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SUCCESS OR FAILURE?
POLISH CLIL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY BASED ON INTERVIEWS

Abstract. This study explores the effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) from the perspective of teachers within the Polish educational context. While CLIL has been recognized as a successful model for integrating subject content with foreign language instruction, its implementation in Poland remains under-researched, particularly concerning teacher competence and perceptions. Drawing on qualitative data from interviews with 149 CLIL teachers across primary, junior high, and high schools, the study examines how educators perceive success and failure in their CLIL practice, alongside the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the approach. Findings suggest that while many teachers view CLIL as an opportunity for professional development and learner advancement, significant challenges persist. These include curriculum overload, insufficient teacher training, lack of appropriate materials, and systemic issues such as final assessments conducted in Polish rather than the CLIL target language. Despite these obstacles, many teachers report a sense of accomplishment linked to student engagement and success, both academically and professionally. The study underscores the need for targeted institutional support, curriculum reform, and improved teacher preparation to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of CLIL in Poland.

Keywords: CLIL; teacher education; qualitative research; content and language integration learning; reflection; professional development

SUKCES CZY PORAŻKA?
PERSPEKTYWA POLSKICH NAUCZYCIELI CLIL.
BADANIE JAKOŚCIOWE OPARTE NA WYWIADACH

Abstrakt. Niniejsze badanie analizuje skuteczność zintegrowanego kształcenia przedmiotowo-językowego (CLIL) z perspektywy nauczycieli w kontekście edukacyjnym Polski. Choć CLIL jest uznawany za skuteczny model integracji treści przedmiotowych z nauczaniem języków obcych, jego wdrażanie w Polsce pozostaje niedostatecznie zbadane, szczególnie w odniesieniu do kompetencji i postrzegania nauczycieli. Opierając się na danych jakościowych uzyskanych z wywiadów z 149 nauczycielami CLIL ze szkół podstawowych, gimnazjów i liceów, badanie analizuje, jak nauczyciele postrzegają

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sukcesy i porażki w swojej praktyce CLIL, a także dostrzegane zalety i wady tego podejścia. Wyniki sugerują, że chociaż wielu nauczycieli postrzega CLIL jako szansę na rozwój zawodowy i postępy uczniów, nadal istnieją poważne wyzwania. Należą do nich przeciążenie programem nauczania, niewystarczające szkolenia nauczycieli, brak odpowiednich materiałów oraz kwestie systemowe, takie jak końcowe oceny przeprowadzane w języku polskim, a nie w języku docelowym CLIL. Pomimo tych przeszkód wielu nauczycieli zgłasza poczucie spełnienia związane z zaangażowaniem uczniów i ich sukcesami, zarówno w nauce, jak i w życiu zawodowym. Badanie podkreśla potrzebę ukierunkowanego wsparcia instytucjonalnego, reformy programu nauczania i lepszego przygotowania nauczycieli w celu zwiększenia skuteczności i trwałości CLIL w Polsce.

Słowa kluczowe: CLIL; kształcenie nauczycieli; badania jakościowe; nauczanie zintegrowane treści i języka; refleksja; rozwój zawodowy

INTRODUCTION

There have been many discussions concerning the core features of a CLIL teacher. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) defined as “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 1) requires highly educated and skillful teachers both in content and language. The scarcity of competent CLIL teachers has been pointed out by several researchers (Mehisto et al., 2008; Pérez-Cañado, 2012; Infante et al., 2009). One of the reasons is the duality of the CLIL approach as well as a proper understanding of the overall goals of CLIL. If CLIL is treated as language competences improvement approach, it should be taught by language teachers who are trained in a content subject; however, if it is perceived as a tool, then it should subject teachers trained in the language who teach through this approach (Pavón Vázquez & Rubio, 2010).). In an ideal situation, the CLIL teacher should be the one qualified in both areas. Nevertheless, teachers with such qualifications are very hard to find.

1. CLIL TEACHER: RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

Successful CLIL depends on the majority of factors such as government support and aims, school policy, school management, the curriculum, well-qualified teachers, learners, and teaching resources. Even though all these factors are significant and have to be taken into account when planning CLIL education, teachers seem to be of prior importance. Without well-qualified teachers who

have the knowledge of how to teach the content subject in a foreign language, implementation of proper CLIL education is very hard and may finish as a failure.

Numerous research was conducted on the CLIL teachers' competences. One of the issues that was investigated was the knowledge or rather the lack of it as far as CLIL was concerned. It was reported that CLIL teachers often did not know what was expected from them, and combining content with language teaching was a real challenge (Coyle et al., 2010). What is more, Mehisto et al. (2008) found out that most of the CLIL teachers were content teachers who had never received any language teacher training and, therefore, usually used translation in their classes. Another study, based on structured interviews, conducted in the Spanish context showed that CLIL teachers believed that their teaching might be improved only if they were provided with some foreign language training (Díaz & Requejo, 2008). Besides, the CLIL teachers reported that they did not feel competent enough to teach in a foreign language (ibid.). Lack of proper CLIL training, as well as foreign language training, were the most common drawbacks reported in the studies on CLIL teachers (Cammarata, 2009; Feryok, 2008; Lazarević, 2022; Lopriore, 2018; Lyster & Ballinger, 2011; Mehisto et al., 2008; Papaja, 2014; Wolff, 2012).

Another important issue reported in the research on CLIL teachers is the workload that the CLIL teachers have to face due to the lack of teaching materials (Alonso et al., 2008; Banegas, 2017; Durán-Martínez et al., 2022; Méndez García, 2014; Gondová, 2012; Maley, 2011; Moore & Lorenzo, 2007; Vázquez, 2007). CLIL teachers seldom complain about it, however, they point out to the real problem and the need to publish more CLIL books and materials that would be widely available not only to CLIL teachers but to CLIL learners, as well.

Lastly, Bruton (2011) mentions evaluation that tends to be a problematic issue for many CLIL teachers. When investigating national exams (except for language exams), it can be noticed that most of them solely focus on content while CLIL should focus on content and language. The structure of national exams raises a lot of confusion among CLIL teachers, who at a certain point, usually a few months before the national exam, decide to focus on content only (Cherro Samper, 2015; Otto & Estrada, 2019; Lofft Basse, 2016; O'Dwyer & de Boer, 2015; Serragiotto, 2007).

Even though most of the research conducted among CLIL teachers concentrates on the drawbacks of CLIL for teachers and issues that should be improved, many CLIL teachers mention the benefits of CLIL (Johnson, 2012; Lo, 2019; Lofft Basse, 2016; Marsh et al., 2010; Massler, 2012; Muszyńska & Papaja, 2019; Navés, 2009; Papadopoulos & Griva, 2014; Savic, 2010). One of them

is the development of content and language teaching techniques based on the use of authentic and up-to-date materials and modern technologies.

Besides, the CLIL teachers mention cooperation with other teachers and institutions. Such cooperation aims to provide the CLIL teachers with the possibility to exchange their knowledge and share their experiences with others. Teachers who have particular content knowledge in a foreign language have a better chance to cooperate with teachers and institutions from other countries. Such cooperation has a positive impact on the CLIL teachers' motivation, who often enumerate this factor as the most beneficial one (Apsel, 2012; Cantón & San Isidro, 2019; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Johnson, 2012; Muszyńska & Papaja, 2019).

Finally, CLIL teachers mention professional development as one of the benefits of CLIL. In many countries, CLIL teachers have the possibility to take part in some exchange programmes, which are often financed by EU Institutions. They might also participate in CLIL teacher workshops or conferences, which are organised by Universities or institutions such as British Council or Goethe Institute (Bruton, 2011; Lorenzo et al., 2010; Muszyńska & Papaja, 2019; O'Dwyer & de Boer, 2015; Wesche, 2010).

Bearing in mind all the benefits and drawbacks of CLIL in the context of teachers and trying to find out whether CLIL is perceived as a success or failure in the CLIL teachers' eyes, more data will be reported in the following pages.

2. THE CURRENT RESEARCH

One of the main objectives of the current study reported in the following pages was to investigate the effectiveness and non-effectiveness of CLIL from the Polish teachers' perspective. Additionally, it aims to raise the future CLIL teachers, headmasters, and authorities' awareness of the benefits and drawbacks, which may help them make appropriate decisions concerning CLIL education. It should be clearly stated from the very outset, however, that the research to be reported in the following stages is of a descriptive-exploratory nature, and its goal is "to analyze the data as they are rather than to compare them to other data to see how similar they are" (van Lier, 1988, p. 2). Based on the literature review, I assumed that there is a need to investigate the effectiveness of CLIL among CLIL teachers, as they are the ones who are mainly but not solely responsible for CLIL success. I also believe that such a focus seems to be fully warranted in view of the fact that bilingual education has become not only a possibility but a necessity in the 21st century especially in a country like Poland where

the knowledge of languages in different contexts is very important due to the economical changes and the role of the teacher cannot be neglected. Therefore, the research questions were the following:

1. What do the CLIL teachers consider to be success in their professional work?
2. What do the CLIL teachers consider to be a failure in their professional work?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL?

2.1 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

A total of **149** CLIL teachers participated in the study; **122** females and **27** males. Due to the fact that the author of the article is also a CLIL teacher trainer, there was no problem with finding the research participants who were contacted through e-mail and asked whether they wanted to participate in the research. 171 teachers were contacted, however, 149 of them agreed to participate in the research. The basic demographic data concerning teaching experience, teaching experience in CLIL education, type of school and subject taught is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Participants' basic data

		Frequency	Percentage
Teaching experience	0-1 year	21	14.1
	2-4 years	31	20.8
	5-10 years	28	18.8
	11-20 years	36	24.2
	more than 20 years	33	22.1
Teaching experience in CLIL	0-1 year	27	18.1
	2-4 years	44	29.5
	5-10 years	40	26.8
	11-20 years	36	24.2
	more than 20 years	2	1.3
Type of school	Primary School	30	20.1
	Junior High School	57	38.3
	High School	62	41.6
Subjects taught	Art	5	17.4
	Maths	26	3.4
	Natural Sciences	15	10.1

	History	18	12.1
	Physics	15	20.1
	Chemistry	9	16.1
	Biology	24	10.1
	Geography	30	4.7
	Social Sciences	7	6.0

According to the data presented in Table 1, most of the teachers ($n=36$) have between 11 and 20 years of teaching experience, which gives 24.2%. 33 teachers (22.1%) have more than 20 years of teaching experience while 31 (20.8%) have between 2 and 4 years of teaching experience. The number of 28 participants (18.8%) has between 5 and 10 years of teaching experience and only 21 participants (14.1%) have been working as teachers for around 1 year or even shorter. As for the teaching experience in CLIL, a significant number ($n=44$) of the research participants has between 2 and 4 years of teaching experience in CLIL, which give 29.5%. 40 teachers (26.8%) have between 5 and 10 years of teaching experience in CLIL, while 36 of them (24.2%) have between 11 and 20 years of teaching experience in CLIL. 27 participants (18.1%) have no experience in CLIL or just started their CLIL career, and only 2 participants, which gives 1.3%, have been teaching in CLIL for more than 20 years. Bearing in mind the number of the participants who have plenty of experience in teaching and CLIL, the group investigated can be considered a representative sample.

When analysing the data concerning the type of school in which the research participants work, most of the CLIL teachers ($n=62$) work in a Secondary School (41.6%). A significant number of the research participants ($n=57$) work in a Junior High School (38.3%) while 30 research participants, which gives 20.1% work in a Primary School. The reason why Secondary School and Junior High School participants outnumber Primary School participants since CLIL education is mostly offered in Poland at these two levels of education. As for the content subjects that are taught in English, 30 CLIL teachers, which gives 20.1% teach geography, 26 (17.4%) teach maths, and 24 (16.1%) of the research participants teach biology in English. 18 (12.1%) of the respondents teach history, and the same number, namely 15, teach natural sciences and physics. Only 9 (6.0%) of the research participants teach chemistry in English, 7 (4.7%) teach social sciences, and 5 (3.4%) teach art. As can be seen from the data, geography, maths, and biology tend to be the most popular subjects taught in English, which is due to the availability of teachers (Muszyńska & Papaja, 2019).

2.2 RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The qualitative data was collected through specially designed interview questions which were the following:

1. **What do you consider to be success in your CLIL teaching experience?**
2. **What do you consider to be a failure in your CLIL teaching experience?**
3. Do you like teaching the content subject in English? Why? Why not?
4. What kind of learners do you ignore?
5. What kind of learners do you pay more attention to?
6. What do you do when you have a 'worse day'?
7. Do you cooperate with other CLIL teachers? How?
8. Is there anything that you ignore in your teaching profession?
9. What do you do to involve parents in the learning process?
10. What are your relations with your headmaster?
11. What do you find stressful when teaching the content subject in English?
12. What had been your expectations before you started teaching the content subject in English?
13. What are your teaching aims for the next school year?
14. What kind of changes would you like to introduce into CLIL?
15. What can you do to be more active in your professional life?
16. **What are the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL?**

For the purpose of the research presented in the following pages, only the data concerning the questions in bold will be presented and analysed.

2.3 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

The research took place between September 2018 and December 2019. All the interviews were scheduled individually and conducted by the researcher. The questions were asked in English, and the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Each of the interviewed teachers signed an interview agreement and, additionally provided the information concerning teaching experience, teaching experience in CLIL, the type of school in which he/she worked, and the content subject taught in English. One interview lasted around 50 minutes. The interviews took place in the participants' schools or at the University of Silesia. The questions were asked in English.

3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND RESULTS

In the following part of the article, the research participants' answers will be provided. Firstly, the CLIL teachers' perception of success will be presented, secondly the responses concerning the CLIL teachers' perception of failure, and finally, some changes that the CLIL teachers would like to introduce into CLIL education. Due to the huge amount of collected data, only a few opinions will be presented on the basis on which data analysis categories were established. The data obtained from the interview was transcribed. There are various methods of data transcription, however, I decided to focus on the simple transcripts (Nagatomo, 2012), without focusing on prosodic features of language such as intonation or length of pauses since the most important was what the respondents were saying and not how. The prosodic features were limited to pauses indicated by three dots (...) and the speaker's emphasis on a word was indicated by a font in **bold**. Once the transcriptions were done, separate files were created according to the previously established categories. I was the only person who knew the identity of the teachers but since anonymity had been promised to the respondents the answers were coded using a capital letter T and the number of the participant.

3.1 THE PERCEPTION OF SUCCESS:

"In my opinion, there are two aspects of success in teaching in CLIL. Firstly, it is the language, and secondly, it is the content. I have a feeling that I provide my learners with lots of knowledge... on the one hand, I teach them the language, and on the other hand, I teach them geography. If I can see that they grasp the knowledge about geography in English and they enjoy it, I feel successful." (geography CLIL teacher)

"For me, CLIL is the real success. I can see that my learners enjoy biology in English and, they find the lessons very inspiring. At the very beginning, I had many problems, especially with the teaching materials – I had to prepare everything myself, and I was afraid that the teaching materials would be boring for my learners, but I managed, and today I can say that I'm proud of myself" (biology CLIL teacher)

"I think that I started perceiving myself as a successful CLIL teacher later on when I realized that learning content subjects in English could be beneficial for my learners, for example, I often meet my learners who tell me that they are studying at some prestigious Universities abroad or they go a very lucrative job in one of the world's biggest companies. Then I think, yes, CLIL makes sense as it helps people become successful in their lives. I'm very happy to be a part of it." (chemistry CLIL teacher)

"I think that I am a successful CLIL teacher. My learners are very keen on geography in English. They always ask additional questions, and they are willing to participate

in all projects and competitions. What is more, they often win these competitions, and I can feel that I am a part of this success” (geography CLIL teacher)

When analysing all the CLIL teachers’ perceptions of success in CLIL, most of the teachers think that being able to convey content knowledge in English is a huge success. Most of them are not language teachers, therefore in order to teach a content subject in English, they have to put much effort into developing their language skills. On the other hand, the CLIL teachers feel proud when they can see that their learners are engaged in the lessons, motivated, and enjoy learning the content subjects in English. They feel successful when they can see that their learners participate in some international projects, cooperate with learners from all over the world, and win competitions. Besides, the CLIL teachers can feel that they are a part of their learners’ success e.g., studying at Universities abroad or working in some international companies. When learning about their learners’ success, they know that their effort was worth it, and they believe that CLIL makes sense.

3.2 THE PERCEPTION OF FAILURE

“One of the things that I guess I failed in CLIL is the curriculum. I did not manage to cover all the topics. The curriculum for CLIL is the same as the one for regular classes. It often takes me more time to explain certain issues in English.” (physics CLIL teacher)

“Definitely the CLIL materials. At the very beginning, I was totally lost. My classes were a bit disorganized; I was using plenty of materials from the Internet and British or American course books. Today, it is much better as I managed to collect plenty of materials that I think are useful for my learners.” (biology CLIL teacher)

“I’m afraid to say that my biggest failure was lack of knowledge concerning CLIL. The headmaster told me to teach chemistry in English because I graduated from the Chemistry Department and I have CAE with A, so in the opinion of the headmaster, I had enough knowledge of English to teach it. I had no idea how to do it. I bought some books about CLIL, but there were no teacher trainings, so I just did it the way I thought was proper. I knew how to teach chemistry, but I had no idea how to teach English, and combining these two was a real challenge.” (chemistry CLIL teacher)

“I remember a group of learners who simply made fun of my pronunciation. I was really trying very hard, and before each lesson I spent hours studying the terms in English, looking for proper pronunciation. Unfortunately, I often failed as my Polish accent could be easily heard. Most of the learners were from bilingual families, or they had been living abroad for many years, so their pronunciation was excellent. When I think about this period and the nasty behaviour of the learners, I really feel ashamed.” (maths CLIL teacher)

Even though many CLIL teachers did not feel comfortable talking about their failures, they were very honest during the interviews. Most of the CLIL teachers consider their inability to cover the whole curriculum as a failure. They often mention that the curriculum is overloaded with topics, which are the same as the topics that are covered by teachers who do it in Polish. They also stress that explaining some concepts in English might take much more time than explaining them in Polish. The next thing that the CLIL teachers consider to be a failure is the lack of proper teaching materials. They say that they often prepare the materials themselves relying on Internet sources or coursebooks from Great Britain or the USA, but they still have a feeling that in some cases they do not do it properly and therefore the teaching materials are useless. Some of the CLIL teachers also mention a lack of knowledge concerning CLIL as a failure. They claim that they are not well-prepared to teach content subjects in English and often do not know how to do it properly. Many CLIL teachers who took part in the research are mainly content teachers with some knowledge of English. Therefore, many of them consider their knowledge of English in the context of CLIL as a failure. Some of them say that they know the language but have no idea how to teach it. As a result, they tend to switch to Polish when explaining some concepts, which they consider a failure. A significant number of CLIL teachers evaluate their work by looking at the learners' grades. Some of them have a feeling that they failed because their learners got only satisfactory grades. Finally, the CLIL teachers also mention the lack of motivation among their learners and the lack of discipline, especially in the case of primary school learners. They state that they do not know how to motivate their learners to learn content subjects in English as they can see that they are bored and often misbehave.

3.3 ADVANTAGES OF CLIL

"In my opinion, one of the advantages of CLIL is that it 'opens the door' to Europe and also other countries. I'm very proud of my learners who get lucrative jobs abroad, and I know that they are successful because they had a chance to be exposed to English a lot." (geography CLIL teacher)

"Even though I had to spend hours preparing the materials, read a lot and look for some interesting facts, I have to say that I really developed my language skills. I can even say that I'm developing all the time as a CLIL teacher. This feeling is very positive. I think that many CLIL teachers can say exactly the same." (chemistry CLIL teacher)

"Well, advantages... I guess there are many, but one advantage of CLIL that comes into my mind is the access to various materials available in English. Sometimes in Polish coursebooks, there is only one aspect presented of a particular issue. Of course,

the learners might read other books or articles in Polish, but it's always worth looking at the international perspective." (history CLIL teacher)

"The biggest advantage of CLIL would definitely be language development. My learners are exposed to English every day; they develop their speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills. Additionally, they acquire specialized vocabulary that they wouldn't probably learn during regular English classes." (physics CLIL teacher)

Most of the CLIL teachers who took part in the interview are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL. In the case of the advantages, they usually mention great opportunities that the learners have during CLIL education e.g., taking part in some international projects but also finishing CLIL education. Many learners go abroad and study at very good Universities as their level of English is very high, not to mention the knowledge of content subjects. Having finished the University abroad, they often get a very lucrative job. When talking about the advantages, the CLIL teachers also mention their own language development. They say that they have to work on their language skills every day, which gives them the feeling that they are developing their professional skills. Access to various materials in a foreign language, which broadens the teachers' and learners' horizons, is often mentioned as the advantage of CLIL.

3.4 DISADVANTAGES OF CLIL

"For me, definitely the time that I have to spend on preparing each lesson. As there aren't any course books in chemistry for CLIL learners available, I have to prepare everything myself. I usually spend hours looking for appropriate materials. Then I have to adapt these materials to the learners' level of English and the curriculum requirements. For me, it's double work that I'm not paid for." (chemistry CLIL teacher)

"I can see that there are some weaker learners in sciences and therefore have a lot of problems with learning in a foreign language. I teach maths, and some of my learners have lots of problems, as the formulas are complicated and difficult even in Polish. I'm just wondering whether all subjects should be taught in a foreign language. In my opinion, maths shouldn't." (maths CLIL teacher)

"I think that in many cases, language teaching is neglected – the most important is the subject. The idea of content and language being integrated doesn't work. We teach vocabulary, and we explain certain concepts in English, but we often don't pay attention to the language itself. Perhaps language teachers who teach particular subjects in English do it but I'm a biology teacher and for me, the most important is biology. To be honest, I don't even know how to teach the language." (biology CLIL teacher)

"The biggest disadvantage is the curriculum itself. It looks the same as the curriculum for learners learning the subject in Polish. Teaching the subject in English requires

more effort and more time. Sometimes I have to explain particular concepts twice or even three times because of the language. In my opinion, this is ridiculous. The curriculum should be adapted to CLIL requirements.” (physics CLIL teacher)

In the case of disadvantages, the CLIL teachers often mention the curriculum, which is too packed, and as a result, the teachers have problems covering all the topics. Another disadvantage very often mentioned by the CLIL teachers is the lack of proper teaching materials. The teachers say that they have to spend hours preparing the materials from various internet sources. The CLIL teachers also mention the lack of proper CLIL teacher trainings and the inability to teach the language itself. For most of them, CLIL is about teaching a content subject in a foreign language because they do not really know how to teach content and language in integration. When referring to the CLIL learners, the CLIL teachers often mention the problems some learners have with understanding particular concepts in English. They add that it is not connected with the lack of proper language in many cases but rather with the difficulty of the subject itself. Finally, the CLIL teachers mention final secondary school examinations, which the CLIL learners are obliged to take in Polish.

4. DISCUSSION

One of the advantages of this study is that the CLIL teachers had a chance to reflect upon their teaching practice in CLIL. The dual focus of content and language integrated learning makes this approach very demanding. The results of the research reported in this article show that CLIL might be perceived both as success or failure, and CLIL teachers need to face many challenges to become competent CLIL teachers.

When referring to the perception of success in CLIL, most of the CLIL teachers feel proud because their language skills have developed and they are able to convey content knowledge in English. This belief might seem surprising, but when bearing in mind that most of the CLIL teachers are content subject teachers, this standpoint becomes crucial. The research results go in tandem with the research reported by Bruton (2011), Lorenzo et al. (2010), and Wesche (2010), who also mention language development as the key factor. Additionally, for the Polish CLIL teachers, success in CLIL is perceived from their learners’ perspective. They feel successful CLIL teachers when their learners are motivated, enjoy the lessons, win competitions, take part in some international projects, and have very good grades. The CLIL teachers often say that they feel that they are

a part of their learners' success. Similar opinions of CLIL teachers were reported in the study conducted by Dalton-Puffer (2011), Gierlinger (2007), and Várkuti (2010), who mention CLIL learners' content and language achievements as CLIL teachers' success.

The perception of success can be linked to the advantages of CLIL, as they often intermingle with the teachers' opinions. When analysing the benefits of CLIL, they may be divided into three categories: advantages for CLIL learners, CLIL teachers, and school and society. As for the advantages for CLIL learners, the CLIL teachers often mention language development, cognitive development, autonomy, development of communicative skills, content knowledge development, and motivation related to future perspectives. When being asked about the advantages for CLIL teachers, the participants of the current study, as well as the studies reported in the literature on CLIL, often mention language development, professional development, access to various materials, and the opportunity to cooperate with other teachers and schools abroad (Johnson, 2012; Lofft Basse, 2016; Massler, 2012; Muszyńska & Papaja, 2019; Navés, 2009; Papadopoulos & Griva, 2014; Savić, 2010). Finally, the CLIL teachers enumerate the advantages of CLIL for school and society, which are the following: greater interest in the school, which offers CLIL education, and well-educated young people.

Although there is not much research on CLIL teachers' perception of CLIL as failure reported in the literature, Polish CLIL teachers often mention the fact that CLIL tends to be neglected at the level of national education. The curriculum is overloaded, which often results in the CLIL teachers' inability to cover all the required topics. Secondly, the CLIL learners are obliged to take their final secondary school examination in Polish, which has a demotivating impact on CLIL. Another crucial aspect that the CLIL teachers mention is the lack of proper coursebooks and teaching materials. Additionally, the lack of teacher trainings and thorough preparation for teaching content in integration with language gives them the feeling of failure as CLIL teachers.

Nevertheless, the disadvantages of CLIL have been widely reported in the literature, and they seem to go in tandem with the CLIL teachers' perception of failure (Banegas, 2011; Bruton, 2011; Coonan, 2007; Hillyard, 2011; Mehisto et al., 2008; Papaja, 2014; Paran, 2010; Serragiotto 2007; Yassin et al., 2010). Among the main disadvantages of CLIL, the research participants mention lack of support at the national level, which leads to some serious difficulties e.g. overloaded curriculum, lack of proper course books and teaching materials, and the obligation to take the final secondary school exams in L1. The current

research conducted in Poland shows that the drawbacks of CLIL are similar to the drawbacks reported in the research in Germany, France, Spain, the UK, Italy, the Czech Republic, or Estonia.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the research was to investigate the perception of CLIL teachers' success of CLIL as well as failure. Additionally, the CLIL teachers were asked to enumerate the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL. Even though the aim of the research has been reached, the number of CLIL teachers having experience in CLIL above 20 years is not satisfactory, which might be due to the fact that 20 years ago CLIL was hardly ever present in Polish schools. Secondly, the number of CLIL teachers teaching art, chemistry, or social sciences might not be representative as these subjects are not very commonly taught in English in Polish schools. However, the researcher decided to include them in the current research in order to show that there are teachers who teach these subjects in CLIL. Finally, even though the research conducted in Poland is up to date, there is not much current research concerning these issues conducted in other countries. Most of the research comes from the years 2008–2016, therefore it would be advisable to check whether the situation of CLIL has recently improved and the problematic issues mentioned by the Polish participants of the study have been solved.

An important limitation of the present study, however, concerns the methodology itself. While teacher surveys provide useful insights, they need to be complemented with classroom-based research on communication behaviour in CLIL contexts. To truly assess the effectiveness of CLIL, it is not sufficient to rely solely on teachers' perceptions – there must also be evidence of how CLIL impacts students' language acquisition. Unfortunately, like the majority of studies on this topic, the current research focuses primarily on teaching practices and omits an analysis of the learning process. This separation between teaching and acquisition results in a situation where, in the Polish context, we are primarily examining teacher intuition and perception rather than the actual effectiveness of L2 teaching and learning. This limitation should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

CONCLUSIONS

The study reported in this article shows that apart from the benefits of CLIL, there are plenty of drawbacks that need to be addressed. CLIL teachers are the ones who face all these challenges in practice and know how to improve CLIL education. CLIL has potential, but in order to be fully implemented, particular measures need to be taken. Firstly, the curriculum should be adapted to CLIL education bearing in mind that the content is supposed to be taught/learnt in a foreign language; therefore it might become more time-consuming. Secondly, publishers should work on subject-specific coursebooks, which would be accepted by the Ministry of Education and could be used by CLIL teachers and CLIL learners. Additionally, those CLIL learners who are a part of CLIL education should not be obliged to take their final school examination in Polish but in the language they study particular content subjects. As for the future CLIL teachers, they should be well-educated and properly prepared to teach content and language in integration; therefore Universities should provide them with the possibility to study content subject and language at the same time and gain proper qualifications. Finally, the CLIL teachers should be provided with national and international teacher trainings, which would help them develop their professional skills and establish connections with other CLIL teachers.

Addressing the limitations enumerated in this article and taking the measures suggested above would be essential for the future of CLIL and its success.

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