.

On the same note, the Ministry of Education of the Andalusian Region has launched the *Plan for the Promotion of Multilingualism* (PPM) to “improve population mother tongue linguistic skills and, in turn, provide it with multilingual and multicultural skills”(Junta de Andalucía 27). To be more specific, the main priorities of this plan are three: 1) On the linguistic level, to improve skills in the official language, in a foreign language and then in a third; 2) On the cultural realm, to envisage realities other than their immediate environment; 3) From a cognitive perspective, to promote a reflective process of linguistic and communicative performance of official and foreign language(s) (Junta de Andalucía 23).

According to these objectives and in compliance with the monitoring and evaluation actions specified in the already mentioned Plan (Junta de Andalucía 71), the Ministry of Education asked the Pablo Olavide University to prepare an evaluation report on bilingual education in the Region (Lorenzo *et al.* 5). In percentage, the opinion of some English specialist teachers regarding students' general (see Table 1) and communicative competence (see Table 2) in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education (PE onwards) is:

Table 1 Primary teachers' perceptions on their students' general competences level

| GENERAL COMPETENCES                       | A LOT | QUITTE | LITTLE | NOTHING |
|---|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>Knowledge of the world</b>             | 16%   | 73%    | 11%    | 0%      |
| <b>Intercultural skills and practices</b> | 16%   | 52%    | 31%    | 1%      |
| <b>Positive attitudes and motivation</b>  | 36%   | 53%    | 10%    | 1%      |
| <b>Learning strategies</b>                | 19%   | 50%    | 31%    | 0%      |

(Source: Lorenzo *et al.* 14-16)

Table 2 Primary teachers' perceptions on their students' general competences level

| COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES                | A LOT | QUITTE | LITTLE | NOTHING |
|--|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>Linguistic</b>                        | 20%   | 62%    | 18%    | 0%      |
| <b>Sociolinguistic</b>                   | 12%   | 52%    | 35%    | 1%      |
| <b>Positive attitudes and motivation</b> | 9%    | 38%    | 39%    | 14%     |

(Source: Lorenzo *et al.* 16-17)

When interpreting these results, we can agree that it is necessary to work harder on the intercultural dimension (sociolinguistic, pragmatic and intercultural competences are over 30% with knowledge of the world as the exception). Moreover, in my opinion, those students between “nothing” or “little” are already or are at the risk of falling behind. So it is also important to work on all students' inclusivity. We should, however, recognize the effectiveness of the PPM as students' results in the bilingual section are superior to non-bilingual school students (Lorenzo *et al.* 6).

For personal and professional reasons it is necessary to find new ways to meet students needs and guarantee academic success for students. La Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación includes among its principles:

- a) Quality education for all students, regardless of their conditions and circumstances.
- b) Equity, to ensure equal opportunities, inclusive education and non-discrimination to compensate for personal, cultural, economic and social inequalities, with special attention to those whose needs arise from disabilities. (7)

Likewise, Ley 17/2007, de 10 de diciembre, 2007, de Educación en Andalucía provides for “c) and guarantees equal opportunities, the conditions to favour their learning and exercise and the inclusion in education of all groups that may have difficulties in accessing and remaining in the education system” (9).

Personally, I think that as vocational professionals, English specialists and education advocates we cannot propose alternatives to improve learning in our area of knowledge without bearing in mind those deficiencies affecting the education system. Those deficiencies are considered



as targets in the Social and Political consensus for Education (Ministerio de Educación 7-43). Only those relevant to PE will be mentioned:

1) All students academic success. 2) Equity and excellence. Assessment as a means to improve education quality. . . . 5) New ways of teaching and learning: the role of Information and Communication Technologies 6) Multilingualism. Boost language learning. 7) Education as a public good and a social right. . . . 10) Coexistence and education in values: families, teachers and society involvement. . . . 12) Inclusive education, diversity and interculturality: and the right to be different without different rights. (Ministerio de Educación 2)

Bilingualism experts have also reported all these needs. David Marsh (137) points out that further investigation should be done on educational technologies, migration and diversity within the classroom, as well as students with specific needs, and the quality of the educational process during difficult economic and social periods of time; among others. Moreover, this author together with Peeter Mehisto and María Jesús Frigols state that members of the local community are often more than capable of helping out with CLIL classroom learning. Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols insist that experience shows that the influence of volunteer assistants can help to make a difference and that students have yet a lot to learn from interaction with teachers and fellow students. Moreover, they point out that “remaining strictly within the classroom cocoon” (186) will make the classroom situation feels somewhat artificial and a far cry from real life; opposite to this, making contact with the immediate community can help them to feel they count. These scholars add that this can be carried out by creating opportunities to experience what it is like participating with others and observing the student’s own impact on the community and vice versa. Likewise, they add, no individual or group of teachers can offer students the extensive use of language used in everyday life and there is no doubt that establishing possibilities for contact and communication with other speakers of the CLIL language offers students further language models.

Regarding interaction, bilingual experts (Casal 97-102), point out that interaction triggers language, content, culture and social context learning. The Andalusian Report on Bilingual Schools also highlights the necessity of using a more interactive methodology in the classroom to improve students’ speaking bad results (Lorenzo *et al.* 13). In addition, several authors belonging to the educational field (Flecha *et al.* 14; Elboj *et al.* 50,53) state that learning does not exclusively depend on students’ prior knowledge but rather on dialogue. According to these and other authors (Chacón *et al.* 15; Elboj 144; Flecha *et al.* 14), and opposite to what Do Coyle, Philip Hood and David Marsh (35) state, when Paulo Freire presented his dialogic perspective on education the scholar referred to communication within the classroom as a process in which any person can interact (administration

and services staff, monitors, families, whoever is willing to volunteer) not only teachers and students.

*Dialogic learning*, as defined by Ramón Flecha is a reality within bilingual and non-bilingual classrooms. Although according to Coyle *et al.* it is a “challenge . . . in the CLIL setting”, for the purpose of a study carried out by Borja Garrido (81-92; Dobson *et al.* 127-158) it really is not a challenge. Garrido works on dialogic learning through *Interactive Groups* (de Mello 139). According to Roseli R. de Mello (140), Interactive Groups are a type of classroom organization in which students are heterogeneously (gender, ability, life style, culture, among others) divided into groups of three or four. The scholar explains that each group is monitored by a community volunteer (families, university students, cultural association members, etc.) whose role is to promote positive peer interactions that favour solidarity above all. The author continues to mention that this reorganization of human resources permits the teacher to control the academic activity in the classroom while students are performing the task and offer help to a group or student when necessary. He also comments that tasks are usually linked by a theme or issue and the duration of each one is 20 minutes approximately. As for students, the expert states that they “help each other and engage in dialogues to deepen the understanding of the content knowledge they are working on” (140).

Dialogic learning pedagogical approach and organization of the class into Interactive Groups are both key elements in a Project called *Learning Communities* (Mello 140). In the light of the results, this Project contributes effectively to the accomplishment of the objectives marked in the Social and Political Pact for Education with the partial exception of targets 5 (ICT) and 6 (Multilingualism).

Learning Communities is a project that was being developed in Andalusia prior to 2012 but it was not until that year that it was regulated by the Ministry of Education of this Region (Andalucía, 2012). This social transformation Project ensures all students educational success (Racionero and Padrós, 2010:153) as well as peaceful coexistence among cultures and the eradication of racist ideas through dialogue and collaboration of the different community members — students, teachers, families and other social agents— (Elboj 99-100). All this implies higher levels of pedagogic and organizational autonomy in the educational centres (Elboj n. pag.). In addition, the effectiveness of the educational practices used in this Project is supported by the INCLUDE-ED integrated project results. INCLUD-ED, Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education, was funded by the European Commission in the Sixth Framework Programme (2006-2011) (INCLUD-ED Consortium 2011).

Flecha, INCLUD-ED coordinator Project and Learning Communities founder, argues that a communicative perspective based on egalitarian dialogue enables multicultural coexistence in the information society (qtd. in Elboj 61). In this way, it would be appropriate to promote an open attitude to dialogue within the English department so that students make an effective use of English language as a means of understanding other cultures. Moreover, in relation with the PPM intercultural objective, cultural exposure in Learning Communities classrooms is heightened thanks to the participation of family members and volunteers who represent the “ideological and cultural diversity of society itself” (Elboj 101). According to Elboj, this cultural diversity enriches and accelerates students’ learning and promotes solidarity (152). With regard to the concept of *diversity* in terms of learning, Learning Communities define it as *difference acceptance*. That is to say, each student, according to his/her abilities and interests, has a different learning style. Carmen Elboj (100) also states that this project equips students with those skills and abilities required to succeed in the information society. Therefore, according to this author, aspects like flexibility, autonomy, teamwork, decision making, problem solving, etc. are worked on in class. The author also adds that there is a significant learning increase among students.

Learning Communities promote the learning of maximums respecting differences (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 63); giving more support to those who need it by using effective organization of human resources and material available (Elboj n. pag.). Interactive groups are an effective way to achieve learning maximums. Thanks to the collaboration and coordination of the whole educational community, ratios are reduced, dialogue and cooperation among students are promoted and a more personalized attention is given to students with low curricular level. (Ferrer 63).

Learning Communities do not segregate students depending on their academic performance given that it only triggers off a higher level of violence, the stigmatization of students considered as failures and family disagreement (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 59). Contrary to Learning Communities, it is easy to find some bilingual schools in which some groups are bilingual and others are not.

As far as conflict resolution is concerned, this Project supports for the community model which favours conflictive situations prevention. This means that the whole community participates in contemplative dialogue to detect the origin of the conflict to later propose a peaceful resolution and decide how to avoid new conflictive situations (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 68-69).

These are just some of the key characteristics of the Learning Communities to be developed at a later stage.

At present, according to la resolución 8 de octubre, 2012 and 4 de junio, 2013, the Ministry of Education of the Andalusian Region recognizes 43 Learning Community Schools; 30 of which are Primary Education. Of those 30, only 4 run the English Bilingual Program. They are the following: CEIP Virgen de las Cruces (Guijo, Córdoba), CEIP Marín Ocete (Alfacar, Granada); CEIP Cruz Blanca (Aznalcóllar, Sevilla) y CEIP Coca de la Piñera (Utrera, Sevilla) (*Averroes n. pag.*).

Faced with this situation, my main goal as a researcher is to see how we can make the CLIL language class work for all students, to determine in which way students benefit the most from the time they spend at school, and which educational practices we should use as English teachers to prepare our students for life in our global society. To do this, I will need to study and carefully analyze the connection between the Learning Community Project and the PPM. Then, the objectives of my Master's Research Project are the following:

- To determine which educational actions are being employed in subjects taught in English (linguistic or non linguistic)
- To detect difficulties arising in the Learning Communities so as to take advantage of the application of these successful educational actions in the learning of English both in linguistic and non linguistic areas
- To evaluate to what degree these successful educational actions used in educational centres add to the objectives set by the bilingual programme the PPM
- To analyse the time devoted by the teacher to practising with oral and written skills in the bilingual class (linguistic and non linguistic areas)
- To analyse the perceptions of teachers in the bilingual section on the general and communicative competences of the students in linguistic and non linguistic areas

This Master's Research Project provides new scientific knowledge on the ability to generate school transformations that promote the overcoming of social inequalities, the promotion of social cohesion and an exponential increase of English as a foreign language when implementing successful socio-educational actions in a bilingual centre.

Data resulting from quantitative and qualitative analysis of the already mentioned plan and project may be of interest to:

- Public administration linked to social and educational fields. The results of this study may be useful as a basis for future education policies address to overcome inequalities resulting from industrial society and aggravated by the information society.
- Professionals in the field of education and social services since the project includes methodological guidelines recognized by the international scientific community.

- Society in general and particularly students who suffer from social exclusion because of their ethnicity, social class, religion, physical or mental disability, etc. because of the promotion of successful educational actions that enhance inclusiveness.
- The international scientific community as this project may open new lines of research.

## CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATION

### *Bilingual Education in Andalusia*

#### CONCEPT

Ofelia García, *Bilingual Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Global Perspective*, states that bilingual education is completely different from old language methods since it uses the language as a medium of instruction in different subjects; in doing so, it teaches content through another language other than the child's native tongue. She adds that “bilingual education programmes provide a general education” (6) by teaching in two or more languages, developing multiple understandings about languages and cultures, and fostering appreciation for human diversity. Those are the main reasons why the professor asserts that the main goals of bilingual education are achieved —a meaningful education and the acquisition of a language—. According to the scholar, language education understood as the intersection of wider aspects like diversity, respect, etc. allows students to become responsible world citizens whose modern and up-dated cultural education knows no borders or frontiers.

On the other hand, García affirms that a bilingual educational focus makes sense and is ideal for those children whose language used at their home context is different from the predominant language used at school or by the local community, in particular, when educating immigrants, refugees, children from Africa or Asia or other minority groups.

She continues to mention that bilingual education is flexible, allowing situations of oral exchange to adapt accordingly; exactly, what all modern-day children need. Communicative interactions are complex with multiple variations and possibilities. Bilingual education promotes learning efficiency and communication as it allows both teachers and students to put these possibilities into practice in their day-to-day limitless multilingual exchanges; at the same time it favours tolerance of linguistic differences, and a positive attitude towards languages and bilingual proficiency.

García's usage of bilingual education comprises what many authors have called *multilingual education*. The European Commission adopts this expression when it cites its global policy of learning one's native language together with two additional languages (qtd. in García 9). The description *multilingual education* was coined in 1999 in the General Conference Resolution 12 by UNESCO, when dealing with the learning of a minimum of three languages: the native tongue, a

regional or national language, and an international language (qtd. in García 9). When referring to bilingual education, trilingual and multilingual education are contemplated too (García 9).

García specifically points out that in the European Union, CLIL/EMILIE, “Content and Language Integrated Learning/Enseignement d’une Matière par l’Intégration d’une langue Etrangère” are being used to promote bilingual education (García 10).

Along these lines, the Ministry of Education of the Andalusian Region launched the Plan for the Promotion of Multilingualism which includes the bilingual programme. This programme aims to promote communicative competence in languages, linguistic diversity, intercultural competence, democratic citizenship and social cohesion (Junta de Andalucía 33).

For this to happen, the adoption of CLIL —Content and Language Integrated Learning— pedagogic approach has been proposed (Junta de Andalucía 64) in order to promote the learning of a foreign language from the first cycle of Primary Education and extending the learning of a third language from the third cycle onwards (Junta de Andalucía 32). Learning foreign languages is not just about linguistic subjects but also about non-linguistic subjects. In this way, the foreign language is used as a vehicular language (Junta de Andalucía 33).

## CLIL

In 1994, David Marsh (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) and Anne Majers (European Platform for Dutch Education) together with other European experts and representatives of the European Commission decided to use the expression *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) (Marsh 63). From that year onwards, CLIL has been considered an example of interdisciplinary educational convergence (qtd. in Marsh 19). Following this line of thought, Coyle *et al.* in their book *Content and Language Integrated Learning* define CLIL as “a dual-focused educational approach” (1) where a second language is used to teach other subjects of the curricular in promoting not only the content but higher levels of language proficiency. A year before, Coyle *et al.* (6) in their book *Towards an Integrated Curriculum — CLIL National Statements and Guidelines* state the same idea; that is to say, CLIL practice is about using language as a tool to develop other subject areas or themes. They specifically point out that, within the CLIL classroom, language and subject area content complement one another. The scholars continue to mention that students assimilate and use language to extend knowledge and skills, at the same time enhancing language and subject areas. From their point of view, introducing CLIL means developing the curriculum with an inclusive and flexible approach since it offers numerous teaching forms and curriculum models and is adaptable to the age, ability, needs and interests of the learners.

Along these lines, Coyle *et al.* (*Content and Language Integrated Learning 1*) add that CLIL process content and language are interwoven, even if the stress is greater on one or the other at a particular time. The professors insist on the idea that CLIL is a fusion of both language and subject area learning and is adaptable to different contexts, but they specifically clarify that for this method to be valid and watertight, its theoretical basis must be proven and transparent in practice. As a matter of fact, they mention that CLIL's operational success has been brought about its application, not just in other countries and continents, but in all kinds of educational centres and classrooms.

Once the concept of CLIL has been described, it is time now to move on to CLIL core principles. According to Sonia Casal (95), integrated language and content learning involves five interconnected elements: culture, social context, language and learning.

In broad terms, the learning of L2 from the point of view of language and content integration within the classroom implies the discussion of a number of themes (content) which derive from the academic disciplines or from the target language culture, using it as a vehicle for learning. These discussions promote a social context in which significative communication and, consequently, learning take place. (Casal 95)

Let us look at each one individually:

- Culture and social context: Learning a second language is a social process developed through interaction. In this way, according to Casal, three main contributions of socio-cultural theory to multilingual education can be distinguished: 1) “the idea that a complimentary relationship exists between language and thinking and thus the importance of speaking to encourage reasoning development” (97); 2) the ideal reason for creating Zones of Immediate Development to favour students’ cognitive development through activities in which knowledge and learning are shared (98); 3) the role of L1 as a guide and boosting instrument of L2 learning; this circumstance highlights the importance of continually keeping in mind the existing interrelation between the languages (99).
- Language and content: the natural integration of language and content takes place through interaction and negotiation (Casal 104). In the negotiation process, lesser attention is paid to the formal aspects of language and greater attention is paid to the meanings by which interaction develops; this increases learners’ fluency and promotes unconscious, incidental, acquisition processes which are similar to the acquisition of the first language. Moreover, students learn a set of social skills (a number of behaviour patterns and language gambits) that will help them to negotiate cooperatively, tolerantly and respectfully in a multicultural context (Casal 101-102)



- Learning: According to humanistic psychology, the learning of a second language depends on several factors such as: classroom atmosphere, self-esteem, motivation, personality and different learning styles. Factors that, properly treated, have a positive effect on students' attitude, interest and number, and quality of their interventions in class. In order to create a good classroom atmosphere, it is necessary to favour “activities that promote personalization, understood as the process by which a person knows (himself/herself) and shown himself/herself as a unique individual” (102). This situation is a guarantee of respect, tolerance and support for diversity inside and outside the classroom (Casal 102-105).

## ***Learning Communities in Andalusia***

### CONCEPT

The Learning Communities Project was developed by the Centre for Social and Educational Research at the University of Barcelona (CREA — acronym for Centro de Investigación Social y Educativa—). It is based on the results and analysis of different theoretical approaches from Social Sciences — educational sciences, sociology, philosophy, language sciences and psychology<sup>1</sup>— and includes educational practices to promote school success, increases academic learning and improves coexistence (Flecha and Larena 22; Elboj 91).

According to Rosa Valls, a Learning Community is a “project of social and cultural transformation of a school and its environment to achieve information society for all people, based on dialogic learning, through participatory education of the community embodied in all areas including the classroom” (8).

In Spain, it is essential to contact CREA when establishing any rules on Learning Communities. Andalusia is no exception and therefore the definition given in the Orden 8 de junio, 2012 that governs this project is consistent with the following:

A Learning Community is a project of social and cultural transformation of a school and its environment, aimed at improving school results and coexistence, and to achieve educational success of all its students. Its distinctive feature is to be a center open to all members of the community which includes and integrates, within the school day, consensus and active participation of families, associations and volunteer in both school management processes as in the development of student learning. (Orden 8 de junio de 2012 3)

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<sup>1</sup> See Flecha and Larena (23-28) for a deeper study about different approaches.

## DIALOGIC LEARNING

Learning Communities are governed by the principles of dialogic learning. This concept has been developed by CREA, University of Barcelona, “through various investigations, readings and discussions that have taken as axes enhancing social and educational theories as well as practice and participation in educational activities” (Flecha and Puigvert 15). Dialogic learning has been defined by CREA as that

which results from the interactions that occur in egalitarian dialogue, that is to say, dialogue in which different people bring arguments on equal conditions to reach consensus, assuming that we want to understand each other talking from validity claims. (Elboj *et al.* 92)

This type of learning is based on the communicative conception which overcomes and includes the constructivist.

The application of the principles of dialogic learning ensures the inclusion of all cultures, significantly increasing learning and social transformation. These are the Dialogic Learning Principles:

- The *egalitarian dialogue* in which “the different contributions are considered in terms of the validity of the arguments and not from criteria such as the imposition of a culturally hegemonic know” (Elboj 145; Flecha and Puigvert 15). In short, it is a matter of replacing the argument of the force by the force of the arguments (Aubert *et al. Aprendizaje dialógico* 169; Racionero and Padrós 151). Thus, all participants (teachers, administration and service staff, students, parents and other volunteers) interact in a horizontal position of equality. For this to happen, it is important to 1) “end with deficit theories, the concept of unequal abilities of people based on their culture, social or family environment” (Elboj *et al.* 97); and 2) modify the structure and organization of the center, opening the different decision and management bodies to the whole community (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 125). Within the classroom, learning must be directed towards the use of egalitarian dialogue, accustoming both teachers and students to stating their views without insulting any social group for any reason and without adopting elements of authority (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 125-126). Unlike traditional learning, reflective and egalitarian dialogue promotes further selection and processing of information (Alcaide *et al.* 61), highly valued skills in the information society.
- *Cultural Intelligence*, “is not limited to the cognitive dimension based on the theological action but contemplates plural dimensions in human interaction” (Flecha and Puigvert, 2002:15). The concept of cultural intelligence embraces academic, practical and communicative intelligence

(Aubert *et al. Aprendizaje dialógico* 180-187; Elboj *et al.* 99-100; Racionero and Padrós 151)

Cultural intelligence within the framework of dialogic learning means:

the acceptance of different and innovative resolution strategies to common problems and the transformation of these cultural strategies in shared knowledge, communicative action undertaken in part by the participants learning. (Elboj *et al.* 100)

Within the classroom, learning intensifies and students' confidence increases when they understand that their cultural skills are valued positively (Elboj *et al.* 100). Once again, it is a question of breaking deficit theories (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 126; Elboj *et al.* 100-101).

- *Transformation*: “People are creatures of transformation and not of adaptation” (qtd. in Flecha and Puigvert, 15; Racionero and Padrós 151), that is to say, human being can overcome personal and social situations that conservative theories deem impossible (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 132; Flecha and Puigvert, 15). Therefore, relationships between people and their environment can be transformed through dialogic learning (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 132; Flecha and Puigvert 15). Such transformation is possible through the dialogic learning that occurs in schools and extends throughout their environment by involving the educational community in education (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 133; Elboj *et al.*, 2002:104). Many educational projects fail for not taking into account the environment of the centre; those who do, such as learning communities among others, succeed.
- *Instrumental Dimension* “does not ignore or stand against the dialogic” (Flecha and Puigvert 15) given that dialogic learning includes all knowledge and skills that the learning community agrees to learn; being it technical, scientific or humanistic (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 129). In fact, what dialogic learning really tries to fight against is the technocratic colonization of learning (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 129). Moreover, it is necessary to mention that dialogic learning intensifies, deepens and accelerates instrumental learning (Alcaide *et al.* 61; Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 130; Flecha and Puigvert 15)
- *Creation of meaning*. The creation of meaning arises from learning that enables directed interaction between people of different cultures. Such interaction highlights those identities and individualities that all humans possess and consequently avoids the imposition of a hegemonic culture and utilitarian logic (Elboj 145; Flecha and Puigvert 16). Today, society live in an increasingly plural and diverse world in which the meaning that each person gives to his/her own life, and therefore to education, is determined not so much by tradition or social convention but rather by the cognitive outcomes of their interactions with others from different cultures.

(Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 131). Learning Communities also favour the creation of meaning through the interaction of people with different cultural profiles —family members and volunteers of various kinds— who give students a broader view of their immediate environment. (Elboj *et al.* 105). As Ramón Flecha stated “everyone can dream and feel, give meaning to our existence. The contribution of each one is different from the rest and therefore unrecoverable if not taken into account” (qtd. in Flecha and Larena 31). The key point at stake is that every child can develop his/her own identity, his/her own lifestyle.

- *Solidarity* as “an expression of the democratization of the different social contexts and the fight against exclusion” (Flecha and Puigvert 16). Thus, solidarity is presented as a basis for achieving equality (Aubert *et al. Aprendizaje dialógico* 223; Flecha and Larena 31; Alcalde *et al.* 62; Elboj *et al.* 106). Learning Communities use educational practices that allow participants to share learning processes and not to compete for individual success (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 134). This improves learning and promotes the coexistence of the class group (Aubert *et al. Aprendizaje dialógico* 223). In short, solidarity in education means achieving academic success of students (Aubert *et al. Aprendizaje dialógico* 227).
- *Equal differences* mean that everyone has the right to live differently (qtd. in Flecha and Larena, 31; Racionero and Padrós 152). This principle is opposed to the principle of diversity, that relegates equality and has been the basis of some educational reforms (Flecha and Puigvert 16) which have resulted in a homogenizing educational equality that has, in turn, led to increased educational inequalities and the exclusion of minority groups (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 127). Some examples are those that separate students based on their grades, behaviour, etc. As can be seen, the term *diversity* in education has arisen without taking into account true equality since “while the curriculum of the strong student is filled with more complex academic contents, the curriculum of weaker students is stuffed with practical and attitudinal contents” (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 127). Thus, equal differences means: respect for different identities and maximum results for everyone. (Aubert *et al. Dialogar y transformar* 128; Elboj *et al.* 119,124).

#### INCLUD-ED - SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL ACTIONS (SEAs)

INCLUD-ED, Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education, is an integrated project funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2006-2011) (INCLUD-ED Consortium 17-18). This has been coordinated by Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities (CREA), University of Barcelona (Valls and Mulcahy 15).

The main objective is to identify which actions promote students' *educational success* and social inclusion at the different stages of compulsory education by paying special attention to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups —women, youths, immigrants, cultural minorities and people with disabilities— (INCLUD-ED Consortium 17-18). Unlike *good practices* that only produce the desired result when they are implemented under concrete circumstances (a specific country or area, students with a particular profile...), these actions are characterized as having universal and effective applications in different geographical, educational, economic and cultural contexts (Ojala and Padrós 18; Racionero and Padrós 152). According to the European Commission, educational success leads to the reduction of numbers of early school leavers, the completion of non-compulsory secondary education and access to higher education (INCLUD-ED Consortium 24).

The INCLUD-ED project has identified “inclusive actions and successful participation of families and the community” as successful actions (Ojala and Padrós 19).

This Master’s Research project focuses on inclusive actions which consist of the reorganization of available resources to provide the necessary support to students within the regular classroom (INCLUD-ED Consortium 56). Five types of inclusive actions can be distinguished:

Table 3. Inclusive actions

| TYPES OF INCLUSION  | DESCRIPTION   |
|---|---|
| <b>Heterogeneous groups with human resources organization</b> | It consists of designating a greater number of human resources (teachers, families or learning community members) to the classroom thus providing more support to those students with difficulties so that they can keep up with the class-group. Interactive groups are widely used. |
| <b>Splitting heterogenous groups</b>                          | The class-group is divided into two or more heterogeneous sub-groups. The number of groups depends on the teachers’ availability.   |
| <b>Extending the learning time</b>                            | Extension may take the form of extracurricular activities or tutoring at school or in students’ homes. It can take place throughout the year, regardless of the holiday periods.  |
| <b>Students’ inclusive curriculum adaptation</b>              | All students share the same curriculum although different teaching methods are employed for those students with learning difficulties.  |
| <b>Inclusive choice</b>                                       | Students choose subject depending on their preferences, not on their academic performance. This strategy is not possible at a primary level of education  |

(Adapted from INCLUD-ED Consortium 64-65)

According to Racionero and Padrós (156) there is a set of SEAs that boost learning, favour interactions and transform the socio-cultural context. Those connecting directly with students are: *interactive groups*, *dialogic reading* and *tutored libraries* and *digital rooms*.

- *Interactive groups* are a flexible organization of the class (Flecha and Larena 63) in which students are organized into heterogeneous groups of four or five who have to complete a series of tasks of a particular topic (Elboj 152; Ferrer 66-67). Each task has a limited time (this changes according to students' age) and when time is finished they move to another one (Elboj 150; Ferrer 66-67). Every task is monitored by an adult —other teachers, families, cultural associations' members, university students, retired people, etc.— (Elboj 150; Ferrer 66-67). Adults volunteer within the classroom in coordination with the teacher (Flecha and Larena 62; Elboj 150; Ferrer 64). Their role is to foster interactions among students according with the principles of dialogic learning. Dialogism promotes student learning in general, as it does not depend on prior knowledge but on interactions with all educational participants (INCLUD-ED Consortium 57). Similarly, interactions foster solidarity and peaceful coexistence among participating cultures (INCLUD-ED Consortium 58; Oliver and Gatt 289).

As for the teacher, his/her role is to prepare the tasks, to coordinate with other participating adults, to control the time and offer support to adults and the students' group itself whenever necessary.

With respect to students with special educational needs, the presence of the specialist teacher in the classroom improves student self-esteem and performance as well as skills' development and social ties with the rest of the classmates (INCLUD-ED Consortium 60). Equally, students without special educational needs benefit from a variety of resources and learning strategies introduced in the classroom and, at the same time, they learn responsibility, encouraging a positive attitude towards people with any disability (INCLUD-ED Consortium 59)

According to Serrano *et al.* (196-197), *dialogic reading* is an enriching, broadening and literary gathering in which people read, examine and debate about classic works of literature. The author states that classic works are chosen because of two concrete reasons:

1) they are about eternal topics (love, gender discrimination, cultural coexistence...) which guarantee that any person has a close perception of the themes and can relate the reading to their own experience

2) they can be comprehended by everyone, no matter their social background.

At the school, the gathering is opened not only to the class students and teachers but also to family members and volunteers. Diversity within the class is a key component to approach to a particular aspects or topic from a more diverse number of angles (Serrano *et al* 199)

First of all, the gathering participants have to reach a consensus on which book they will read and debate in the following sessions. In this way, each participant proposes a book, stating the reasons why it should be read. According to those arguments, the participants see eye to eye about which book to read (Serrano *et al* 196). Next, the group members decide how many pages they will read at home. Once at their places, they will underline the paragraph(s) that they would like to highlight for some reason (Valls *et al* 80).

In the following session, they read and justify the already mentioned paragraph(s). As soon as one person presents his or her paragraph, others take turns to discuss different views on that particular piece of text; always bearing in mind the principle of egalitarian dialogue as a premise to interact (Valls *et al.* 80; Serrano *et al.* 197). Therefore, to collectively construct knowledge it is noteworthy that reasonable arguments and willingness to agree are above any form of power. This type of dialogue fosters participants' motivation and burning desire to learn academic contents—which leads them to use information and communication technologies—; knowledge that will be later shared with others members and consequently multiplied (Valls *et al* 80). Moreover, group members extend their vocabulary, learn how to decipher the meaning of words or sentences by paying attention to the book's context, have a wider knowledge of words, improve their command of the language, reason better, perfect their skills when it comes to organizing, presenting and defending their opinions, and incorporate the book's content and historical knowledge (Serrano *et al* 198-202).

On the same note, these gatherings usually lead to the creation of different groups interested in finding further information on some topics that arise from the readings, or simply to develop a deeper analysis of society concerning their discussions. In addition, some of the members have taken up or continued with courses to satisfy their curiosity (Serrano *et al* 200). But the skills acquired in this educational practice do not remain in the academic contexts; participants put them into practice in their private lives requiring dialogue and consensus in any decision made and consequently making social transformation possible (Serrano *et al* 201).

· *Tutored libraries and digital rooms*: They allow for flexibility, making use of those spaces at the education centre that remain closed after school-hours in order to promote interactions among students, family members and volunteers.

Tutored libraries are already a reality among many centres of education, with adults and children belonging to the community reading and commenting on books together. They also help students to find information about reference works or to use computers to do work, write summaries and literary criticisms about their reading, and prepare

performances on the books and stories they read. There is even, a room to perform theatre in the same library. (Valls *et al.* 84)

On the other hand,

Digital rooms transform themselves into what is called “tutored digital rooms”, where heterogeneous groups made up of students, family, monitors and volunteers use computer programs to improve reading and writing skills. (Valls *et al.* 84)



## CONTEXTUALIZATION

This chapter deals with evolution of both Bilingual and Learning Communities Schools in Spain, specifically in Primary Education.

### *Bilingual Education*

#### THE PATH ADOPTED BY THE BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN SPAIN

In Primary Education, the learning of foreign languages was not contemplated until the entry into force of the Law 14/1970, 4 August, of General Education and Financing of Educational Reform. For the first time specialist teachers were contracted to teach Foreign Languages; to be more precise, English or French, with French being promoted more than English. Very basic initial training was followed by specific training courses sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Science (Junta de Andalucía 15).

By 1978, the different regions of Spain were gradually acquiring competency in the area of Education following changes in the Spanish Constitution (Junta de Andalucía 15). Subsequently, the Royal Decree 942/1986, 9 May, gave schools the green light on extending educational experiences and, the Order 29th of April of 1996, authorized them to teach a foreign language in the second cycle of Nursery Education (Junta de Andalucía 15-16). All these advances in the field of linguistics led to the design of several language training programmes by the Autonomous Communities (Junta de Andalucía, 2004:16). The emergence of bilingual programmes began in 1996 when the Ministry of Education and Science and the British Council signed a partnership agreement for the Bilingual Education Plan which covered Nursery, Primary and —compulsory— Secondary Education. This Plan was adopted in the regions of Aragon, Asturias, Baleares, Castile Leon, Castile La Mancha, Cantabria, Extremadura, Madrid, Murcia, Navarra and Ceuta and Melilla autonomous cities (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte *n.pag.*). Taking into account the agreement on a general basis, each region designed its own bilingual programme (Consejo Escolar de la Comunidad de Madrid 17-168).

On April 18, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport renewed the collaboration agreement with the British Council to continue with the promotion of teacher training in Bilingual Centres and research in language teaching (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte *n.pag.*).

With regard to other regions, bilingual programmes were developed as follows:

- Catalonia. In 2007 the government of Catalonia launched a Multilingual Project to promote third languages. This is being developed in 2007-2015 Plan. The aim of this plan is that students who complete compulsory secondary education have a mastery of Spanish and Catalan and are able to have a fluent conversation in a third language. At the end of high school students are expected to communicate and learn in a third language (Consejo Escolar de la Comunidad de Madrid 113)
- The Community of Valencia. It has three different programmes. The first one started in 2008; it is known as *Multilingual Education Programme* with the aim of approaching the English language in the second cycle of Nursery Education. The second programme, called *Enriched Bilingual Education Programme*, began in 1998 in order to promote the coexistence of three languages —two official and a foreign language— in Primary Education. The last one was named *Multilingual Programme* and it was launched in 2009 to boost the use of a vehicular foreign language (French or English) in Secondary and Vocational Education. (Consejo Escolar de la Comunidad de Madrid 159)
- In Galicia, the Bilingual Sections Programme started in 2007. This programme unifies language experimental plans that had been carried out previously in this community. It began in 2006 in Primary Education and was formerly adopted in Secondary Education, compulsory Secondary Education and Vocational Education. Bilingualism can be Spanish-Foreign language or Galician-Foreign language at schools (Consejo Escolar de la Comunidad de Madrid 129-130).
- In the Basque Country, an experimental process was established in 2010 in the form of trilingual education for the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Primary and/or the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Compulsory Secondary Education. The number of hours devoted to teaching the different languages (Spanish, Basque and a foreign language) in Primary Education is five while in Secondary it is six. Other programmes had been developed previously (Gobierno Vasco 11-19).
- The Spanish-English bilingual section started in 2004 in the Canary Islands. The programme is adopted in Primary and Secondary Education. In both cases, the teaching of a non-linguistic subject in English is one hour per week (Consejo Escolar de la Comunidad de Madrid 85-86).
- In La Rioja 2 programmes coexist. Centres can choose to adopt one or another but not both. The first one, the Linguistic Innovation Project, started in 2004. It is for pre-university levels and it contemplates two systems: a) non-linguistic teachers use day-to-day expressions within the classroom; b) teachers use a foreign language to teach non-linguistic subjects.
- The second programme is known as *Bilingual Sections*. It was launched in 2008 with the aim that students begin (Primary Education) and complete (High Secondary Education and Vocational Education) by studying at least two non-linguistic subjects in a foreign language (Consejo Escolar de la Comunidad de Madrid 134-138).

## IMPLEMENTATION IN ANDALUSIA

In Andalusia the application of bilingual sections started on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1998, the date on which the Protocol of Cooperation was signed, for the application and development of Spanish-French bilingual services, between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Andalusian Region and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the French Republic. (Junta de Andalucía 20). In the light of the positive outcomes, on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2000, the Ministry of Education and Science for the region of Andalusia signed a Protocol of Cooperation with the General Consul of the Federal Republic of German and the director of the Goethe Institut for the application and development of Spanish-German bilingual schools (Junta de Andalucía 20).

By 2005, the Plan for the Promotion of Multilingualism was launched in the Andalusian Region, including this time the Spanish-English bilingual section (Junta de Andalucía 13). Despite the late incorporation of English in the bilingual programme, according to data published on the web link Averroes in association with the Ministry of Education for Andalusia, the number of Spanish-English bilingual schools exceeds the rest by far (Averroes n. pag.).

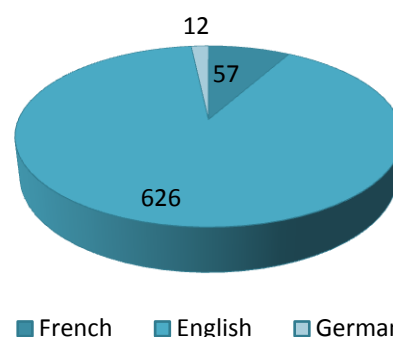


Figure 1 Bilingual Primary Schools in Andalusia

### ***Learning Communities***

The origin of this project is to be found in the experience of the adult centre of education in Verneda-Sant Martí, Barcelona. Moreover, this project draws on other SEAs in Infant and Primary Education, among others: School Development Program, Yale University, Accelerated Schools, Stanford University, and Success for All, University Johns Hopkins (Flecha and Larena 37; Castro *et al.* 41; Elboj 78; Racionero and Serradell 30-31; Flecha and Puigvert 13-14; Jaussi and Luna 41)

#### “LA VERNEDA-SANT MARTÍ” ADULT EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

This adult educational centre located in La Verneda-Sant Martí (Barcelona), is considered to be the pedagogical model and initiator of Learning Communities'. This community began in 1978 in a working class neighbourhood of Barcelona (Flecha and Larena 38; Racionero and Serradell 31; Flecha and Puigvert 13). Its population is largely made up of national immigrants but international

immigration continues to rise; especially from those coming from North Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe (Elboj 80).

Pedagogical and organizational bases that define the identity of this centre are derived from the theory proposed by Paulo Freire. This practice helps to develop a democratic, participatory, pluralistic, free . . . centre (Flecha and Puigvert 14; García and Rué 78) with egalitarian dialogic learning and community participation considered as Project objectives (Elboj 80).

The educational success and implementation of egalitarian dialogic learning led, among others, to what is known as Learning Communities (Elboj 80-81). The confirmation of this success is shown by its more than 30 years of existence, and the increasing number of people enrolled in the various activities, together with its recognition by the international scientific community (Sánchez n. pag.).

In the same way (Flecha and Larena 39; Elboj 82; Racionero and Serradell 32), it is important to point out that working bodies exist to guarantee egalitarian dialogue with representatives from different social groups (teachers, volunteers, administration staff, neighbourhood organizations) which participate democratically.

In all, there are four involved social groups: the Asamblea General, the Consejo de Centro, the Comisión Mensual and the Coordinación Semanal (Flecha and Larena 39). There are two associations, HEURA (a women's association) and AGORA (members association), present in all working bodies. They are responsible for ensuring egalitarian dialogue and for implementing the decisions taken by the community (Flecha and Larena 39; Elboj 82).

What is more, there are assessment mechanisms that comprise all the centre's activities which help to identify deficiencies and new needs, thus allowing for reorientation in educational practice (Elboj 82). This centre is therefore a dynamic entity, constantly evolving, and always ready to meet society's needs for information.

## THE PATH ADOPTED BY THE LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN ANDALUSIA

For the first time, in 1995, four public kindergarten and Primary Schools located in the Basque Country were approached by CREA. In the Orden de 8 de septiembre de 1997 (Orden de 8 de septiembre de 1997), the regional government authorized the transformation of these schools into learning communities; the initial period being from 1997/1998 to 1999/2000, inclusive (Valls 278).

Many others joined the initiative as well. So CREA decided to create a network of consultants and advisors, with broad scientific knowledge of the scientific basis of the project, to meet the schools demands. Currently, CREA's website is recognised by groups of advisors in

different regions. To be more specific: Aragon, Cantabria, Castile-La Mancha, Castile-León, Catalonia, Extremadura, Madrid, Navarra, Basque Country, Valencian Community (Red de asesores n. pag.).

Of all these, only three are controlled by the regional administration: Basque Country (Orden de 8 de septiembre de 1997), Aragon (Orden de 15 de febrero de 2003) and Andalusia (BOJA 2012). In Catalonia, although there is no legislative regulation, the Learning Community Project is included within *plans estratègics* of the Department of Education of the Catalunya Generalitat (Flecha *et al.*)

Focusing on the case of Andalusia, it is necessary to mention that although this project is governed by the Orden 8 de junio, 2012, various schools have been functioning as Learning Communities before this law was put into force. Schools' interest in Learning Communities is growing stronger every academic year, proof of which is found in the number of centres denied access to become Learning Communities in the aforementioned resolutions (Resolución de 4 de junio de 2013; Resolución de 8 de Octubre de 2012).

Similarly, the support of the institutions concerned is increasing and that is the reason why it was created the Andalusian Sub-Network of Learning Communities (SAUCA) in May 2013. This collective offers the necessary support to centres that already belong to or are interested in becoming a Learning Community (Medina n. pag.).

## STATE OF THE ART

According to the first results recently published by INCLUDE-ED' (INCLUD-ED Consortium), the late regulation of Learning Communities Project in Andalusia (Orden 8 de junio de 2012), the small number of countries in which this Project is developed —Spain, Chile y Brazil— (Garrido 84) and the very few number of schools in which this Project coexists with the Plan for the Promotion of the Bilingualism, there is no previous research in the Andalusian region which undertakes and considers both projects together. Likewise, little research has being done in other geographical contexts.

There is only one research publication which considers some aspects of both projects together, authored by Borja Garrido (2012) and titled “Making communication happen: Interactive groups in the bilingual classroom” (Garrido 81-92; Dobson *et alt.* 127-158).

Garrido studies the impact on students’ communication skills and attitudes when using Interactive Groups for teaching English as a foreign language in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education of a bilingual school located in the Autonomous Community of Madrid. The study focuses on a group of 25 students who have been enrolled in bilingual education since the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Primary Education. Diversity is a reality within the classroom (outcast students, fast/slow learners, immigrants/nationals, non-special needs/special needs, timid/outgoing...). Data was collected by means of: a teaching journal; questionnaires for students, volunteers and teachers; interviews and registration and comparison of students’ participation in both regular sessions and Interactive Groups sessions with the aim to compare them. The investigation's conclusion indicates that Interactive Groups make all students speak longer and show willingness to participate and interact meaningfully. Consequently, they learn faster and, as their self-esteem increases, a positive attitude is created.

Although there is no specific research on the use of SEAs in the English area, it is possible to know that it is being applied thanks to the following informative articles:

- R. M. Píriz describes in “Una experiencia de grupos interactivos en un centro de secundaria” This article describes the experience of a public high school in Madrid which, despite not being part of the Learning Community Project, develops interactive group practices in various subjects; including English in first and second year of Compulsory Secondary Education. Throughout the article, Píriz emphasizes the work that is involved when putting into practice interactive groups, finishing with a qualitative based assessment detailing the learning community’s opinion of it.

- L. Puigvert and I. Santacruz highlight those aspects of the Learning Community Project that encourage social agents' democratic participation in the school in "La transformación de centros educativos en comunidades de aprendizaje. Calidad para todas y todos" . Interactive groups are a clear example of that. In this case, an English teacher realizes how this classroom organization helps to eliminate racial prejudice and decides to start the educational practice with a veiled mother and a Colombian mother who lived in Miami. Both had knowledge of the language.
- Juana Martín, the headmistress of CEIP Cruz Blanca in Aznalcóllar (Seville), sets out, in the article "La colaboración y transformación familiar en comunidades de aprendizaje. Un sueño conseguido", the process of development and transformation of this school since it became a Learning Community, detailing the strengths and weaknesses of the project as well as the educational practices developed. It is worth mentioning that the author confirms the use of interactive groups and literary circles in the English area, both Primary Education and kindergarten.
- Aurora Moreno, the headmistress of CEIP Mosaico de Santiponce (Seville), explains in the article "Grupos Interactivos en la Comunidad de Aprendizaje Mosaico de Santiponce" what interactive groups are, the results obtained and how to achieve effective participation of volunteers. At the same time, the importance of the evaluation process in education is noted. As in the previous informative articles, it is stated that the English language is positively taught through interactive groups
- In the article "Grupos interactivos en el CEIP Adriano del Valle", Candelaria Peña —the director of studies of this Sevillian center— emphasizes the open character of the school and underlines the collaborative relationships that are established, both outside in (volunteers, researchers) and inside out (training for other centres). Nevertheless, the article mostly focuses on how literary circles and interactive group sessions are developed. Once again, it should be noted that these practices are also developed in the English area.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### *Objectives and research questions*

This research project has several purposes. Firstly, it aims to check if the statements of universality and transferability about Learning Communities, which are assumed to be true, take place in Andalusian Bilingual Schools. Secondly, it intends to see whether or not the Plan for Promotion of the Multilingualism and the Learning Communities Project complement each other. A further objective would be to make use of the results achieved in this study to offer a number of pedagogical actions that guarantee high quality education to all students.

In order to accomplish the above mentioned purposes, the following specific objectives have been established:

- a) To determine which educational actions are being employed in subjects taught in English (linguistic or non linguistic)
- b) To detect difficulties arising in the Learning Communities so as to take advantage of the application of these successful educational actions in the learning of English both in linguistic and non linguistic areas
- c) To evaluate to what degree Learning Communities successful educational actions used in educational centres add to the objectives set by the bilingual programme the PFM
- d) To analyse the time devoted by the teacher to practising with oral and written skills in the bilingual class (linguistic and non linguistic areas)
- e) To analyse the perceptions of teachers in the bilingual section on the general and communicative competences of the students in linguistic and non linguistic areas

### *Participants*

As mentioned in the introduction there are just four schools in Andalusia in which the already mentioned Plan and Project coexist. However, in order to reduce to a minimum the chances of getting a distorted picture of the coexistence of the PPM and the Learning Community Project, this study is going to be adopted, only in those schools whose coexistence is equal or higher than two academic courses. That is the reason why, CEIP Virgen de las Cruces, CEIP Coca de la Piñera and CEIP Marín Ocete are not included in the investigation. In the conversations held with the headmasters of these schools, they informed that this Project had only recently been approved and



educational actions within the Learning Communities Project had only been adopted in the non-linguistic areas taught in Spanish.

Therefore, there is only one school which actually meet these criteria: CEIP Cruz Blanca. It became a Learning Community centre in 2006. By that time, the Andalusian Region had not regulated the project yet. On the other hand, it started as a Bilingual Centre in 2009. Consequently, this pioneering school perfectly meets the requirements for the study stated above. Considering the starting year of each plan, it is crystal clear that inclusive pedagogical actions arising from Learning Communities have been implemented in the English subject from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> year of PE. As for the non-linguistic subjects, they have only been implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> until 4<sup>th</sup> of PE. Therefore, with the intention to assure that there is not any interference in questionnaires' results because of the use of non-inclusive pedagogical practices adopted, this study tracks the academic year 2012/2013 representing data related to students who studied English in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education and students who studied non-linguistic subjects in English from 1<sup>st</sup> until 4<sup>th</sup> year of PE.

Regarding the teachers, this study considers the information provided by Bilingual Section teachers, teaching either a linguistic or a non-linguistic subject in English. Particularly, they teach Sciences and Arts in English apart from English itself. The school's English department is composed of three teachers. One that teaches English in all Primary Education, the other one Sciences and Arts in the first cycle and the other one Sciences and Arts in the second cycle. Nowadays, the English specialist is the only one that remains in this school, the others are working in a different one. Fortunately, the headmistress of the school puts the author of this Master's Thesis in contact with one of them that kindly accepted to participate in the investigation. As for the other one, neither the headmistress nor the English specialist has her contact details.

Focusing on teachers' profile, there is a great difference between the English specialist and the non-linguistic specialist in all areas except *language*. Teacher\_1 —the English specialist— is considerably older than Teacher\_2 —the non-linguistic areas specialist— and that has allow Teacher\_1 to be working for a much longer period of time and consequently its knowledge about the bilingual program, the learning communities and the school itself is way broader than Teacher\_2. The same occurs when it comes to training. Teacher\_1 has received more and much varied formation than Teacher\_2, which probably explains each one's attitude towards the use of training when interviewed. Contrary to Teacher\_2, Teacher\_1 highly values the training received and finds it purposeful and fruitful. At this point, it is noticeable to mention that Teacher\_2 has not received training regarding Learning Communities. Learning Communities' regulation (Orden 8 de junio de 2012) specifically states that teachers should receive previous training so as to recognize as a

Learning Community by the Andalusian Government. However, nothing is said about teachers' mobility and substitutions. Let us see look at one each of these parameters in details:

Table 4 CEIP Cruz Blanca teacher's profile

| TEACHER'S PROFILE     |                                 | TEACHER_1   | TEACHER_2   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Gender</b>         |                                 | Woman   | Woman   |
| <b>Age</b>            |                                 | 33  | 24  |
| <b>Years</b>          | of teaching career              | 8   | 2   |
|                       | working at Cruz Blanca          | 5   | 1   |
|                       | in a bilingual section          | 5   | 2   |
| <b>Language</b>       | Level                           | B2  | B2  |
|                       | Certified                       | Yes   | Yes   |
|                       | Type                            | Official Language School  | Official Language School  |
| <b>Specialization</b> | Foreign language                | Yes   | No  |
|                       | Non-linguistic subject in L2    | No  | Yes   |
|                       | Type                            | -   | Primary Education   |
|                       | State entry exam                | English   | English   |
|                       | Bilingualism                    | Yes   | Yes   |
| <b>Training</b>       | Type                            | Online courses and organised by the county Teaching Centre. She also participated as speaker  | Pluriilingualism course   |
|                       | Useful                          | Yes   | No  |
|                       | Reason(s)                       | Useful when coordinating and enforcing the Project. As well as achieving its objectives   | Inconsistency between the Bilingual Programme and the reality within the school. A large number of interpretations by the competent authorities |
|                       | Learning Communities            | Yes   | No  |
|                       | Type                            | In the school, at a national and provincial level. On occasions, she has participated as speaker  | -   |
|                       | Useful                          | Yes   | -   |
|                       | Reason(s)                       | It has been useful for working in a LC, for meeting experts in the field and for giving access to a number of references that allow for independent learning. | -   |
|                       | <b>Completed questionnaires</b> | English / 1 <sup>st</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Science and Art / 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup>  |

Finally, to get an overall view of this school’s characteristics and to better comprehend the questionnaires’ results, it is advisable to comment on students and families’ profile. Their socioeconomic and cultural background is medium or low. Students’ habits, learning pace and, interests and motivation among others are diverse.

### ***Guiding principles on this research***

Table 5 Research Project Key Characteristics

| <b>RESEARCH PROJECT KEY CHARACTERISTICS</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Outlines or Boundaries</b>               | a) Bilingual Programme as conceived in Andalusia; b) Primary Education; c) Learning Community School as defined by CREA; and d) linguistic and non-linguistic areas taught in English. |
| <b>Design frame</b>                         | A case study   |
| <b>Type of Case Study</b>                   | Evaluative<br>Educational  |
| <b>Origin (beginning point)</b>             | Instrumental   |
| <b>Approach</b>                             | Analytic   |
| <b>Type among analytic approaches</b>       | Analytic - Deductive   |
| <b>Data Typology</b>                        | Qualitative and quantitative   |

Obviously, the fact that there is just one school in which it is possible to implement the research strongly conditions the design frame chosen: a *case study*. According to Martyn Hammersley (qtd. in Thomas 115) and Cohen and Manion (qtd. in Nunan 77, qtd. in Bassey 30-31), you can opt for a small sample to give you an in-depth idea and then use its results to generalize on a greater scale. Despite other authors’ disagreement (Thomas 115), generalization in case studies is possible. However, like Robert E. Skate (qtd. in Nunan 75), this idea must be adopted within certain limits. In other words, the findings of this research can only be extended and extrapolated to schools which have the same key characteristics; what Skate calls *boundaries* or *outlines*. The boundaries of this study are: a) Bilingual Programme as conceived in Andalusia; b) Primary Education; c) Learning Community School as defined by CREA; and d) linguistic and non-linguistic areas taught in English.

Skate defines *validity* in terms of “accuracy and useful representation of the bounded system” (qtd. in Nunan 89). This entails that the present study could be carried out as well in those schools with the same common key elements. Nonetheless, my research is just a modest contribution that hopefully will trigger rigorous, deep and professional research sooner than later.

One of the main characteristics of case studies is that these are generally carried out by graduate students and/or teachers when doing research on a small scale (Nunan 88). Another reason why this design is suitable is because different tools can be employed and data gathering can be either qualitative or quantitative (Nunan 75; Thomas 105; qtd. in Bassey 26). Therefore it is possible to measure and manipulate figures that find their proper explanation or meaning thanks to the participants' answers or vice versa, statements that are confirmed by numeric results (Thomas 89-90).

This case study is defined by different authors (Nunan 76-78, Stake 86-87, Thomas 122) as *evaluative* because it assesses the existing connections between two relatively recent teaching programmes —the PPM and the Learning Community Project— and it sheds light on the pros and cons of the coexistence of both regarding the students' academic progress and the teachers' difficulties to effectively implement them. This case study is also *educational* because it enriches “the thinking and discourse of educators either by the development of educational theory or by refinement of prudence through the systematic and reflective documentation of evidence” (qtd. in Bassey 28). In addition, it can be said that this case study is *instrumental* as its set-up begins by a series of hypothesis or issues (see page 24) for which a bounded system (see page 25) is selected as an instance (Stake 16-17). According to Robert E. Stake (26-27), such issues create controversy. In his book *The Art of Case Study Research*, Stake exemplifies a question (an issue) that considers “the possibility that the teaching and the instruction are correctly planned and implemented” (27).

The fact that a case study is presented with a clear conceptual definition of its boundaries calls for an *analytic approach* since the learning of English as a second language is examined in relation with those specific outlines or parts (Seliger and Shohamy 56). Among all those boundaries, Learning Communities' successful educational actions stand out since this is the parameter that is going to tell researchers whether or not it helps to fulfil the objectives of the Plan for the Promotion of Multilingualism. That is to say, we understand the process as *an analytic-deductive* one. Seliger and Shohamy clearly exemplify it:

The process we have followed is analytic because we have broken down the synthesis of factors into constituent factors, and deductive because we have analyzed one of these as being most likely to be related to rate of acquisition. (59)

On the other hand, according to the scholars, the *degree of explicitness* is inextricably linked to the type of research. As this research is analytic-deductive, its degree is high because the procedures are “more explicit and structured and usually determined in advance” (156). Exactly, this study is mainly developed through structured questionnaires. On a second level, it also includes structured observations about the school's bilingual project. On the other hand, a lower level of

explicitness is found in structured interviews. Finally, there is a place for one of the lowest procedures of explicitness: conversations. They are considered fundamental because it is possible to find those connections among the different variables that have not been taken into account in strictly structured procedures. In order to facilitate the comprehension of these last lines, Seliger and Shohamy's table on the different degrees of explicitness is included:

Table 6 Examples of data collection procedures typical of research types

| Low explicitness<br>← Heuristic |                                | High explicitness<br>Deductive → |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Diaries                         |                                | Metalinguistic tests             |
| Record reviews                  |                                |                                  |
| Journals                        | Structured interviews          | Grammatical judgments            |
| Letters                         |                                |                                  |
| Unstructured interviews         | Semi-structured questionnaires | Structured questionnaires        |
| Conversations                   |                                | Structured observations          |
| Open observations               |                                | Discrete point tests             |

Seliger and Shohamy 159

In a research, *validity* is as important as the degree of explicitness. Although this term has slightly been covered, let us deeply deal with it below. As maintained by Seliger and Shohamy (95), there are two types of validity, *internal* and *external*. The experts affirm that results can be considered intrinsically useless due to the fact that they have been altered by circumstances different from those considered to have created them, or because the readings of the information by the experimenter are not positively sustainable. These authors detail that internal validity will vary according to six factors: 1) *subject variability*; 2) *size of subject population*; 3) *time allotted for data collection or the experimental treatment*; 4) *comparability of subjects* 5) *history, attrition, and maturation*; and 6) *instrument/task sensitivity*. Let us see how each one has been taken into account in this research project:

- As for the first one, *subjects*, Seliger and Shohamy state that “the population used in the research is representative of the general population to which the research would apply” (96). This investigation constitutes 25% of the total population. At this time, it would be appropriate to remind that there are just four schools in Andalusia that meet this study's requirements (see *boundaries* on page 34 and *participants* on page 30 for further information). Moreover, subjects have not been chosen randomly. In fact, criteria used is extremely connected with the

fact that this case study is analytic-deductive, that is to say, students in each chosen course started and continued along Primary Education learning English or content through English in a specific way: through successful educational actions.

- With respect to the second, *size of the population*, Seliger and Shohamy point out that in an analytic-deductive study “the problem can be controlled to a large extent by increasing the size of the sample population so that it is more representative of the population as a whole” (98). In line with this statement and what have been stated above, this study by including 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education given that the Plan for the Promotion of the Multilingualism was implemented for the first time in 2009 and the Learning Community Project in 2006, before it was ruled by the Andalusian Government.
- With reference to the third, *time allotted for data collection or the experimental treatment*, the authors of the book *Second Language Research Methods* highlight that the difficulty lies in “deciding when enough time has elapsed for collecting a valid simple of data or for a treatment to have an effect” (Seliger and Shohamy 101). It is possible to see students’ progress over time by comparing results from 2<sup>nd</sup> year to 4<sup>th</sup>. It is certainly true that a specific group of students have not been tracked for a long period of time but, looking at the bright side, teachers and context are the same. Besides, the fact that the results of three academic years are available actually provides a clear idea of the outcomes which are predictable in the future.
- As for the fourth, *comparability of subjects*, Seliger and Shohamy do not give a straightforward explanation of the concept. Anyway, it is an aspect that has to be taken into consideration when designing two groups of population whose results will be compared in the future (97). Such an element has nothing to do with this research project since it does not contrast groups of students.
- Concerning the fifth, *history* “refers to the possible negative effects of the passage of time on the study . . . In a foreign language context, where there is little input outside the classroom, the effect of outside sources of input are more easily accounted for” (Seliger and Shohamy 101). This particular aspect has not been fully contemplated because attention has been focused on after school activities that take place within the school or that are monitored by school volunteers (see section *B.I.* of the questionnaire on page 45). Certainly, this is a weakness of the present study since it does not gather information regarding if students are registered in an English course offered by other institutions, watch cartoons in English, read for pleasure in the foreign language, reinforce the school learning through ICTs at home, go to English camps, and a long etcetera. After having covered the concept *history*, let us concentrate on the following term: *attrition*. According to Seliger and Shohamy, in studies that are carried out for

a long period of time “subjects may lose interest and drop out of the study or be ill on days when periodic data collection is conducted” (101). This research does not suffer from that because it only measures teachers’ professional perceptions at a given moment. Moving on to *maturation* they state that “we know that children’s language acquisition is affected by changes taking place in cognitive development, so that language development which is tracked over a longer period is bound to be affected by other factors, such as increased short-term memory capability” (qtd. in Seliger and Shohamy 101). Teachers have experienced students’ development for a complete academic school year; that means they have a broad and detailed knowledge of the class as a group and they have enough food for thought so as to balance students’ performance. Anyway, it is necessary to mention one more time that students are not tested about how long it takes them to complete a task or how accurately they perform it. Consequently, it can be said that maturation is not an issue in this investigation.

- As to the sixth, *instrument/task sensitivity*, Seliger and Shohamy specifically warn that they will employ the terms *instrument* and *task* “to refer to any tool employed by the researcher to obtain information on the status of the subjects *before* the research commences” (Seliger and Shohamy 102). Given that this study does not test students at any point, instrument/task sensitivity does not entail difficulties.

On the other hand, Seliger and Shohamy state that a study may be extrinsically useless because the results cannot be amplified or related to situations other than those in which the experiment was carried out (95). Exactly, they point out that there are seven factors which affect external validity: 1) *population characteristics*; 2) *interaction of subject selection and research*; 3) *the descriptive explicitness of the independent variable*; 4) *the effect of the research environment*; 5) *researcher or experimenter effects*; 6) *data collection methodology*; and 7) *the effect of time* (106).

- Concerning *population characteristics*, Seliger and Shohamy state that they “are concerned with the degree to which the sample population to which the sample population in the study has the same characteristics as the population to which the research findings are to be applied” (107). In this research, the target population are children registered in Primary Education and results will only be applicable to learners with same range of age under the already mentioned learning setting (see *boundaries* on page 34 for further information).
- With respect to *interaction of subject selection and research*, the scholars are particularly sensitive to find the right number of subjects or to the fact that volunteers can be paid, among others. Volunteers in this study do not receive any salary and the number of subjects is determined by the circumstances specified in the previous sections.



- As for *the descriptive explicitness of the independent variable*, the experts quote in *Second Language Research Methods* that:

in order for research findings to be either replicated or generalized to a broader population, the independent variable must be described as explicitly as possible. If the independent variable is a language teaching method, for example, not only must the components of the method be described, but also the conditions in which it was used, the characteristics of the teachers using it, and the size and nature of the classes. (107-108)

All those aspects have been already described in the *conceptual delimitation* section.

- On the subject of *the effect of the research environment*, Seliger and Shohamy express that the fact that the subjects of the investigation “are aware that they are participating in a study may affect them in ways that will make their behaviour different from a population not participating in a study” (108). Without a doubt, most people tend to change their practice or attitude slightly positively when they are aware of their participation into a research study. Participants in this study will not probably be an exception but that is the risk of any investigation conducted under certain ethic principles: first inform, second ask for permission and third feedback the outcomes or conclusions.
- As for *research or experimenter effects*, Seliger and Shohamy express that research has to be as careful with “the possible effect of something which the researcher does either during the actual research or during the interpretation of subject behavior, while collecting or evaluating data” (109). This study design and implementation has been developed very cautiously. An example of that can be found in the questionnaires designed (For further information please go to page 41). Another example can be found when addressing the participants for asking collaboration. They were informed that the reason why they were participating was because this study is aimed to diagnose how the bilingual program runs in conjunction with the Learning Community Project. The fact that what they are doing is innovative and successful was not mentioned.
- In relation with *data collection methodology*, the aforementioned scholars point out that it is important to bear in mind that “each method of data collection has underlying theoretical assumptions about the nature of data” (110). In this study, the tools have been chosen according to the time available (see *anticipated problems*, page 72) and to the reasons stated in *degree of explicitness* (page 35).
- As to *the effect of time*, Seliger and Shohamy “are concerned with the degree to which the time frame established by the research context can be extended to the real world to which the results of the research will be generalized” (110) When it comes to generalization, time is certainly a

key aspect and this project studies, without a doubt, a long term situation; exactly a nine month period of time at a school. On the same note, the project's *boundaries or outlines* (see page 34 for further information) should also be taken into account when extrapolating the outcomes.

In addition to what have been mentioned the previous lines, this research considers the criteria reported by schools teachers about the findings as a form of results' validation. Thus, multiple viewpoints are contemplated. This form of validation is called *triangulation theory* (qtd. in Stake 98) and takes place when two or more observers or researchers with different points of view interpret the same results of a specific question.

Finally, it is important to highlight that case studies, as in any other design frame, have their weaknesses (Bassey 34-35) and this research is not an exception. In order to strengthen the validity of this study, a wider variety of tools could have been used. In addition, this research should have been carried out in other schools with the same boundaries. It should have also been compared with others schools which are not bilingual or not learning communities so as to really confirm that combination of both teaching practices —PPM and the Learning Community Project— are positive. Retesting the study in different periods of time would also have been appropriate. The reasons why this study has not been done as said can be found in *anticipated problems* (see page 31).

## ***Tools***

In order to assess the real connections between the bilingual program and the learning community project, a straight forward set of data gathering instruments is proposed:

- A set of structured questionnaires.
- A structured interview for teachers which includes free speech time (conversation) at the end of it.

Let us briefly stop at each tool employed in relation with every objective:

- Objective **a)** demands strictly measurable answers which shall be provided through a questionnaire that asks for responses to closed questions.
- Objective **b)** stems from the need to find out the difficulties of specific schools' in order to be able to test the viability of running both programmes at the same time and/or to propose some alternatives that may help them to overcome bumps along the way. Therefore, measurable and explanatory answers are required. Both, a questionnaire and a structured interview will be used in order to achieve those answers.

- Objective **c)** calls for straightforward measurable and descriptive answers which shall be provided through the statistics obtained in a specific ranked questionnaire and the explanations given by the interviewees.
- Objective **d)** aims to see if the time designated to each skill is similar. In this case, recordings or personal observation would have been the best option but, due to anticipated problems, it has not been possible. Alternatively, teachers' will be inquired about their perceptions on this issue as done in the Andalusia Bilingual Centres Report (Lorenzo *et al.* 13).
- Finally, objective **e)** presents the same difficulties as the above one but this refers to students' competences. Despite the fact that the best option would have been a test, the pattern of the Andalusia Bilingual Centres Report (Lorenzo *et al.* 14-17) has been followed because of lack of time.

As you can be appreciated in the above mentioned tools, the researcher is an outsider since the investigation is going to be carried out without coming into the class. Data is gathered through a set of methods that do not require a firm interaction with the analyzed students and situation.

## TOOLS' DESIGN

- Questionnaires

On the following pages, an English version of the questionnaires that were handed out in Spanish to the school's teachers can be found. Their mother tongue was simply used in order to facilitate comprehension. Moreover, at the bottom of each one, there is a box that includes information about how they have been designed and which objective each of them measures. The questionnaires have been slightly modified and approved by a board of examiners composed by three experts of the University of Cordoba: one in Bilingualism, another one in Learning Communities and a third one in statistics.

Without a doubt, the most valuable aspects of this Master's Thesis are two: 1) to investigate an educational aspect that has never been studied before in the Andalusian Region, scarcely in Spain and never in the World; and 2) to provide the research community with a set of questionnaires that have been tested and that can be easily adapted to each regional bilingual programme. This investigation constitutes what is known as a *pilot study*. It serves the useful purpose to test a research instrument in a small sample, identify its weaknesses and provide with a better version of the original to later efficiently apply it to a large sample.

## TEACHER'S PROFILE

· Gender:  Female  Male

· Age: \_\_\_\_\_

· Years of teaching career: \_\_\_\_\_

· Years working at Cruz Blanca School: \_\_\_\_\_

· Years teaching in a bilingual section: \_\_\_\_\_

· Level of English:  A1  A2  B1  B2  C1  C2

*Certified:*  Yes  No

*Type:*  Cambridge  Trinity  TEFOL  EOI  Others: \_\_\_\_\_

· Do you teach English as a foreign language?:  Yes  No

· Do you teach a non-linguistic subject in English?:  Yes  No

*Specify:*  Music  P.E.  Arts  Sciences  Maths

· In which specialization did you pass the state entry exam? \_\_\_\_\_

· Training received:

▶ Bilingualism:  Yes  No

*Specify:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you think that training has been useful in your day to day life as a teacher?*  Yes  No

*Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Learning Communities:  Yes  No

*Specify:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you think that training has been useful in your day to day life as a teacher?*  Yes  No

*Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

· Completed questionnaires:

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

In order to design this questionnaire, the information found in Lorenzo *et al.* (7-9) has been taken as a reference. Specifically, the variables: age, gender, non-linguistic teachers teaching in L2, linguistic teachers teaching the L2, teachers' proficiency level of L2 and teaching experience. The last item has been expanded in order to obtain further information about the teacher career both in the PPM and the Learning Community Project.

Apart from these variables, other relevant items to the investigation have been included; such as *training received* in both plans —PPM and Learning Community Project— and the *completed questionnaires* in order to identify which questionnaires have been completed by each teacher. This tracking will help to pay the way for future detail analysis of the data.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of students: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of students with special needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark X in the appropriate box. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your school's students grouping and teaching practices. Complete a questionnaire for each subject and year. Thank you.

**1. Tick a cross the educational strategies carried out with the subject and course indicated.**

| SECTION A.1: STUDENTS GROUPING   | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| Curricular adaptations (adapting teaching method, not curricular level)  |     |    |
| Curricular adaptations (adapting the curricular level)   |     |    |
| Organising pupils into several educational itineraries (for example: students attend bilingual or non-bilingual classes according to their academic performance) |     |    |

| SECTION A.2:<br>STUDENTS GROUPING   | FRECUENCY |        |       |         |         |             | Sporadically* |
|---|-----------|--------|-------|---------|---------|-------------|---------------|
|   | Never     | Weekly |       |         |         |             |               |
|   |           | Once   | Twice | 3 times | 4 times | More than 4 |               |
| Heterogeneous ability groups with a higher number of human resources (teachers, families, volunteers...) within the classroom |           |        |       |         |         |             |               |
| Heterogeneous split classes coordinated by different teachers   |           |        |       |         |         |             |               |
| Extending the learning time (activities out of school hours)  |           |        |       |         |         |             |               |
| Homogeneous groups (the activities are organized according to the students' learning level)                                   |           |        |       |         |         |             |               |
| Giving extra help to pupils with difficulties outside the classroom (small groups)  |           |        |       |         |         |             |               |
| Others (Specify):<br>_____  |           |        |       |         |         |             |               |

\* **Sporadically** means once or more than once a month.

| SECTION B.1:<br>TEACHING PRACTICES                | LENGTH |                  |        |        |        |                  | WEEKLY FREQUENCY |       |                   |
|---|--------|------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------------|------------------|-------|-------------------|
|   | Never  | Less than a term | 1 term | 2 term | 3 term | More than 3 term | Once             | Twice | More than 2 times |
| English workshops                                 |        |                  |        |        |        |                  |                  |       |                   |
| English private tutoring                          |        |                  |        |        |        |                  |                  |       |                   |
| Other out-of-school activities. Specify:<br>_____ |        |                  |        |        |        |                  |                  |       |                   |

| SECTION B.2:<br>TEACHING PRACTICES                      | LANG UAGE |         | FRECUENCY |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
|---|-----------|---------|-----------|--------|-------|---------|---------|-------------------|---------------|
|   | English   | Spanish | Never     | Weekly |       |         |         |                   | Sporadically* |
|   |           |         |           | Once   | Twice | 3 times | 4 times | More than 4 times |               |
| Teacher explanation                                     |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Teacher ICT explanation                                 |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Students explain their work                             |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Group activity to understand the topic                  |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Interactive groups                                      |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Group work  |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Individual activities base on their student's books     |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| ICT individual activity                                 |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Dialogic reading  |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Tutored library   |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Complementary activities carried out outside the school |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |
| Others (specify): _____<br>_____                        |           |         |           |        |       |         |         |                   |               |

\* **Sporadically** means once or more than once a month.

This questionnaire gathers information related with objective **a**. Sections *A.1* and *A.2* tackle students grouping. The information found in column one has been taken from INCLUDED Consortium, pages 64-65. The item “inclusive choice”, at the bottom of page 65, has been omitted given that the application of this option is not available at a Primary Education level. In addition, some items have been slightly modified in order to avoid that respondents mark a specific item simply because it is written in way that is considered beneficial or positive. For example, it was decided to change the item *Inclusive Curricular Adaptations (adapting teaching method, not curricular level)* by

*Curricular Adaptations (adapting teaching method, not curricular level)*. Moreover, other items have been included to find out whether or not this school implements only SEAs that is the reason why the above mentioned curricular item —*Curricular Adaptations (adapting teaching method, not curricular level)*— has its non-inclusive opposite: *Curricular adaptations (adapting the curricular level)*.

As for sections *B.1* and *B.2*, they have been designed following my tutors' recommendations. Furthermore, it has been considered important to insert a column on *languages* to see if the use of English is greater or lower than Spanish in a bilingual setting.

**2. Identify the difficulties you have encountered to carry out Learning Communities actions in the specified year and subject:**

- Classroom arrangement *Specify (optional):* \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of material resources *Specify (optional):* \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of human resources *Specify (optional):* \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of training *Specify (optional):* \_\_\_\_\_
- The objectives stipulated in the bilingual programme come into conflict with those named by the Learning Communities *Specify (optional):* \_\_\_\_\_
- The Bilingual Programme characteristics make it difficult to carry out Learning Communities educational actions  
*Specify (optional):* \_\_\_\_\_
- Others  
*Specify (optional):* \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire measures objective **b**. The items specified are a result of a debate with my tutors and of my experience as: 1) a volunteer at CEIP Albolafia in Cordoba during the academic years 2011/2012 and 2012/2013; and 2) a tutor of two online training courses about Learning Community in which participants expressed their feelings and concerns about this project on a discussion board. These courses took place from January to February 2013.



**3. To value on a scale the degree of attainment of the following objectives of the Bilingual programme in relation with the application of the Learning Community Project in your school**

**3.1. From a linguistic point of view:**

| <b>THE STUDENT...</b>   | <b>Never</b> | <b>Hardly ever</b> | <b>Little</b> | <b>A little</b> | <b>Quite</b> | <b>A lot</b> |
|---|--------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| improves his/her competences in the mother tongue   |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| improves his/her competences in the second language   |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| improves his/her metalinguistic competences (establishing comparisons, transferring rules from one language to another) |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| improves his/her linguistic comprehension and production  |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| uses critical arguments   |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |

**3.2. From a cultural point of view:**

| <b>THE STUDENT...</b>  | <b>Never</b> | <b>Hardly ever</b> | <b>Little</b> | <b>A little</b> | <b>Quite</b> | <b>A lot</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| comes into contact with different cultural realities   |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| draws a parallel with his/her own environment  |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| is interested in knowing different cultures  |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| considers fundamental values such as freedom, tolerance, solidarity and respect for pluralism                    |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| is prepared for a future European citizenship, democratic, plural, modern and free of prejudices and stereotypes |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |

**3.3. From a cognitive point of view:**

| <b>THE STUDENT...</b>  | <b>Never</b> | <b>Hardly ever</b> | <b>Little</b> | <b>A little</b> | <b>Quite</b> | <b>A lot</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| increases his/her general learning abilities   |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |
| develops a great cognitive flexibility that favours the analysis and the observation of the mechanism used in their own learning process |              |                    |               |                 |              |              |

This questionnaire deals with objective **c**. In order to design it, it has been taken into account the specific objectives of the Bilingual Program within *The Plan for the Promotion of the Multilingualism*, pages 33-34.

Following my tutors' advice, the possibility of using a Likert scale has been dismissed in order to avoid the tendency to mark the middle option in a scale from 1 to 5. Therefore, a scale from 1 to 6 has been chosen since, contrary to a 1 to 4 scale, it offers a wider range of precision. Moreover, the linguistic objective, *third language competences improvement*, has been omitted given that this study is aimed at investigating students' learning on a second language and, on a second level, its connection with the students' mother tongue.

**4. Indicate approximately how often the pupils practice these skills:**

| SKILLS          | NEVER | SOMETIMES | QUITE | ALWAYS |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Reading in L2   |       |           |       |        |
| Writing in L2   |       |           |       |        |
| Listening in L2 |       |           |       |        |
| Speaking in L2  |       |           |       |        |

This questionnaire deals with objective **d**. The questionnaire found in *Bilingüismo y Educación. Situación de la Red de Centros Bilingües en Andalucía* (Lorenzo *et al.* 13) has been taken as a reference.

In this particular case, a scale 1 to 6 has been dismissed in order to make use of the scale values employed by Lorenzo *et al.*; as this will enable a more fruitful comparison.

**5. Indicate the degree of development of students' competences:**

| COMPETENCES                           | A LOT | QUITE A BIT | A LITTLE BIT | NOTHING |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------|---------|
| Knowledge of the world                |       |             |              |         |
| Intercultural abilities and practices |       |             |              |         |
| Motivation and positive attitudes     |       |             |              |         |
| Learning strategies                   |       |             |              |         |
| Linguistic                            |       |             |              |         |
| Pragmatic                             |       |             |              |         |
| Sociolinguistic                       |       |             |              |         |

This questionnaire is devoted to objective e. As in the above one, the same questionnaire has been used (Lorenzo *et al.* 14-17). Because of the small number of respondents, the scale's item *don't know* has been erased.

- Interview

The interview questions were designed following the order of the questionnaires. Once data from the questionnaires was gathered and a previous analysis was done, teachers were asked about those answers that did not follow a standard pattern, those that did not provide enough information to understand the situation within the classroom or those which were contradictory. Questions can be found in Chapter *appendix* (See page 87) and answers in Chapter *data analysis and results* (See pages 51-71).

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

First of all, the data gathered will be analysed in relation with each one of the objectives of this Master's Thesis. Next, a further analysis will be carried out.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To determine which educational actions are being employed in subjects taught in English (linguistic or non-linguistic)

According to data gathered, the following figure represent the percentage of practices that are —*YES*— or are not —*NO*— put into practice in the school; differentiating between those approved or refused by the international research community (INCLUDED-Consortium)

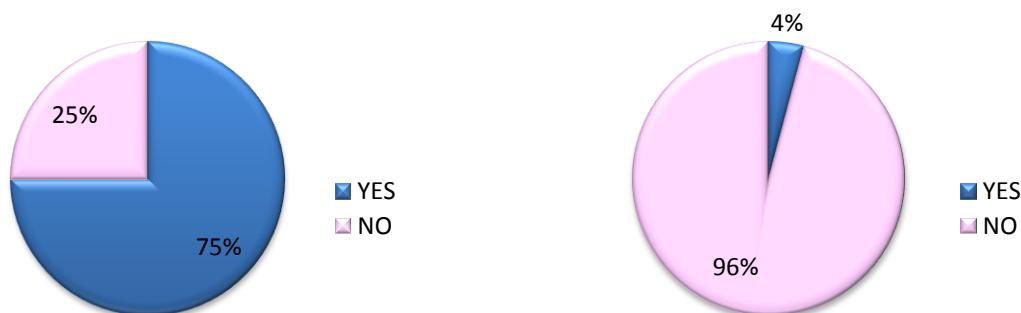


Figure 2 Educational practices approved by LCs

Figure 3 Educational practices refused by LCs

Not all pedagogical actions accepted by Learning Communities' researchers are fully implemented; nor is it mandatory to put them all into practice at once. In fact, it is a set of pedagogical actions that each school adopts in relation to its needs and its available material and human resources. However, non-pedagogical actions (Figure 3) should not be applied. As can be seen, they are implemented in a 4%, which is not a high figure if we take into account that this school formally became a LC in 2012 (Resolución 8 de octubre de 2012 39). Anyway, let us make a deeper analysis and see which type of actions reflect that 4% data and why.

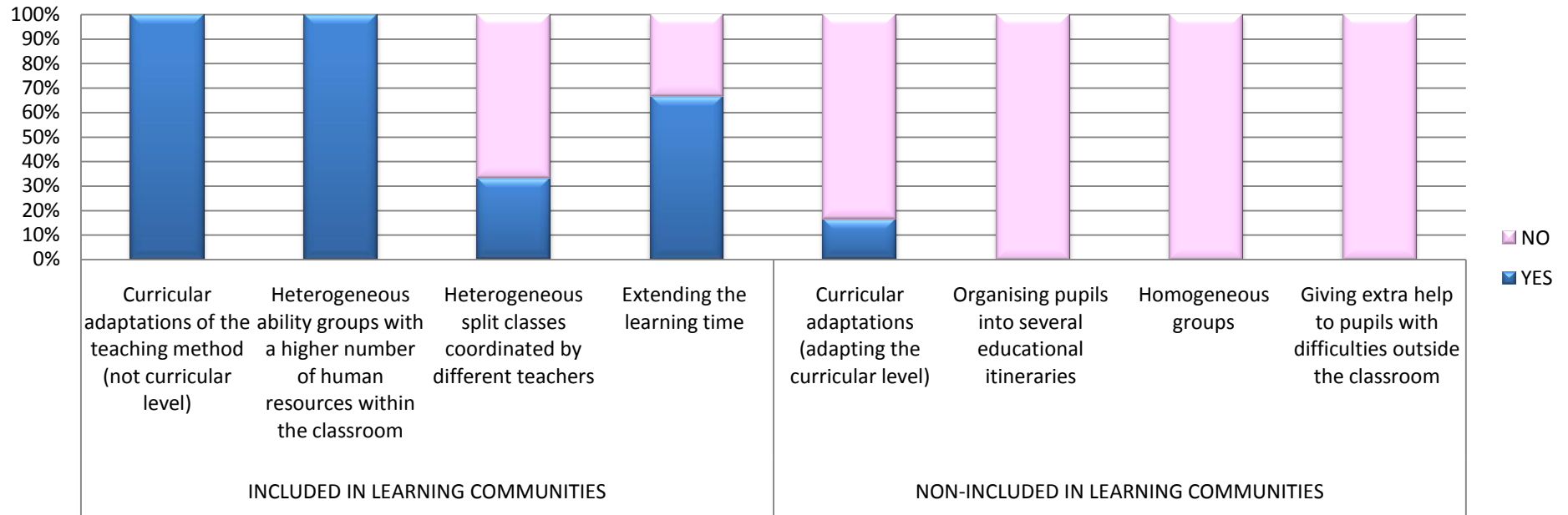


Figure 4 Educational actions implemented in subjects taught in English (English: 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>; Science: 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>; Art: 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>)

In contrast with the second education action in order, *Heterogeneous ability groups with a higher number of resources within the classroom*, in which human resources can be various (teachers, family members and other volunteers), the third educational action is limited to other bilingual teachers' availability. This may be the strongest reason why it is not as used as the others. A less probable reason could be due to the teacher's choice. This is unlikely given that teachers openly welcome other teachers and volunteers as shown in column which measures *Heterogeneous ability groups with a higher number of resources within the classroom*, as they know how positive it is to reduce the ratio per students and just how fruitful it is for students to approach the same contents from a different angle.

As for the second part of the figure, which refers to *NON-INCLUDED ACTIONS IN LEARNING COMMUNITIES*, this notes that teachers' bad habits are on the decrease when put into practice in educational actions that have been proven to fail. However, it is necessary to are on the decrease investigate, why a small percentage of these anti-pedagogical actions still take place in the school. In doing so, it is fundamental to contrast results coming from linguistic and non-linguistic subjects taught in English.

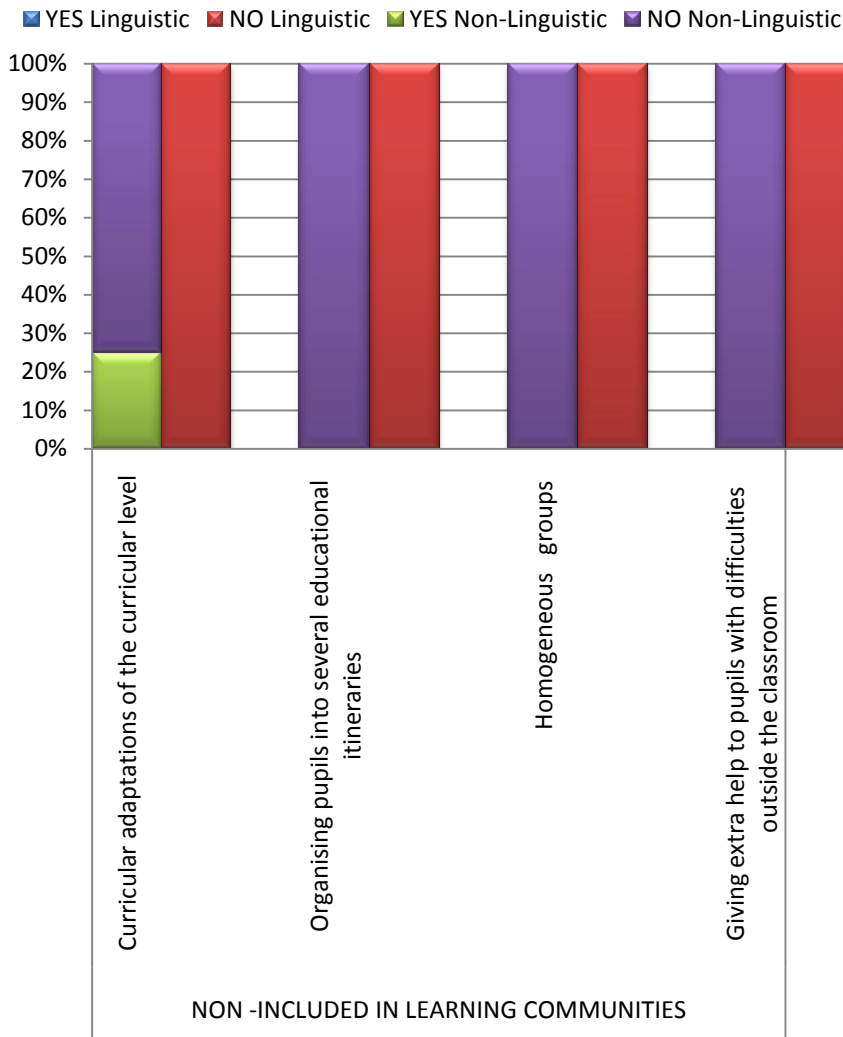


Figure 5 Educational actions employed in linguistic (English) and non-linguistic subjects (Science/Art) taught in English

Figure 5 on the left clearly identifies in which area anti-pedagogical actions are being carried out. As can be seen, in the linguistic subject, pedagogical actions refused by LC are not used. However, in the non-linguistic areas, *Curricular adaptations of the curricular level* takes place. Taking into account that this histogram represents data from 4 questionnaires in the case of non-linguistic area, we can draw the conclusion that 25% actually represents one of the four questionnaires provided. This figure is particularly alarming for a Learning Community school since that kind of actions reduce

students' expectations and have a negative impact on their sociability. Let us now see in detail in which year(s) and subject(s) this takes place, to be able to identify the reasons that have led to this situation.

Table 7 Type of grouping that favours inequalities and discrimination in non-linguistic areas

| SUBJECT:<br>YEAR:<br>Type of grouping                               | SCIENCE         |    |                 |    | ART             |    |                 |    |
|---|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|
|   | 1 <sup>st</sup> |    | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |    | 1 <sup>st</sup> |    | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |    |
|   | YES             | NO | YES             | NO | YES             | NO | YES             | NO |
| Curricular adaptations (adapting the curricular level)              |                 | X  | X               |    | X               |    | X               |    |
| Organising pupils into several educational itineraries              | X               |    |                 | X  | X               |    | X               |    |
| Homogeneous groups  | X               |    |                 | X  | X               |    | X               |    |
| Giving extra help to pupils with difficulties outside the classroom | X               |    |                 | X  | X               |    | X               |    |

As Table 7 illustrates, *Curricular adaptations of the curricular level* occurs in Science in 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Primary Education. According to the figures given by the teacher, in 2<sup>nd</sup> year, there are 25 students, four of them with special needs. Although questionnaires do not provide information about these students' particularities, further information was obtained about these students in the interview. One of them has reduced vision, another one who has a lower curricular level than students in his/her stage (*desfase de etapa*), a third one family problems and a fourth is gifted. The first two have a significant curricular adaptation and the third one has a non-significant curricular adaptation none of them in Science but in other subjects. The last one has a curricular adaptation. However it has not been designed by the specialist on special needs but rather by the non-linguistic teacher. This teacher enriches the curriculum of the gifted student by giving him/her extra resources. In my humble opinion, this gifted and consequently fast student should support their peers instead of increasingly making the curriculum divide greater.

Having said this, it is important to go back to the fact that the first two have a significant curricular adaptation. In accordance with objective one, "to determine which educational actions are being employed in subjects taught in English (linguistic or non-linguistic)", questionnaires fully achieve their purpose and they only obtain data related to those subjects. However, it would be good idea to contemplate educational practices in the school in its entirety, especially in order to know if educational actions refused by LC are put into practices in other subjects different from those taught in English.

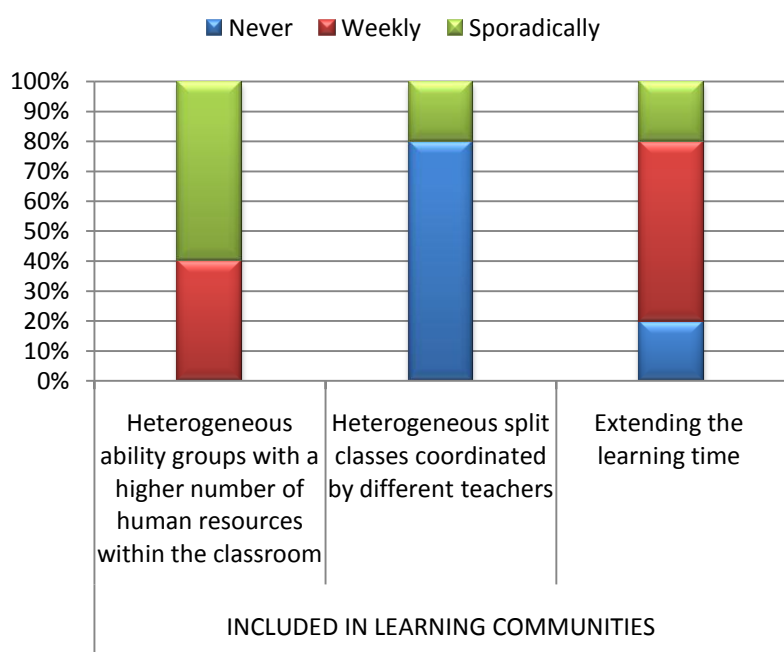


Figure 6 Frequency of successful educational actions

As for the actions *INCLUDED IN LEARNING COMMUNITIES*, only *Heterogeneous split classes coordinated by different teachers* and the difficulties to be found, have been tackled so far. Their frequency is visually reflected in the Figure 6 on the left.

Regarding *Extending the learning time*, percentages seem to be normal given that the activities carried out represent

80%, and that 60% of them take place on a weekly basis. The fact that most of them are carried out every week is remarkably positive and allows for a profound understanding and consolidation of knowledge.

On the other hand, percentages in *Heterogenous ability groups with a higher number of human resources within the classroom* are surprising, since 60% of these actions are carried out sporadically. As stated in previous pages, this action is one of the most fruitful, enriching and rewarding experiences in LC; particularly for the students and, in turn, beneficial for the school and the neighbourhood where the school is located. Therefore, the question is simple: why is this happening? Once again, the answer is provided by the interviews conducted with teachers. Teacher\_1 argues that regarding volunteers, priority is given to core subjects (English, Maths and Spanish). As for Teacher\_2, she suggests that it is very difficult to carry out this practice because the preparation of the activities requires time. She adds that two years ago she put into practice interactive groups more frequently whereas nowadays, because she is the English coordinator, the person in charge of the tutored library and the teacher of 9 classes it is nearly impossible to organise interactive groups more than once a week.

Next *Section* in the questionnaire is *B.1*. Results show that in after-school hours, members of the Learning Community do not monitor workshops in English and do not offer private tutoring in L2. When asked about this question in the interview, Teacher\_1 mentions that this school's strengths regarding LC are: interactive groups, dialogic readings and tutored libraries; all these activities performed during school hours.

Next *Section* in order is *B.2: TEACHING PRACTICES*. Of all items in this section, a differentiation between *teaching practices* in and out school hours have been done in order to see each language activity during those hours. Items on the list have been divided as follows:

Table 8 Teaching practices during and after school hours

| SCHOOL HOURS   | AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS |
|--|--------------------|
| Teacher explanation<br>Teacher ICT explanation<br>Students explain their work<br>Actividad de aula individual con recursos TIC<br>Group activity to understand the topic<br>Individual activities base on their student's books<br>Group activity to understand the topic<br>Interactive groups<br>Dialogic reading<br>Complementary activities carried out outside the school | Tutored library    |



Having defined each category, it is time to tackle the coexistence of languages in a figure.

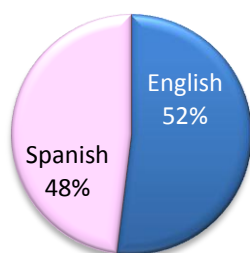


Figure 7 English and Spanish usage in school hours



Figure 8 English and Spanish usage in after-school hours

As can be seen in Figure 7 above, during *school hours*, *English* is slightly more used than *Spanish*. Specifically, there is a scarce difference of 2%. As times passes and thanks to the promotion of foreign languages through the Bilingual Programme, the English language will continue to moderately increase in classrooms. Expansion which is not limited to the time devoted to the target language subject since it also covers new fields of knowledge. As for activities implemented in *after-school hours*, activities carried out by volunteers are solely developed in Spanish. However, in the talks held with Teacher\_1, she assures that the school offers English classes which are not run by volunteers and obviously students have to pay for them.

As important as it is to know the time devoted to the target language it is to know who uses the language. Thus, items under the reference *school hours* (please see Table 9 on page 54) have been divided attending to the person who addresses the activity: *teachers*, *students* or *teacher*, *students* and *volunteers*.

Table 9 Division of activities in class according to participants

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| TEACHERS                      | Teacher explanation<br>Teacher ICT explanation  |
| STUDENTS                      | Students explain their work<br>Group activity to understand the topic<br>Group work<br>Individual activities base on their student's books<br>ICT individual activity |
| TEACHER, STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS | Interactive groups<br>Dialogic reading  |

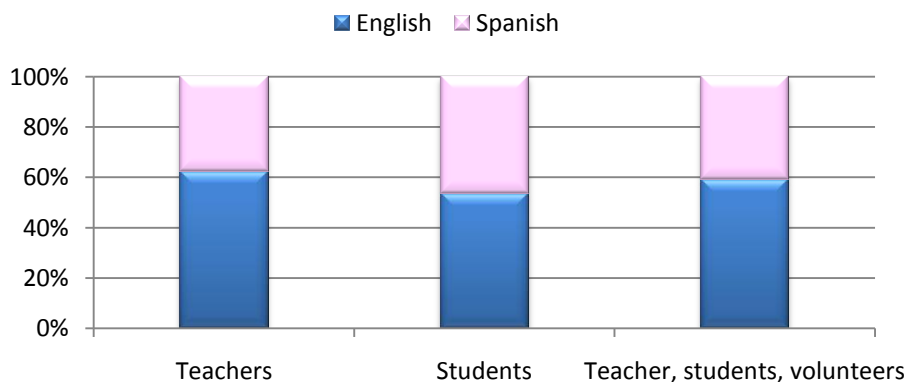


Figure 9 Percentage of language used in school hours

If the use of the English language is ranked, *teachers* are placed at the top, closely followed by the tandem formed by *teachers, students and volunteers*, and *students* are pushed into the lowest level. By looking at Table

9 and Figure 9 above, it is possible to infer that classes are more interactive and less passive. Students engage in the class dynamics in various ways, not only by receiving input but also to actively producing output as can be seen in the type of activities under each category.

Once again, contextualizing the data gathered is important, and knowing the frequency with which those activities are carried out is extremely valuable. The rate with which they are developed allows us to propose educational actions to promote further interaction and use of the English language among students. However, given that this is a case study, it is more appropriate to do this regarding linguistic and non-linguistic areas and, consequently, it is advisable to deal with the information in the same way it has been done before in order to obtain a more precise picture of each area: linguistic and non-linguistic.

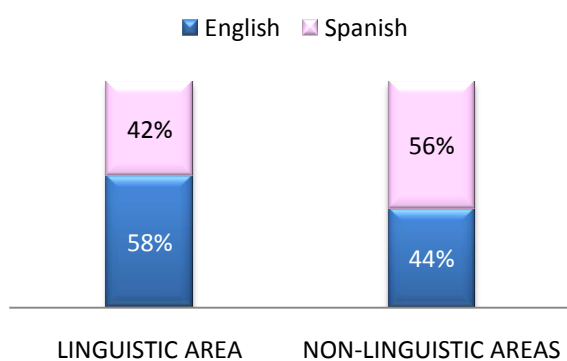


Figure 10 Language in relation with linguistic and non-linguistic areas within school hours

When comparing the use of both languages in relation with the area of knowledge, the blue slice of the bar figure in the *linguistic area* is longer than in the *non-linguistic area* which means that the L2 is more used in the English subject than in Science and Art together.

Reasons can be various, but it is more likely that the target language is more used in a subject which has been taught for a longer period of time in schools' trajectory. What is more, the reference book in class is in English, not in Spanish as it occurs in the other subjects. Information about the books' language was obtained in the interview.

Having said this, let us now focus on how those percentages are shared among activity categories mentioned above:

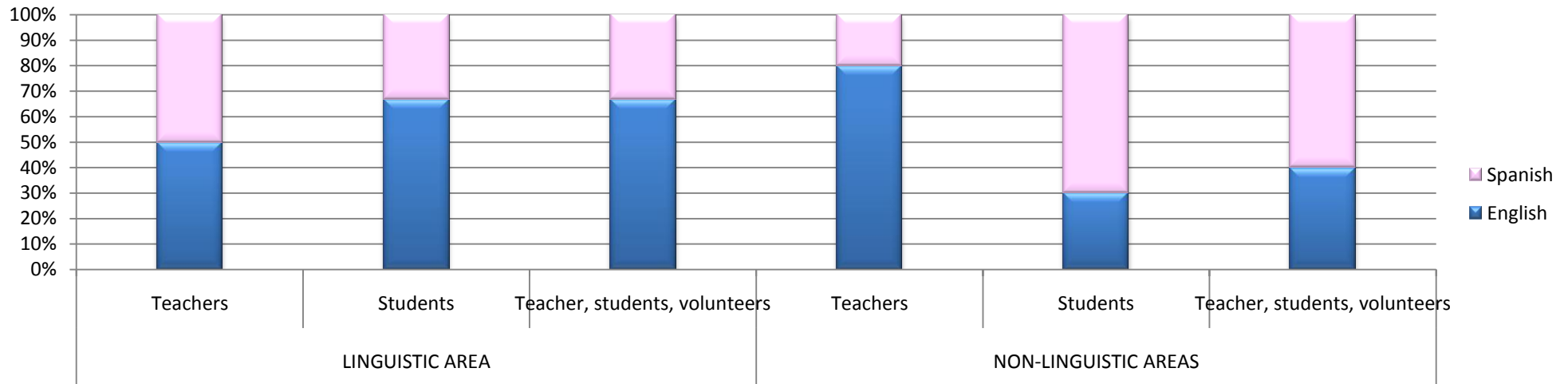


Figure 11 Language used in linguistic and non-linguistic area during school hours

The arguments mentioned above seem to be validated with the data shown in Figure 11. The fact that materials are in English and the amount of time that non-linguistic subjects devote to English directly conditions students' interactions in class. Therefore, if we want students to operate in the target language those two aspects should be taken into account.

Concentrating just on the *LINGUISTIC AREA*, the English specialist makes an equal use of both languages. From my experience in schools, I can draw the conclusion that this teacher switches language from English to Spanish when it comes to teaching grammar or new concepts in order to get the message across and avoid misunderstandings. Personally, I consider this is the way we should teach, given that by explaining certain aspects of language in Spanish we save time, which can later be used more fruitfully and effectively in free practice in the target language. As for students, they seem to make a great use of the target language not only when working with volunteers but also when doing it on their own. According to Teacher\_1, it seems that the fact that volunteers carefully make sure that they speak in English as much as possible allows them not to be shy when using a foreign language on their own. On comparing results with the non-linguistic area, the last statement makes sense as students make a slightly greater use of English when working with volunteers than when working with peers. This is understandable given that Science and Art are subjects totally new to them in PE and that they have never used the foreign language in those fields. As a consequence, they need some time to overcome their shyness.

On the other hand, in the *NON-LINGUISTIC AREAS* teacher\_2 seems to make a wider use of English in contrast with the other categories (*students* or *teacher*, *students and volunteers*). In the interview held, the teacher explains that in the first stage of PE, oral skills (listening and speaking) are promoted and less attention is paid to written skills (writing and reading). Therefore, bearing in mind that in the class she basically works on oral skills and that at this stage students' speaking competence is low, it is comprehensible that the use of English is higher in *teachers* than in the other two categories, among which *students* is. Anyway, it is advisable to gradually reduce the time devoted to Spanish language and give way to English.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** To detect difficulties in the Learning Communities so as to take advantage of the application of these successful educational actions in the learning of English, both in linguistic and non-linguistic areas

Table 10 Teachers' difficulties regarding the development of the LC Project together with the Bilingual Programme

| TEACHER:<br>SUBJECT(S):<br>YEAR:   | 1               |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | 2               |                 |                 |                 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  | ENGLISH         |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | SCIENCE         |                 | ART             |                 |
|  | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Classroom arrangement  |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | X               | X               |                 |                 |
| Lack of material resources   |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | X               | X               |                 |                 |
| Lack of human resources  |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | X               | X               | X               | X               |
| Lack of training   |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | X               | X               | X               | X               |
| The objectives stipulated in the bilingual programme come into conflict with those named by the Learning Communities |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| The Bilingual Programme characteristics make it difficult to carry out Learning Communities educational actions      |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Others   | X               | X               | X               | X               | X               | X               |                 |                 |                 |                 |

According to Teacher\_1, the main and only difficulty found is the massive increase in paperwork for teachers, plus the extra workload that implies being the English specialist in a school that offers Infant and Primary Education.

As for Teacher\_2, difficulties are various and different depending on the subjects although it seems that there are two parameters that constantly recur in her area of knowledge. They are *lack of training* and *lack of human resources*. There is nothing to say about the first one because this teacher simply did not attend any course about LC. Regarding the second one, the teacher argues in the interview that according to the school policy, when it comes to volunteers' help core subjects (Spanish language, Maths and English) were treated as a priority. In addition, in the Science class, the teacher points out that the scarce flexibility of the classroom together with small number of material resources available difficult the class development. In the teacher's words, due to the organization of the class' elements, it was particularly hard to work with large size materials used as visual aids to facilitate comprehension of the topic.

As can be seen, there is a strong difference of opinion between the two teachers. Bearing in mind the data gathered, one might conclude that such a difference may be motivated particularly by the number of volunteers, the scarcity of hands-on experience and the lack of knowledge of Teacher\_2 regarding Learning Communities (see page 33). However, in spite of Teacher\_2 lack of

initial training, it necessary to mention that in the talks held with the headmistress and English specialist, both praised this teacher willingness to actively participate in the project and her quick adaptation.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** To evaluate to which degree these successful educational actions used in educational centres add to the objectives set by the Bilingual Programme of the PPM

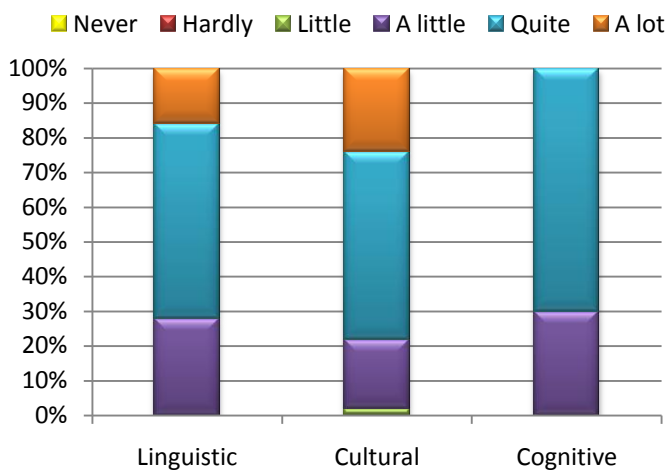


Figure 12 Teachers' opinion on the degree of attainment of the Bilingual programme objectives in relation with the application of the LC Project

that is to say, linguistic versus non-linguistic areas.

Figure 12 on the left shows a clear consensus between both teachers in the different years they teach. It is significantly positive that the sum of the upper categories, *A lot* and *Quite*, makes at least 70% in each of the levels: *Linguistic*, *Cultural* and *Cognitive*. That is to say, the Learning Communities Project highly contributes to achieving the goals of the Bilingual Programme. Above all, those related to culture and linguistics. However, despite the promising results, it is appropriate to compare data sources,

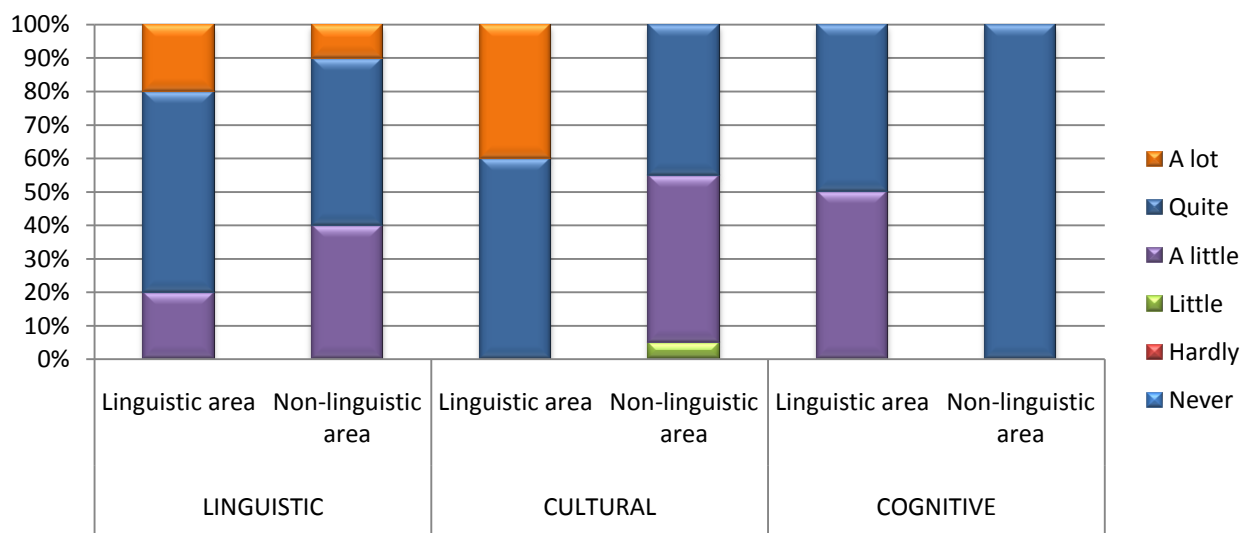


Figure 13 Result levels in linguistic and non-linguistic areas

As the Figure 13 above illustrates, the *Linguistic area* works harder on the objectives that are directly connected with the *LINGUISTIC* and the *CULTURAL* level. On the contrary, in the *Non-linguistic area*, the *COGNITIVE* and the *LINGUISTIC* level stands out. It is noteworthy how low the



results of the *Non-linguistic area* are in the *CULTURAL* level given that LCs are run by the principles of *dialogic learning* (see page 16) which provide students from the very beginning with skills and abilities that boost most of the items under that category.

Teacher\_2, who is in charge of Science and Art, argues that those items are so complex per se that cannot be fully covered in the early stage of PE (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year). Students deal with those circumstances but just on a very basic level.

Table 11 Results of linguistic area versus non-linguistic areas

| TEACHER:<br>SUBJECT(S):<br>STAGE(S): | 1<br>ENGLISH<br>ALL  |        |        |          |       |       | 2<br>SCIENCE/ART<br>1 <sup>st</sup> |        |        |          |       |       |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------|--------|----------|-------|-------|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|----------|-------|-------|
|                                      | Never  | Hardly | Little | A little | Quite | A lot | Never                               | Hardly | Little | A little | Quite | A lot |
| LINGUISTIC                           | improves his/her competences in the mother tongue  |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | improves his/her competences in the second language  |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | improves his/her metalinguistic competences (establishing comparisons, transferring rules from one language to another)                  |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | improves his/her linguistic comprehension and production   |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | uses critical arguments  |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
| CULTURAL                             | comes into contact with different cultural realities   |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | draws a parallel with his/her own environment  |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | is interested in knowing different cultures  |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | considers fundamental values such as freedom, tolerance, solidarity and respect for pluralism  |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | is prepared for a future European citizenship, democratic, plural, modern and free of prejudices and stereotypes                         |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
| COGNITIVE                            | increases his/her general learning abilities   |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |
|                                      | develops a great cognitive flexibility that favours the analysis and the observation of the mechanism used in their own learning process |        |        |          |       |       | 6                                   |        |        |          |       |       |

**OBJECTIVE 4:** To analyse the time devoted by the teacher to practising with oral and written skills in the bilingual class

Table 12 Students' skills in L2 in Andalusian bilingual schools (Source Lorenzo *et al.* 13)

| FREQUENCY:      | Never | Sometimes | Quite | Always | Don't know |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------------|
| Reading in L2   | 8%    | 25%       | 45%   | 14%    | 8%         |
| Writing L2      | 5%    | 35%       | 39%   | 12%    | 8%         |
| Listening in L2 | 0%    | 5%        | 53%   | 35%    | 7%         |
| Speaking in L2  | 0%    | 45%       | 42%   | 6%     | 7%         |

Table 12 on the left shows the results obtained in a survey carried out by Pablo de Olavide University (Seville) at the request of the Andalusian Government. Questionnaires were filled in by teachers

working in the bilingual section of a total of 32 bilingual schools in Andalusia. To be more exact, it was addressed to the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education. Details about weighting or percentages corresponding to English, French or German Bilingual schools are unknown. In any case, the table can be used as a reference to obtain a general idea of the situation of bilingual schools in Andalusia. The maximum percentages are found in the column *Quite*, particularly in *Reading*, *Writing* and *Listening*. As for *Speaking*, teachers still find it hard to make students speak and so it is difficult for students to express themselves orally. Therefore, nowadays the challenge with the speaking skill is still very much alive.

When it comes to a bilingual and Learning Community school, the figures for the different skills are the following:

Table 13 Students' skills in the L2

| TEACHERS:<br>SUBJECTS:<br>FREQUENCY: | 1 and 2<br>ENGLISH/SCIENCE/ART |           |       |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------|--------|
|                                      | Never                          | Sometimes | Quite | Always |
| Reading in L2                        | 0%                             | 40%       | 0%    | 60%    |
| Writing L2                           | 0%                             | 40%       | 0%    | 60%    |
| Listening in L2                      | 0%                             | 0%        | 0%    | 100%   |
| Speaking in L2                       | 0%                             | 0%        | 40%   | 60%    |

In this case the highest percentages are in the column labelled *Always* which is fairly positive. Moreover, results on oral skills (*Listening* and *Speaking*) are outstanding since these skills are practiced quite often. However, there is not a gradual smooth flow in data

coming from written skills. In both cases, there is a wide range of frequency between *sometimes* and *always*. Although it is generally claimed that in the early years greater emphasis should be paid to listening and speaking —let us not forget how we learned our mother tongue— and that reading

plays a more passive role as does writing, it still seems quite drastic the difference in the usage of these skills (*Reading* and *Writing*). Therefore, it would be advisable to observe if there are some differences between linguistic and non-linguistic areas and, if not, further analysis should be carried out by looking at each stage or year specifically.

Table 14 Skills' frequency in the L2 (linguistic and non-linguistic areas)

| TEACHER:<br>SUBJECT(S):<br><br>FREQUENCY | 1<br>ENGLISH |           |       |        | 2<br>SCIENCE/ART |           |       |        |
|--|--------------|-----------|-------|--------|------------------|-----------|-------|--------|
|  | Never        | Sometimes | Quite | Always | Never            | Sometimes | Quite | Always |
| Reading in L2                            |              |           |       | 6      |                  | 4         |       |        |
| Writing in L2                            |              |           |       | 6      |                  | 4         |       |        |
| Listening in L2                          |              |           |       | 6      |                  |           |       | 4      |
| Speaking in L2                           |              |           |       | 6      |                  |           | 4     |        |

Table 14 on the left illustrates that the lowest percentages in written skills (*Reading* and *Writing*) are found in non-linguistic subjects, that is to say, *SCIENCE/ART*. With these figures in mind, one might conclude that the gradual introduction of bilingualism is at its very beginning since students still use books

written in Spanish which make them use their mother tongue more frequently than the target language. On the same note, teachers are required to prepare materials in English which is sometimes unfeasible due to their workload. *The lack of materials* is a powerful reason that Teacher\_2 highlighted when asked about the difficulties found in carrying out both plans. Ideally, in order to carry out a successful plan, time, dedication and careful planning are essential ingredients, together with abundant resources and support. Unfortunately, these continue to be absent in the schedule and classroom of a busy, overworked and harassed teacher. Last but not least, it is important to mention Teacher\_2 arguments for not using written skills as often as oral skills. As stated before, she argues that greater emphasis is given to *listening* and *speaking* given the students' age. In addition, when asked about this matter she expressed her dissatisfaction with the current principles of the Bilingual Programme. She said that it is not fair that she teaches in English and that students' learning can only be measured in Spanish. She adds that when it comes to English, she can only positively modify the students' mark but never negatively.

**OBJECTIVE 5:** To analyse the perceptions of teachers in the bilingual section on the general and communicative competences of the students in linguistic and non-linguistic areas

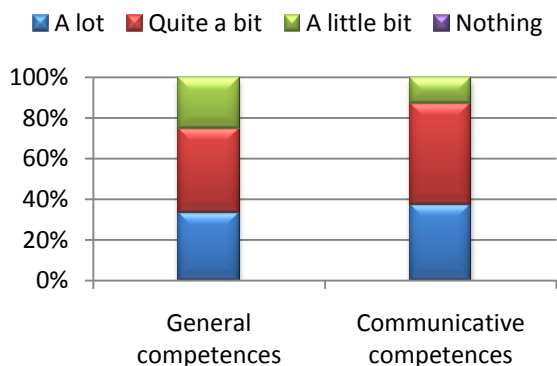


Figure 14 Teachers' perceptions of general and communicative competences

*Communicative competences* include the following: linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic of items found in question 5 of the questionnaire (See full list of items on page 48). As far as *Communicative competence* is concerned, it contemplates: knowledge of the world, intercultural abilities and practices, motivation and positive attitudes, and learning strategies.

In general terms, both teachers agree that *Communicative* and *General competences* are successfully achieved among students; the percentages being slightly higher at the *Communicative* level. A deeper analysis of this information is in pages to come.

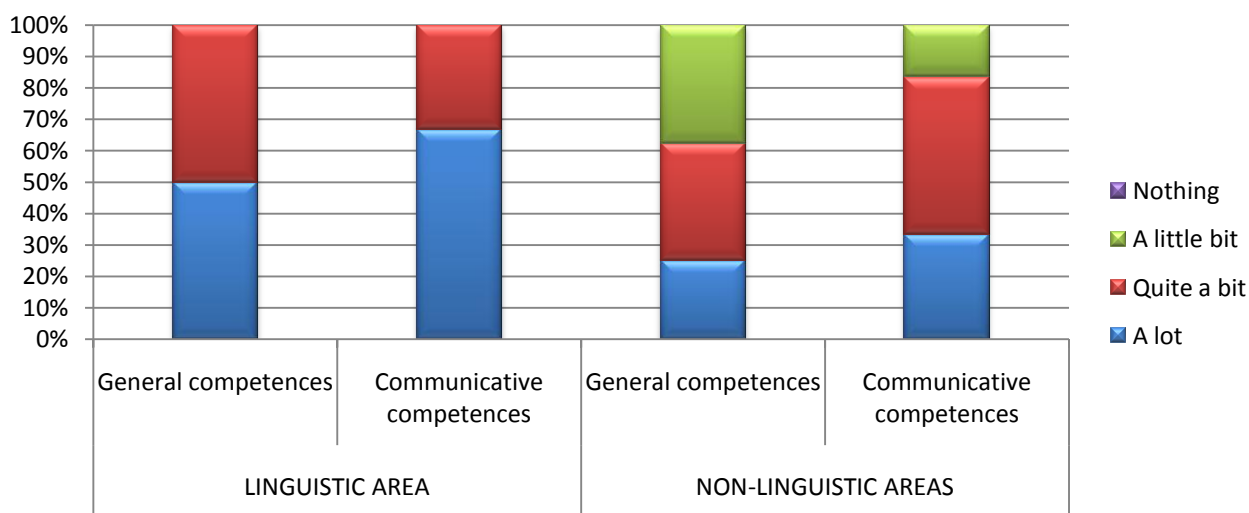


Figure 15 Comparative figure on linguistic and non-linguistic areas

When comparing *LINGUISTIC* and *NON-LINGUISTIC AREAS*, it is evident that in both cases *communicative competences* results are relatively better than the *general* ones. At the same, it can be noticed that the poorest outcomes are found in non-linguistic areas.

Table 15 Degree of achievement of *general* and *communicative competences* in non-linguistic areas

| SUBJECT:<br>STAGE:<br>DEGREE OF ACHIEVEMENT: |                                       | SCIENCE |                 |              |         | ART   |                 |              |         |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|-------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
|  |                                       | A lot   | 1 <sup>st</sup> |              | Nothing | A lot | 1 <sup>st</sup> |              | Nothing |
|  |                                       |         | Quite a bit     | A little bit |         |       | Quite a bit     | A little bit |         |
| GENERAL<br>COMPETENCES                       | Knowledge of the world                | 1       | 1               |              |         |       | 2               |              |         |
|  | Intercultural abilities and practices |         | 1               | 1            |         | 1     | 1               |              |         |
|  | Motivation and positive attitudes     |         | 2               |              | 2       |       |                 |              |         |
|  | Learning strategies                   | 1       | 1               |              |         |       | 2               |              |         |
| LINGUISTIC<br>COMPET.                        | Linguistic                            | 2       |                 |              |         | 1     | 1               |              |         |
|  | Pragmatic                             |         | 2               |              |         | 1     | 1               |              |         |
|  | Sociolinguistic                       | 2       |                 |              |         | 2     |                 |              |         |

Table 15 on the left illustrates that practically all the least favourable results in the previous figures are to be found in *ART*. Results on *communicative competences* can be understood given that the

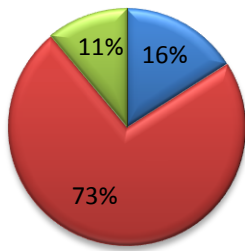
items under that competence are linguistic rather than communicative. It does not contemplate communication in all its expressions, just orally. However, aspects on *general competences* perfectly fit with the artistic subject; consequently, one might conclude that a different didactic approach should be taken by Teacher\_2.

As in OBJECTIVE 4, Table 15 was taken originally taken from a study ordered by the Andalusian government. In that specific investigation, results for Primary Education were varied. In the following pages the reader will find a list of figure groups in general and communicative competences and, at the same time, differentiating between the results drawn by the Andalusian Government report and outcomes from the present study. Once again, the comparison is unequal since variables in both studies, as mentioned before, are different. However, it would also be noteworthy to mention that the Andalusian study took place in 2009. By that time, only pioneer and best academic schools were part of the bilingual system, which means that results may be a little higher due to that circumstance. It was even possible to find a school with two groups of the same year in which a group was bilingual and the other one was not simply because of students' poorer academic results. It has not been until very recently that this unequal practice has been erased.

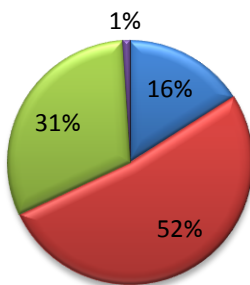
But still, it is a point of reference that can tell us whether the combination of the Plan for the Promotion of Bilingualism and the Learning Community Project benefits are notable or average. Let us look at the results:

### Knowledge of the world

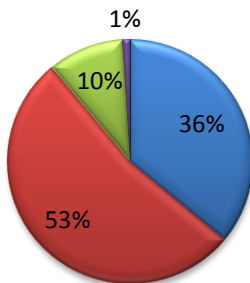
■ A lot ■ Quite a bit ■ A little bit ■ Nothing



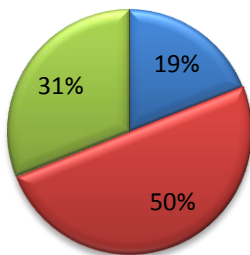
### Intercultural abilities and practices



### Motivation and positive attitudes

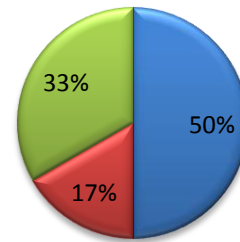


### Learning strategies

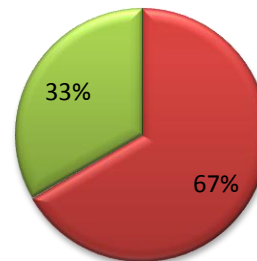


### Knowledge of the world

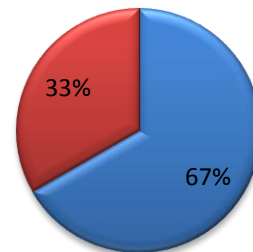
■ A lot ■ Quite a bit ■ A little bit ■ Nothing



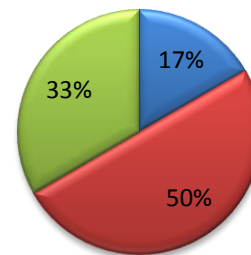
### Intercultural abilities and practices



### Motivation and positive attitudes



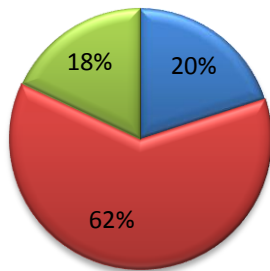
### Learning strategies



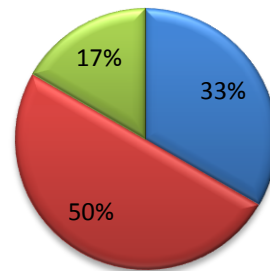
Figures 16 Andalusian report\_ results on general competences (Source: Lorenzo *et al.* 14-16)

Figures 17 This Master's Thesis study\_ results on general competences

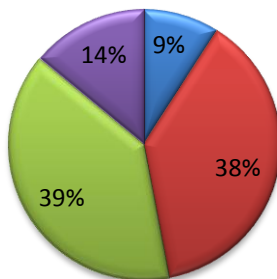
**Linguistic**  
 ■ A lot ■ Quite a bit ■ A little bit ■ Nothing



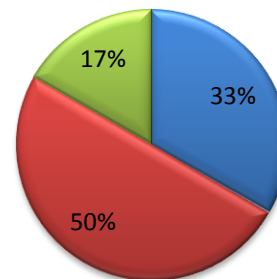
**Linguistic**  
 ■ A lot ■ Quite a bit ■ A little bit ■ Nothing



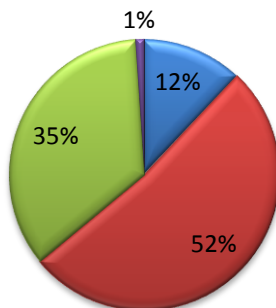
**Pragmatic**



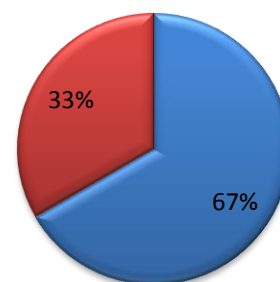
**Pragmatic**



**Sociolinguistic**



**Sociolinguistic**



Figures 18 Andalusian report\_ results on linguistic competences (Source: Lorenzo *et al.* 16-17)

Figures 19 This Master's Thesis study\_ results on linguistic competences

Results demonstrate that *Linguistic competences* development is much higher in this study than in the Andalusian investigation. *Sociolinguistic* outcomes stand out among others in this category. This is bound to happen given the large number of group activities and the heterogeneous profile of social agents that participate in the classroom. Students learn in a real context in which it is easy to interact and communicate not only with their peers but also with adults from various

backgrounds. Obviously, this benefits not only the *sociolinguistic* competence but also the *linguistic* and the *pragmatic* ones, since students are exposed to people that approach a problem or task in different ways and their registers, dialects and accents may also differ. As for *General competences*, it seems that in some cases the Andalusian study overcomes the figures in this research project. But it is only sometimes and the difference is barely significant. Specifically, Andalusian report results are clearly better in *Knowledge of the world* and slightly better in *Intercultural abilities and practices*. On the other hand, outcomes are nearly the same in *Learning Strategies* and remarkably worse in *Motivation and positive attitudes*.



## ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS

Limitations found in this research project development have to do with:

- 1) the reduced number of schools in which the Learning Community Project and the Plan for the Promotion of the Multilingualism coexist. It may be due to a) the recent publication of the order that regulate the Learning Community Project; b) reasons related with minimum level of approval teachers' approval (Orden de 8 de junio de 2012 4) for the school to become a Learning Community; or c) teachers' reluctance to volunteers' (family members, NGO workers, university students, etc.) participation within the class and in the decision-making process;
- 2) the very few academic courses in which they coexist given the recent regulation in Andalusia of the Plan for the Promotion of the Multilingualism —2005— and the Learning Community Project —2012—;
- 3) the simplicity of the data gathering instruments is due to the lack of time I had after learning in June, when my former research project was defined, the unexpected decision of the supporting institution (ONCE —National Organization of Spanish blind people— delegation in Cordoba) to withdraw their collaboration; and
- 4) the fact that most international publications about Learning Communities are not free.

Possibly, difficulties number one and two could be solved by expanding the geographical limits of my investigation. This Research Project would have been way more interesting if it would have been implemented in Catalonia and/or in the Basque Country because of its long tradition as learning communities and as bilingual schools. This investigation could also be expanded to Chile and/or Brazil.

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is organised into three differentiated sections. All of them are connected, although the focus of attention in each one goes from interrelation between languages and educational actions; to the key aspects that assure the successful implementation of the Bilingual Programme and the LC Project; to finally conclude with an assessment of the questionnaire design.

### ***About the teaching practices and the coexistence of the English and the Spanish language***

Results conclude that in the bilingual section of the school, all SEAs within the Learning Community Project are put into practice. It stands out a considerable usage of *curricular adaptations of the teaching method (not curricular level)*, *heterogeneous ability groups with a higher number of human resources* and *extending the learning time*. On the other hand, practices like *heterogeneous split classes coordinated by different teachers* are rarely used. Arguments for its lack of usage are simple: a reduced availability of bilingual teachers. As for non-SEAs, the study reveals that grouping arrangements such as *organising pupils into several educational itineraries*, *giving extra help to pupils with difficulties outside the classroom* and *homogeneous groups* never take place at the school. However, *curricular adaptations (adapting the curricular level)* do happen. This is not a generalised practiced but rather a very concrete circumstance that only affects to non-linguistic areas of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. The teacher in charge argues that the adaptation just consists on giving extra resources to a gifted student. In my view, such adaptation should be avoided and that student should be taught how to help other students so that the whole class achieves the standard curriculum. It is not a matter of restraining this student skills but a question of using this strong student's spare time to boost his/her social skills rather than the academic ones.

As far as the frequency with which SEAs are employed, it stands out that one of the most valuable teaching practice recognized by the international research community, *interactive groups*, is mostly done *sporadically* (60%) versus *weekly* (40%). In this sense, the explanation is convincing in the case of non-linguistic areas, given that volunteers support core subjects (Maths, Spanish and English) as a priority.

When it comes to activities organised by volunteers during after-school hours it becomes clear that they are not addressed to improve students' level of English since all of them are developed in the students' mother tongue. For the next course, it would be advisable to introduce some kind of

activity that allows learning English in a fun and unconscious way: through music, sketches, games...

As for the use of English, the study indicates that in the English subject *students* make a wider use of the target language. It contrasts with Science and Art, in which the *teacher* makes a greater use of English than the *students*. According to Teacher\_2, the focus is done in oral skills in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of PE. Taking into account students' speaking command of English at this stage, it is comprehensible that the teacher tries to boost listening as much as possible in class. This question is directly connected with time devoted to the different skills. As will be explained in subsequent pages, results reveal that there is a very unbalanced use of the four skills. I totally support the idea that greater emphasis should be done in oral skills in the early years of PE but not at the expense of forgetting written skills.

Regarding difficulties in the development of the LC Project in conjunction with the Bilingual Programme, there is a tremendous difference in opinion between both teachers. Teacher\_1 claims that the work load that both plans require is excessive, especially those tasks related to bureaucratic formalities. Teacher\_2 complains about the lack of training in newly hired teachers and the fact that she does not receive as many volunteers as in other core subjects. Moreover, she finds that a higher number of material resources are needed in Science and the classroom arrangement could be improved in order to facilitate the use of large size materials. As previously stated, "one might conclude that such a difference may be motivated particularly by the number of volunteers, the scarcity of hands-on experience and the lack of knowledge of Teacher\_2 regarding Learning Communities. However, in spite of Teacher\_2's lack of initial training, it is necessary to mention that in the conversations held with the headmistress and English specialist, both praised this teacher's willingness to actively participate in the project and her quick adaptation" (see page 59).

When asked about how the LC Project contributes to achieve the aims of the Bilingual Programme, both teachers agree that the Project highly helps to accomplish the linguistic goals and also helps to guarantee success of cultural and cognitive objectives. The consensus is wide and of all options in the row *degree of achievement* in the questionnaire —*a lot, quite, a little, little, hardly, never*—, the choice *hardly* or *never* have not been used and *little* just once in one item.

With respect to the use of skills, results are quite positive given that the four skills are mainly used *always* in class. Oral skills are highly balance since the percentages are among *quite* and *always*. However, there is a wide gap in the frequency with which writing is dealt with that goes from (40%) *sometimes* to (60%) *always*. Research has found that those low percentages correspond to non-linguistic areas and that the specialist argues that the focus is on oral skills in the first stage of

PE. In any case, while I consider the argument valid, I understand that such difference should not be that marked.

In relation with *general* and *linguistic competences*, results show that the coexistence of both plans favour the development of *linguistic competences*. When it comes to *general competences*, it would be appropriate to pay special attention to some items under this category: *knowledge of the world, intercultural abilities and practices* and *learning strategies*. Further actions should be taken in this regard so as to improve results.

### ***About the elements that guarantee the effectiveness and fruitfulness of Plan or Project***

Findings reveal the importance of teacher training and stability. Both elements will raise standards in schools. Authorities should take further control on replacement staff and be more selective by making use of the record of each candidate's training and teaching careers in order to give priority to those that meet this school's needs. Should the case be that no one fulfils the requirements, the teaching post should be covered by stipulating a minimal basis: the teacher should complete a training course within a short period of time and he or she must agree to offer his or her service to the same school for at least three academic courses. In educational centres where ambitious plans are developed, it is important to guarantee the continuity of personnel so that the Plan or Project coordinator can delegate responsibilities. Having a large, intensive, tight and demanding schedule does not allow the coordinator to effectively complete his or her task: or to have a complete view of the process and be able to identify strengths and weaknesses and act and coordinate accordingly. Consequently, staff continuity together with lifelong learning are both pre-requisites for full success of the PPM and LC Project, whether the two or just one are put into practice in a school.

On the other hand, we cannot forget that family and community involvement highly contribute to the proper development of a Plan or Project. Many educational projects fail because they do not take into account students' links outside the school. This is something that the LC Project is fully aware of given that the participation of family and other members of society is totally contemplated since it is a strategy included among its SEAs (INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2011:76). Five types of participation can be distinguished in a LC:

Table 16 Types of family participation within the school

| TYPES               | DESCRIPTION   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Informative</b>  | Communications with families are informative  |
| <b>Consultative</b> | Families have a very limited scope for decision on the consultations that teachers make   |
| <b>Decisive</b>     | All community members have a say in the school decision-making bodies   |
| <b>Evaluative</b>   | Families and other community members help to assess students in the day-to-day teaching activity and / or participate in the general assessment of the centre |
| <b>Educational</b>  | Families and the school community are trained in the centre and / or actively participate in the students' learning process, in or out of school time.        |

Many authors perfectly describe the core concept of CLIL as a dual force. That undeniable flow of forces between language and content also exists between the school and its surroundings; two elements that are emotionally and inextricably connected cannot be isolated. Regarding bilingualism, the educational authorities in Andalusia are taking small but firm steps to open and broaden participation of other social agents. A clear example of this is the inclusion of families, among others, in the *Jornadas Regionales de Plurilingüismo* in Seville (Junta de Andalucía *Revista Andalucía Educativa* n. pag.). In this meeting their contribution was *evaluative* by participating in the general assessment of the PPM. But still there is no track of the other two types *decisive* and *educational*. In those educational centres where the Bilingual Programme is run in conjunction with the LC Project, this issue is not relevant since, as stated-above, the LC Project guarantees all community members' participation in the whole school activity. However, other schools are missing out on the benefits that have been proven to create a positive effect. According to the INCLUD-ED Consortium publication in 2011, *decisive* participation permits students' prospects to multiply and "quality be assured, thus allowing schools to guarantee exceptional results and high quality education, these being basic priorities of the centre" (86). The document asserts that families and community guarantee exceptional results and high quality learning practice for their children (Gatt and Petreñas 52) because they want the best for them and sometimes teachers, who are or will also be parents, forget to provide their students with the best resources and practices that are within their reach. It is well known that some teachers do not enrol their children in the same school they work at because they deem it does not provide desirable levels of education to their son(s) or daughter(s). Therefore, family and community involvement in the school makes perfect sense. As for the other

type of participation, *educational*, according to INCLUD-ED Consortium, it means that when members of the community collaborate in educational activities, the school gains a human resource that serves to further students' learning. Possibilities for intervention increase since "they become positive models to follow in the existing social groups of the centre" (87), improving social inclusion and education and making the school make more sense to the pupils at the same time. Moreover, educational support for the families enriches the participation of students and children and contributes to improving school results (INCLUD-ED Consortium 87) and it helps families and schools to work in the same direction (INCLUD-ED Consortium 69).

### ***About the questionnaire design***

The analysis of the data gathered has allowed us to identify questions that could be expanded in order to obtain an even greater detailed picture of the school's reality that will later help us to better understand results. Proposals for enriching this source of information are the followings:

- State which type of special need students have, in order to know how severely or slightly this can affect class development
- Indicate, on a percentage scale, how long each language, English or/and Spanish, is used, given that with the existing questionnaire it is possible to detect which languages are used depending on the activity but its duration is uncertain.
- Clearly specify that items under *Block B1* are referring to those activities that are monitored by the learning community members in after-school hours.
- Include a new block similar to B1, in order to know which activities related to English students attend after-school hours. These activities, contrary to those in block B1, are not free or monitored by volunteers of families.

On the other hand, it would be appropriate to rethink whether or not the parameters included under the category *communicative competences* should be modified or expanded, given that it just includes items of communication which are exclusively oral and it does not contemplate artistic communication, which affects the questionnaires' results badly. At this point, it is important to remember that the table in question was designed by members of Pablo de Olavide University.

On the same note, there is some more valuable information that should be gathered right after the questionnaire has been completed. The reason for this is because, if this data is asked throughout the questionnaire, it may give the respondent a hint that will allow him/her to know if a particular issue is or is not welcomed by society and therefore s/he may not respond as s/he would do without providing this information at this early stage. The questions are first why the teacher uses

certain pedagogical actions that are deemed negative; and second, which of the students with special needs receive extra help outside the classroom and which ones have a curricular adaptation of the curriculum (not teaching method).

## **ETHICS**

As in any research carried out under the ethical principles of Learning Communities, the results of the present study will be sent to the school in question in order to provide access to an information which can be discussed and possibly used for future improvements. Therefore, assuming the social responsibility of the researcher, this research is at the disposal of the participants.

As for teachers' privacy, neither their names nor their surnames are asked for. Although in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of data gathering, each teacher has to specify which questionnaires they have filled in to be able to consider those variables concerning the teacher profile (age range, linguistic or non-linguistic teacher, English level...) in data management and statistical analysis. Obviously, this research requires teachers' consensus of the terms through a contract.



## **FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

According to Garrido (92), it would be necessary to further investigate on Interactive Groups so as to determine whether or not students' academic results are higher and to find out if this pedagogical action could be used to prepare students for external English exams like Cambridge, Trinity and so on. At the same time, Garrido wonders if non-linguistic subjects could be taught through Interactive Groups.

Investigation could be expanded by focusing not only on Interactive Groups but on the Learning Community Project itself because there are also other pedagogical actions —such as dialogic reading /dialogic literary reading, etc.— that encourage students to speak and in particular to improve their social and intercultural skills. Therefore, it could be appropriate to compare several features shared by Learning Communities and Bilingual Schools and those which are just Bilingual. Apart from focusing on students' fluency levels and their social and intercultural competence would also enrich the approach.

On the other hand, this study could be expanded by implementing the same questionnaires in other schools which are not Learning Communities or Bilingual alternatively and contrasting results.

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## APPENDIX

### *Teacher\_1: interview questions*

- ¿Por qué no se hacían “grupos interactivos” con mayor frecuencia en todos los cursos?
- ¿Por qué no se hacían “deshobles en grupos heterogéneos coordinados por diferentes maestros/as”?
- A parte de la biblioteca tutorizada, ¿qué otras actividades extraescolares llevaban a cabo los familiares y voluntarios en el centro?
- ¿Por qué crees conveniente hacer el mismo uso del inglés y del español desde 1º hasta 6º de primaria?
- ¿Crees que la presencia de familiares y voluntarios/as en el aula hace que el alumnado utilice más la L2 cuando éstos se encuentran dentro?
  - o Si la respuesta es afirmativa, ¿crees que esta circunstancia hace que el alumnado gane confianza en sí mismo y le ayude a hacer un mayor uso de la L2 cuando se realizan actividades sólo con sus compañeros/as? sin presencia del voluntariado

### *Teacher\_2: interview questions*

- En las encuestas indicabas que en 2º curso de educación primaria había cuatro alumnos/as con necesidades educativas específicas, ¿qué tipo de necesidades educativas específicas tenía cada uno/a?
  - o ¿Cuántos recibían apoyo fuera del aula? ¿Por qué?
  - o ¿A cuántos se les hizo una adaptación curricular a nivel de contenidos? ¿Por qué?
- En la primera pregunta de las encuestas, en el Bloque A.2 AGRUPAMIENTO DEL ALUMNADO, está marcada la casilla “Esporádicamente” para ítem “Grupos heterogéneos con más recursos humanos ... en el aula”.



Esta información no concuerda con lo que se indica en el Bloque B.2. PRACTICAS DIDÁCTICAS CON EL ALUMNADO. Aquí aparece marcada la opción “1 vez a la semana” del ítem “Actividad de aula en grupos interactivos”

Sólo se da esta contradicción en las encuestas de 2º de Primaria de Science y Art. ¿Podrías indicarme la frecuencia con la que se producen grupos interactivos?

- En la primera pregunta de las encuestas en el Bloque B.2., PRACTICAS DIDÁCTICAS CON EL ALUMNADO, está marcado el ítem “Explicación del profesor/a con recursos TIC”, idioma “español”, frecuencia “Nunca”.

Si marcas el idioma es porque se realiza y la frecuencia no puede ser nunca. Por el contrario, si no se realiza esa actividad, sólo habría que dejar en blanco la casilla idioma.

Sólo se da esta contradicción en las encuestas de 1º de primaria Art y 2º de primaria Science. ¿Podrías indicarme la frecuencia con la que se realiza?

- ¿Por qué no se hacían “grupos interactivos” con mayor frecuencia en todos los cursos?
- ¿Por qué no se hacían “desdobles en grupos heterogéneos coordinados por diferentes maestros/as”?  
dos maestros en un aula, no lo recuerda.
- ¿Los libros de Art estaban escritos en inglés o español?
- ¿Los libros de Science estaban escritos en inglés o español?
- ¿Se impartían las clases de Art en un aula diferente a la que se impartían las clases de Science?
- ¿Por qué se trabajaba sólo “a veces” las destrezas escritas (reading y writing) en Art y Science?
- ¿A crees que se debe que en la pregunta 3, punto 3.2., los niveles sean más bajos?