

FINAL PROJECT

**BILINGUALISM:
"Teacher Perceptions on
Bilingual Programme"**

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ABSTRACT: The present research has as main objective to know the opinion, use and knowledge presented by the teacher of a foreign language (English) on the Plan of Bilingualism.

To do this, we have carried out an investigation, searching through different sources and making a questionnaire to twenty bilingual teachers on the subject.

Thereafter, an analysis of the data is performed and a number of results and conclusions are generated.

It is a research paper in which we know the faculty perspective on the Plan of Bilingualism. From it, we can know the current situation and generate a number of positive suggestions.

KEYWORDS: Bilingualism, initial training, continuous training, confidence, assessment.

INDEX:

1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. JUSTIFICATION	8
3. METHOD	10
A) PARTICIPANTS	10
B) TOOLS.....	10
C) PROCEDURE.....	11
D) KIND OF ANALYSIS.....	12
4. RESULTS.....	13
5. CONCLUSION	16
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	21
7. ANNEX.....	22

1. INTRODUCTION

“The world we live is so globalized, dynamic and competitive that being able to speak at least a foreign language (or I would say that two would be better) that it has turned into an inalienable necessity” (Quijada, 2013).

We are living in a changing and renewed society that demand us not only professionally but also academically and even personally, to keep informed, always bearing in mind that one of the most important issues is the importance of language. Nowadays knowing foreign languages has turned into something essential, especially English, with which we will treat in this research.

English language is used in almost growth and knowledge human areas. We can say that we face with the most used language around the world. Besides, not having a basic knowledge of this language may lead to a drawback as this tool allows us to communicate with people from other countries. We not only improve communication but we can also speak about enrichment, new ideas experimentation, cultural profits, better professional perspectives and of course mind exercising through new learning and skills.

On the other hand, the inclusion of new languages, in this case English, in our lives has meant the appearance of new words, elements and concepts, among we have Bilingualism. There is a huge variety of definitions about what bilingualism means, however, there is not a common agreement about its meaning and what being bilingual means.

In the academic world; McGroarty (2001: 345) defines bilingual education as "one in which two languages are used as media of classroom instruction for the same group of students".

She also provides definitions for a bilingual and a biliterate: the first is the person who has age-appropriate language skills in two languages, whereas the second is the person who is able to read and write in two languages. (Madrid & McLaren, 2004).

Now some of the definitions we can find about this word are going to be shown. Some of them have been suggested by psychologists, pedagogues, linguists and sociologists, obviously all of them established from their own perspectives.

BILINGUALISM DEFINITIONS

- According to Bloomfield (1933) bilingualism means “the knowledge of two languages as a native speaker”. That is, the is the ability to speak two languages as natives use their mother tongue, producing correct statements full of sense.
- Haugen (1953) says that a bilingual speaker can use complex sentences, which have meaning in different languages.
- On his behalf, Weinreich (1953) states that using two languages alternatively is called bilingualism and people who use them are called bilingual.
- In 1959, Weiss maintains that bilingualism is the direct use, active or passive, of two languages by the same speaker, being active the person who sends the message and passive the one who receives and understands it.
- Macnamara (1967) defines bilingualism as the ability to develop any level of the competence (speaking, reading, understanding and writing) in a second language
- For Mackey (1976), bilingualism is a person or population’s virtue to use two languages without the predominance of any of them.
- On his behalf, Titone (1976) explains that bilingualism is the person’s capacity to use a second language respecting its own concepts and grammar structures.
- En 1981, Blanco confirms that a bilingual is a person who is able to encode and decode messages which come from two different languages at any level.
- According to Cerdá Massó (1986), bilingualism is the speaker ability to use two languages equally. What is more, it is a sociolinguistics requirement by which a community uses two different languages to cover the same public or private commitments.
- Harding and Riley (1998) says that an individual has the possibility to communicate with two or more codes in different contexts that demand any linguistic system. Consequently, his vocabulary and ability to speak, write, listen and read have different levels depending on the usage of each language.
- For Romaine (1999), a bilingual is a person who learns a group of meanings with two different linguistic understanding.
- Lam (2001) defines bilingualism as the phenomenon of competence and communication in two different languages.

**Tabla:* Bermúdez, J. R. & Fandiño, Y. J. (2012). El fenómeno bilingüe: perspectivas y tendencias en bilingüismo [Versión electrónica]. Revista Universidad de La Sale, 59, 99-124.

A current definition is the one suggested by *Espejo. M* (2013) that refers to “*individual bilingualism*, that is, individual people, speakers who are able to speak two different languages (...) The strange thing is that the same authors who suggest the expression *individual bilingualism* and state its basic features do not say that the speaker has to be equally competent in both languages, but have a similar knowledge of both languages. In conclusion, it is not necessary to speak correctly in both languages but to be able to use them skilfully”.

Taking into account what we have previously mentioned, we wonder what the current role of bilingualism in education centres is. With this research we will base on Andalusian Community, specifically Primary Education in its eight different provinces. To do that, we make reference to ORDER 28th June 2011, which states bilingual education in Andalusian schools.

The Multilingualism Framework in Andalusia, passed by a government agreement, 22nd March 2005, obeyed a model of a new linguistic policy in our Community connected with the European objectives in relation to this area, since the full integration in the European context demands that Andalusian students achieve the skill to communicate in different languages. With this objective and the mentioned Multilingual Plan, whose validity was spread from 2005 to 2008, considered the development and the spreading of educative bilingual programmes through the creation of bilingual schools. In relation to vocational studies, it was based on an implementation of a system of bilingual courses. Andalusian bilingual schools area featured not only by teaching and learning specific areas, subjects or vocational training in two different languages but also by rising foreign language lessons, which becomes a learning tool similar to mother language, which is not invalidated as it keeps on being the receiving language(...) (BOJA, 2011).

In the case of vocational studies the purpose implies at least three objectives: linguistic, professional and cultural. This linguistic skill teaches students to learn, discover and be, as a previous step to make an enterprising culture to a better working inclusion. (BOJA, 2011).

All this leads us to make us be aware of initial education, that later extends to teachers who teach in primary schools.

According to this order, in chapter II, “ Article 7. Bilingual schools requirements” states that:

1. Bilingual schools must gather the following requirements:
 - a) Teaching the second grade of pre-school education, primary education, compulsory secondary education, high school education and vocational studies.
 - b) Having teachers who are accredited with levels B2, C1 or C2 according to the Common European Framework, to teach areas, subjects or vocational modules in a foreign language. The minimum number of teachers who have these requirements mentioned in this section will be necessary to guarantee the teaching timetable established by the different programmes and studies for each subject or module given in a foreign language, taking into account the number of students for each stage.
 - c) Changing its educational project and its organization and working models, adapting it to the specifications mentioned in Chapters III and IV to the different educational stages that teach bilingual education.
2. In order to be authorised as multilingual centres, apart from the requirements mentioned in section 1, schools must have finished bilingual teaching in the pertinent stage. (BOJA, 2011).

So if the aim is to establish a good bilingual teaching it is necessary to have teaching staff which has **B2**, **C1** and **C2** certificates according to the Common European Framework. Here is where we are going to base our research: initial and continuous education of bilingual teachers.

2. JUSTIFICATION

Due to all these changes in the academic world, making this researching work has as its main objective to establish the level of knowledge, use and opinion that foreign language teachers have in relation to Bilingualism.

These data may be useful to establish if this Plan of Bilingualism is dealt as it is described, having a real knowledge of the situation. Besides, it may establish if it is necessary to make any change to improve it or if any help is required to solve any problem caused by this situation, that is social, economical or personal situations.

In order to achieve that, a series of tools and procedures have been used to answer the objectives which have been suggested.

Objectives:

- Knowing the bilingual teaching team background.
- Knowing the bilingual teaching team continuous training.
- Knowing the bilingual teaching team attitude towards Bilingualism.
- Assessment of Bilingualism by the bilingual teaching team.

Researching hypothesis:

The hypothesis laid out in this research is the existence of a lack of awareness in relation to this plan, as well as the insecurity to carry out it, which could be due to an inadequate initial and continuous training.

In an interview made to Daniel Madrid Fernández, Professor of English Language Didactics, entitled *"El profesor de lengua extranjera debería ser casi bilingüe"*, published by Marta Vázquez Reina (27th January 2010); emphasises interesting issues brought up by our hypothesis.

To make Plan of Bilingualism to become true, it is necessary that foreign language teaching staff has enough ability, Daniel Madrid Fernández adds that “ primary school teachers plan does not provide them enough training asked by society”, as well as, “these plans are not consistent with teaching staff interests and needs”.

We do not only make reference to current teachers, as Madrid Fernández states that “different researches have shown that students of foreign language educational teaching claim 67% specialization. Despite this, the plan which is going to be passed only reserves 11% through honourable mention and a 6 credits subject related to didactics”. The percentage of credits assigned to this teaching specialty does not guarantee the appropriate training to future teachers to face a foreign language teaching.”

We have to highlight the suitable profile that Madrid Fernández describes about a foreign language teacher from this interview. The abilities and skills a good teacher should have are “first of all, a teacher should be almost bilingual or know the foreign language that the Common European Framework requires for levels B2 or C1. This does not happen among primary school teachers, whose degree is so generic that it does not allow them to get the level that society demands. Furthermore, teachers should have studied in the country whose language they teach, for at least a semester. This does not happen currently, as the number of vacancies offered by Erasmus Programme is not enough.”

These series of support highlight the suggested hypothesis and suggest us to carry out an exhaustive research about this issue, as we show below.

We have to bear in mind the profile and skills of foreign language teachers, which are essential tools, so students can get a good knowledge of other languages. The basis must be given at first ages and be constant during the following educative stages.

3. METHOD

The method used in this essay is based in a research about investigation techniques such as the questionnaire, through Likert elements, also known as summative assessment, in order to study the suggested hypothesis.

Now we are going to explain the characteristics of the questionnaire in detail, as well as the participants, tools, procedure and the kind of analysis used.

a) Participants

The questionnaire has been offered to bilingual teachers who are giving lessons in different primary schools, as they are the one who are in contact with the Plan of Bilingualism.

For this, 20 participants from different ages and teaching experience have participated by filling out this questionnaire. Participants range from one year experience teachers to teachers who have been teaching for more than thirty years.

The reason why we have chosen subjects from different ages and different working years is to establish the knowledge we can get from different points of view.

b) Tools

As we have mentioned before, we have used a questionnaire to interview teachers from different public or private primary schools in Andalusia to answer the suggested objectives. (Questionnaire: look “Annex”).

The questionnaire is graded following an importance scale (Linkert element) o a psychometric scale, which determines agreement or disagreement with a series of different items. In this case, the value given to each item is shown in the following table:

IMPORTANCE SCALE	
1	Totally disagree
2	Disagree
3	No reply
4	Agree
5	Totally agree

This survey is made of 21 positive items related our theme divided into four different sections:

- Initial Training
- Continuous Training
- Confidence
- Assessment

The first section “Initial Training” is based on six items and the rest of sections are made of five items each. Each item tries to answer to the section title in order to get the closest knowledge of each objective.

The headline of the questionnaire shows teachers teaching experience, gender and the number of courses related to bilingual courses made in the last two years. The last data was included to know if there is a personal continuous training or if the situation forces teachers to do that.

Furthermore, we have included a more subjective space, kept to add any suggestion or personal opinion about our theme, as well as possible proposals to improve the Plan of Bilingualism.

c) Procedure

First of all, once we have studied the case we have, each participant is given all the information needed to fill the questionnaire and solve possible doubts and make

explanations about it. With the participant consent, he or she is given enough time to fill it in an anonymous way.

We have to emphasise that in this kind of questionnaires, participants make a statement, assessing under subjective criteria; that is they are asked to show the level of agreement or disagreement with a series of positive items.

d) Kind of analysis

We are facing an educational investigation with a quantitative analysis. This kind of quantitative analysis allows us to carry out a deep approach towards the suggested hypothesis, being more objective and independent, as it is less subject to subjective interpretations. The importance scale that shows Likert elements measures the positive, neutral and negative grades of each participant for each item. Taking them into account we will get a series of numerical scales, measurements and percentages, which will allow us an analysis and comparison of the different data.

To represent the data, the "EXCEL" programme is used. This programme which appears in the section on results and conclusions shows averages, percentages and graphs.

The purpose of this quantitative analysis is the knowledge of social reality using a group of people who represents our problem, dividing it into different variations.

4. RESULTS

Taking into account the importance scale used to value the questionnaire (from **1** totally disagree to **5** totally agree) and that the questionnaire is divided into four different sections: the results we got in each of them are the following:

Results: Initial Training

ITEMS	AVERAGE	PERCENTAGE
1. I got a good training in a foreign language in Primary school.	2,45	49%
2. I got a good training in a foreign language in compulsory secondary education.	3,05	61%
3. I got a good training at the university to be a foreign language teacher.	2,90	58%
4. I finished my degree with the appropriate level to teach a foreign language.	3,45	69%
5. I have received extra training of a foreign language (private lessons, courses, students exchange...)	4,50	90%
6. The number of credits devoted to a foreign language is enough.	2,70	54%
GLOBAL RESULT:	3,18	63,5

Results: Continuous Training

ITEMS	AVERAGE	PERCENTAGE
7. I am receiving training courses in a foreign language.	2,95	59%
8. School provides me with continuous training in a foreign language.	3,35	67%
9. My autonomous community offers teaching programmes to teachers	3,50	70%
10. I keep on studying a foreign language in a private way.	3,45	69%
11. I keep myself informed about the new foreign language plans and provide my students new learning resources	4,15	83%
GLOBAL RESULT:	3,48	69,6%

Results: Confidence

ITEMS	AVERAGE	PERCENTAGE
12. I feel confident and participant of the established Plan of Bilingualism.	3,90	78%
13. I feel confident teaching a foreign language at school.	4,30	86%
14. My students and I feel motivated and we enjoy our foreign language lessons.	4,05	81%
15. I have personal resources and the materials needed to improve the learning-teaching process.	3,60	72%
16. I speak with my students using a foreign language (English) most of the time	3,75	75%
GLOBAL RESULT:	3,92	78,4%

Results: Assessment

ITEMS	AVERAGE	PERCENTAGE
17. I think it is important to establish a Plan of Bilingualism.	4,70	94%
18. I think my English level is enough to give my lessons.	4,05	81%
19. I think the way I give my lessons is the correct one	4,05	81%
20. I think that learning a foreign language is essential to teach our students.	4,85	97%
21. I think the number of foreign language lessons is enough.	3,25	65%
GLOBAL RESULT:	4,18	83,6

Apart from the previous results, the average of courses related to bilingual teaching during the last two years addressed to bilingual teachers is 2,3; that is a course per year.

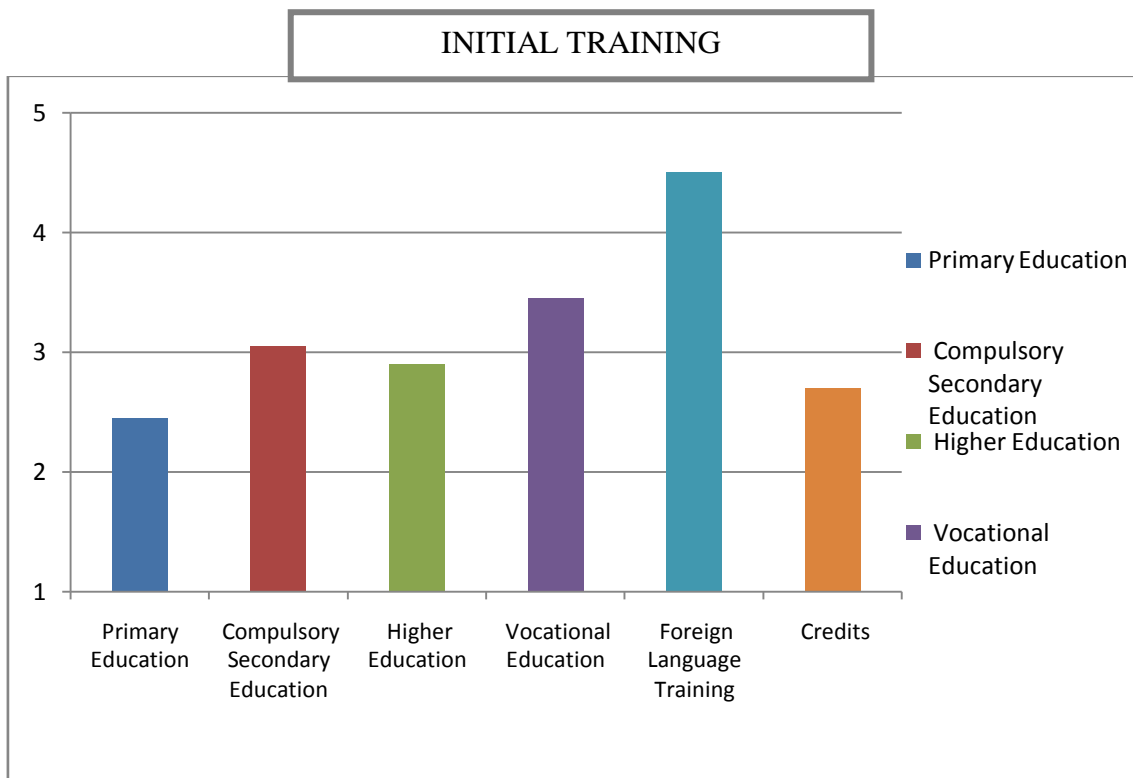
The section reserved to comments and personal suggestions, the most subjective part of the research, the participants wrote in an anonymous way the following statements:

- "A Plan of Bilingualism is important in Spain in order to be “someone” in our current society and in other countries, as well."
- "Students should be taught from the very beginning of their school days."
- "From my point of view, it is now when they are establishing a good base to teach English."
- "An important matter is bilingual practice at primary school."
- "In the past we started in the wrong way, bilingual teachers went to Language Schools to learn English in the evenings and B1 level was enough."
- "Now that we are teachers in bilingual schools, we spend some time living in a foreign country, using our own money to improve in our job."
- "There are sometimes teachers who are not totally qualified and start working in bilingual schools with a B2 certificate, which they have got “by chance”."

Another interesting data we have to mention is that of the 20 interviewed participants: 6 are men and 14 are women. Participants were randomly chosen, that is, when we went to bilingual schools we did not know teachers, and an interesting data is that most teaching staff is made of women.

5. CONCLUSION

The results we have help us to explain and make a debate. These data can be used in a wide context in order to establish limits and participations carried out in this survey. We can see these results by looking at the different graphs we have below. Each of them makes reference to the different sections and is valued using 1 to 5 importance scale:

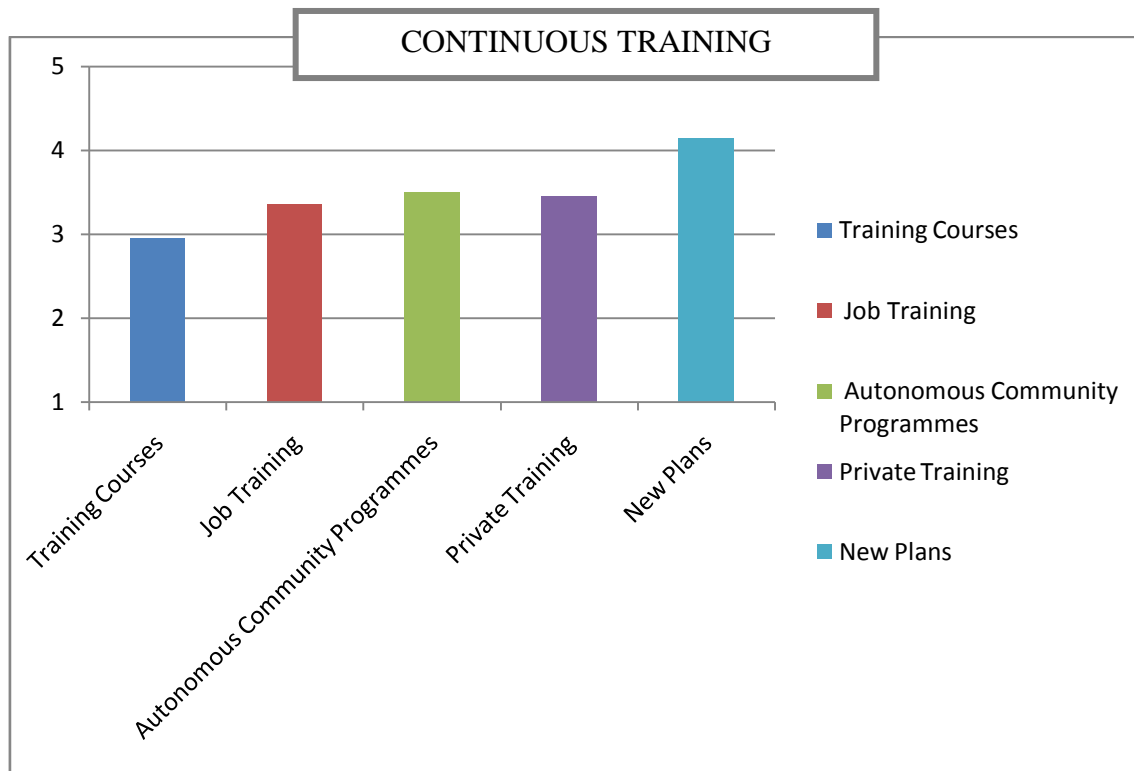


From a general point of view, the initial training of bilingual teachers is not good enough. This represents around 3,2 of the average, that means “no reply” in the established items.

Most participants claim they do not agree with the item which makes reference to the appropriate training of a foreign language at primary school.

During compulsory education their training seems to be better, but it decreases again when they start at university.

Above half of the participants admits they have finished their degree with the appropriate level to teach in a bilingual school. A very surprising data is that 90% of participants needed extra training, that is, they had private lesson, made courses, lived in a foreign country or participated in students exchange programmes. A 46% of participants think that the number of credits obtained in certain subjects is not enough.

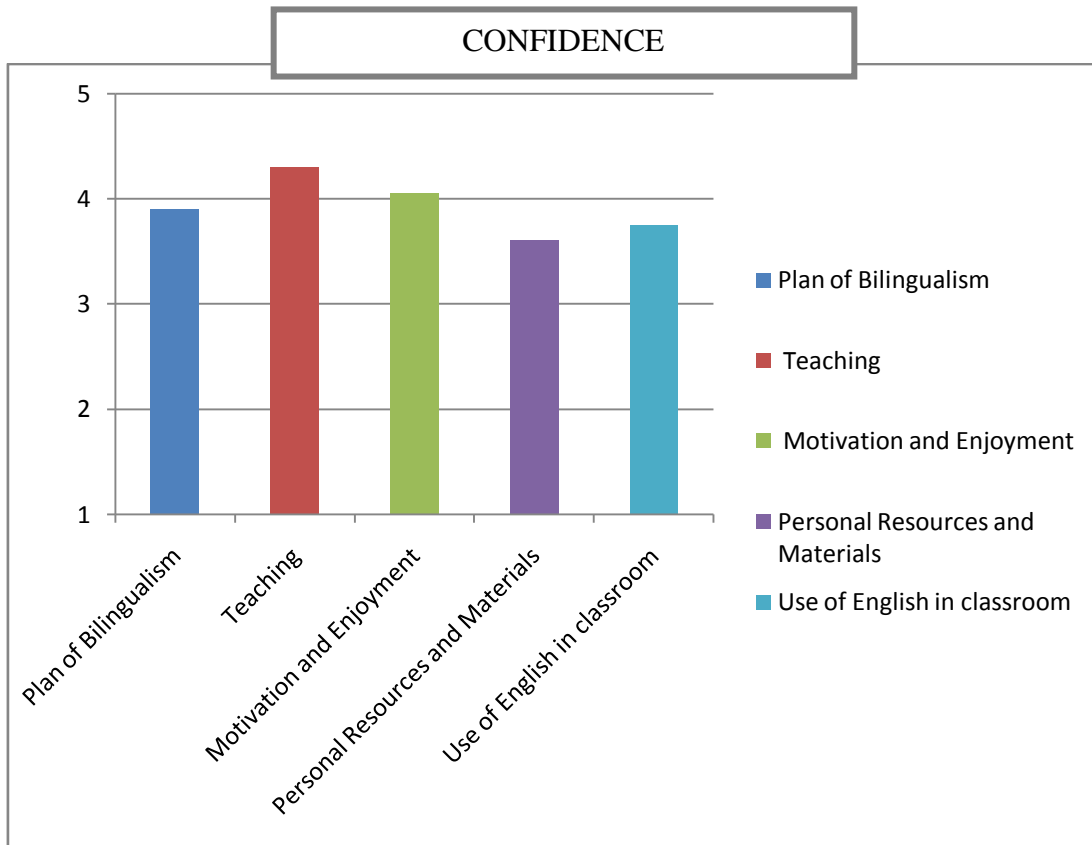


The continuous training offered to bilingual teachers is less positive in comparison to initial training. Almost 70% of participants think it is necessary to keep on studying although they have finished their degree. Less than a half are given training courses or offered resources to keep on improving their foreign language. Around 70% of them are offered appropriate programmes by Andalusian Community or study in a private way.

In this section we have to highlight that 83% of participants gets information about new degrees and provides students new resources to learn a foreign language.

It is not only having knowledge in a personal level but we also find the need of an educational integration. To do that we need some clues and methodological strategies, such as tools or assessment patterns, that the teacher must be able to control.

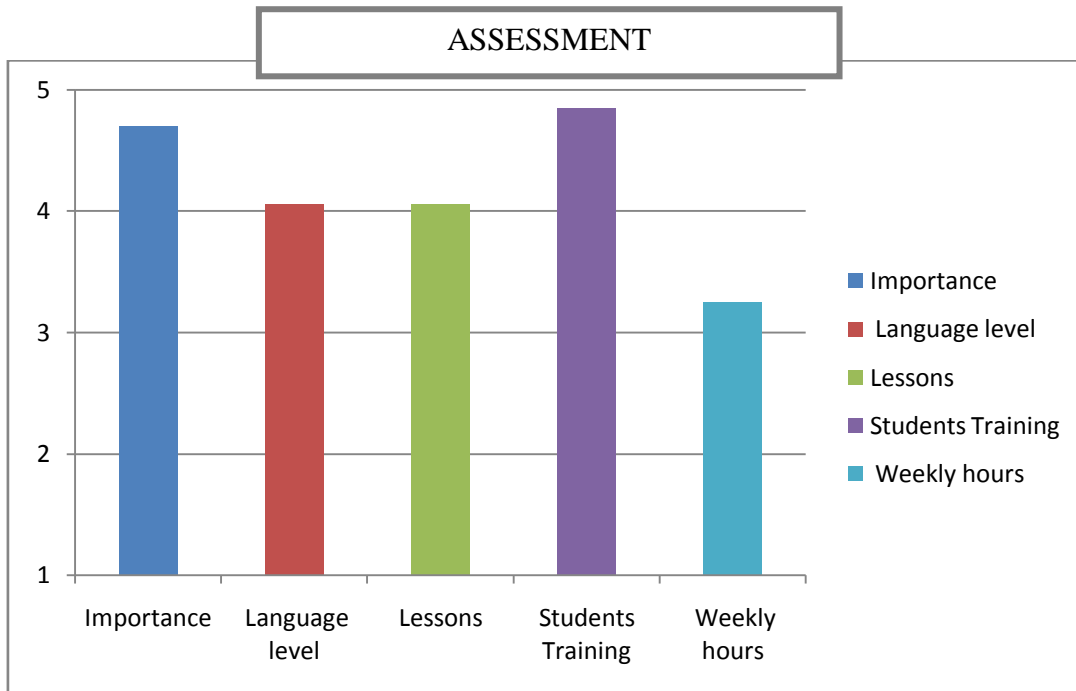
What is more, a teacher must choose and elaborate teaching materials to give bilingual students a significant learning. In order to do that, teachers need to train themselves.



The section related to “Confidence” towards the established Plan of Bilingualism represents 3,92; which means “agreement” towards the established items, this represents a high level.

Taking into account the participants, 22% of them do not feel comfortable or participants with the Plan of Bilingualism and 14% do not feel comfortable teaching English in their classes. Another interesting data is that around 75% of participants have personal resources and useful materials. Besides, they speak in English with their students most of the time.

According to the results and the statements made by teachers, there is a higher level of agreement to have courses in their own school, something which increases their confidence in a positive way.



97% of the participants thinks it is important to establish a Plan of Bilingualism, 81 % claims that their foreign language level and the way they give their English lessons are the correct ones.

The higher data is that 97% thinks that an appropriate training to teachers is necessary to teach students a foreign language. On the other hand, 35 % thinks that the number of lessons given in a foreign language is not enough.

Taking into account all this information, we can conclude by saying that the initial training that teachers gets, as we stated in our hypothesis, has not been enough to prepare bilingual teachers, above all in relation to primary school, where a better level of teaching- learning process is required.

The circumstances and constant changes that our current society have make that continuous training has become into an essential and necessary matter. However, as we have verified with our results, most teachers find this training in a foreign country or using private fund.

To this we must add, that the use of new technologies and resources in the classroom require more training.

Furthermore, teachers who have been working for more years are the ones worried about the inclusion of a new generation of bilingual teachers into their professional area.

Despite the lack of initial training and the constant continuous training, the section related to “confidence” shows that 78, 4% feels confident, motivated and participant in their English lessons. There is a 75% percentage of teachers who claim they use English to communicate with their students most to the time, this percentage is the one which must be increased. If we want our students to speak English, why don not we speak English with them?

The value given to the Plan of Bilingualism stated in Andalusia is quite good, as 87, 6 agrees with its establishment and importance.

If we take into account our previous answer to the problem of our investigation, where we said there is a lack of knowledge and an insecurity feeling towards the Plan of Bilingualism, probably caused by the lack of initial and continuous training that teachers have, we have to say that our hypothesis is confirmed, although is not fully confirmed. As the results show there are not enough initial and continuous training, which means a lack of knowledge and skills to give lessons in bilingual schools. It is true that most participants claim they know and take part in the Plan of Bilingualism, but they have also claimed they have started learning a foreign language in the wrong way.

In order to offset the lack of training and to get the level required by our current world, most teachers look for this training in foreign countries or using their own fund.

I would like to finish this research being positive and encouraging teachers to work and effort in order to vanish that encumbrance created many years ago, and asking students to become a future generation of bilingual speakers.

In conclusion, we refer not only to current society requirements (related to communication, cultural aspects or job opportunities) but also the positive effects towards students’ intelligence and linguistic development.

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7. ANNEX

CUESTIONARIO

TRABAJO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EDUCATIVA: "CONOCIMIENTO, USO Y OPINIÓN DEL PROFESORADO DE LENGUA EXTRANJERA (INGLÉS) DEL BILINGÜISMO"

Años de experiencia docente:	Sexo:
Número de cursos realizados sobre la enseñanza del Bilingüismo en los dos últimos años:	

En cada una de las preguntas siguientes, rodee con un círculo el número que mejor se adecúe a su opinión sobre la importancia del asunto en cuestión. La escala que aparece encima de los números refleja las diferentes opiniones.

PREGUNTAS:	Escala de importancia				
	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
FORMACIÓN INICIAL					
1. Recibí una buena formación en Lengua Extranjera en Educación Primaria.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Recibí una buena formación en Lengua Extranjera en Educación Secundaria.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Recibí una buena preparación universitaria para ser docente en Lengua Extranjera.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Finalicé mis estudios con un nivel profesional y académico adecuado para impartir enseñanza en Lengua Extranjera.	1	2	3	4	5
5. He recibido formación en Lengua Extranjera fuera del ámbito educativo (Clases particulares, cursos, intercambio en el extranjero...)	1	2	3	4	5
6. La cantidad de créditos dedicados a la Lengua Extranjera es suficiente.	1	2	3	4	5
FORMACIÓN CONTINUA					
7. Estoy recibiendo cursos de formación en Lengua Extranjera.	1	2	3	4	5
8. En mi trabajo, me facilitan medios para continuar formándome en Lengua Extranjera.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Mi comunidad Autónoma ofrece adecuados programas para la formación del profesorado.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Continúo realizando estudios de Idiomas Extranjeros de manera particular.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Me informo de los nuevos planes de estudios en Lengua Extranjera y facilito el aprendizaje de los alumnos con nuevos recursos.	1	2	3	4	5

CONFIANZA					
12. Me siento cómodo y participe con el Plan de Bilingüismo establecido.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Me siento cómodo enseñando Lengua Extranjera en las aulas.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Tanto yo como mis alumnos estamos motivados y disfrutamos en las clases de Lengua Extranjera.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Dispongo de los recursos personales y materiales necesarios en el aula para facilitar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Me comunico la mayor parte del tiempo con mis alumnos en Lengua Extranjera - Inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
VALORACIÓN					
17. Considero que es importante que se establezca el Plan de Bilingüismo.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Considero que mi nivel de idioma para impartir clases en inglés es suficiente.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Considero que mi manera de impartir mis clases en Lengua Extranjera es la correcta.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Considero que el aprendizaje de una Lengua Extranjera es necesaria para la formación del alumnado.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Considero que el número de horas semanales de Lengua Extranjera es el adecuado.	1	2	3	4	5