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INSIGHTS INTO CLIL PRACTICES: BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN POLAND'S PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Abstract. In the field of foreign language education, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has emerged as a highly promising and innovative method, gaining broad support from educational authorities throughout the European Union. As a result, the current study focused on examining the perceptions of CLIL implementation among primary and secondary school teachers in Poland. Data were collected through an *ad-hoc* questionnaire, gathering responses from 135 in-service teachers working in English bilingual schools across Poland. The findings highlight concerns about inadequate teacher training programmes, ineffective textbook design, and crucial issues such as students' diverse English proficiency levels and larger class sizes, which may potentially hinder the development of the CLIL programme. The study further highlights that promoting a collaborative culture among educators is essential, not only to ease workload but also to create a supportive atmosphere for resource development. Moreover, recognising the pivotal role of experienced teachers with advanced English proficiency underscores the need for strategic investments in professional development. These findings emphasise the importance of making careful and knowledgeable educational choices to ensure the effectiveness of the CLIL programme.

Keywords: CLIL; bilingual education; teacher training; English proficiency; classroom challenges.

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Introduction

Nowadays, Poland's linguistic landscape reflects a historical shift from Soviet-era Russian dominance to the adoption of Western European languages after the 1990s transformations (Borecka, 2024). These changes, along with Poland's broader social and political transition, created a strong need to increase foreign language instruction in Polish schools. The new education system, initiated by the Parliamentary Act of January 8, 1999, aimed to enhance the overall quality of Polish education by implementing significant changes. It reinstated the two-tier education system and, in 2017, another reform adjusted the Polish school system to match the standards of other EU countries (Romanowski, 2019). Based on the European Council's 2002 recommendation, which highlighted the necessity for all European citizens to master a minimum of two languages besides their native language (European Council, 2002), Poland implemented the Core Curriculum in 2009, bringing about essential transformations in language education. The main aim was to enhance linguistic competence across different educational levels, supporting the broader European goal of multilingual proficiency.

Following Poland's entry into the European Union in 2004, English has increasingly become the leading foreign language in education (Górowska-Fells, 2012; Romanowski, 2019). Currently, studying a second language (most often English) is mandatory starting from the first year of primary school, although many preschool-aged children already participate in regular language lessons offered in kindergartens or private schools. At the secondary level, students begin learning a third language, typically chosen from German, French, Russian, Spanish, or Italian (Borecka, 2024). Within this educational context, Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL) emerges as a promising shift from traditional language teaching methods (Szczesniak & Muñoz Luna, 2022). CLIL operates on the premise that the most effective way to learn foreign languages is by prioritising content in the classroom and placing emphasis on the information conveyed through language rather than the language itself (Wolff, 2003). Therefore, in this context, a CLIL teacher must not only demonstrate advanced language proficiency but also possess subject-matter expertise (such as mathematics, biology, or geography) and

the pedagogical skills required to teach the content through the foreign language (Papaja & Rojczyk, 2024). In the initial years of the 21st century, bilingual education programmes proliferated across the country, with English, including additional languages such as German, French, Italian, and Spanish, becoming the primary medium of instruction (Romanowski, 2019).

Bilingual education in Polish schools has its roots in the 1960s, when the first general secondary schools began offering English as the medium of instruction (Komorowska, 2009). CLIL-based instruction was formally implemented in Poland for the first time in the 1970s at the 3rd Secondary School in Gdynia, where selected subject content was delivered entirely in a foreign language (Papaja, 2014b; Zielonka, 2007). Subsequently, other schools in Polish cities like Cracow or Warsaw adopted bilingual classes, although initially they were perceived as elitist, with the primary goal of elevating English language proficiency (Papaja, 2010).

Even though the concept of bilingual education is not recent in Poland, it is essential to highlight that a standardised methodology of bilingual education has not been universally adopted to date. This is evident in Polish schools, where four main instructional approaches are employed (Czura & Papaja, 2013; Romanowski, 2019). A crucial aspect relies on the proportion of L1 and L2 employed in lessons. In Model A (Extensive Language Medium Instruction), classes are primarily held in the target language, with the native language limited to cases where terminology needs to be translated or a brief overview is required. This approach not only fulfils the curriculum requirements but also enhances students' language proficiency to an advanced level. In Model B (Partial Language Medium Instruction), lessons are delivered in Polish alongside a foreign language, with each language used as needed, and about half of the lesson time dedicated to each (Romanowski, 2019). The primary focus is on achieving course objectives, with less emphasis on linguistic competence. In Model C (Limited Language Medium Instruction), the use of a foreign language is restricted, allowing both the native language and a foreign language to be used interchangeably. Approximately 10% to 50% of the lesson time is allocated to studying a foreign language, primarily aiming to teach course content, and language skills are largely developed through the acquisition of new vocabulary. In Model D (Specific Language Medium

Instruction), a foreign language is used occasionally during instruction (Romanowski, 2019). Although the lesson is primarily delivered in Polish, it relies on resources in the target language or involves project-based tasks where the outcomes are showcased in the foreign language. The primary focus is on the subject matter, with foreign language proficiency being a secondary objective (Romanowski, 2016, 2018, 2019; Marsh et al., 2008).

In today's multilingual educational landscape, CLIL is seen as an innovative method for developing both academic content knowledge and language proficiency (Bower et al., 2025). It is also frequently viewed as a transformative language learning method that should be promoted across all educational levels (Bruton, 2011, 2013). The significant advantages of CLIL in Poland, as highlighted in the *Eurydice Report on Content and Language Integrated Education*, encompass socio-cultural, language-related, and educational aspects, particularly in terms of learning ability (Eurydice, 2006). In Poland, CLIL is primarily regarded as a tool for improving proficiency in a second language (L2) (Wolff & Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2010). However, it has been noted that the recognised prestige and concrete benefits that students may gain from participating in CLIL classes often appeal to the most dedicated learners, who are better equipped to succeed in meeting the curriculum expectations in both Polish and the language used for instruction (Czura & Papaja, 2013). Consequently, schools that provide CLIL class units are frequently viewed as exclusive or elitist (Czura & Anklewicz, 2018).

It has been argued that CLIL is particularly effective because the classrooms closely simulate real-world professional environments, preparing students for the workforce by combining language learning with practical subject application (Wolff, 2007). Additionally, CLIL has the capacity to attract foreign students, encourage teachers to engage in continuous professional development, and provide students and teachers with opportunities for communication with colleagues abroad. This also facilitates the sharing of innovative experiences, collaborative research, participation in international conferences and exchange programmes, and the pursuit of Master's-level education abroad (Leshchenko et al., 2018)

Despite the numerous advantages that CLIL offers, it is important to

acknowledge certain considerations and challenges tied to its implementation. These challenges include a lack of teacher training opportunities (Czura & Papaja, 2013), teachers' insufficient qualifications and skills, and a dearth of effective materials and teaching aids for bilingual education (Czura & Anklewicz, 2018; García, J., & Vélez Yanza, 2025; Papaja, 2014a) among others. Unfortunately, these issues might have a negative impact on the quality of the method, indirectly impacting students' education. Furthermore, the struggle with these challenges might not only hinder the integration of CLIL into the curriculum but may also place an additional burden on educators, affecting their overall job satisfaction and well-being.

In CLIL, the crucial role played by teachers becomes even more evident, and there is a growing need for support systems, including ongoing professional development and collaborative initiatives, to address these obstacles and increase the overall impact of the CLIL programme. This is especially important, as teachers do more than facilitate language learning; they actively drive and shape the overall learning process. Beyond teaching foreign languages and subject content, they are also expected to respond to diverse learning styles, foster critical thinking, and engage learners in creative problem-solving (Coyle et al., 2010). Marsh et al. (2001) further outline the competencies required of CLIL teachers, which include proficiency in the target language, understanding of language acquisition processes, identification and remediation of linguistic difficulties, use of dual-focused activities, adaptability to diverse learners, adaptation of materials, and the development of effective evaluation and assessment tools (Wysocka-Narewska, 2021). With so many demands placed on CLIL teachers, recognising their perspectives is essential to making better decisions about CLIL practices. In light of insights derived from earlier research, the primary aim of this study was to assess the implementation of CLIL programmes in Poland, from the perspective of teachers. To achieve this aim, the study was designed around the following objectives:

1. To explore teachers' perspectives on CLIL implementation by examining their views on teacher training programmes, their own English language proficiency, collaboration practices within schools,

use of instructional materials, class size, students' English proficiency levels, and their overall evaluation of the CLIL programme.

2. To identify differences among teachers involved in the CLIL programme based on variables such as age, gender, teaching experience in bilingual education, type of institution (primary vs. secondary), level of education taught, and teachers' English proficiency levels.

Methodology

Instruments

In the initial phase, data were obtained through an *ad-hoc* questionnaire which was originally designed to evaluate CLIL programmes in the Spanish region of Andalusia (Szczesniak & Muñoz Luna, 2022). The questionnaire, developed as a tool to assess the implementation of CLIL programmes from teachers' perspectives, was subsequently adapted to the Polish context to conduct a similar study in the country. The instrument was carefully reviewed and modified by experts to guarantee its appropriateness and relevance within Poland's new cultural and linguistic context. A few changes were made to the first part of the questionnaire, while most items in the second part were intentionally left unchanged to facilitate a smooth comparison between the countries in the future research study.

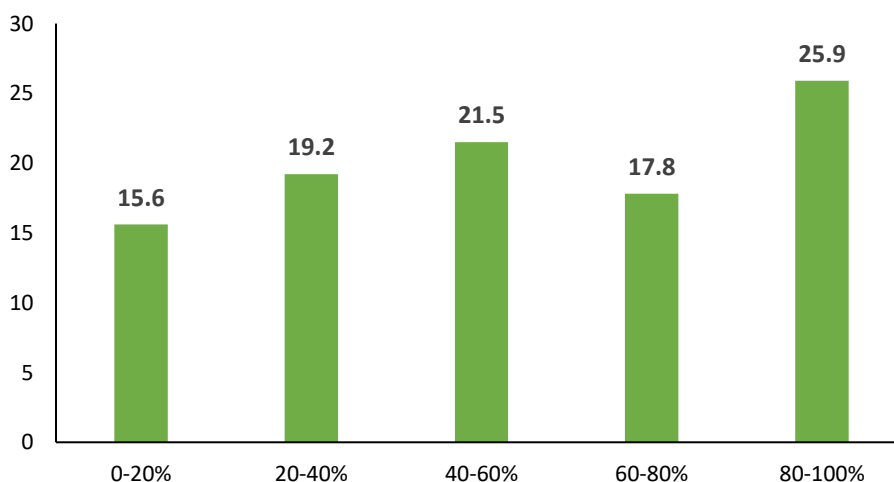
Administered in Polish, the questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part contained background questions, and the second aimed to explore teachers' views on bilingual education in Poland. This second section consisted of 22 items, subsequently organised into six groups: a) teacher training programmes, b) teachers' English proficiency, c) materials and resources, d) collaboration, e) students' diverse English levels and class size, and f) overall evaluation of CLIL. Participants expressed their views using a six-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree (1)" to "Strongly Agree (6)," and from "Deficient" to "Excellent" for item 22. Following each category, an open-response query was presented, offering participants a chance to make comments on relevant facets. For this investigation, only closed-response questions were subjected to analysis.

Sample

After the validation process, communication was established through email with the heads of English bilingual primary and secondary schools in both public and private sectors throughout Poland. The email, sent during September and October 2023, included detailed information about the research objectives, procedures, and assurances regarding participant confidentiality and data privacy, as well as a link to the questionnaire designed through Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained electronically before participants completed the questionnaire. Owing to a diminished response rate (58 respondents), a follow-up reminder was dispatched in November 2023, yielding a heightened participant count of 141. Nevertheless, owing to incomplete data from certain participants, resulting in their exclusion, the study ultimately utilised a sample of 135 respondents.

Figure 1

Percentage of Classes Taught in English

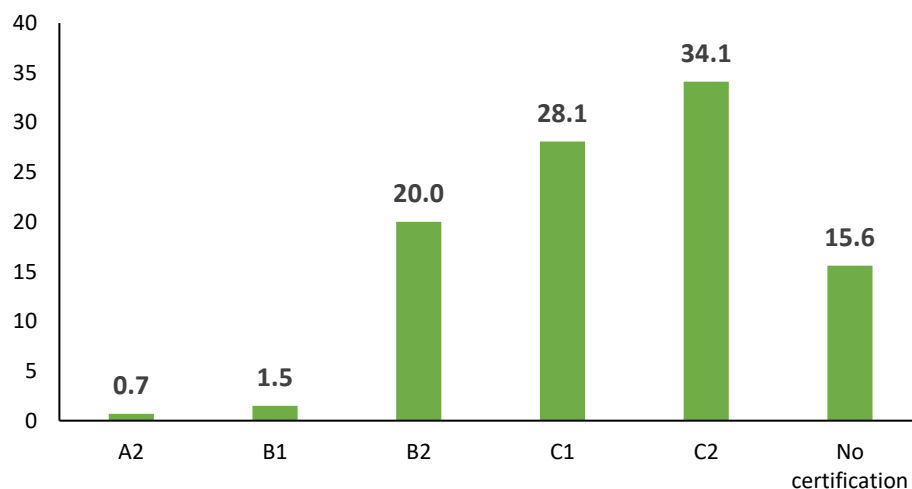


On average, participants were 44.4 years old (SD 7.3), all holding Polish nationality. The majority were women (83%). Additionally, a total of 82.9% were affiliated with public schools, while 17.1% were employed in the private sector. In terms of educational level, 57.8% of participants were

engaged in teaching at the primary school level, while 41.5% were involved in secondary education. It is important to note that throughout the manuscript, the term 'students' is used as a general term for the learners taught by these teachers, including both primary and secondary education, in line with common practice in educational research. Educators reported a mean general teaching experience of 19.10 years ($SD = 7.60$) and a mean bilingual teaching experience of 6.10 years ($SD = 5.30$). Additionally, they conducted approximately 40-60% of their lessons in English, as depicted in Figure 1. Concerning language proficiency, 34.1% of respondents reported C2 level proficiency, representing just over a third of the total, followed by 28.1% at the C1 (advanced) level, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Percentage of educators holding official English certifications



Statistical Analysis

For the preliminary set of questions, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) were computed, while for the first objective of the study, descriptive statistics (mean, standard error, and percentage) were analysed for the 22 items under consideration.

To address the second objective, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, or one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was applied in cases where significant covariates were present. These analyses aimed to compare scores across the 22 items based on categorical variables such as gender (Men and Women), type of school (public and private) and level of education (primary and secondary). Potential confounding variables, including age, gender, school type, education level, teaching experience in the bilingual programme, and English proficiency level, were taken into consideration. Successively, simple linear regression analyses were conducted between teachers' age, experience in CLIL, certified level of English (non-categorical variables), and responses to questionnaire items. Effect sizes were determined using partial eta squared (ηp^2). All statistical analyses were carried out using IBM® SPSS® Statistics version 25.0 for Windows. The significance threshold was established at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Teachers' Perceptions of CLIL Implementation

The questionnaire provided valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences associated with CLIL among the surveyed educators. Participants generally acknowledged possessing adequate methodological training for teaching in a bilingual setting ($M = 4.80, SD = 1.20$).¹ In contrast, there was dissatisfaction with their university training in bilingual methodology, as indicated by a lower mean result ($M = 2.60, SD = 1.20$). Furthermore, respondents expressed concerns about the availability ($M = 2.50, SD = 1.30$) and design ($M = 2.90, SD = 1.50$) of in-service training courses for delivering lessons in the dual-focused setting. In terms of linguistic competence, educators reported a high level of English proficiency ($M = 5.30, SD = 1.00$), and the subsequent data analysis unveiled a moderate impact of enhancing their English proficiency on both students' learning ($M = 3.20, SD = 1.90$) and

¹ Likert scale responses ranged from 1 to 6, with 1 indicating the strongest disagreement (lowest) and 6 indicating the highest agreement (highest).

teachers' workload ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.90$). This suggests that educators, who already indicated a high proficiency level, may be satisfied with their current language skills, resulting in a perceived lack of significant transformative benefits in terms of student learning outcomes or substantial workload reduction. However, it is noteworthy that despite general satisfaction with their English level, the respondents raised concerns about the limited availability of language training courses, as reflected in the comparatively lower mean rating ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.40$). This indicates that despite contentment with their language skills, there is a perceived gap in the provision of language training opportunities, prompting participants to underscore the need for more language education options. Moreover, the data showed that according to the cohort under scrutiny bilingual teaching increased their workload ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.40$), but collaboration with other teachers was considered helpful in reducing it ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.50$). As the mean result indicated ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.50$), the respondents agreed that the time dedicated to teamwork in their centres was sufficient.

Yet, it has to be noted that concerns were raised about the adequacy of textbooks for bilingual teaching ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.50$) and participants strongly underscored the need to adapt and develop their own materials ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.00$), acknowledging that this process was time-consuming ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.00$). The flexibility of bilingual teaching materials to accommodate the needs of all students also received a moderate mean rating ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.40$), indicating that improvements are necessary to better cater to the varied requirements and learning experiences of the student population.

The challenges associated with group size and students' English proficiency also became evident in the present study, as larger group sizes ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.50$) and the diversity in English levels among students ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.50$) were reported to hinder effective teaching. Therefore, there was a consensus among the respondents that smaller class sizes would enable more effective support for both students facing challenges and those demonstrating high capabilities ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.50$). The surveyed teachers also concurred with the notion of implementing bilingual instruction at the early childhood education level, viewing it as a possible catalyst for enhancing

students' language proficiency and alleviating teachers' work ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.40$). Regarding the overall appraisal of the CLIL programme, on average, educators expressed satisfaction with its development in their centres ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.90$).

Within-Cohort Comparison

The one-way ANCOVA results demonstrated statistically significant differences in all identification variables for at least one item ($p < 0.05$), as illustrated in Table 1. Regarding gender, data analysis revealed only one statistically significant difference. Notably, women exhibited a higher level of agreement with the idea that collaboration with colleagues would help to reduce workload. As regards the type of centre, three statistically significant differences emerged. In private schools, teachers showed higher dissatisfaction with the availability of in-service training courses in bilingual methodology, while their counterparts in the public sector were more inclined to believe that bilingual education led to an increased workload. Notably, those in the private sector demonstrated a stronger consensus that collaborative efforts could potentially alleviate this workload. Regarding the education level, teachers from primary education were more aligned with the notion that differences in English proficiency among students make teaching more challenging. Additionally, the cohort working in secondary schools provided a more positive overall evaluation of the CLIL programme.

Table 1

Within-Cohort Comparison of the Questionnaire Scores (N = 135)^a

Group/item	One-way ANOVA/ANCOVA ^b				
	Mean (SE)	Mean (SE)	F	p	η^2_p
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Women</i> (<i>n = 112</i>)	<i>Men</i> (<i>n = 23</i>)			
Item 10 ^c <i>Collaboration with other teachers helps to reduce the workload</i>	4.2 (0.1)	3.5 (0.3)	3.974	0.048	0.029

One-way ANOVA/ANCOVA ^b					
Group/item	Mean (SE)	Mean (SE)	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p
<i>Type of center</i>	<i>Private</i> (<i>n</i> = 23)	<i>Public</i> (<i>n</i> = 112)			
Item 3 <i>Teachers are offered sufficient in-service training courses in bilingual methodology</i>	2.0 (0.3)	2.6 (0.1)	4.002	0.047	0.029
Item 9 ^d <i>Bilingual teaching increases the workload</i>	4.3 (0.3)	5.1 (0.1)	5.485	0.021	0.040
Item 10 ^e <i>Collaboration with other teachers helps to reduce the workload</i>	4.7 (0.3)	4.0 (0.1)	4.107	0.045	0.030
<i>Education level</i>	<i>Primary</i> (<i>n</i> = 78)	<i>Secondary</i> (<i>n</i> = 56)			
Item 20 ^d <i>Difference in English proficiency among students in the same class makes my teaching difficult</i>	4.5 (0.2)	4.0 (0.2)	4.326	0.039	0.032
Item 22 ^f <i>In general, how would you rate the functioning and development of bilingualism at its center?</i>	4.3 (0.1)	4.7 (0.1)	6.366	0.013	0.046

Note: SE stands for standard error. a - Because the analysis was expanded, this table includes only the statistically significant findings (i.e., 6 out of 66 comparisons). b -Analyses were conducted using one-way ANOVA or ANCOVA (when covariates were statistically significant). The covariates included: c type of centre, d age, e gender, and f level of English proficiency.

The results of the simple linear regression analyses indicated that teachers' age had a statistically significant positive relationship with several perceptions related to bilingual education. Specifically, as age increased, teachers were more likely to agree that bilingual teaching increased their workload ($\beta = 0.219$; $R^2 = 0.048$; $p = 0.011$) and that the adaptation and

elaboration of their own teaching materials was excessively time-consuming ($\beta = 0.229$; $R^2 = 0.053$; $p = 0.007$). Age was also positively associated with the perception that large group sizes make it difficult to teach effectively in the bilingual programme ($\beta = 0.181$; $R^2 = 0.033$; $p = 0.036$). Furthermore, as age increased, teachers were more likely to report that reducing class size would allow them to better serve both students experiencing difficulties and those who are more advanced ($\beta = 0.259$; $R^2 = 0.067$; $p = 0.002$), and that differences in students' English proficiency levels within the same class complicate their teaching ($\beta = 0.256$; $R^2 = 0.066$; $p = 0.003$). These results indicate that as teachers age, they increasingly perceive bilingual education as demanding in terms of workload and material preparation and emphasise classroom management challenges, such as group size and proficiency diversity.

In addition, the simple linear regression analysis demonstrated that teachers' experience in the bilingual programme is significantly and positively associated with two key perceptions. First, more experienced teachers were more likely to agree that the adaptation and elaboration of their own teaching materials is excessively time-consuming ($\beta = 0.185$; $R^2 = 0.034$; $p = 0.032$). Second, they expressed stronger agreement that reducing class size would allow them to better support both students facing the greatest difficulties and those with the highest capabilities ($\beta = 0.185$; $R^2 = 0.034$; $p = 0.031$). These findings mirror observed age-related trends, suggesting that both age and experience may shape teachers' perceptions of workload and the necessity for smaller class sizes.

The findings from the simple linear regression also revealed that teachers' accredited level of English was significantly associated with several perceptions related to bilingual education. Higher levels of English proficiency were positively linked to teachers reporting that they possess adequate training in the methodological aspects required to teach in bilingual education ($\beta = 0.271$; $R^2 = 0.073$; $p = 0.001$). Similarly, teachers with higher English proficiency were more likely to agree that introducing bilingual teaching at the early childhood education stage would enhance students' language proficiency and, consequently, facilitate the teacher's work ($\beta = 0.235$; $R^2 = 0.055$; $p = 0.006$). They also expressed greater satisfaction when rating

the overall functioning and development of bilingualism at their centre ($\beta = 0.228$; $R^2 = 0.052$; $p = 0.008$). Conversely, teachers with higher English proficiency were less likely to agree with the statement that if they had a higher level of English, their students could learn more ($\beta = -0.201$; $R^2 = 0.040$; $p = 0.020$), suggesting that those educators who are confident in their language skills do not perceive further proficiency as a critical barrier to student learning.

Discussion

While the participants expressed satisfaction with methodological knowledge for CLIL classes, the data underscores the limited attention given to teacher training programmes, both in academic institutions and on the job. Educators continue to face challenges stemming from insufficient provision and poorly designed courses, which may potentially hinder their effectiveness in meeting the demands of their profession. The results of the present study substantiate the findings of the previous research conducted by Czura and Papaja (2013), reinforcing the notion of a deficiency in formal training opportunities for CLIL methodology. Papaja (2014a) emphasises that effective training is crucial for empowering educators with the necessary skills and strategies to deal with the complexities of CLIL instruction and adeptly address challenges, including those related to creating teaching materials. Hence, the absence of formal CLIL training may pose challenges for teachers, resulting in variations in instruction quality and potential disparities in student learning outcomes. Lack of proper qualifications may impede the effective integration of content and language, thereby impacting the overall success of bilingual education. Moreover, a lack of standardised training further complicates CLIL instruction, making it challenging to establish best practices and ensure a consistent, high-quality learning experience for all students.

As stated by Czura and Papaja (2013) "the shape of CLIL provision is to a large extent determined by the teachers: their competence in L2, their qualifications in the field of CLIL as well as their ability to cooperate with their colleagues in order to facilitate the integration of language and content"

(p. 322). Coyle et al. (2010) also highlighted that the sustainability of high-quality CLIL was jeopardised without the adoption of training strategies for the professional workforce, which should include long-term plans to equip multilingual teachers with the necessary skills. Yet, it appears that a significant number of educators still lack the necessary formal qualifications to teach in a dual-focused setting. Additionally, educators often encounter challenges in striking the right balance between using the local language and the foreign language or in effectively teaching complex concepts (Czura & Papaja, 2013).

Furthermore, the present findings demonstrate not only a lack of training programmes focused on methodological skills in bilingual education but also a shortage of opportunities for learning foreign languages. Although participants in the current study expressed satisfaction with their English proficiency, they also concurred that the available courses for refining their linguistic skills are limited. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Gozdawa-Gołębiowski et al. (2019) on the implementation of CLIL in Poland, Austria, Romania, and Spain.

In light of the identified challenges in CLIL instruction, several suggestions can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of bilingual education. To begin with, there is an urgent requirement for the creation and execution of formal CLIL training programmes, both within universities and as part of continuous professional development. These initiatives should focus on equipping educators with the essential methodological skills in bilingual education emphasising the integration of content and language elements. Additionally, efforts should be made to provide more opportunities for language learning, ensuring that educators can continually refine their linguistic skills. Long-term plans for training the professional workforce, as suggested by Coyle et al. (2010), should be devised to ensure the sustainability and quality of bilingual education. Furthermore, educational institutions should take a proactive role in addressing the observed lack of standardised training, establishing guidelines and best practices for CLIL instruction, ultimately aiming to create a cohesive and high-quality learning experience for students.

In addition to the shortage of teacher training programmes, the notable lack of well-designed materials and the ongoing need for adaptation have emerged as significant constraints in bilingual education in the Polish

educational scenario. In our research, it became evident that the scarcity of well-crafted materials, a concern previously by Papaja (2014a), continues to pose a persistent challenge in the field. This issue demands significant dedication from CLIL educators, who frequently find themselves compelled to create their own resources. Some educators also opt to use textbooks from countries where the target language is spoken (Czura & Papaja, 2013). Nevertheless, it has been argued that relying on materials from other nations to teach a specific country's curriculum raises issues due to the non-neutrality of education (Czura & Papaja, 2013). As Czura et al. (2009) indicated, "because of their high price and, what is even more important, unsuitability because of culturally-bound discourse approaches, the imported course books do not satisfy Polish students and teachers' needs" (p. 175). Furthermore, it was stated that teachers should not anticipate covering the same volume of content when using the L2 as they do with the L1 (Marsh & Marsland, 1999). Therefore, there exists a pressing need for well-crafted, culturally relevant materials to address bilingual education challenges in Poland, with Marsh and Marsland (1999) emphasising the importance of ensuring high L2 standards for teacher-created resources. In response to the demand for CLIL materials, fostering collaborative initiatives among educators proves essential. Czura et al. (2009) advocated for the integration of team meetings into schedules, presenting a strategy to bolster the development of well-designed resources and, consequently, enhance the overall effectiveness of bilingual education. The present study further highlighted the significance of collaboration in reducing workload, with respondents acknowledging sufficient time dedicated to teamwork in their centres. Despite this improvement, it is essential to consider that there might be other issues addressed during these meetings, as educators still express concerns about materials creation.

Besides the outlined limitations, CLIL teachers have also expressed concerns about larger group sizes and students' diverse proficiency levels, identifying these factors as impediments to effective teaching. Moreover, the study suggests that addressing learner diversity through smaller class groups is viewed as a potential strategy by CLIL educators. This approach allows teachers to support students with special needs and high achievers, facilitating the realisation of their full potential. These findings resonate with

recent investigations by Pérez Cañado (2018) and Soler et al. (2017), highlighting a notable concern among scholars regarding the lack of attention to diversity in bilingual education.

However, despite significant drawbacks, the overall assessment of the CLIL programme remains positive. This may suggest that while various challenges persist, teachers still recognise the substantial potential of this innovative educational initiative. Indeed, Czura et al. (2009) observed that CLIL teachers demonstrated a high level of commitment to teaching, perceiving their role in bilingual classes not only as a significant challenge but also as a means of personal and professional fulfilment.

Regarding the within-cohort comparison, the presented data reveal a noteworthy association between age and teachers' perspectives. Increasing age is associated with greater agreement on the heightened workload and awareness of challenges related to group size and varying English proficiency among students. Similarly, as age increases, teachers are more inclined to recognise the benefits of reducing group size, viewing it as a strategic approach to better serve students with diverse needs. This coincides with the findings that more experienced teachers, in accordance with the data presented, hold similar beliefs regarding the challenges of adapting materials and the potential benefits of reducing group size. The parallel trends between age and experience suggest an intricate relationship, indicating that over time, teachers develop a better understanding of the complexities inherent in bilingual education. The present study's findings are in line with those of Perez Cañado (2018) and Szczesniak and Muñoz Luna (2022) conducted in Spain, revealing a consistent impact of age and experience on teachers' perspectives in CLIL settings. While there is a shared acknowledgement of these two variables influencing teachers' viewpoints, it is important to recognise differences in the specific aspects emphasised between these studies. For example, in the study by Szczesniak and Muñoz Luna (2022), age is primarily associated with teachers' satisfaction with in-service training and their perceptions of textbook design, whereas in the study by Pérez Cañado (2018), age is linked to teachers' familiarity with the theoretical foundations of bilingual education and their use of authentic materials. Thus, while age plays a role across all studies, the specific areas it influences are not the same. The variations noted

in how age and experience impact teachers' perspectives on different facets of CLIL may be attributed to the distinct educational systems, cultural influences, and institutional frameworks present in Spain and Poland. These contextual variations play a significant role in shaping teachers' experiences and perceptions, underscoring the need to consider each country's unique socio-cultural and educational landscapes when interpreting the influence of age or experience on teachers' opinions in bilingual education.

In relation to English proficiency, the current study corroborates the findings of Szczesniak and Muñoz Luna (2022), indicating that teachers with higher language proficiency levels express increased satisfaction not only with their language competence but also with their methodological expertise in bilingual education. As a result, the primary conclusion from these analyses indicates that CLIL teachers who have a higher proficiency in the target language tend to experience greater satisfaction in different aspects of the programme — an observation further substantiated by the study conducted by Milla Lara and Casas Pedrosa (2018). Consequently, our study underscores the importance of prioritising the improvement of language proficiency, a crucial factor for the success of bilingual education, as indicated by Pérez Cañado (2018).

The data also revealed a few notable distinctions in the perceptions of educators in private and public schools. Teachers from private schools expressed greater dissatisfaction with in-service training courses in bilingual methodology. These findings are contrary to the results of the study conducted in the region of Andalucía in Spain by Szczesniak and Muñoz Luna (2022), where CLIL educators who belonged to the private sector appeared slightly more positive towards the provision of teacher training. The variations in outcomes could also be influenced by country-specific factors such as distinct educational systems, cultural contexts, and regional policies. These disparities once again underscore the importance of recognising and addressing country-specific factors when designing and implementing teacher training programmes in bilingual methodology. Policymakers and educators should consider the unique challenges and context of each country's educational system to tailor in-service training courses effectively. Additionally, the results of this study suggest that educators in the public sector are more inclined to endorse

the notion that bilingual education contributes to an increased workload. Therefore, it appears that they may require additional support to alleviate their workload and enhance the efficacy of their performance.

Yet, the within-cohort comparison showed limited statistically significant differences across gender, which could suggest that, in general, both male and female educators share similar perceptions of bilingual education. The statistically significant difference found in women's higher agreement might be an isolated observation rather than a pervasive trend. As regards the education level, the study reveals that primary education teachers express more concerns about challenges related to varying English proficiency among students in bilingual education. This disparity could be explained by the fact that students in primary education are in the initial stages of language acquisition. Consequently, any disparities in proficiency could exert a more pronounced impact on both teaching strategies and learning outcomes. This might also clarify why secondary school teachers appeared to evaluate the programme more positively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides important insights into the implementation of the CLIL programme in Poland by presenting teachers' perspectives on classroom practices, resources, and contextual factors influencing its implementation. A key finding is the inadequacy of formal training programmes for CLIL methodology, which may hinder educators' ability to effectively teach in bilingual classrooms. Another significant challenge is the scarcity of well-designed materials for CLIL instruction, which leads teachers to create their own resources or rely on materials developed abroad, as highlighted in previous research (Czura & Papaja, 2013). Czura et al. (2009) noted that using such imported textbooks may raise concerns about their cultural relevance to the Polish curriculum. Participants in this study also highlighted challenges related to class size and diverse student proficiency levels as impediments to effective teaching in bilingual education. These observations point to areas where improvements could support teachers, particularly through in teacher training initiatives and resource development to

enhance the quality of bilingual education and ensure its sustainable growth.

The study also highlights the important role of teachers' characteristics, encompassing age, experience, and language proficiency, in influencing their perspectives within bilingual education. The findings illuminate the substantial impact of these variables on educators' awareness of challenges and overall satisfaction within the CLIL environment. Moreover, acknowledging the substantial impact of experience and English proficiency on the effectiveness of CLIL underscores the need for prioritising language competence in enhancing the overall success and impact of bilingual education initiatives. Looking ahead, future research in bilingual education should extensively investigate the provision and impact of teacher training initiatives on teachers' practices and CLIL programme effectiveness. Additionally, exploring the development and use of well-designed materials is essential for fostering effective bilingual education practices.

Despite its contributions, this study presents several limitations. Focusing on the Polish context may restrict the applicability of the findings to different cultural and educational environments. Additionally, the emphasis on educators' perspectives leaves gaps in understanding student experiences. Future studies should aim to overcome these limitations to enable a more detailed analysis of bilingual education. Moreover, it should be noted that the sample in this study was relatively small and may not be representative of all primary and secondary school teachers implementing CLIL in Poland. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the study provides important information on the experiences of CLIL teachers in Poland and identifies practical challenges and opportunities for improving bilingual education. Although the sample is not representative, the findings highlight key challenges faced by CLIL teachers and point to areas where teacher training, instructional materials, and policy support could be strengthened to enhance the implementation of CLIL.

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**ĮŽVALGOS APIE IDUKM PRAKTIKĄ: DVIKALBĖ ŠVIETIMO SISTEMA
LENKIJOS PRADINĖSE IR VIDURINĖSE MOKYKLOSE**

Anotacija. Užsienio kalbų mokymo srityje integruotas dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymasis (IDUKM) iškilo kaip labai perspektyvus ir novatoriškas metodas, sulaukęs plačios Europos Sąjungos švietimo institucijų paramos. Todėl šiame tyrime daugiausia dėmesio skirta Lenkijos pradinių ir vidurinių mokyklų mokytojų nuomonei apie IDUKM įgyvendinimą. Duomenys buvo renkami naudojant specialiai šiam tyrimui parengtą anketą, kurią užpildė 135 mokytojai iš dvikalbių anglų kalbos mokyklų visoje Lenkijoje. Rezultatai atskleidžia susirūpinimą dėl netinkamų mokytojų rengimo programų, neveiksmingo vadovėlių dizaino ir tokių svarbių klausimų kaip skirtingas mokinių anglų kalbos įgūdžių lygis bei didelis mokinių skaičius klasėse; tai gali trukdyti IDUKM programos plėtrai. Tyrimas taip pat pabrėžia, kad bendradarbiavimo kultūros skatinimas tarp pedagogų yra būtinas ne tik darbo krūviui palengvinti, bet ir tam, kad būtų sukurta palanki atmosfera išteklių plėtrai. Be to, pripažįstant patyrusių mokytojų, turinčių aukštą anglų kalbos kompetencijos lygį, lemiamą vaidmenį, pabrėžiama strateginių investicijų į profesinį tobulėjimą būtinybę. Šie rezultatai pabrėžia kruopščių ir žiniomis pagrįstų švietimo sprendimų priėmimo svarbą, siekiant užtikrinti IDUKM programos veiksmingumą.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: IDUKM; dvikalbis mokymas ir mokymasis; mokytojų rengimas; anglų kalbos mokėjimo lygis; iššūkiai klasėje.

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ANALIZA PRAKTYK CLIL W EDUKACJI DWUJĘZYCZNEJ W POLSKICH SZKOŁACH PODSTAWOWYCH I ŚREDNICH

Streszczenie. W edukacji języków obcych zintegrowane nauczanie przedmiotowo-językowe (CLIL) stało się nowoczesną i obiecującą metodą, która jest wspierana przez władze edukacyjne w Unii Europejskiej. W związku z tym niniejsze badanie analizuje, jak nauczyciele szkół podstawowych i średnich w Polsce postrzegają wdrażanie CLIL. Dane zebrano za pomocą autorskiego kwestionariusza wśród 135 nauczycieli pracujących w dwujęzycznych szkołach z językiem angielskim w całym kraju. Wyniki pokazują obawy dotyczące niewystarczającego szkolenia nauczycieli, słabego przygotowania podręczników oraz ważnych problemów, takich jak różny poziom znajomości języka angielskiego u uczniów i duże liczebności klas. Czynniki te mogą utrudniać rozwój programu CLIL. Badanie podkreśla również, że współpraca między nauczycielami jest bardzo ważna. Pomaga ona zmniejszyć obciążenie pracą i tworzy lepsze warunki do przygotowywania materiałów dydaktycznych. Dodatkowo doświadczeni nauczyciele z wysokim poziomem języka angielskiego odgrywają kluczową rolę, dlatego potrzebne są inwestycje w ich rozwój zawodowy. Wyniki wskazują, że dobrze przemyślane decyzje edukacyjne są niezbędne, aby program CLIL działał skutecznie.

Słowa kluczowe: CLIL; edukacja dwujęzyczna; szkolenie nauczycieli; znajomość języka angielskiego; wyzwania w klasie.