

Teacher training in CLIL: Teachers' perceptions in a public school in Bogotá—A case study

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ABSTRACT: The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach promotes the teaching of disciplinary content through a foreign language. Although its benefits have been widely recognised, several studies point out that its implementation faces important challenges, with teacher training being one of the most critical. This qualitative and interpretative case study design, supported by descriptive quantitative data, analyses the perceptions of 35 participants—non-linguistic subject teachers (n=21), English teachers (n=12), and bilingualism programme leaders (n=2)—in a public school in Bogotá. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and analysed using descriptive and thematic procedures. Findings reveal consensus on teacher training as a core component of the CLIL approach, as well as significant gaps between the linguistic and methodological preparation of non-linguistic subject and English teachers. The role of the bilingualism leaders as formative support and the need for continuous, relevant, and contextualised training processes are also highlighted. This study provides situated empirical evidence on CLIL in Colombian public contexts, contributing to the strengthening of bilingual education and to the literature on CLIL implementation in official institutions less documented.

Keywords: CLIL, teacher training, teacher perceptions, bilingual education, public school

Formación docente AICLE: percepciones docentes de un colegio público de Bogotá—Estudio de caso

RESUMEN: El enfoque Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua Extranjera (AICLE), promueve la enseñanza de contenidos disciplinares a través de una lengua extranjera. Aunque sus beneficios han sido ampliamente reconocidos, diversos estudios señalan que su implementación enfrenta retos importantes, siendo la formación docente uno de los más relevantes. Este estudio de caso cualitativo interpretativo, apoyado por datos cuantitativos descriptivos, analiza las percepciones de 35 participantes—docentes de áreas no lingüísticas (n=21), docentes de inglés (n=12) y líderes de bilingüismo (n=2)—de un colegio público de Bogotá. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante cuestionarios y entrevistas semiestructuradas, y analizados a través de procedimientos descriptivos y temáticos. Los hallazgos evidencian consenso sobre la formación docente como eje estructural del enfoque AICLE, así como brechas entre los niveles lingüísticos y la formación metodológica del profesorado de áreas no lingüísticas y de inglés. Asimismo, se destaca el rol del líder como apoyo formativo y la necesidad de procesos de formación continuo, pertinentes y contextualizados. Este estudio aporta evidencia empírica situada sobre AICLE en contextos públicos colombianos, contribuyendo al fortalecimiento de la educación bilingüe y a la literatura sobre la implementación de CLIL en instituciones oficiales poco documentadas.

Palabras clave: AICLE, formación docente, percepciones del profesorado, educación bilingüe, institución pública

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach has become a key methodology for promoting bilingualism in educational contexts. In several European countries, such as Spain, it has been implemented through language policies aimed at fostering multilingualism (Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). In contrast, in Latin America—and particularly in Colombia—it has focused on strengthening English as a foreign language, mainly through the National Bilingualism Plan (NBP). However, several studies have questioned the exclusive emphasis on English, arguing that it overlooks the country's multilingual and multicultural character (Miranda, 2012; Miranda-Montenegro, 2020; Bastidas & Jiménez, 2021). Moreover, bilingualism policies have often been disconnected from educational and social realities (López Pinzón et al., 2021; Miranda-Montenegro, 2020; Mosquera Pérez, 2022) students, and administrators about EFL teaching and learning in public schools under the Suggested English Curriculum (SEC).

Although CLIL's benefits in developing cognitive and communicative skills are documented, its implementation has faced significant challenges, especially regarding teacher training -both linguistic and methodological- and the limited availability of context-appropriate materials (Durán-Martínez & Fernández-Costales, 2025; Pérez Cañado, 2016b) the expansion of bilingual education programmes in Spain has generated a situation where the voices of stakeholders frequently go unheard. Accordingly, this paper is a critical review of bilingual programmes within the Spanish context. An analysis has been carried out on stakeholder perceptions, that is, of teachers, students, management teams, and families, as reflected in the literature published between 2014 and 2023. The corpus reviewed consists of 34 papers, ranging from pre-primary to higher education, with a particular focus on stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of bilingual education in a foreign language (English). In Colombia, the discontinuity of educational policies—particularly following in government transitions—has hindered the sustainability and consolidation of bilingual programmes (López et al., 2021) students, and administrators about EFL teaching and learning in public schools under the Suggested English Curriculum (SEC; Corrales & Poole, 2023). For more than a decade, various studies have pointed out that one of the main limitations of the CLIL approach has been the insufficient training of teachers in methodological, linguistic and subject-specific aspects (Pérez Cañado, 2018b; Lo, 2020; Banegas et al., 2020). Although some progress has been made in this regard, teacher training remains a persistent challenge in public educational institutions, as this study illustrates.

This article analyses the perceptions of teachers and bilingualism leaders regarding teacher training within an institutional bilingual programme based on the CLIL approach, implemented in a public school with an established trajectory in this model.

Research questions: 1) How do English teachers, non-linguistic area (NLA) teachers, and bilingualism programme leaders perceive their linguistic and methodological training for implementing of the CLIL in a public-school context in Bogotá, Colombia? 2) How do programme teachers perceive the role of pedagogical leadership in supporting CLIL implementation?

This study follows a qualitative and interpretative case study design, supported by descriptive quantitative data that provide contextual information about the teachers' perceptions. It explores both the progress achieved and tensions in teacher training processes to

understand how teacher preparation is perceived in real educational contexts and to identify opportunities for improvement. This research contributes situated empirical evidence from the public sector, addressing a gap in the literature, as studies documenting CLIL implementation in official educational institutions in Colombia remain limited (Banegas et al., 2020; Corrales & Poole, 2023; Hemmi & Banegas, 2021).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. The CLIL approach: concept and expansion

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), known as *Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenido y Lenguas Extranjeras* (AICLE) in Spanish, *l'Enseignement de matières par l'intégration d'une Langue Étrangère* (ÉMILE) in French, and *Bilingualer Sachfachunterricht* in German, is an educational approach that emerged in Europe at the end of the 20th century. It was driven by the Council of Europe's language policies, aimed at promoting the learning of foreign languages through innovative methodologies (Campillo et al., 2019; Cenoz et al., 2014; Hemmi & Banegas, 2021; Marsh et al., 2015). This approach advocates for the teaching of non-linguistic content subjects through a foreign language, integrating the simultaneous learning of both content and language. According to Coyle et al. (2010), CLIL is based on the principle that authentic language use in academic contexts fosters both linguistic and cognitive competences inherent to subject areas. This dual orientation requires intentional pedagogical design that connects content, communicative skills, critical thinking and intercultural awareness.

CLIL has been expanded across Europe and Latin America. In Spain, for instance, language policies aimed at promoting plurilingualism have contributed to the consolidation and development of CLIL in both practice and educational research (Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). Various studies recognise Spain as a leading country in the development of CLIL methodology, due to the ongoing systematisation of experiences, production of materials, and research output (Campillo et al., 2019; Marsh et al., 2015; Pérez Cañado, 2016b). Likewise, Durán-Martínez and Fernández-Costales (2025) the expansion of bilingual education programmes in Spain has generated a situation where the voices of stakeholders frequently go unheard. Accordingly, this paper is a critical review of bilingual programmes within the Spanish context. An analysis has been carried out on stakeholder perceptions, that is, of teachers, students, management teams, and families, as reflected in the literature published between 2014 and 2023. The corpus reviewed consists of 34 papers, ranging from pre-primary to higher education, with a particular focus on stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of bilingual education in a foreign language (English offers an updated perspective, highlighting persistent challenges such as the need for additional teacher training in linguistic and methodological aptitudes, the development of specialised CLIL materials, and enhanced collaborative work between teachers and clear guidance from educational authorities. These findings, while situated in the European context, echo similar concerns identified in Latin American and Colombian bilingual education systems.

In Latin America, Colombia stands out for its contributions to CLIL research and implementation in both public and private institutions (Banegas et al., 2020; Corrales & Poole, 2023). Nevertheless, persistent challenges remain, such as scarcity of contextualised

teaching materials, limited ongoing methodological support, and, particularly, the need for specific teacher training (Banegas, 2012; McDougald, 2018; Pérez Cañado, 2018a). These issues are especially acute in public education, where structural conditions need adaptable, continuous, grounded training strategies and physical spaces with adequate materials (Bermúdez & Fandiño Parra, 2016; Mosquera Pérez, 2022).

Furthermore, the alliance between the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional* (MEN) and the British Council in 2007 resulted in a national diagnostic study that informed the *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo*. Despite criticism of its ambitious goals and detached from the actual conditions of educational contexts, the programme continues today. Likewise, the agreement between the *Secretaría de Educación del Distrito* (SED) and the British Council in 2016 supported the actions outlined in the *Plan Distrital de Segunda Lengua* (Secretaría de Educación del Distrito, 2019), strengthening Bogotá's public schools.

2.2. Teacher training in CLIL

Teacher education is a key factor for the success of bilingual programmes, especially those based on the CLIL approach. European research continues to identify linguistic and methodological training as main need for effective implementation (Durán-Martínez & Fernández-Costales, 2025) the expansion of bilingual education programmes in Spain has generated a situation where the voices of stakeholders frequently go unheard. Accordingly, this paper is a critical review of bilingual programmes within the Spanish context. An analysis has been carried out on stakeholder perceptions, that is, of teachers, students, management teams, and families, as reflected in the literature published between 2014 and 2023. The corpus reviewed consists of 34 papers, ranging from pre-primary to higher education, with a particular focus on stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of bilingual education in a foreign language (English; Lo, 2020). Banegas and Arellano (2024) analysed *Teacher Language Awareness* (TLA) in CLIL teacher education programmes in Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador proposing a TLA-CLIL pedagogical model based on Morton's (2018) framework, that integrates linguistic and content knowledge through an experiential learning cycle.

In Colombia, this need is especially evident as schools adopt bilingual initiatives without first ensuring adequate teacher preparation (Bermúdez & Fandiño Parra, 2016; Corrales & Poole, 2023; Rodríguez, 2011). Within the CLIL, training must go beyond language proficiency to include didactic, disciplinary, and contextual dimensions. Teaching content through a foreign language requires teachers integrating subject and language knowledge, curriculum planning, and dual-focus assessment (Coyle et al., 2010; Cummins, (2001). Consequently, CLIL teacher profiles should combine linguistic competence, subject expertise, and collaborative curricular planning (Corrales and Poole, 2023).

In Colombia, however, studies reveal policy fragmentation and discontinuity in training programmes derived from the *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo*, that has limited pedagogical appropriation of CLIL (Bastidas & Jiménez, 2021; Mosquera, 2022; Rodríguez, 2011). Research also highlights limited knowledge among non-language subject teachers, along with the difficulty of balancing disciplinary and linguistic objectives (McDougald, 2018; Mosquera, 2022; Corrales & Poole, 2023). Authors such as Pérez Cañado (2016a) and Lo (2020) stress the need for continuous professional development addressing linguistic, intercultural

and methodological competences. From an interpretative perspective, CLIL teacher education must consider real classroom conditions and the voices of teachers (Bermúdez & Fandiño Parra, 2016; López Pinzón et al., 2021) política lingüística y formación docente, realizado por docentes de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de La Salle. Intenta dar a conocer de manera sucinta algunas aproximaciones conceptuales con respecto al concepto de bilingüismo, presenta algunas perspectivas teóricas con respecto al fenómeno bilingüe, y finalmente, plantea algunas sugerencias y retos que pueden favorecer el logro de los objetivos propuestos por la política de bilingüismo del país.”, ”language”: ”en”, ”source”: ”papers.ssrn.com”, ”title”: ”Bilinguismo: Definición, Perspectivas Y Retos (Bilingualism: Definition, Perspectives and Challenges. Strengthening teacher education enhances quality, sustainability, fosters ownership of the approach, encourages innovation in bilingual education and promotes more equitable and contextualised processes (Madrid & Madrid, 2014; Pérez Cañado, 2016a; Truscott de Mejía et al., 2011).

2.3. Professional competences of CLIL teachers

The professional profile of CLIL teachers take on diverse configurations depending on institutional context, educational level, and disciplinary background. Lo (2020) identifies three main models in CLIL practice: a) content teachers with sufficient language proficiency; b) language teachers who deliver disciplinary content—more common in primary education—and c) team teaching between content and language teachers, where each one focuses on their area of expertise using integrated pedagogical strategies (p.17). This diversity of pedagogical configurations underscores the need for differentiated and contextualised training processes.

In line with this, the *European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education* (Marsh et al., 2012) outlines key competences such as disciplinary expertise, foreign language competence, and knowledge of pedagogical methodologies to integrate language and content. Beyond technical skills, teachers must articulate these elements coherently and align them with the curriculum and institutional educational projects and the ability to use language both as a medium and an object of learning, and develop lifelong competences—digital, intercultural, and civic—that support holistic education (Lo, 2020).

In addition to teaching competences, a set of ongoing learning dimensions: communication in the mother tongue and in a foreign language, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competence, a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression (Lo, 2020). In this regard, Lo (2020) argues that the CLIL teacher carries a dual responsibility: facilitating the learning of disciplinary content while simultaneously promoting students' development of a foreign language competences.

This dual role requires the ability to scaffold learners' access to the subject-specific target language, with particular emphasis on discipline-related terminology. Hence, both initial and in-service teacher education should address theoretical understanding, knowledge of language and content, and their integration. It should also include the planning, implementing, and assessment of interdisciplinary learning sequences; the development of linguistic awareness regarding how language constructs content knowledge and how it should be taught; and the fostering of intercultural competence (Lo, 2020, p.18). Banegas and Arellano (2024) identify

Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) as a central component of professional competence in CLIL teacher education, distinguishing between *Common* and *Specialised Language Knowledge* for Content Teaching. This distinction highlights the need for CLIL teachers to develop an explicit awareness of how language functions. Additionally, Lo (2020, p.23) proposes two models for teacher professional development: (1) collaborative work between content-subject teachers and language teachers, and (2) professional development courses specifically designed for content teachers involved in bilingual programmes. Similarly, continuous reflection and collaborative professional development remain essential, alongside ongoing that enables teachers to stay updated with current advancements in CLIL (Pérez Cañado, 2018b).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative methodology, framed within an interpretative and phenomenological paradigm. Its aim is to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers of English, Non-Linguistic Area (NLA) teachers, and bilingualism leaders regarding the bilingual programme based on the implementation of CLIL methodology. In particular, this article focuses on the theme of teacher training within the context of a public school in Bogotá, where CLIL is being implemented.

3.1. Methodological design

This study employed a qualitative case study design focused on a public educational institution (*Institución Educativa Distrital -IED*) recognised for its bilingual educational programme (Stake, 2010). The case was selected not only for its uniqueness but for its potential to deepen understanding of teachers' perceptions of CLIL implementation in the public sector, specifically in relation to teacher training.

The selected school constitutes a relevant case within Bogotá's district bilingual education initiatives. It began implementing its bilingual programme in 2008 and it is one of the pioneering institutions adopting the *Modelo Educativo Bilingüe (MEB)* under the *Plan Distrital de Bilingüismo*. According to the *Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá* (2025), 21 public schools are currently designated as part of the MEB across all localities, highlighting the significance of this case for analysing CLIL in public-school contexts.

At the national level, Colombia represents one of the few Latin American countries where bilingual education policies have been implemented through both national and district programmes such as the *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo* and the *Plan Distrital de Bilingüismo*. As noted by Banegas et al. (2020), Colombia has contributed significantly to CLIL research in the region; however, further studies are needed to explore diverse contexts – particularly public schools – where implementation challenges and opportunities remain under-documented.

3.2. Participants

The sample consisted of 35 teachers: 21 Non-Linguistic Area (NLA) teachers, 12 teachers of English, and 2 bilingualism programme leaders. Although the sample size is neither

large nor probabilistic, it corresponds to a purposive sampling, involving key participants directly engaged in the implementation and development of the bilingual programme. This selection enables the collection of in-depth data on the perceptions and experiences of those who are actively involved in the phenomenon under study (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014). In this sense, representativeness is grounded in the pertinence and relevance of the participants for understanding the phenomenon from an interpretative perspective, rather than in a statistical generalisability.

Table 1. Profile of Participants

PARTICIPANT GROUP	MAIN DISCIPLINE(S)	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	TEACHING/COORDINATION EXPERIENCE (YEARS)	CEFR ENGLISH LEVEL (SELF-RATED)
Bilingual programme leaders	Bilingual programme Coordination	1	1	2	1 (6 yrs); 1 (8yrs)	C1
English teachers	English	10	2	12	1 (≤5 yrs); 4 (10–15 yrs); 7 (>15 yrs)	B1 (n=2); B2 (n=5); C1 (n=5)
Non-Linguistic Area teachers (NLA)	Mathematics (n=10), Natural sciences (n=7), Technology (n=3), Physical education (n=1)	13	8	21	8 (≤5 yrs); 12 (6–10 yrs); 1 (>10 yrs)	A1 (n=2); A2 (n=4); B1 (n=6); B2 (n=5); C1 (n=3); C2 (n=1)
Total		24	11	35	—	—

Note: CEFR = Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. English proficiency levels for participants were self-reported through the questionnaire. Teaching experience is shown in years.

3.3. Data collection techniques

Information was gathered using instruments adapted from Ortega et al. (2018), originally validated and applied in Spanish communities and used with authorization from the original authors. Data were collected through:

- **Mixed-format questionnaires** (Likert-scale and open-ended items) applied to bilingualism leaders and teachers, covering areas related to programme such as coordination, resources, planning and pedagogical results; and
- **Semi-structured interviews** with bilingual programme leaders, which explored perceptions and experiences in depth.

The questionnaires were adapted to the Colombian public-school context through minor lexical and referential adjustments (e.g., institutional terminology), while preserving the original conceptual structure. The instrument was applied using Google Forms (see 9 Appendices) and distributed through WhatsApp, email, or by the programme leaders. A total of 35 teacher responses were obtained, including those from the programme leaders. The sample was not-probabilistic and aimed at contextualised interpretative understanding rather

than generalisability. Although no additional pilot testing was conducted in this context, adaptation was supported by theoretical alignment and linguistic compatibility. Triangulation between questionnaire and interview data strengthened interpretative validity and reliability (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

3.4. Data analysis

The quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires were examined using descriptive analysis via SPSS software (version 23). This analysis focused on the calculation of absolute frequencies and percentages, which facilitated the identification of patterns of perception, level of agreement, and experiences related to training in the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodology.

In parallel, qualitative data derived from the semi-structured interviews with bilingual programme leaders and the open-ended questions from the questionnaires were analysed through thematic analysis. The data were coded with the support of NVivo software (version 12), allowing for the identification of emergent categories focused on teacher training. This methodological strategy, based on the triangulation of data from both quantitative and qualitative instruments, enriched the interpretation of findings and enhanced the interpretative validity of the study (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

The data collection instruments used in this study -questionnaires and semi-structured interviews- were administered in Spanish, the native language of all participants. Consequently, the verbatim excerpts cited throughout the findings were translated to English language. The appendices include the original versions of the instruments in Spanish to ensure transparency and contextual accuracy.

3.5. Ethical considerations

All participants signed an informed consent form prior to their involvement in the study, thereby ensuring the confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of the information collected. Data were managed in accordance with the ethical principles of education research and are available upon request from the author.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the data obtained through questionnaires and interviews, focusing on teacher training within the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) framework. The results are structured in two sections: quantitative data from closed-ended questionnaire items and qualitative data from open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews.

Participants' profile (see Table 1) includes English teachers, bilingual programme leaders, and Non-Linguistic Area (NLA) teachers from disciplines such as Science, Mathematics, Technology and Physical education. This diversity in disciplinary background, teaching experience, and English proficiency (CEFR self-reported levels) provides essential context for interpreting the findings. English teachers generally reported higher proficiency (B2-C1) and longer teaching experience, whereas NLA teachers represented more heterogeneous and

lower language levels. These factors may influence teachers' confidence and their ability to integrate content and language effectively (Pérez Cañado, 2018). Likewise, NLA teachers' emphasis on the need for ongoing training and professional development suggest a comparatively lower sense of confidence in teaching through English.

The quantitative findings are organised into two main categories: **perceptions of linguistic training** and **perceptions of pedagogical training**.

4.1. Quantitative data

4.1.1. Perceptions of linguistic training

Table 1 summarises the data related to the English language proficiency, professional experience and knowledge of the language used in bilingual subject areas.

Table 2. Perceptions of Linguistic training

VARIABLE	BILINGUALISM LEADERS (N=2)	NLA TEACHERS (N = 21)	TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (N = 12)
English Level (CEFR)	C1 (certified by British Council)	2 A1 4 A2 6 B1 5 B2 3 C1 1 C2	2 B1 5 B2 5 C1
Knowledge of the foreign language used in bilingual subjects	50% agree 50% disagree (perception about NLA teachers)	38.1% agree 28.6% neutral 14.3% disagree	66.7% strongly agree 8.3% agree 16.7% neutral 8.3% disagree
Professional Experience (years)	6-8 years as coordinator	76.2% with 1–8 years as bilingual teachers 23.8% with more than 10 years	91.7% with 10–23 years 8.3% with 1 year

Note: Author's own compilation based on survey data collected at school. Self-developed based on the results of surveys conducted at School 1. CEFR = Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The data show that teachers of English report a higher proficiency in the foreign language, with 83.3% at B2 or C1 levels, compared to the more heterogeneous self-reported levels among NLA teachers, including basic levels (A1 and A2). This disparity impacts teachers' confidence and competence in conducting lessons in English language. This is also reflected in teachers self-perceived knowledge of the language used in bilingual classes: 38.1% of NLA teachers agree with their proficiency, while 28.6% remain neutral and 14.3% disagree. In contrast, teachers of English show higher levels of self-confidence, with the most selecting "agree" or "strongly agree", and very few reporting disagreement. Their extensive professional experience -10 years or more- may contribute to this confidence and sense of mastery. These differences suggest that linguistic competence and pedagogical capacity remain determining factors in shaping teachers' attitudes towards CLIL implementation, influencing not only their classroom practices but also their confidence in applying the approach effectively.

4.1.2. *Perceptions of pedagogical training*

Table 2 displays data related to pedagogical knowledge for bilingual education and specific training in CLIL.

Table 3. Perceptions of Specific Training

VARIABLE	BILINGUALISM LEADERS (N=2)	NLA TEACHERS (N = 21)	TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (N = 12)
General knowledge level in bilingual education	1 intermediate 1 high	1 none (4.8%) 5 low (23.8%) 13 intermediate (61.9%) 2 high (9.5%)	2 intermediate (16.7%) 7 high (58.3%) 3 very high (25%)
Have you taken a specialised course, master’s degree, etc., in CLIL or bilingual education?	Yes	28.6% Yes 71.4% No	50% Yes 50% No
Self-perception of pedagogical knowledge in CLIL	Yes	14.3%strongly agree 38.1% agree 23.8% neutral 14.3% disagree 9.5% strongly disagree	58.3%strongly agree 25% agree 16.7% neutral

Note: Author’s self-compilation based on survey data collected at the school.

The results show a medium-level perception of knowledge in bilingual education: 71.4% of NLA teachers report an “intermediate” or “high level”, although 28.6% still state having “little or no knowledge”. In contrast, English teachers report higher levels of self-perception with no indication in low. Nevertheless, only 28.6% of NLA teachers have received formal training in this approach, whereas 50% of teachers of English have taken a specific course.

In terms of specific CLIL knowledge, none of the teachers of English expressed disagreement, while 23.8% of NLA teachers remained neutral and one expressed disagreement. This points to a need for strengthening continuous training processes and providing permanent supported in specific pedagogical practices of CLIL. It is worth emphasising that both foreign language proficiency and specialised methodological training in CLIL are essential for effective implementation (Coyle et al., 2010).

4.1.3. *Comparative analysis: training gaps between English and subject teachers*

Figure 1 presents the distribution of English language proficiency levels, based on the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), for both Non-Linguistic Area (NLA) teachers and teachers of English subject. It also shows their responses regarding participation in CLIL or bilingual education training courses. This data reveals notable disparities in the professional profiles of these two teaching groups

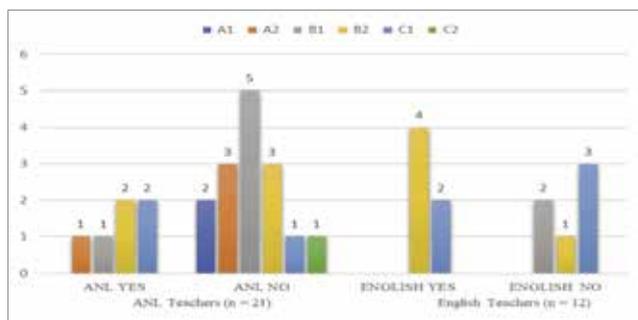


Figure 1. Distribution of English proficiency level (CEFR) by teacher type and CLIL training

The data reveal significant disparities between the two teaching groups, in terms of both language proficiency and specific CLIL training. Teachers of English reported more consolidated linguistic profiles, with 83.3% at B2 or C1 levels according to the CEFR, whereas NLA teachers showed a more heterogeneous distribution, including basic levels (A1 and A2). In terms of CLIL-specific training, 28.6% of NLA teachers reported having received such training, compared to 50% of teachers of English subject. Notably, some teachers who have taken CLIL-related training do not necessarily demonstrate high levels of language proficiency. These training gaps suggest that linguistic competence and pedagogical training continue to be determining factors shaping teacher’s didactic confidence, their capacity for pedagogical planning, and their perception of their own role within the bilingual programme.

4.2. Qualitative data

The qualitative results derive from an interpretative thematic analysis of interviews with the bilingualism leader and open-ended questionnaire responses. Four main categories emerged, reflecting teacher’s perceptions, experiences, and needs regarding professional development within the CLIL-based bilingual programme. All interview excerpts were originally expressed in Spanish and were translated into English by the author for publication purposes, ensuring semantic and contextual equivalence with the original meanings. These categories are

a. Training as a key component of the programme

Different educational stakeholders recognised that teacher training is an essential component of the bilingual programme. As stated by Marsh et al., 2015 if properly acknowledged, CLIL teacher preparation constitutes a fundamental pillar of initial teacher education and every educator should be trained as a CLIL teacher (p.7). This view extends beyond linguistic competence to include didactic strategies, curriculum design, and pedagogical knowledge specific to CLIL. Teachers and bilingual leaders alike highlight that the quality of teaching and learning in a foreign language is closely linked to strengthening teacher’s professional knowledge.

“Thanks to that English training, I believe we have the necessary knowledge to support bilingual processes at the school, and specifically with the methodology adopted years ago, which is CLIL.” (Leader 2).

“We received training, information, and updates on bilingual teaching.” (Maths teacher)

“We have had CLIL-specific training. Workshops are conducted here at the school with all the teachers who are part of the programme.” (English teacher)

b. Continuity in professional training

Although many teachers acknowledged previous training opportunities, some-particularly NLA teachers- expressed concern about the lack of continuity and regularity in training processes. This discontinuity limits opportunities and may create inequality

“I would like the school to offer more training sessions for the teachers who are part of the project. A few years ago, they were held more frequently; now we are lucky if one takes place per year.” (Maths teacher)

“Teacher training sessions are not regular” (Science teacher)

“Sometimes there are events organised by the Secretaría de Educación. At one point, we received very good training, we even had the opportunity to go to London. But that has not been maintained” (Leader 1)

Discontinuity in training reduces motivation and limits pedagogical consolidation. Therefore, continuous and institutionalised professional development should be a structural component of the school’s annual planning (Bastidas & Jiménez Salcedo, 2021).

c. Specific training in CLIL

Various educational stakeholders recognise the need for more focused methodological and pedagogical competence in CLIL principles. They emphasise training tailored to lesson planning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the design of bilingual materials. As teachers noted,

“Training—I always think it’s about training for the teachers. If teachers are properly trained, they will have the tools to improve their classroom practices” (Leader 1)

“It is necessary to provide training in the management of the technical English or the specific English used in each subject.” (Technology teacher)

“Topics from other subjects should be taught in English classes...Interdisciplinary work would be very helpful.” (Science teacher)

“Preparing the materials requires a great deal of work and time.” (Science teacher)

“There is always a need for further training and for diversifying the methodology—to renew strategies.” (Science teacher)

d. Pedagogical leadership as support for training

Leadership plays a crucial role in sustaining the programme, especially in contexts of high staff turnover and scarce institutional training. Leaders provide induction, support, and guide teachers, as well as the design of resources and the monitoring of pedagogical practices.

"The leader provides induction to new teachers in CLIL or through the agreements established with the British Council and the SED." (Leader 1)

"Our leader has knowledge about the project and gets actively involved". (Maths teacher)

"The training sessions we have had been organised by the programme leadership rather than by the institution itself." (English teacher)

As Banegas (2012) points out, a CLIL coordinator can play a central role in balancing content and language demands, and Coyle et al. (2010) underline, effective CLIL implementation requires committed leadership that integrates training with organizational structures.

Cross- analysis of quantitative and qualitative data validate convergences and complementarities around the centrality of training and leadership. First, English teachers reported intermediate to high levels of both language proficiency and knowledge of CLIL methodology (83.3% at B2 and C1 levels), which was echoed in qualitative responses

"The teachers participate in training sessions on the CLIL methodology." (Leader 1)

Secondly, both datasets highlighted a lack of regular training opportunities, particularly among NLA teachers. Quantitative data revealed that 28.6% of these teachers reported having little or no knowledge of CLIL, supported by qualitative testimonies that emphasised the urgent need for ongoing and context-specific professional development

"A few years ago, they offer training sessions with more frequently; now we are lucky if one is held per year." (Maths teacher)

Finally, all groups recognised leadership as essential for facilitating CLIL implementation. Quantitatively, the item "The person in charge of the programme has the pedagogical knowledge necessary to facilitate bilingual education" received strong support, with 100% of NLA teachers and 66.6% of teachers of English either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Findings align with teachers who acknowledge the leader's role in training and coordinating the programme.

"The leadership and commitment of the person in charge of the project." (Maths teacher)

A comparative analysis of the three participant groups – bilingual programme leaders, English teachers, and non-linguistic area (NLA) teachers- reveals both shared understandings and distinct perceptions regarding CLIL training and implementation. However, the emphasis and perspective differed across groups. The bilingual leaders adopted a more systematic and managerial view, focusing on coordination, continuity, and the work with external alliances such as the British Council. English teachers reported higher confidence levels, supported by their linguistic competence and prior methodological training. In contrast, NLA teachers

expressed a stronger demand for continuous and subject-specific training, which reflects the challenges of teaching content through English with limited language proficiency. These differences can be interpreted as resulting from disparities in access to training opportunities, linguistic competence, and disciplinary background (Bermúdez & Fandiño Parra, 2016; Pérez Cañado, 2018b). Despite these contrasts, the three groups converge on recognizing the need for ongoing professional development as a condition for the sustainability of the CLIL approach in public-school contexts.

5. DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings in light of the research questions: RQ1) How do English teachers, non-linguistic area (NLA) teachers, and bilingualism programme leaders perceive their linguistic and methodological training for implementing of the CLIL in a public-school context in Bogotá, Colombia? and RQ2) How do programme teachers perceive the role of pedagogical leadership in supporting CLIL implementation? This discussion is organised around dimensions derived from the questions

5.1. Teacher training as a fundamental pillar of the programme

Findings reveal a clear convergence: both teachers and bilingual coordinators recognise training as a key pillar for the programme's development. As noted by Coyle et al. (2010), Banegas and Arellano (2024) and Pérez Cañado (2018b), CLIL implementation requires not only language proficiency, but also integrated methodological competence. Training is therefore understood as an enabling condition for effective bilingual teaching and learning, requiring both comprehensive and specific preparation that combines methodological understanding, linguistic skills, and the ability to teach subject content through a foreign language. This reinforces arguments by Bastidas and Jiménez (2021) and Marsh et al. (2015), who regard CLIL teacher training as a core component of any bilingual policy, and by Madrid and Madrid (2014) and Pérez Cañado (2016a), underscore the ongoing professional development to the sustainability of bilingual programmes. From the interpretative perspective of this study, participants view teacher training as a crucial factor to strengthening their appropriation of the approach and professional confidence. This aligns with Lo (2020), who argues the CLIL teacher's dual responsibility: integrating disciplinary content teaching while fostering student's linguistic competence – an endeavour requiring specialised pedagogical, linguistic, and intercultural training.

5.2. Subject-specific training needs

An important emerging category is the need for subject-specific training. NLA teachers highlight that, beyond linguistic competence, they require methodological tools aligned with their disciplinary background. There is a clear demand for training that is both discipline-specific and pedagogically oriented, tailored to the institutional teaching context. These findings align with Lo (2020), who argues that the CLIL teacher profile entails dual responsibilities in which teachers must integrate linguistic, disciplinary, and didactic knowledge in coherence with the school curriculum.

5.3. Training gaps

The findings reveal a clear disparity between English and Non-Linguistic Area (NLA) teachers in both language proficiency and methodological preparation. Teachers of English subject tend to present higher linguistic competence and greater exposure to specialised training in CLIL. These gaps are not merely technical but pedagogical, as they may influence teachers' confidence, classroom practices, and the coherence of bilingual instruction across subjects. Such disparities represent a relevant theme that merits further exploration in future research (Banegas et al., 2020; Corrales & Poole, 2023).

This situation also reflects the fragmentation between national policies and institutional realities within Colombia's bilingual education framework (Bermúdez & Fandiño Parra, 2016; López Pinzón et al., 2021) política lingüística y formación docente, realizado por docentes de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de La Salle. Intenta dar a conocer de manera sucinta algunas aproximaciones conceptuales con respecto al concepto de bilingüismo, presenta algunas perspectivas teóricas con respecto al fenómeno bilingüe, y finalmente, plantea algunas sugerencias y retos que pueden favorecer el logro de los objetivos propuestos por la política de bilingüismo del país.”, ”language”.”en”, ”source”.”papers.ssrn.com”, ”title”.”Bilinguismo: Definición, Perspectivas Y Retos (Bilingualism: Definition, Perspectives and Challenges. Several studies (Corrales & Poole, 2023; Mosquera, 2022; Rodríguez, 2011) have pointed out that the implementation of bilingual programmes in Colombia has been hindered by a weak articulation between national education policies and school-level conditions. From an interpretative perspective, these inequalities reinforce the need for differentiated and collaborative training models that promote co-teaching and shared methodological development between English and content teachers This aligns with the recommendations of Coyle et al. (2010), Lo (2020), and Marsh et al. (2012), who emphasise that both initial and ongoing teacher education—articulated, context-sensitive, and sustained—are essential conditions for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of CLIL programmes.

5.4. Irregular training and lack of continuity

A recurring concern among teachers -particularly NLA teachers- was the irregularity and limited continuity of training opportunities. While some reported participation in sessions organised by the *Secretaría de Educación* or the British Council, others noted less frequency or absence of recent training. Access often depended more on the leadership of the bilingual coordinator than on institutional policy. This findings echoes Bastidas and Jiménez (2021), who identified fragmentation in Colombia's language education policies and the resulting inequalities in their implementation. Discontinuity in training hinders CLIL consolidation and reduces teacher engagement, particularly among newly incorporated staff into the programme. In line, McDougald (2018), Mosquera (2022), and Corrales and Poole (2023) highlight the absence of institutionalised, continuous training—intensified by political changes—as a major threat to programme stability. From an interpretative perspective, such discontinuity generates inequalities among teachers, reinforcing the need for institutionalised, initial, continuous, and context-sensitive professional development, as recommended by Marsh et al. (2012) in the *European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education*.

5.5. Leadership as structural support in contexts of limited teacher training

In educational contexts characterised by high staff turnover and scarce opportunities for ongoing training, the role of pedagogical leadership emerges as a critical factor. The bilingual programme leader has assumed a proactive role in coordinating training sessions, supporting the induction of new teachers, and providing continuous pedagogical guidance. Although this leadership role is not always formally recognised -given that it depends on administrative decisions- it has operated as a compensatory mechanism in response to structural constraints within the bilingual education.

This role acquires particular relevance in contexts where, as Truscott de Mejía et al. (2011) argue, external support is intermittent, and programme sustainability depends largely on committed leadership. The data collected reinforces this perspective: 100% of NLA teachers and 66.7% of teachers of English subject reported that the programme leader possesses the pedagogical knowledge necessary to effectively support bilingual education initiatives.

The convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings highlights this leadership role as a structural factor sustaining the implementation of CLIL in public institutions. Nevertheless, while such leadership is undoubtedly valuable, it should not be considered a replacement for a robust, continuous, and systematised training embedded with the educational policy.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to answer the research questions: (RQ1) *How do English teachers, non-linguistic area (NLA) teachers, and bilingualism programme leaders perceive their linguistic and methodological training for implementation of CLIL in a public-school context in Bogotá, Colombia?* (RQ2) *How do programme teachers perceive the role of pedagogical leadership in supporting CLIL implementation?*

With respect to RQ1, the findings confirm that teacher professional development constitutes a structural pillar for the effective implementation and sustainability of the CLIL. A shared vision was identified among English and Non-Linguistic teachers (NLA), and programme leaders regarding the need to strengthen both linguistic competence and methodological knowledge to integrate subject content and foreign language effectively. Although tensions persist, particularly among NLA teachers and programme leaders, due to the lack of continuous, and context-relevant training opportunities. These challenges are consistent with previous studies (Banegas et al., 2020; McDougald, 2018; Mosquera, 2022; Pérez Cañado, 2016b; Rodríguez, 2011).

Regarding RQ2, teachers lived experiences reveal that effective training should ensure continuity, regularity, engagement of all stakeholders involved in the bilingual programme, and alignment with disciplinary and institutional contexts. In this regard, the role of the programme leader emerged as key support mechanism to address institutional gaps. However, it cannot substitute for a more structured, permanent, and context-sensitive teacher education policy.

Furthermore, strengthening both general and English language proficiency remains a priority. Despite some teachers showing proficiency levels, a significant proportion still do not meet the linguistic and methodological requirements of CLIL. Strategic partnerships with institutions such as the British Council may support differentiated strategies, including

discipline-specific technical training, contextualised language instruction, and collaborative learning opportunities among teachers.

In conclusion, the implementation of CLIL in public schools requires a systemic vision of teacher education that integrates pre-service and in-service training, institutional leadership, and supportive policies. Sustainable progress will require educational reforms that recognise the realities of public-school educators, ensuring that bilingual education moves beyond isolated or unequal initiatives toward equitable and contextually grounded development. Some practical recommendations include allocating time within teachers' workload for collaborative planning, establishing pedagogical support teams, ensuring the availability of sufficient support teachers, providing access to CLIL-specific training, and, importantly, offering professional recognition and incentives, such as postgraduate study support, international training exchanges, and overseas immersion programmes.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was conducted in a public school in Bogotá, which limits the generalisability of its findings to other educational contexts in Colombia or Latin America. The case was selected because it is one of the pioneering public institutions implementing the CLIL approach under the *Modelo Educativo Bilingüe (MEB)* established by the *Plan Distrital de Bilingüismo*. As the data rely mainly on self-reported perceptions from teachers and bilingualism leaders, possible self-report bias may have influenced the results. Additionally, the absence of classroom observations limited the triangulation of findings with actual teaching practices. Future research should therefore include multi-site, quantitative, or longitudinal studies to explore CLIL implementation across diverse school types, incorporate classroom-based evidence, and focus on specific CLIL components such as culture, cognition, language development, and content integration, as well as their long-term progress. Such studies would deepen understanding of effective practices and contextual adaptations in bilingual education.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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9. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Questionnaire for English teachers and questionnaire for teachers of non-language subjects

¿Cuál es su Nivel de conocimiento de la lengua inglesa?

SIN NIVEL

A1

A2

B1

B2

C1

C2

...

El nivel de conocimiento de la lengua inglesa fue acreditado por *

Texto de respuesta corta

¿Cuál es su Nivel de conocimiento de enseñanza bilingüe? *

NINGUNO

POCO

MEDIO

BASTANTE

MUCHO

¿Ha realizado algún curso de experto, máster, etc. sobre CLIL-AICLE o la enseñanza bilingüe?

1. SI

2. NO

En caso afirmativo, indique nombre del curso, máster, etc. y organismo que lo impartió:

Texto de respuesta corta

ÁREA 2: Puntúe los siguientes ítems en referencia a **LA COORDINACIÓN** empleando la siguiente escala: 1. Totalmente en desacuerdo 2. En desacuerdo 3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo 4. De acuerdo 5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Descripción (opcional)

1. La persona responsable del programa bilingüe tiene conocimiento de la lengua extranjera empleada en las asignaturas bilingües. *

1 2 3 4 5
 1. Totalmente en desacuerdo 5. Totalmente de acuerdo

2. La persona responsable tiene conocimiento pedagógico que facilite la enseñanza bilingüe. *

1 2 3 4 5
 1. Totalmente en desacuerdo 5. Totalmente de acuerdo

1. Tengo conocimiento de la lengua extranjera empleada en las asignaturas bilingües. *

1 2 3 4 5
 1. Totalmente en desacuerdo 5. Totalmente de acuerdo

2. Tengo conocimiento pedagógico específico (CLIL) que facilite la enseñanza bilingüe. *

1 2 3 4 5
 1. Totalmente en desacuerdo 5. Totalmente de acuerdo

En su opinión, ¿cuáles son los puntos fuertes o fortalezas del programa bilingüe en su colegio?

Texto de respuesta larga

En su opinión, ¿cuáles son las áreas de mejora o retos del programa bilingüe en su colegio? *

Texto de respuesta larga

APPENDIX B. Questionnaire for bilingual coordination is similar to teachers questions

¿Cuál es su Nivel de conocimiento de enseñanza bilingüe? *

- NINGUNO
- POCO
- MEDIO
- BASTANTE
- MUCHO

¿Ha realizado algún curso de experto, máster, etc. sobre CLIL-AICLE o la enseñanza bilingüe?

1. SI
2. NO

En caso afirmativo, indique nombre del curso, máster, etc. y organismo que lo impartió:

Texto de respuesta corta _____

¿Ha realizado algún curso de experto, máster, etc. sobre CLIL-AICLE o la enseñanza bilingüe?

1. SI
2. NO

En caso afirmativo, indique nombre del curso, máster, etc. y organismo que lo impartió:

Texto de respuesta corta _____

ÁREA 2: Puntúe los siguientes ítems en referencia a **LA COORDINACIÓN** empleando la siguiente escala: 1. Totalmente en desacuerdo 2. En desacuerdo 3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo 4. De acuerdo 5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Descripción (opcional)

1. Como responsable, asisto a cursos de formación para la enseñanza bilingüe. *

1 2 3 4 5

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo

5. Totalmente de acuerdo

En su opinión, ¿cuáles son los puntos fuertes o fortalezas del programa bilingüe en su colegio?

Texto de respuesta larga

En su opinión, ¿cuáles son las áreas de mejora o retos del programa bilingüe en su colegio?

Texto de respuesta larga

APPENDIX C. Interviews about bilingual programs (Coordinator or Bilingualism Leader)

SOBRE COORDINADORES

6. ¿Están suficientemente preparados los coordinadores para coordinar el programa CLIL?
¿Tienen suficiente conocimiento científico y pedagógico para ello? Razones a favor y en contra.
7. ¿Están lo suficientemente comprometidos con la coordinación? ¿Por qué? ¿Coordinan de manera efectiva? ¿Por qué?
8. ¿Promueven prácticas y estrategias adecuadas? ¿Por qué?

SOBRE EL PROFESORADO

11. ¿Están los profesores lo suficientemente formados para garantizar el éxito del programa CLIL? Debilidades y fortalezas.
12. ¿Está el profesorado motivado y comprometido con el programa CLIL? ¿Por qué?