

Differences between Students in Bilingual and Non-Bilingual Groups in a Centre for Secondary Education

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Abstract: This article deals with a crucial issue in the field of education nowadays: bilingual education. The main objective is to analyse the differences between students in bilingual groups and students in non-bilingual programmes, in relation to several variables, especially special educational needs and coping strategies. Concerning the method, a survey, in which 89 students of third year aged 14-17 participated, was carried out in a centre for CSE (Compulsory Secondary Education) located in the Region of Murcia. It consisted of two parts: an *ad hoc* questionnaire and a standardized test (the Coping Strategies Inventory). The results showed that, in general terms, students who were in non-bilingual groups were less interested and motivated regarding academic issues and the English language, as well as they proved to be less concerned about how to cope with their problems. Furthermore, almost all the students who had any type of special educational need were in a non-bilingual group. Therefore, according to the results, it is clear that more research should be done concerning not only the differences found between bilingual and non-bilingual students, but also on the situation of students with special needs in relation to bilingual education.

Key words: Bilingual education, Special educational needs, English, Coping strategies.

Diferencias entre el alumnado de grupos bilingües y no bilingües en un centro de Educación Secundaria

Resumen: Este artículo aborda un asunto crucial en el área de la educación en la actualidad: la enseñanza bilingüe. El objetivo principal es analizar las diferencias entre el alumnado que está en programas bilingües y aquel que está en programas no bilingües, con referencia a variables tales como las necesidades educativas y las estrategias de afrontamiento. En cuanto al método, se llevó a cabo una encuesta en un instituto de Murcia en el que participaron 89 estudiantes de tercero de ESO de entre 14 y 17 años. La encuesta consistía en un cuestionario *ad hoc* y un test estandarizado (el Inventario de Estrategias de Afrontamiento). Los resultados mostraron que, en general, el alumnado de grupos no bilingües tenía un menor interés y motivación en lo referente a la lengua inglesa y otras cuestiones académicas, así como una menor preocupación por cómo afrontar sus problemas. Además, la mayoría de estudiantes con necesidades educativas no estaba en un programa bilingüe. Por tanto, en función de estos resultados, una mayor investigación debería llevarse a cabo en relación a las diferencias entre alumnado bilingüe y no bilingüe, así como a la situación de los estudiantes con necesidades educativas respecto a la enseñanza bilingüe.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza bilingüe, Necesidades educativas, Inglés, Estrategias de afrontamiento.

This paper deals with an issue of great concern nowadays: bilingualism. The number of bilingual programmes in centres for Secondary Education has been increasingly

growing during the last few years. In fact, according to the Ministry of Education, Culture & Sport (2016), nowadays 15.4% of the students from CSE participate in bilingual programmes in Spain.

To begin with, the term 'bilingualism' is a wide concept which does not have a single and specific meaning, but its meaning depends on the context in which it is used (Grosjean & Li,

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2012). According to Rodríguez, Carrasquillo and Lee (2014, p. 4), bilingualism can be defined as “the ability of an individual to use two languages in a variety of situations and conditions”. As bilingualism is such a wide concept, this paper focuses specifically on bilingual education, which is one of the relevant concepts for this study. Bialystok (2016) defines bilingual education as a school programme in which some subjects, other than language subjects, are taught in more than one language or a programme in which the vehicular language is not the same that the language of the community. In addition, bilingual education has been proved to be beneficial for students because of various reasons, such as the fact that students can reach high levels of competence both in their mother tongue and their first foreign language, they can also develop a sensitive view of other cultures, as well as it has cognitive benefits (Baker, 2006). Due to the numerous advantages of bilingual education, together with the fact that in Europe co-exist a great number of languages and cultures, the European Union has launched a great amount of programmes and projects in this field. One of those initiatives is the Action Plan on Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity (European Commission, 2003), in which the benefits and contributions that CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has for language learning are emphasized.

CLIL is defined as “an educational approach where curricular content is taught through the medium of a foreign language, typically to students participating in some form of mainstream education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level” (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 183). In the 1990s, this term started to become widely used to speak about immersion teaching (Eurydice, 2006), a programme in which students are exposed to big amounts of input in a foreign language.

Despite the importance of bilingual education and the numerous programmes and projects launched to foster it, Scherba et al. (2016) state that there is a particular group of students who may encounter limitations to access language programmes:

learners with disabilities. Some of the reasons are the lack of trained staff and resources, as well as scheduling problems. In addition, many practitioners consider that children with severe developmental disabilities are not able to become bilingual because they may have even problems in acquiring their first language (Paradis, 2016).

Regarding the concept of special educational needs, in 2000, at the World Education Forum, the international community established six educational goals to be achieved by the year 2015. This international commitment, coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was called Education for All (EFA) and its main objective was to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults (UNESCO, 2015). Despite one of the six goals of EFA was that all children had access to education by 2015, this goal has not been totally reached yet. In developing countries, for instance, children with disabilities are normally excluded from educational services (Srivastava, 2015).

It is essential to clarify that the term ‘special educational needs’ is considered differently depending on the country. However, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007, p. 19) defines broadly this term as “the students for whom countries make additional resources available so that they can access the curriculum more effectively”. In addition, the OECD (2007) established three cross-national categories: A/Disabilities, B/Difficulties and C/Disadvantages. The first one refers to disorders which can be attributed to organic pathologies such as neurological problems. The second one includes children with social interaction problems, and the last one refers to problems which arise from socio-economic, linguistic or cultural factors.

In the United Kingdom, for instance, the term ‘special educational needs’ (SEN), according to the Children and Families Act (The National Archives, 2014), includes children or youth with learning difficulties or disabilities which require some kind of special educational provision. More specifically,

clause 20 of such Act states that a child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a greater difficulty in learning than the rest of students or a disability which hampers him or her from using certain facilities which a normal school provides for other students of the same age. The term SEN includes four broad categories or areas: (1) communication and interaction, (2) cognition and learning, (3) social, emotional and mental health difficulties, and (4) sensory and/or physical needs (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015).

Nevertheless, according to LOE (Jefatura de Estado, 2006), in Spain, two main groups can be distinguished: Alumnado con Necesidades Educativas Especiales (ACNEE) and Alumnado con Necesidades Específicas de Apoyo Educativo (ACNEAE). The first one –ACNEE– is defined by the Spanish legislation as those students who need certain supports and educational assistance because of a disability or behavioural disorder, for a specific educational period or during the whole education process. The term ACNEAE is a broader category which includes the first one, as well as the following students: those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), those with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, those with high intellectual capacity, those who entered into the education system later and those who have personal or academic history conditions (LOE, 2006).

In spite of the different categorization of the concept of special educational needs in the United Kingdom and Spain, the legislations from both countries leave proof of taking into account the issue of students with special educational needs in their respective education systems. Moreover, both countries have taken numerous measurements and initiatives in order to integrate all children and young people with special educational needs into the education system, following the principle of inclusiveness.

In the Region of Murcia, which is the Region where the study was carried out, the Decree 359/2009 (Consejo de Gobierno, 2009) establishes and regulates the educative response to students' diversity in the Region

of Murcia by creating the Plan on Attention to Diversity. Moreover, the Order of 4th June (Consejería de Educación, Formación y Empleo, 2010) regulates this Plan in public and private centres from the Region of Murcia. The Plan on Attention to Diversity gathers the programmes and measures undertaken in the framework of its autonomy and organization and it must be agreed and accepted by the whole educative community, as well as included in the General Annual Schedule of the school. In Resolution of 17th December (Consejería de Educación, Formación y Empleo, 2012) orientations are established to respond to the students with learning difficulties. They must be identified according to the principles of detection and early attention. Once a student with a learning difficulty has been detected, the counsellor from the school will carry out the psychological and pedagogical evaluation of the student. According to the results from this evaluation, the appropriate measures and adaptations to respond to the specific needs of that student.

Regarding the issue of bilingual education in the Region of Murcia, it is important to mention that, in this community, 17.5% of the students from CSE participate in CLIL programmes, one of the highest rates compared to other Autonomous Communities (Ministry of Education, Culture y Sport, 2016). In addition, according to Benito (2017), in the academic year 2017/2018, 86.5% of the education centres of the Region of Murcia will offer teaching in foreign languages, which is a pretty high number. Concerning legislation, the Royal Decree 1105/2014 (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, 2014), in which the basic curriculum for Secondary Education and Baccalaureate is established, states that the educative administrations may establish that part of the subjects from the curriculum are taught in a foreign language. Furthermore, the Order of 3rd June (Consejería de Educación y Universidades, 2016) regulates the teaching system on foreign languages in the Region of Murcia. In this Order some criteria regarding foreign language teaching in CSE are established, such as the fact that students should reach a B1 level at the end of

the four year of CSE, that the foreign languages in which the system can be organised are French, German or English, and that all the subjects, but those which are linguistic, can be taught in a foreign language, among other criteria.

Despite there are numerous articles and studies which deal with the issue of bilingual education, few of them have drawn an actual comparison between bilingual and non-bilingual groups. In addition, there are not enough studies which relate bilingual education to the notion of students with special educational needs. As Paradis (2016) states the research on if children with disabilities are able to become bilingual is limited and most of it is not based on scientific research, but on an applied and descriptive orientation. Bird, Genesee and Verhoeven (2016) also state that there is limited research on bilingual children with developmental disabilities in educational settings and the reason may be the restriction in the inclusion of those children in educational contexts. There is also a study of three cases of children with developmental disabilities which showed the variability which exists between bilingual contexts in terms of children with special educational needs. It also illustrates that there are barriers for children with disabilities to access and participate in bilingual programmes (Bird, Trudeau & Sutton, 2016).

Therefore, the main objectives of this paper are: (1) to compare students' reasons to be or not to be in a bilingual programme; (2) to analyse the differences between students in bilingual and non-bilingual groups in terms of the English language and general academic aspects; (3) to figure out the percentage of students with special educational needs who are in bilingual programmes; and (4) to analyse the students' coping strategies, drawing a comparison between bilingual and non-bilingual students.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were 89 students aged 14-17, with a mean of 14,58 and a standard deviation of ,751, studying third year of CSE in a centre for Secondary Education in the Region of Murcia. The centre is situated in

the centre of the city of Murcia, specifically in an area where families with an upper-middle socioeconomic level reside. More than 3,000 students, from first year of CSE to Baccalaureate and Vocational Training, study in this educative centre. Regarding nationality, 88.8% of those students were Spanish and only 11.2% were of different nationalities, mostly Ukrainian and Bolivian. There were 44 female students and 45 male students. Moreover, 51.7% of the students were in a bilingual programme, while 48.3% of them were in an ordinary group. Out of the total number of participants, 18% had special educational needs, but only two of those students were in a bilingual programme.

INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaire that the participants in this study filled had two parts: an *ad hoc* survey and a standardized test. On the one hand, the *ad hoc* survey consisted of 35 closed-ended questions, specifically multiple-choice and yes-no questions. The questions were closed in order to facilitate data analysis, although some of them gave the participants the possibility of choosing more than one option, such as the questions related to study techniques and personality. The variables intended to study through this *ad hoc* questionnaire can be divided into three main groups: sociodemographic variables, variables related to the English language and subject, and variables related to general academic issues. The sociodemographic variables included students' sex, age, nationality and number of siblings, as well as information about their parents. The variables related to the English language and subject had to do with students' attitude and aptitude, number of hours devoted to study, best and worst skill, attendance to private lessons, parents' knowledge of English, leisure activities in English, participation in class and anxiety. Finally, the rest of variables were aimed at analysing academic issues, such as the number of student who were in bilingual and non-bilingual groups, as well as the reasons that they had to be or not to be in a bilingual group. They also analysed the number of students who had failed any subject or had repeated any academic course, as well

as students' personality, relationships among them and their plans after finishing CSE.

On the other hand, the standardized test was the Spanish version of the CSI –Coping Strategies Inventory–, created by Tobin, Holroyd, Reynolds and Kigal in 1989 and adapted by Cano, Rodríguez and García in 2006. The adapted test was carried out in the Spanish province of Sevilla and the sample was of 337 adults who carried out teaching activities. The results of that adapted study showed a better psychometric properties than the original one (Cano, Rodríguez & García, 2007). This test consisted of 40 items in a Likert scale from 0 to 4, being 0 "nothing at all" and 4 "totally". This Spanish version of the standardized test had a first part which consisted in the description of a stressful situation but, due to time constraints and the difficulty of analysing the descriptions written by all the students, only the second part of the test was carried out. The 40 items were aimed at analysing eight different coping strategies and most of them proved to have a good level of reliability, according to Cronbach's alpha. These coping strategies were the following: problems solving (with a value of .819), self-criticism (with a value of .804), emotional expression (with a value of .745), wishful thinking (with a value of .755), social support (with a value of .780), cognitive restructuring (with a value of .716), problems avoidance (with a value of .648) and social retirement (with a value of .748).

PROCEDURE

The study was carried out in a secondary school located in the city of Murcia. This secondary school was chosen because of two main reasons: the high rate of students who study there and accessibility aspects. Two authorisations were written, one for the headmaster of the Secondary School and the other one for the participants' parents, since they were under age.

The questionnaires were given to five different groups of third year of CSE. Each group completed the questionnaire at the beginning of their tutoring session in our

presence and the presence of their tutor. The students completed the questionnaires in April 2017; three out of the five groups of third year of CSE filled in the questionnaires before Easter and the other two groups after Easter. This study guaranteed the anonymity, willingness and confidentiality of all the data.

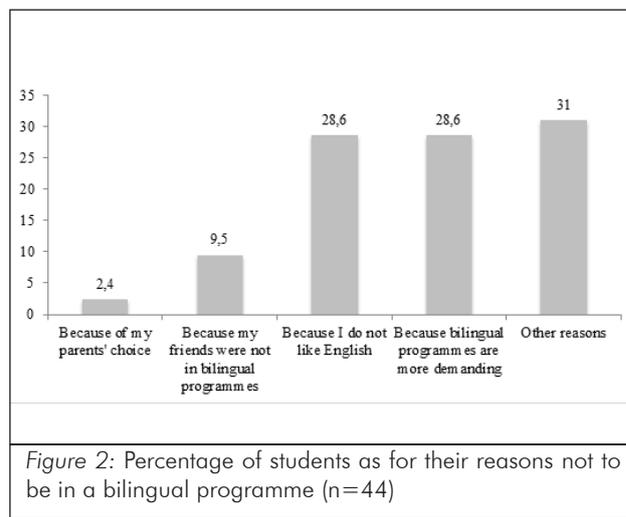
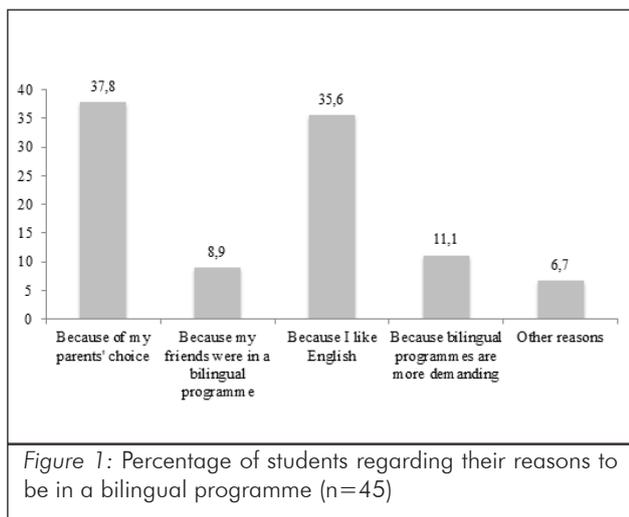
DATA ANALYSIS

This study is *ex post facto*, which literally means "after the facts". In this study, a descriptive analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire has been carried out by studying the standard deviation and the mean, as well as the frequencies and percentages. Contingency tables have been produced to analyse the relationship between two or more variables, for instance to make a comparison between bilingual and non-bilingual groups, as well as between ACNEAE and non-ACNEAE students. Furthermore, bar charts have been created in order to exemplify and show some of the results obtained from the questionnaire. All the data have been analysed using the statistical package SPSS v. 23.

RESULTS

STUDENTS' REASONS TO BE OR NOT TO BE IN A BILINGUAL PROGRAMME

As it was previously mentioned, 51.7% of the students who participated in this study were in a bilingual programme. Those students were asked for the reasons to be in a bilingual programme and the results were varied, as it can be observed in the Figure 1. The most common reasons that the students gave to be in a bilingual programme were because of their parents' choice and because they liked English. Nevertheless, the reasons that the students who were not in a bilingual group gave were different, as it can be observed in the Figure 2. It is surprising the fact that 31% of the students who were not in a bilingual group stated other reasons not to be in a bilingual programme. Those reasons were mainly related to the fact that, although they had started Secondary Education in a bilingual



programme, they were moved to an ordinary group for unknown reasons. The following most common reasons, with exactly the same percentage, were that bilingual programmes were more demanding and that they did not like English.

COMPARISON BETWEEN BILINGUAL AND NON-BILINGUAL STUDENTS

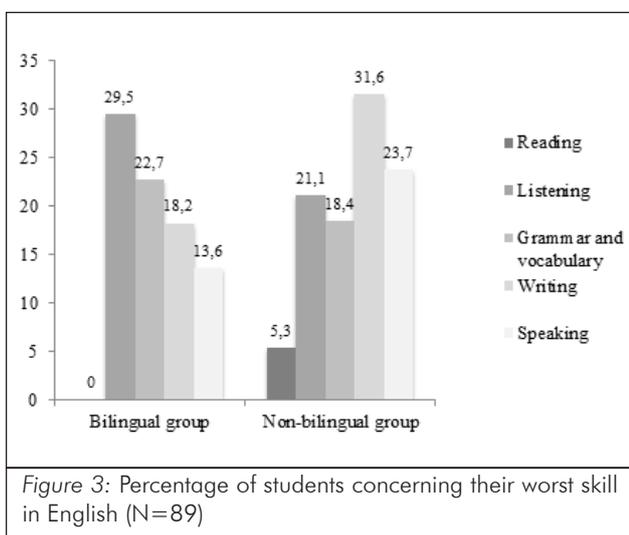
Regarding students' attitude towards English, 77.5% of the students liked English. Nevertheless, when a distinction between bilingual and non-bilingual groups was made, it was observed that 95.7% of the bilingual students liked English, compared to only 58.1% of the non-bilingual students. Concerning their aptitude for English, the results were very similar; while 89.1% of the students in bilingual programmes stated to be good at English, only 55.8% of the students in non-bilingual groups said to be good at it. The

students were also asked which English skills they think they were best and worst at. They were also given the option to choose grammar and vocabulary as the area they were best or worst at. Significant differences were observed between bilingual and non-bilingual groups, as it is shown in the Figure 3.

In bilingual groups, the skill which the students were worst at was listening and in non-bilingual groups it was writing, followed by speaking, that is, productive skills. Regarding the English area that the students were best at, both bilingual and non-bilingual students chose grammar and vocabulary.

Concerning the number of hours that the students devoted to study English per week, there were also differences between bilingual and non-bilingual students. While 34.8% of bilingual students devoted two or more hours, only 16.3% of non-bilingual students devoted two hours or more. In fact, 62.8% of non-bilingual students devoted only half an hour or less per week, compared to 45.7% of bilingual students. In addition, the number of bilingual students who attended English lessons out of school almost doubled the number of non-bilingual students who attended English lessons (60.9% compared to 34.9%).

The students were also asked whether their parents spoke English or not. Only 19.1% of non-bilingual students said that one of their parents spoke English, compared to 45.7% of bilingual students who either their mother or their father spoke English. In addition, while 39.1% of the bilingual students had travelled to English countries, only 11.9% of non-bilingual



students had done that. Moreover, 67.4% of the students in bilingual programmes read books or watched films in English, compared to only 31% of the non-bilingual students.

Concerning if the students preferred group work or individual activities, 78.4% of them preferred group work, compared to 21.6% who preferred individual activities. The percentage was very similar in bilingual and non-bilingual groups, being slightly higher in non-bilingual groups (83.3%). The students were also asked who they asked for help when they had problems related to the English language. The results showed that 45.5% of them resorted to the teacher, 23.9% did not resort to anyone, 19.3% resorted to their classmates and only 11.4% resorted to their parents. When comparing bilingual and non-bilingual groups, it was observed that 31% of the students in non-bilingual classrooms did not resort to anyone, compared to only 17.4% in bilingual groups.

In addition, 19.1% of the students had repeated an academic year and only one of those students was in a bilingual programme. Regarding the number of subjects that the students had failed, there was a clear difference between bilingual and non-bilingual groups. While 93.5% of the students in bilingual groups did not fail any subject last year, only 51.2% of the students in non-bilingual groups did not fail any subject. According to the students who failed one or more subjects last year, 73.9% of them admitted not to have studied enough, 13% considered that the teacher did not like them and 8.7% believed that the subject was too difficult.

Concerning the number of hours that the students devoted to study, most of the students in bilingual groups studied more than four hours per week, a high percentage of them studied three or four hours and almost 20% studied one or two hours per week. None of them studied half an hour or less per week. On the contrary, not even 10% of the students in non-bilingual programmes studied more than four hours a week and only 14% studied three or four hours, while most than half of them studied one or two hours and around

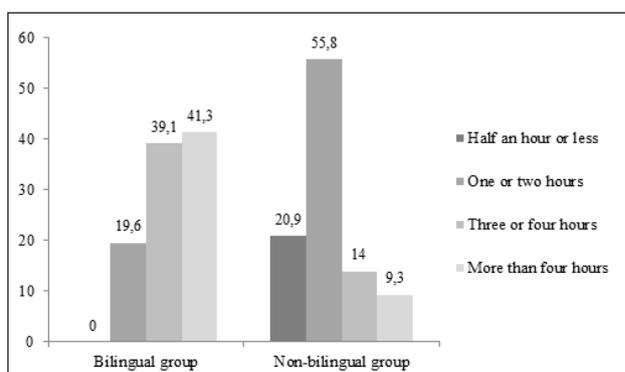


Figure 4: Percentage of students regarding the number of hours they devote to study (N=89)

20% studied half an hour or less. The Figure 4 shows a comparison of the results in this respect between bilingual and non-bilingual groups.

The students were also asked about the study techniques they normally used. The results are shown in the Table 1. The most common study technique was reading, followed by underlining. Nevertheless, when comparing bilingual and non-bilingual groups, the results varied. The most popular study technique among bilingual groups was reading, with a percentage of more than 80%, while among non-bilingual groups the most common technique was underlining. The most unpopular technique in both cases, but with a higher percentage among bilingual students, was doing exercises.

Finally, 89.1% of bilingual students wanted

Table 1
Study techniques most commonly used by the students

Study techniques	No. of cases	Percentage
Reading	63	19.3%
Underlining	62	19.0%
Make diagrams	39	12.0%
Summarizing	60	18.4%
Memorizing	59	18.1%
Doing exercises	33	10.1%
No studying	5	1.5%
Other	5	1.5%

to study Baccalaureate, compared to 66.7% of non-bilingual students. Moreover, while 14.3% of the students in non-bilingual groups wanted to study Vocational Training, only 2.2% of bilingual students wanted to study it. Finally, no students in bilingual programmes wanted to start to work, compared to 4.8% of non-bilingual students.

SITUATION OF THE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN BILINGUAL PROGRAMMES

As it was previously mentioned, only 18% of the students had special educational needs. Most of those students were considered, under the Spanish legislation, as ACNEAE and only two of them were ACNEE.

In bilingual groups, the students with special educational needs only represented 4.3% of the total number of students, while in non-bilingual groups, the students with special educational needs represented 32.6%, as it is shown in the Figure 5.

Concerning the reasons why most of the students with special educational needs were not in bilingual programmes, 38.5% of them stated that they did not like English and 38.5% had other reasons, mainly that they had started a bilingual programme but they were moved to an ordinary course. In addition, 23.1% of those students were not in bilingual programmes because those programmes were more demanding.

The percentage of students with special educational needs who liked English was exactly the same as the percentage of them who did not like English (50%). Nevertheless, in terms of aptitude, 62.5% of the students

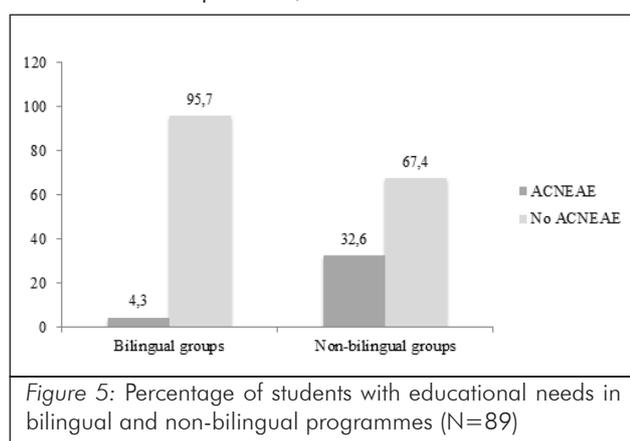
with special needs considered themselves to be bad at English. The skill in which they were worst at was writing (53.8%), followed by reading (23.1%), and the skill they considered to be best at was listening (40%), while those students without special needs considered listening to be the skill they were worst at.

Regarding the hours that the students with special needs devoted to English, 68.8% of them devoted half an hour or less, compared to 50.7% of non-ACNEAE students. In addition, 75% of the students with special needs did not attend English lessons out of school and 81.3% of them did not watch films or read books in English. Finally, 31.3% of them never participated in the English lessons and 37.5% did not ask for help to anyone when they had problems related to English, in comparison to only 14.8% of non-ACNEAE students who never participated and 23.9% who did not ask for help when they had problems related to English.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS IN BILINGUAL AND NON-BILINGUAL GROUPS IN TERMS OF COPING STRATEGIES

The 40 items which formed the CSI survey were divided into eight categories: problems solving (*REP*), self-criticism (*AUC*), emotional expression (*EEM*), wishful thinking (*PSD*), social support (*APS*), cognitive restructuring (*REC*), problems avoidance (*EVP*) and social retirement (*RES*). As it was mentioned before, each item consisted of a Likert scale from 0 to 4, being 0 "nothing at all", 1 "a little", 2 "quite", 3 "a lot" and 4 "totally". "When the results of the different coping strategies were compared between students in bilingual groups and students in non-bilingual programmes, some relevant differences were observed.

Firstly, concerning the strategy of problems solving, it is important to point out that while only 2.2% of students in bilingual groups did not use the strategy of problems solving and 10.9% used it only a little, 11.6% of students in non-bilingual groups did not use it at all and 25.6% of them used it a little. In fact, 41.3% of bilingual students said that they used it a lot, compared to only 16.3% of non-bilingual students.



Regarding the strategy of self-criticism, there was an important difference in the percentage of students who did not use the strategy of self-criticism at all, 14.3% of students in non-bilingual groups compared to only 6.5% of students in bilingual groups. Moreover, while 28.2% of students in bilingual programmes used this strategy a lot or totally, only 21.5% of non-bilingual students used it with that frequency.

Concerning the strategy of emotional expression, it was not frequently used either by students in bilingual or non-bilingual groups. Nonetheless, it was shocking how not a single student who belonged to a non-bilingual group used totally this strategy and only 2.4% of them used it a lot, compared to 2.2% of students in bilingual groups who always used it a lot.

As for wishful thinking, there were also significant differences between students in bilingual groups and students in non-bilingual programmes. While 15.2% of students in bilingual groups always used this strategy, not a single student in non-bilingual groups always used it. In fact, 14.3% of students in non-bilingual groups said not to use this strategy at all, compared to only 8.7% of students in bilingual groups.

The strategy of social support also shows important differences between both groups of students. Only 4.8% of students in non-bilingual groups always used this strategy, compared to 15.2% of students in bilingual groups. In addition, while 47.6% of students in non-bilingual groups did not use this strategy at all or used it little, only 23.9% of bilingual students did not use it at all or rarely used it.

Regarding the strategy of cognitive restructuring, the results were more varied. All the same, while 23.8% of students in non-bilingual groups used it always or very frequently, 39.1% of bilingual students said to use it a lot.

Concerning problems avoidance, the results in both groups were very similar. However, the percentage of students who did not use it at all was higher in the case of non-bilingual students (9.5% in non-bilingual groups compared to 4.3% in bilingual groups).

Finally, as for the strategy of social retirement,

this strategy was more used among bilingual students. In fact, while 28.6% of non-bilingual students did not use it at all and 35.7% used it a little bit, only 19.6% of bilingual students did not use it at all and 30.4% used it only a little.

DISCUSSION

As it was mentioned in the introduction section of this paper, the objectives of this study were to analyse the differences between bilingual and non-bilingual students, as well as their reasons to be or not to be in a bilingual group. In addition, another objective was to analyse the number of students with special educational needs who were in a bilingual programme. The evidence exposed in the results section shows interesting results which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

In the first place, regarding the reasons that the students gave to be or not to be in a bilingual programme, it was observed that most of the students who were in a bilingual programme were there because of their parents' choice. This may be related to the fact that, according to Pladevall-Ballester (2015), parents consider bilingual education to be the only way for their children to improve their level of English. On the contrary, those students who were in non-bilingual groups stated other reasons to be in a non-bilingual programme, mainly that they had started Secondary Education in a bilingual group but they were moved –for unknown reasons– to a non-bilingual group.

On the one hand, the reasons may be that they were not able to follow the learning pace in a bilingual group or that they were not good enough at English. This will confirm what Bruton (2013) states about CLIL—that is, bilingual education—being discriminatory as it selects students. On the other hand, it may be a matter of the socioeconomic status of the students' parents. It is commonly said that parents who have an upper socioeconomic level normally want their children to be in a bilingual programme, due to its numerous benefits and the fact that it is more demanding. Nevertheless, students' parents with a lower socioeconomic status may not be aware, in many cases, of the benefits of bilingual

education and, therefore, they may not care about their children entering a bilingual programme or an ordinary one. All these data may lead to think that bilingual programmes are only for the best students, as no every student is able to follow the learning pace and difficulty level of a bilingual programme.

In the second place, when comparing the students' attitude towards studying, clear differences were observed between bilingual and non-bilingual groups. The students in bilingual groups devoted many more hours to study and used many more study techniques than the students in non-bilingual groups. Furthermore, all the students who had repeated one or more academic years—but one—were in non-bilingual groups. Most of the students who failed one or more subjects last year admitted not to have studied enough. Therefore, it can be inferred from all these data that bilingual students are, indeed, more motivated and engaged with studying than non-bilingual students. This may be related to the fact that, according to Klimova (2012), one of the benefits of bilingual education is that it increases students' motivation and confidence in the subject and the language in which the subject is taught. Focusing on the English language, there were also interesting differences in terms of the skills that the students were best and worst at. The students in non-bilingual groups were worst at productive skills (writing and speaking) while bilingual students were worst at listening, which is a receptive skill. These differences may have to do with the different insights that the students in bilingual and non-bilingual groups have in terms of what to be good or bad at English is. In bilingual groups, students are exposed to bigger amounts of English than students in non-bilingual groups and, therefore, their English level is supposed to be higher. The field of the English skills is a very interesting area to investigate in future research, in order to analyse the importance given to each of the skills in education and how their teaching can be improved.

In the third place, one of the objectives of this paper was to figure out the number of

students with special educational needs who were in a bilingual programme. Out of the eighteen students with special educational needs who participated in this study, only two of them were in a bilingual group. Both students suffered from ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), that is, they were ACNEAE students. It was shocking that, in particular, one of these students did not like English, did not was good at it, did not see it useful for his future, did not participate during the English lessons, and still he was in a bilingual classroom. Nevertheless, provided that the number of students with special needs in bilingual programmes was really small, more research should be done in order to figure out the actual reasons since there is limited research on this area and, according to Bird, Genesee and Verhoeven (2016), this may be related to the fact that students with special needs encounter limitations to enter bilingual programmes.

Finally, in the second part of the questionnaire, which consisted of the standardized test CSI, the main objective was to analyse the students' coping strategies to overcome problems related to the English language. When comparing the use of the eight strategies between students in bilingual groups and students in non-bilingual programmes, significant differences were observed. Students in bilingual programmes tended to use the eight coping strategies in a higher degree than non-bilingual students, above all the strategies of wishful thinking and social support. Although the strategies of emotional expression and social retirement were the less used both in bilingual and non-bilingual groups, they were still slightly more used by bilingual students than by non-bilingual students. The reason of these results may be that non-bilingual students do not care as much as bilingual students about how to cope with their problems with regards to academic issues. Therefore, it may lead to think that students in non-bilingual groups are less interested or motivated in terms of the English language and other general academic issues. In addition, according to Cocoradă and Mihalaşcu (2012), gender

plays a fundamental role in preferring one strategy over the others. When comparing male and female students, it was shocking that the means in all the strategies among female students were lower than the means among male students, above all in the case of cognitive restructuring and social retirement. This means that male students had a higher usage of all the strategies than female students. However, since the number of female and male students in bilingual and non-bilingual groups was very similar, this fact has not had really an impact on the differences between bilingual and non-bilingual groups in terms of coping strategies.

As a general conclusion, interesting results have been achieved thanks to this study on bilingualism. Numerous differences have been observed between students in bilingual and non-bilingual groups, above all in terms of motivation, attitude towards English and studying, and coping strategies. In addition, it was surprising the fact that almost all the students, except for two of them, were in non-bilingual groups. Concerning the implications derived from this study, it may help teachers and educators be aware of the differences between bilingual and non-bilingual groups and, therefore, try to take the necessary measures in order to reduce these differences and to foster interest and motivation among non-bilingual students. Moreover, they may think about the reasons why most of the students with special educational needs are in non-bilingual groups instead of bilingual groups. It would be appropriate to carry out programmes and projects aimed at increasing motivation and interest among non-bilingual, as well as among students with special educational needs.

As in most cases, this study has had some limitations, above all in terms of the number of participants. Moreover, the participants could have been from different school years, in order to make a comparison between the youngest and the oldest students, and even from different schools, in order to observe if there were differences between students of different backgrounds and socioeconomic levels. Regarding future research lines, the results of this paper may be considered as a

starting point to go depth into the issues of bilingualism. It will be interesting to study the differences between bilingual and non-bilingual groups, in terms of motivation, coping strategies and academic results in order to discover the reasons of the differences between the two groups and implement proactive and reactive measures.

- **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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