Teachers' language use and attitudes towards multilingual education in primary education

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The exclusive use of the target language in the classroom has dominated language teaching in the past. However, the mixing of languages, often referred as translanguaging is frequently observed in multilingual classrooms. The aim of this paper is to examine teachers' linguistic choices in the classroom, and their attitudes towards the three languages in the educational context in the Valencian community. Data were collected in three schools adopting three different language models, namely those of an English-based, a Catalan-based, and a Spanish-based language model. Lo's (2015) observation scheme was used to analyse teachers' language use in thirty classroom sessions. In addition, thirty teachers, ten from each language model school, answered a questionnaire and participated in semi-structured interviews with the researcher. Findings from the study show that, although teachers believe that multilingualism is encouraged in education, they mainly rely on one language: English in the English model, Catalan in the Catalan model, and Spanish in the Spanish-based language model. Finally, the language model seems to play a role in teachers' attitudes towards their languages, and reveal the prestige of English as a lingua franca, the prestige of Spanish as a majority language, and the lack of prestige of Catalan as a minority language, especially for those who do not use Catalan in education.

Keywords: *Multilingual education, language attitudes, teachers' multilingual competence, Primary Education, CLIL.*

El uso de las lenguas y las actitudes de los maestros hacia la Educación Multilingue en Primaria

El uso exclusivo del idioma de destino en el aula ha dominado la enseñanza de idiomas en el pasado. Sin embargo, la mezcla de idiomas, a menudo referida como translanguaging, se observa con frecuencia en aulas multilingües. El objetivo de este artículo es examinar las opciones lingüísticas de los profesores en el aula y las actitudes hacia los tres idiomas en la comunidad valenciana. Los datos se recopilaron en tres escuelas que adoptaron tres modelos de idiomas diferentes, a saber, los de un modelo de idioma basado en el inglés, el basado en el catalán y el basado en el español. El esquema de observación de Lo (2015) se utilizó para analizar el uso del lenguaje de los maestros en treinta sesiones en el aula. Además, treinta maestros, diez de cada escuela modelo de idiomas, respondieron un cuestionario y participaron en entrevistas semiestructuradas con el investigador. Los hallazgos del estudio muestran que, aunque los docentes creen que el multilingüismo se fomenta en la educación, se basan principalmente en un solo idioma: el inglés

en el modelo de inglés, el catalán en el catalán y el español en el modelo de lengua en español. Por último, el modelo lingüístico parece desempeñar un papel en las actitudes de los profesores hacia el lenguaje de enseñanza correspondiente, y revela el prestigio del inglés como lengua franca, el prestigio del español como idioma mayoritario y la falta de prestigio del catalán como idioma minoritario, especialmente para aquellos que no utilizan el catalán en la educación.

Palabras clave: *Educación multilingüe, actitudes lingüísticas, competencia multilingüe de los profesores, Educación Primaria, CLIL.*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception in the world, and multilingual education has been encouraged in the last decade (Safont & Portolés, 2015). As suggested by Cenoz (2015), bilingual proposals have emerged as a response to transform a school in which the teaching of English must be adapted and combined with the teaching of other languages. One aspect to consider is how multilingualism can be promoted at school. Cenoz and Gorter (2011, 2014) suggest that one possibility is "focus on multilingualism". According to these authors, learning English cannot be separated from the use of other languages in education. Furthermore, they suggest that a monolingual approach towards language learning needs to be revised. Taking into account the study of multilingual discursive practices in and outside the classroom, the authors also claim that there are no hard boundaries between languages and encourage the use of several languages in the classroom.

Although the mixing of languages, often referred as translanguaging, is frequently encouraged in the approach "Focus on Multilingualism", there seems to be a need for classroom-based studies to examine whether the whole linguistic repertoire is used in the multilingual classroom. The current study addresses this need by exploring the linguistic repertoire in three different schools, which claim to encourage multilingual education in the Valencian community. More specifically, following Lo (2015), the present study explores whether teachers use different languages to create a positive social and affective environment, to manage the classroom, or to support content transmission.

In addition, as suggested by Cenoz (2001, 2003), Lasagabaster and Huguet (2007), Lasagabaster and Safont (2008), and Portolés (2011), the linguistic context plays a role in language attitudes, that is to say, it may influence speakers' attitudes towards the majority, minority and foreign languages. Language attitude is a set of preferences opinions and beliefs that speakers adopt with respect to a language. The attitude a speaker has towards language can deeply impact the knowledge and usage of that language. Moreover, Lanos et al. (2017) suggested that attitudes are important since they are reflected in all situations. According to Garrett (2010), we can distinguish three attitudinal components: Cognitive, affective, and behavioural. So far, there are scarce studies on language attitudes which take all of these components into consideration. One such study is Nightingale (2016), who attempts to present cognitive, affective, and behavioural components as a unified system;

however, his study focuses on adolescent high-school students. The present study shifts the focus by targeting adult primary-school teachers. It relies on quantitative and qualitative data to explore whether participants' predisposition to act is in line with their own beliefs.

In this regard, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the study:

- Do teachers use different languages in class, and which functions are they used for?
- Are teachers' attitudes towards languages influenced by the type of school language model?

2. Method

2.1. Setting and participants

Data were collected in three different multilingual settings: An English-based language school model, a Catalan-based language school model, and a Spanish-based language school model. The school following the English language model is a British school where English is the language used in education. The other two schools follow two different plurilingual programs. The first program is Programa Plurinlingue en Valenciano (PPEV), in which the vehicular language is Catalan. The second programme is Programa Plurinlingue en Castellano (PPEC), in which the vehicular language is Spanish. Additionally, both programmes teach the other official language as a subject.

A total of 30 primary-school teachers, participated in the study, 10 from each of the three schools mentioned above. The age range of the sample was 26 to 68 years, and the gender distribution was 73.3% female ($n = 22$) and 26.7% male ($n = 8$). All participants were teaching a non-language subjects though an L2 and they had a minimum teaching experience of five years and were permanent teachers at the schools in which the study was conducted.

2.2. Data collection instruments and analysis

Data were collected during 30 classrooms where students engaged in performing tasks, such as comparing and contrasting different weather forecasts, creating poems, describing an experiment, or completing a story map. Lo's (2015) observation scheme was used to analyse teachers' language use in the classroom. (see Table 1). During each session, the researcher and a teacher from each class completed Lo's (2015) observation scheme individually, considering language used differently from the one the school encourages (Lx) for each function included in Lo's (2015) observation scheme, plus another one dealing with Lx to support learners' comprehension. Subsequently, they compared the information included in their observation scheme. Cases of discrepancy were discussed, and an agreement was reached for 93% of the data.

In addition, a questionnaire on attitudes towards the three languages (adapted from Lasagabaster and Huguet, 2007) was responded by the teachers participating in the study (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire included a number of questions designed to gather demographic data as well as some attitude statements relating to each of the three languages. The questionnaire was piloted with five different teachers, and three of the original attitude statements were eliminated to avoid potential misunderstandings or confusion.

Table 1. Lo's "Functions of teachers' use of L1".

Major Categories		Subcategories
Social or affective functions		1. Referring to shared cultural norms or social values
		2. Building a warm and friendly atmosphere or building rapport with students
Pedagogical functions	Classroom management	3. Managing discipline
		4. Comments on students' behaviour
		5. Giving instructions or commands
		6. Encouraging class participation
		7. Getting students' attention or directing their focus
	Content transmission	8. Explanation of difficult concepts
		9. Parallel translation
		10. Providing annotations or examples from the students' daily lives to explain an unfamiliar topic or concept

Data obtained in the questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS statistics 20.0.1).

Finally, after completing the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. A total of 8 questions were used during the semi-structures interviews. For the present study we will analysed answers to the following three questions:

• How many languages do you use in class? For what purposes?

• Are you more comfortable when you speak English, Catalan or Spanish? How can you explain that?

• Is multilingual education important in your school?

These questions were used as prompts to further understand the reasons underlying translanguaging in the classroom and teachers' attitudes towards the multilingual repertoire.

3. Results and discussion

Tables 2, 3, and 4 provide an overview of the instances of episodes where translanguaging occurred while students carried out activities during the 30 classroom observations. The number of episodes in each activity vary, but we looked into instances of episodes where translanguaging occurred in each session.

In response to research question 1 and, as illustrated above, a language other

Table 2. Language use in an English language model school.

SUBJECTS	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10
Lx use for social and affective functions	1	2	1	1	0	2	2	1	3	1
Lx for classroom management	1	2	1	0	3	1	3	2	0	2
Lx for content transmission	10	4	9	6	9	8	5	2	6	5
Lx to support the learner's comprehension	3	3	2	4	3	0	0	1	2	1

Note: Lx = language used different from the one the school encourages.

Table 3. Language use in a Catalan language model school.

SUBJECTS	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10
Lx use for social and affective functions	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	2
Lx for classroom management	4	10	2	12	17	0	3	2	4	1
Lx for content transmission	17	4	5	2	13	10	2	6	8	1
Lx to support the learner's comprehension	3	2	7	5	2	3	4	2	3	2

Note: Lx = language used different from the one the school encourages.

than English is not frequently used in the English-based language model. In contrast, in the Catalan-based language model, students are not allowed to speak Spanish in class. Furthermore, the teacher mainly uses English in the English language class, although Catalan is used for classroom management and content transmission. No Spanish is used in this educational setting, except in the Spanish language class. In the Spanish-based language model, Spanish is mainly used for classroom management, content transmission, and comprehension. In addition, in the Catalan and English language classes, students are allowed to speak Spanish to avoid misunderstandings and enhance comprehension.

To sum up, each school encourages monolingual education in line with its language model. This is confirmed during the semi-structured interviews. In answering the question "How many languages do you use in class? For what purposes?" Teachers in the English-based language model answered: "*I mainly use English because my Spanish is not good*". Similar answers were provided by the teachers in the Catalan-based language model: "*Gaste sempre el valencià. No canvie quasi mai d'idioma*" [*I always use Valencian Language. I almost never change language*]; and, "*Valencià. Anime els xiquets a parlar sempre en valencià,* és el que volem a l'escola" [*Valencian. I encourage the children always to speak in Valencian. It is what we want in our school*]. Lastly, in the Spanish-based language model, the teachers reported: "*Español, porque así me entienden todos*" [*Spanish, because that is how everyone understands me*]. This answers could be explained as those teachers who work in ELM show a lack of linguistic competence, and those who work in SLM and CLM have a monolingual attitude towards their own language.

Table 4. Language use in a Spanish language model school.

| SUBJECTS	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10
Lx use for social and affective functions	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Lx for classroom management	0	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	0
Lx for content transmission	2	0	3	0	8	8	1	1	3	1
Lx to support the learner's comprehension	0	0	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	1

Note: Lx = language used different from the one the school encourages.

Moving on to research question 2, results related to the impact of the language model on teachers' attitudes towards the three languages are summarized in Figures 1, 2, and 3. On the one hand, in the English-based language model (ELM), it seems to be a clear separation of attitudes (see Figure 1). The most favourable attitude on behalf of the teachers is towards English, followed by Spanish, and the most negative attitude is towards Catalan.
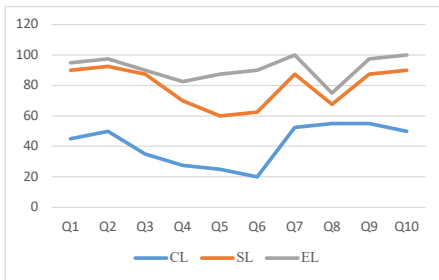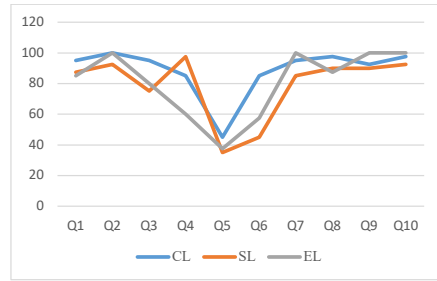

Figure 1. ELM's Attitudes towards Catalan, Spanish and English Languages.

On the other hand, Figure 2 shows that, in the Spanish language model (SLM), the teachers show a very positive attitude towards the Spanish language, while their attitudes towards the other two languages is not so favourable, although their attitude towards English is more favourable than to Catalan.
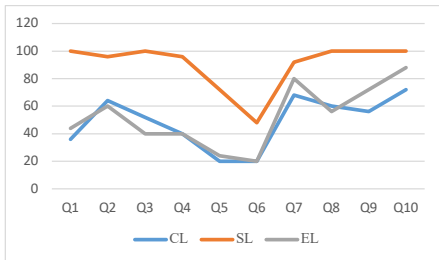
Figure 2. SLM's Attitudes towards Catalan, Spanish and English languages.

Finally, in the Catalan language model (CLM), the teachers show similar attitudes towards the three languages (see Figure3).

Figure 3. CLM's Attitudes towards Catalan, Spanish and English Languages.

Findings related to research question 2 suggest that, although the three schools are open to multilingualism, the language model of each centre seems to have a notable impact on teachers' attitudes towards the three languages. Our qualitative findings, obtained in the semi-structured interviews, confirmed the quantitative data, since teachers reported feeling more comfortable using the preferred language of the school they were working in. This is illustrated in teachers' answers to the question "Are you more comfortable when you speak English, Catalan or Spanish? How can you explain that?"

For example, answers from the ELM included: "*In English, this is my language*", and *"English, no doubt"*. While answers from the CLM included: "*En valencià, en anglès segur que no. No tinc ni idea*" [*In Valencian, in English surely not. I have no idea*], and "*En valencià, sempre parle en valencià*" [*In Valencian, I always speak in Valencian*]. Lastly, answers from the SLM include: "*Castellano porque es mi L1*" [Spanish because it's my L1], and "*Castellano, las otras no se hablarlas bien*" [*Spanish. I don't speak very well the others*].

In relation to teachers' attitudes towards multilingual education, all the teachers in the three schools reported that multilingual education was important in their school. This is illustrated in the teachers' answers to the question "Is multilingual education important in your school?". For example, answers from the ELM included: "Yes, absolutely, it's the essence of the whole school", and "Very important. Multilingualism is a key for the future". While, answers from the CLM included: "*Sí, perquè oferim valencià, castellà, anglès i francés*" [*Yes, because we teach Valencian, Spanish, English and French*], and "Sí, a l'escola es parla valencià, castellà, francés i anglès" [trans: *Yes, at the school, we speak Valencian, Spanish, English and French*]. Lastly, answers from the SLM included: "Muchísimo, cuando más idiomas mejor, esta escuela ofrece hasta alemán" [*Very much, the more languages the better, this school even teaches German*], and "Bastante, la educación multilingüe abre la mente a los niños y les empuja al futuro" [Quite a lot, multilingual education opens the mind of the children and pushes them to the future]. Research conducted in the Catalan and Basque context are in line with our results. There have been several studies on language attitudes in a multilingual context, frequently with two or more officially recognized languages, as in the case of Catalonia (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Bernaus et al., 2004; Huguet, Janés, & Chireac, 2008; Newman et al., 2008) and in the Basque Country (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Lasagabaster, 2003; Ibarra et al 2008, Huguet et al., 2010). Spain is considered to be a multilingual state, and as a consequence many studies have been conducted in terms of language attitudes. In the context of the Basque Country, studies

seem to be more focussed on language attitudes for learners. Nevertheless, findings of language attitudes in learners can also be applied to the beliefs that teachers have towards that language. In a study of analysing Spanish and Euskera language perceptions, findings revealed that L1 learners had a high impact on attitudes. In the Basque country, Huguet et al (2010) carried out a study aiming to explore learners at a secondary level and their attitudes towards Euskera and Spanish. A total of 390 autochthonous students and 183 immigrants participated in the study. In general, findings showed a positive attitude toward both languages. Some nuances were distinguished as for the Euskera language, where autochthonous students showed more enthusiasm towards the language. Another study carried out in the Basque country was carried out by Lasagabaster (2003). He used a similar version of Baker's (1992) language attitudes questionnaire. Participants from Lasagabaster study were university learners who either had L1 in Euskera, or Spanish, or even both. Findings showed that students who had their L1 in Spanish showed a more favorable attitude towards Spanish and less favorable toward Euskera. On the contrary learners with L1 in Euskera had more positive attitudes toward Euskera and less positive toward Spanish. In the Catalan context, Ballester (2014) conducted a study on teachers' attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish. The study focussed on the usage and attitudes of teacher's on Catalan and Spanish. This was done by asking teachers in which situations they use one language or the other (school, home, quarrelling, friends). Findings revealed that the use of Catalan language has been normalized in Catalan schools where 100 % of teachers

believe that Catalan should be the primary language of instruction.

As it can be observed from teachers' comments, the linguistic repertoire (Spanish, Catalan, and English) expected to be present in the sociolinguistic context of the Valencian community is not used in the context of Primary Education in the case of the sample scrutinized in the present study. This has some pedagogical implications that are worth considering. On the one hand, teachers encourage monolingual education, since only one language is mainly used in each language model. Thus, it seems that there is a need for training teachers on how to apply a multilingual educational approach in the classroom. One possibility to avoid the divorce between teachers' positive attitudes towards multilingual education and classroom practices could be to encourage language teachers to explore "focus on multilingualism" (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). In doing so, teachers could work with an integrated language curriculum and a holistic view of language learning. On the other hand, our findings show that teachers' attitudes towards languages are in line with the sociolinguistic status of each language: The prestige of English as a lingua franca, the prestige of Spanish as a majority language and the lack of prestige of Catalan as a minority language. These findings are in line with previous research conducted at university level by Lasagabaster and Safont (2008) where two different bilingual communities where analysed (the Valencian Community and the Basque Country). Findings showed that both communities were open to multilingualism, even though learners with Catalan as a mother tongue preferred a multilingual education whereas leaners with Spanish as a mother tongue showed a monolingual attitude towards Spanish. In sum the study pointed out that the language model had an influence on teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of minority, majority and foreign languages. However, in the current study, we have extended the scope to cover Primary Education.

4. Conclusions and limitations

The aim of this study is to observe teachers' practices and attitudes towards languages in three different multilingual settings: An English-based language model, a Catalan-based language model and a Spanish-based language model. Findings of the study show that, although teachers believe that multilingual education is important, they mainly rely on one language, which is the dominant language in each school: English in the ELM, Catalan in the CLM and Spanish in the SLM. The study also shows the impact of the language model on teachers' attitudes towards English, Spanish and Catalan in Primary Education, a context that is in need of investigation.

The study presents some limitations. First, the number of sessions and the number of teachers are too small to make the results generalizable. Moreover, no difference between content and language classes is considered, and this provides an issue to explore in the future. In addition, further research might look at the impact of other variables such as training in multilingual education, or teachers' mother tongue. Finally, we have not considered students' attitudes towards languages and future studies might take this route, considering variables such as language proficiency or educational background.

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Appendix I

We would like you to help us answer the following questions. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire is anonymous, and data will be treated in the strictest confidence. We are interested in personal opinions, so please respond sincerely as this is the only way to guarantee the success of this study. Thank you very much for your participation.

Age[ ] Year [ ] Sex (F: Female/ H: Male) [   ]
Mother tongue (C: Catalan-Valencian/ S: Spanish/ E: English) [   ]

Here are some statements about the languages indicated above. Please tell us if you agree or disagree with them. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Answer using a scale 1 of 5 (1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree).

About Catalan-Valencian

1. I like to listen to Catalan-Valencian...[1][2][3][4][5]

2. Catalan-Valencian must be taught in all the schools in the
   Valencian Community..[1][2][3][4][5]

3. I like to speak Catalan-Valencian..[1][2][3][4][5]

4. Catalan-Valencian is an easy language to learn ....[1][2][3][4][5]

5. You cannot learn other languages more useful than Catalan-Valencian...........[1][2][3][4][5]

6. I prefer Catalan-Valencian as a vehicle language at school ....[1][2][3][4][5]

7. Learning Catalan-Valencian enriches my cultural background...............................[1][2][3][4][5]

8. I would not mind marrying a person who only spoke Catalan-Valencian ....   [1][2][3][4][5]

9. It is worth learning Catalan-Valencian...[1][2][3][4][5]

10. If I had children, I would like them to speak Catalan-Valencian.............................[1][2][3][4][5]

About Spanish Language

1. I like to listen to the Spanish language..[1][2][3][4][5]

2. Spanish must be taught to all the schools in the Valencian Community...........[1][2][3][4][5]

3. I like to speak Spanish...[1][2][3][4][5]

4. Spanish is an easy language to learn...[1][2][3][4][5]

5. You cannot learn other languages more useful than Spanish...............................[1][2][3][4][5]

6. I prefer Spanish as a vehicle language in school ....[1][2][3][4][5]

7. Learning Spanish enriches my cultural background..[1][2][3][4][5]

8. I would not mind marrying a person who only spoke Spanish.............................[1][2][3][4][5]

9. It's worth learning Spanish...[1][2][3][4][5]

10. If I had children I would like them to speak Spanish (apart from others).........[1][2][3][4][5]

About English Language

1. I like to listen to the English language .... [1][2][3][4][5]

2. English must be taught to all the schools in the Valencian Community .... [1][2][3][4][5]

3. I like to speak English .... [1][2][3][4][5]

4. English is an easy language to learn .... [1][2][3][4][5]

5. You cannot learn other languages more useful than English .... [1][2][3][4][5]

6. I prefer English as a vehicle language in school.. [1][2][3][4][5]

7. Learning English enriches my cultural background .... [1][2][3][4][5]

8. I would not mind marrying a person who only spoke English .... [1][2][3][4][5]

9. It's worth learning English .... [1][2][3][4][5]

10. If I had children I would like them to speak English (apart from others) .... [1][2][3][4][5]