

**EFL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN CLIL SETTINGS: AN INSIGHT INTO  
TEACHERS' PRACTICES**

**DESARROLLO DE LA LITERACIDAD EN INGLÉS COMO LENGUA  
EXTRANJERA EN ENTORNOS AICLE: UN ANÁLISIS DE LAS PRÁCTICAS  
DOCENTES**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present article examines teachers' practices on ELF literacy development in Primary CLIL settings. The work is part of the research developed in the Erasmus+ project "Developing FL literacy in CLIL contexts, which aims to improve literacy practices in the CLIL classrooms. The study has an exploratory and descriptive nature and was conducted using an online questionnaire, designed and supervised by the international group participating in the project. Results show that a number of the resources, tools and strategies used by participants fall short in covering students' communicative needs in our present society, such as the work on different genres and text types, the promotion of free voluntary reading or the creation of a link between reading and writing tasks. Possible improvement areas are related to teacher training, lesson planning and materials design.

Keywords: literacy, teachers' practices, reading, Content and Language Integrated Learning, English as a Foreign Language.

**RESUMEN**

El presente artículo examina las prácticas docentes relativas al desarrollo de la literacidad en las clases de inglés en Educación Primaria en entornos AICLE. Tiene como objetivo la mejora de las prácticas de literacidad en las aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera. El estudio tiene un carácter descriptivo y exploratorio, y ha sido desarrollado a través de un cuestionario online, diseñado y supervisado por el grupo internacional participando en el proyecto. Los resultados muestran que algunos recursos, herramientas y estrategias utilizados por los participantes no cubren las necesidades comunicativas de nuestros estudiantes en la sociedad actual, como el trabajo con diferentes géneros y tipos de texto, la promoción de la lectura libre y voluntaria o la creación de un vínculo entre las tareas de lectura y escritura.

Palabras clave: literacidad, prácticas docentes, lectura, aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lengua extranjera, inglés como lengua extranjera.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of bilingual education, much research has been carried out to find out the impact of this instruction on students' language skills. However, despite the fact that teacher's views on CLIL have been dealt with in the specialised literature (Fernández Fernández et al., 2005;; Coonan, 2007; Fernández Fernández and Halbach, 2010; Johnson, 2012; Cabezuelo and Fernández Fernández, 2014; Pladevall-Ballester, 2015; and San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019), there still seems to be a dearth of studies on teachers' perceptions and, more specifically, on the English language teachers. In this context, the Erasmus+ Project 'Literacy for CLIL' attempts to improve literacy development in contexts where English is taught and used as a foreign language<sup>1</sup>.

One of the milestones in the research phase of the project is to describe teachers' beliefs about literacy and their classroom practices. At the core of these practices is reading, as a skill that makes learning accessible, providing students with a considerable amount of input both inside and outside the classroom. Also, research has demonstrated that students' reading abilities can be considered a predictor of academic success (Cullinan, 2000; Whiten, Labby and Sullivan, 2016; or, more recently, Stoffelsma and Spooren, 2019).

Another important characteristic of reading as a communicative skill is that it is inextricably linked to the rest of the skills. In Krashen's words (2013, p.21): "There is overwhelming evidence that those who read more read better, write with a more acceptable writing style, have larger vocabularies, have better control of complex grammatical constructions, and spell better than those who read less". In this sense, classroom practices that remain at the decoding phase fail at giving students the opportunity to develop cognitive skills, which are linked to the a more sophisticated use and work on text, such as grasping nuances of meaning, speaking from the perspective of a text or generating knowledge of text structure and purpose which will ultimately feed into text production.

Even if reading has always been at the core of literacy, little research has been carried out to describe the present state of the art of EFL reading practices in the CLIL classroom. The present work attempts to fill the research gap providing evidence on the current practices of EFL Primary Teachers of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Spain.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literacy is not only an academic concept but a human right (UNESCO, 2008). For a long time, it remained as a privilege for those who could afford and access quality education (Lunsford, Moglen & Slevin, 1990). With the spread of public education in the world, literacy development has been achieved by an increasing number of citizens. Nevertheless, there is still a need to develop good literacy practices in countries where economic and human means are not at hand, such as in the case of Ethiopia or India, and for sectors of the

population which present disabilities or need support (Goodley, 2007). It is still common to find literacy practices which fall short at providing learners with the training they need, as Copeland and Keefe state (2007).

The definition of literacy has evolved because it is a historical-contingent concept. In our time, literacy skills have been influenced by two significant advances. First, the impact of technological progress in the last century, which has created new means of communication, helping citizens to have easier access to information from any part of the world. Second, and also as a consequence of the first, globalisation. This panorama has created new opportunities for communication in different languages and contexts, and the use of more than one language in our everyday context. As García et al. (2007, p.207) stated: "In this context, it has become clear that, instead of bilingualism and biliteracy, the terms plurilingualism and pluriliteracies more accurately describe the complex language practices and values of speakers in multilingual communities of the 21st century".

## **2.1 Bilingual programmes and teacher training in Spain**

Following recommendations from the Council of Europe (White Paper, 1995), the Spanish government started to promote bilingual education. Bilingual initiatives in public schools were launched with collaboration from the British Council and the Ministry of Education with a project combining the national and the British curriculum as an integrated model (1996). Later on, some regional governments established bilingual projects based on dual-language models, such as is the case in Andalusia, where the curriculum competences are delivered both in L1 and L2 parallelly, and teachers are required to have a B2 CEFR level in the additional language. Other regional bilingual projects are based on the development of CLIL programmes, such as in the Autonomous Community of Madrid, or in the Community of Valencia. In this case, around 50% of class time is given in English. Bilingual subjects are entirely taught in English by content-teachers with an accredited advanced level, C1 CEFR. Other regions hired native speakers of the language to deliver subjects in English, such as is the case of the Aragon government, which implemented these programmes together with the British Council.

Parallel to these programmes, regional governments made (and are making) a considerable effort to launch teacher training itineraries for content-subject teachers to improve, not only teachers' communicative abilities but also their didactic knowledge and abilities. However, few recommendations, if any, have been made to teachers teaching the English language subject to adapt and improve their instruction within the new context. In this line, Dalton-Puffer and Smit (2013) indicate the need for research in this area:

The question of whether additional FL teaching is necessary is at the heart an empirical one and requires more, and more detailed, studies of the classroom discourse of CLIL and FL classes embedded in specific educational contexts. (p. 552)

Furthermore, most of the English language curricula are still based on a pre-designed grammatical syllabus (Coyle et al. 2010 and Coyle, in Zarobe, Sierra and Gallardo, 2011) instead of focusing on language use associated with the content needs (Halbach 2014, Pavón Vázquez, 2014). Few proposals on how to tackle English language learning as a subject can be found in the literature focusing on the Spanish context. Among the few, Halbach (2018) proposes to work on a literacy-based approach centred on backwards planning (as proposed by Wiggins and McTighe, 2006) with the creation of texts as the

desired goal. In the same line, a more textual approach to language in EFL is recommended by Lorenzo and Moore (in Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010).

## 2.2 Literature Review

Specific reports on reading practices in CLIL classrooms are scarce. In many cases, information on this area can be found in the evaluation reports of bilingual projects, such as the report on the Spanish Project launched by the Ministry of Education and the British Council written by Dobson, Pérez Murillo and Johnstone (2010). The authors conducted a study based on interviewing teachers and conducting a systematic observation of classroom practices. Also, they surveyed students at both Primary and Secondary levels. Results related to reading show that sixth-graders perceive this skill as the second most developed, just after writing. Students generally indicate that they need to improve their speaking. From the teachers' perspective, the teaching for literacy, and more specifically the connections between reading and writing with the spoken language, were indicated as areas desired to be covered in future teacher training (p. 110). Another interesting finding of this report is that the teaching of reading and writing was often introduced earlier than in monolingual schools, with some practices taking place with 3-year-old children (p. 125).

Research on reading practices in bilingual contexts generally focuses on students' skill development. In this area, Recio and León (2015) measured Primary students' reading production in terms of fluency and reading comprehension. Participants were 39 students from first and fourth grades in primary. The test asked students to read a text aloud and answer some comprehension questions in front of an evaluator in a meeting that lasted around 20 minutes. Results show that first graders were marginally better in English than in Spanish, while the fourth graders had a superior performance in Spanish. The reason for these differences is the year in which they enrolled in the bilingual program, as first graders had been exposed to English for a longer time. When it comes to reading comprehension, there were significant differences among both groups, as fourth-graders were somewhat better altogether. However, first graders were better in English than in Spanish.

In the same vein, San Isidro and Lasagabaster (2018) conducted a two-year longitudinal study in a rural multilingual school context in Galicia, Spain. CLIL and non-CLIL samples were analysed to find out the impact of CLIL provision on students' language and content learning. The researchers concluded that the CLIL cohort outperformed the non-CLIL group not only in English but also in Spanish and Galician. Besides that, content in the CLIL group was not found to be watered down, and learning outcomes were not found to be negative in comparison with their non-CLIL counterparts.

Another different perspective into reading practices is the one adopted by the present study, which revolves around the teachers' viewpoint. In this area, and apart from the sections included in the general reports, such as the work by Dobson et al. (2010) cited above, there is a need to produce high-quality research in the area. However, we can find some studies in international settings. In the United States, Jia et al. (2006) focused on teachers' reading practices. There were 13 people taking part in this study: seven elementary teachers and six middle school educators. All the information was gathered using observations, interviews, and document analysis. Findings show that these teachers used oral activities to evaluate their pupils' reading comprehension skills.

In Africa, Cekiso (2017) selected the area of Eastern Cape in South Africa to explore how teachers enhance reading skills with students whose mother tongue is not English. The

tool used for this purpose was semi-structured interviews. In the District of Mzibana, nine teachers selected from three public schools were interviewed. According to the results, teachers considered that their training was not sufficient to deliver effective lessons. They also believed that classroom conditions, such as the big number of students per room, made it difficult to create an appropriate learning environment. Similar results are found in Ethiopia, where Bosha and Ukute (2019) reviewed some teachers' perceptions regarding the challenges of teaching reading skills. This project was held at 'Wolaita Sodo Preparatory School' in Ethiopia. This school had 450 male and 388 female students, 838 altogether. The number of teachers was a total of six, four male and two female. All six teachers were selected to participate in the study, as well as the students from 11<sup>th</sup> grade. All teachers were interviewed and then observed in an actual lesson. This research revealed how these teachers had to overcome certain challenges derived from the lack of teaching material or previous teacher training. The consequences of these problems were lack of motivation at all levels and poor classroom management, to mention a few.

Another EFL context is set in Saudia Arabia, where Eid Alhasoini (2017) went a little bit further and sought to find differences between native and nonnative EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia when it comes to activating prior knowledge in reading activities. To fulfil the objectives of the investigation research, 63 native and nonnative teachers volunteered to participate and 23 agreed to be observed during a class. These participants were working at the Aljouf University teaching English in the preparatory year. There were two instruments used for this research: a questionnaire and an observation checklist. As a conclusion, Alhasoini discovered that many of the difficulties that appeared when activating the previous knowledge were due to the students' low level of reading. They also agree on the importance of suitable activities to activate prior knowledge in order to achieve a proper level of reading comprehension. Finally, there was some evidence that confirmed that these participants lacked appropriate training. At the same time, the books that they were using in their classes did not meet their needs since they provided very little help.

Research on teachers' beliefs and practices on reading in CLIL or EFL contexts demonstrates that this field has been studied worldwide in the last decades. Some influential variables such as classroom conditions, teachers' training, use of methodological strategies and time of exposure to the language are highlighted as factors that influence students' learning success.

### **3. THE STUDY**

#### **3.1 Aims and hypothesis**

The present piece of research aims to describe and understand the nature of the teaching practices around reading in CLIL contexts in Spain. It is expected to gather evidence as to indicate future guidelines which may be used for teacher training actions or material development as to improve EFL literacy development in the CLIL Primary classrooms in Spain.

### **3.2. Research methodology and data gathering tool**

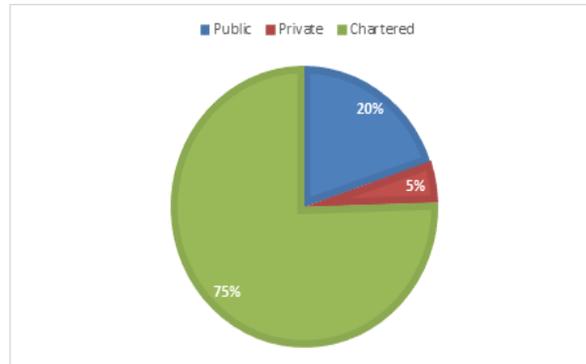
The present article is based on an exploratory and descriptive study which gathers information about the EFL reading practices at the Primary level in CLIL settings in Spain. The information gathered is both quantitative and qualitative and has been analysed using the IBM software SPSS. To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire used was first piloted following the Delphi method, then piloted by a number of teachers and finally, the group of statisticians collaborating in the Erasmus+ project that this study is part of revised the final version to ensure information gathered was in line with the research questions for the project.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of 47 questions with sections covering: general information, the conceptualisation of literacy, reading and writing resources and practices, teacher assessment, difficulties, teacher training and teachers' needs. Questions combined multiple-choice format with Likert-scale statements and open questions. Respondents to the need analysis questionnaire were self-selected, as the online questionnaire was made available to all teachers of English in CLIL projects in the three countries through email, social media and personal contacts of the partners in the project. The questionnaire was made available from December 2018 to March 2019 and was sent to private contacts, as well as institutions, such as the British Council, Cambridge Assessment and education counsellors for regional governments in Spain.

### **3.3 Participants and context**

The on-line questionnaire was filled out by 106 valid respondents in Spain. In what follows, information about the profile of the participants is provided. Participants' age ranges from 24 to 60 years. The average age was 38.84 years. As for the number of years working as a teacher, the minimum was one year, the maximum was 37 years, and the average was 13.75 years. Out of 106 participants, there were 23 male (21.7%) and 83 female (78.3%) participants. The proportion coincides with EUROSTAT report (2016), which indicates that the population of female Primary Teachers reaches 76% in Spain.

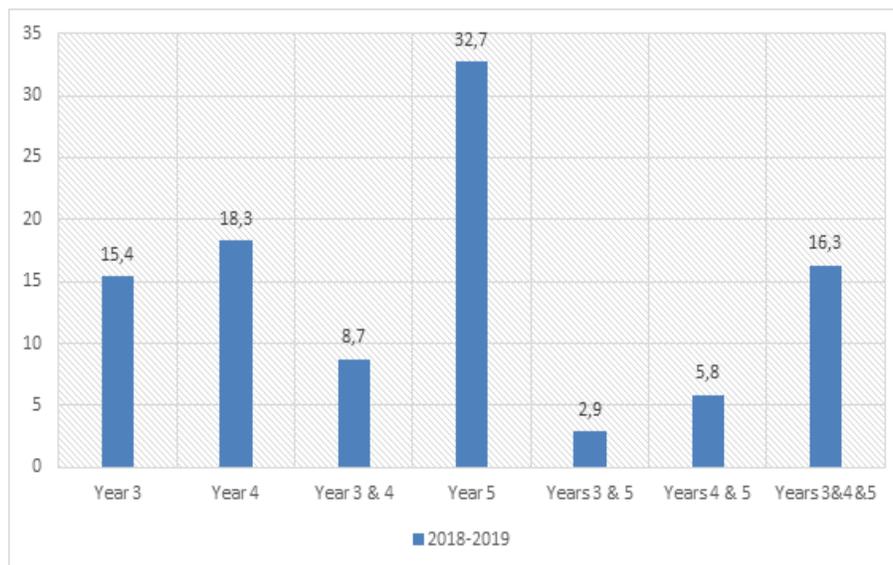
The sample shows that participants generally come from state-granted schools (80, 75.5%), with a smaller representation of public centres (21, 19.8%) and just 5 (4.7%) private schools (see figure 4). The sample does not represent the population in this case, as state schools represent 62.6% of the schools in Spain, whereas private and state-granted centres account for 30.6% of the centres. Thus, it was expected to have more participants coming from public/state schools than chartered centres. These results may be explained by the fact that the survey was sent to several private educational organisations, which may have spread the word among their associates better, producing more responses in the data gathered.



Graph 1. Type of schools participants come from

Concerning their qualifications, 69.8% of the participants held a Teaching degree with an English specialization. Other profiles included English Philology or English studies and Primary teachers with an English certification. In relation to this, they were asked about the current position in the school. 67 participants (63.2%) were EFL teachers, whereas 63 (59.4%) were content-subject teachers in a CLIL/bilingual project. From those teachers working in a CLIL/bilingual project, 54.0% (34 teachers) are also working as English teachers.

Most teachers are in 5th-grade classes (32.7%), with 16 participants (15.4%) teaching in 3rd grade, and 19 (18.3%) in 4th grade. There is also a representative number of teachers who are involved in the teaching of the three courses (16.3%). However, teachers in two courses are rarer, with percentages ranging from 2.9% to 8.7%. We can conclude that teachers dealing with the highest level, year 5, constitute more than half the teachers in the sample.



Graph 2. Levels taught in the present school year

10 out of 17 autonomous communities in Spain are represented in the sample. There are no participants from Galicia, Cantabria, Catalonia, Extremadura, Murcia, Balearic

Islands or the Canary Islands. The two autonomous cities, Ceuta and Melilla, do not have any representation in the study either. The most represented one is Madrid (41.4%).

In the case of Spain, CLIL contexts often involve the teaching of several content subjects in a foreign language. Teachers were asked which subjects they were teaching in the 2018/2019 school year. Results show that most teachers are teaching Natural Sciences combined with another subject, most commonly Arts and Crafts (N=67).

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In what follows, the results of each of the questions related to reading practices will be analysed and described.

##### 4.1 How often and which activities do teachers use to develop their students' reading skills? (1=very rarely or never; 5=very frequently)

As can be seen in Table 1, the activity most frequently used to develop students' reading skills is helping students understand new vocabulary in the text (M=4.42), followed by doing reading comprehension tasks orally (M=4.13) and asking students to read aloud (4.02). The activity showing the highest standard deviation is listening to a tape while reading the text. It is worth highlighting that reading activities are more often connected to oral work than to written work.

	N	Mean	Median	SD
Teachers read aloud to the class	103	3.66	4	1.015
Ask students to read aloud	90	4.02	4	0.861
Ask students to read silently	88	3.03	3	0.928
Give students time to read books of their own choosing	91	2.73	3	1.165
Teach students strategies for decoding letters into sounds	90	2.73	3	1.16
Listen to a tape while reading a text	91	3.64	4	1.32
Help students understand new vocabulary in the texts	90	4.42	4	0.599
Do reading comprehension tasks in writing	90	3.87	4	0.939
Do reading comprehension tasks orally	90	4.13	4	0.778
Ask students to write something in response to what they have read	90	2.93	3	1.015
Do a project about what they have read (e.g. a play or an art project)	90	3.06	3	1.115

Table 1. Reading activities and frequency of use

In the free comments section, some participants included options that were not initially included in the questionnaire, such as using drama techniques or creating mindmaps.

#### 4.2 How often and which activities do teachers use to develop their students' reading strategies? (1=very rarely; 5 very frequently)

The most frequent activity used to develop students' reading strategies is finding specific information in the text ( $M=4.27$ ), followed by identifying main ideas in the text ( $M=4.15$ ), followed by the least frequent, and showing the highest standard deviation, talking about text genre ( $M=2.72$ ;  $SD=1.198$ ).

	N	Mean	Median	SD
Identify main ideas in the text	100	4.15	4	0.833
Find specific information in the text	95	4.27	4	0.675
Compare what they have read with their experiences	92	3.57	4	1.009
Make generalisations and draw inferences based on the text	92	3.51	4	1.064
Encourage risk-taking and guessing about the text	92	3.53	4	1.084
Make predictions about what will happen in the text	92	3.86	4	0.897
Talk about the text structure	92	3.22	3	1.137
Talk about the text genre	92	2.72	3	1.198

Table 2. Reading activities for strategy training and frequency of use

Some of the teachers also stated other activities they use for developing their students' reading strategies, such as matching pictures to the text; using grammar songs or games to help them link words or work in groups to get the main idea of the text. Results show that the strategies used are based on identifying information (general or specific) in the text. The lack of work on text genres may indicate that either there is not a diversity of texts used or that the genre of the text is not considered. However, working with different text types and genres and considering their structure may be pivotal to help students recognise and produce texts later on.

#### 4.3 How often and what kinds of materials/resources do teachers use for developing their students' reading skills? (1=very rarely or never; 5=very frequently)

Another area of interest in the study was the use of materials and resources for developing students' reading skills. Participants use mainly EFL textbooks ( $M=3.84$ ). They also show frequent use of worksheets ( $M=3.71$ ) and CLIL textbooks ( $M=3.66$ ). However, the use of CLIL textbooks show one of the highest standard deviations ( $SD= 1.238$ ), probably reflecting that teachers come from bilingual and non-bilingual contexts, and when the former is the case, they opt for these types of materials. The least frequently used materials for reading are children's magazines ( $M=2.05$ ) and non-fiction books ( $M=2.45$ ).

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
EFL textbooks	98	3.84	1.068
CLIL textbooks	93	3.66	1.232
Graded readers	92	3.52	1.049
Worksheets	92	3.71	0.882
Children's books	93	2.83	1.179
Non-fiction books	93	2.45	1.170
Children's magazines	92	2.05	1.136
Web pages	92	3.20	1.096
Materials written by students	92	2.54	1.166
Materials from other subjects	91	2.64	1.245

Table 3. Resources and materials used for reading development

Some participants included other materials, such as authentic materials, songs and song lyrics, graphs, films, poetry, photocopies of exam papers, quizzes, or videos. Even with these examples, the vast majority of teachers rely on textbooks or other didactic material and leave little room for non-fiction books or literature.

#### **4.4 How often and what kinds of texts do teachers use to develop their students' reading skills? (1=very rarely or never; 5=very frequently)**

As can be seen in the table below, teachers often use songs and chants, followed by short stories, tales and fables. These results contrast with the reduced use of children's literature stated in the question before ( $M=2.83$ ). It may be that the texts used are not considered literature for children or that the teachers do not recognise these literary genres as such.

Participants rarely use non-fiction texts, such as instructions or manuals, or other modes of communication, such as charts, diagrams and graphs. These modes of representation are fundamental in the development of students' literacy skills in content subjects where information is organised using different text types and modes of communication.

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>
Dialogues/plays	99	3.18	3	1.078
Short stories, tales, fables	92	3.39	3.5	0.956
Poems, riddles, limericks	92	2.65	3	0.999
Charts, diagrams, graphs	91	2.45	2	1.148
Instructions or manuals about how things work	93	2.27	2	1.023
Songs, chants	92	3.89	4	1.010

Table 4. Texts teachers use for reading development

Respondents also included other materials such as e-mails, letters, digital articles or comics.

#### 4.5 How often and what forms of classroom organisation do teachers use when developing their students' reading skills?

When developing students' reading skills, participants mostly use whole-class groupings (M=3.96), followed by mixed-ability groups (M=3.73) and individual work (3.62). They rarely use same-ability groups.

	N	M	SD
Pair-work	100	3.39	0.973
Whole-class	93	3.96	0.859
Same-ability groups	87	2.41	1.106
Mixed-ability groups	93	3.73	1.044
Individual work	93	3.62	0.846

Table 5. Classroom organisation in reading activities

#### 4.6 What difficulties do students have when reading in English?

Participants were requested to tick the two main difficulties their students faced when reading in English. As can be seen in Table 6, the option most frequently chosen by respondents (n=100) was 'understanding what was read' (54%). The second option (see R (rank) column) chosen was mispronouncing words (52%) followed by reading monotonically (29%). The options chosen least frequently were for students to share their reading experience with others (8%) and to engage emotionally with the text (3%), which are related to a more social and aesthetic view of reading.

	F	R
Mispronouncing words	52	2
Reading very slowly	14	4
Reading monotonically	29	3
Understanding what was read	54	1
Unmotivated to read	10	6
Extracting key ideas	10	6
Distinguishing facts and opinions	9	7
Thinking critically about the text	11	5
Sharing their reading experience with others	8	8
Engaging emotionally with the text	3	9

Table 6. Difficulties students have when reading in English

Six participants indicated that all the difficulties in the list appeared in their classrooms. Three teachers highlight the students' fear or embarrassment and describe situations of reading aloud when their classmates burst into laughter. Also, another participant considers that the difficulties are not language-bound, as they also appear in Spanish. Regarding comprehension, three teachers consider that the work on pronunciation prevents students from understanding what they are reading.

#### 4.7 What kind of tasks do teachers use for assessing their students' reading skills?

As can be seen in table 7, when assessing students' performance in reading, teachers often use oral questioning of students on what they have read (M=4.09). However, this response shows one of the highest standard deviations, indicating that respondents are often choosing the extreme options (a high frequency of use but also the lowest frequency), and thus that the use of these kinds of activities is very uneven. Participant teachers also use true/false activities (M=3.97), and they listen to students reading aloud (M=3.96). Assessment activities such as meeting with students to discuss what they have been reading or having students give an oral summary of what they have read in English are used less often.

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>
Multiple choice questions on materials read	96	3.76	4	0.964
Short answer to written questions on materials read	89	3.90	4	0.844
Students give an oral summary of what they have read in English	90	3.15	3	1.026
Teacher listens to students read aloud	90	3.96	4	0.925
Oral questioning of students on what they have read	90	4.09	4	1.148
True/false activity	89	3.97	4	0.979
Meeting with students to discuss what they have been reading	89	2.85	3	1.216

Table 7. Assessment tasks for reading

Teachers also use drawings to assess what they have understood, as well as role-play, drama or KET-type tests.

Results portray a picture of reading practices in CLIL contexts which is very much attached to traditional practices, with textbooks as the core material. Beside this, teaching practices rarely focus on the work with text types or different genres and, when they do, they are more often than not opting for fictional texts, with a tendency towards using songs and chants. This may indicate that texts are really an excuse to exemplify the use of specific grammar points or vocabulary items included in the curricula, rather than promote the use of text focusing on a more functional perspective of language, which will highlight discourse structure and purpose over purely grammatical forms.

As it has been seen in the theoretical framework, current literacy practices should integrate different communicative abilities. There is no evidence of integration in the data analysed, as just reading and oral work seem to be promoted with the purpose of assessing the comprehension of texts orally. This lack of integrated practices may call for a broader vision of what literacy may bring into CLIL contexts and how this may enrich students' learning.

In line with the previous paragraph, difficulties highlighted by teachers are at the level of comprehension and pronunciation, with little reference to critical thinking or distinguishing facts and opinions. This may indicate a need for more profound and rich work on text, which may also trigger discussion and personal contributions to the class. Dialogic practices which incorporate these elements together with a more systematic work on the

structure, purpose and meaning of the texts may be crucial to help teachers boost their students' reading skills.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The present study attempts to understand the nature of the teaching practices within the English classrooms in CLIL settings in Spain. Data analysis suggests that there is little work on certain key areas that may ensure a more productive and effective reading experience for students. To begin with, there seems to be little work on text structure and genre. Working on text types will help children recognise text structure and intention, identify different language patterns typical of those text types and use them to produce their own texts. Working on text types will also increase reading comprehension, as these schemata will be activated and help students make sense of the text. In the same line, exposure to different genres (such as theatre scripts or poetry) and the discussion around them may help students gain knowledge on different topics, while also recognising new language features and developing an interest in genres they had not been exposed to until then. It is, therefore, an area of improvement in the Primary English classroom that needs to be taken into consideration, not only by the teachers but also by the publishing houses.

Another finding worth highlighting is that reading for pleasure and having the right to choose their books is rare in the data analysed. Teachers rarely offer students the possibility to work on the books they would like to read and, in any case, there is little emphasis on the aesthetic experiences with literature. As Rosenblatt (2005) puts it, there is probably much effort on gathering information from the text, rather than focusing on the experience lived through the text, and how the text is constructed in such a way to create this experience. It is essential to work on language, not as a literal vessel of meaning, but as a compound of representational nuances the reader has put together.

Finally, results also show that there is a need to create stronger links between reading and writing activities. Reading activities are often accompanied by oral tasks, but it is rare to find a link with written production. It is quite surprising, as both skills should go hand in hand to help students develop appropriate communicative competences. Students' written production should be encouraged in these Primary middle courses as students have basic knowledge of the language to start producing their own.

Regarding possible future lines of research, it would be interesting to compare these results with the practices in other countries, as to check whether they are context-bound or are related to teachers' training in each country. Also, it would be of interest to disseminate results in international gatherings to share these concerns and seek other literacy models that are more focused on text-types and reading for pleasure. Finally, it is of paramount importance to raise teachers' awareness of their practices and the impact they have on their students' reading development. Teacher training efforts should be directed towards working on their beliefs and practices and allowing them to discover new ways in which literacy can be approached.

## NOTES

1 The present study is part of the research work carried out as part of Erasmus+ project "Developing FL literacy in CLIL contexts" (2018-1-PL01-KA201-050920)

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