

UCL EMaDA Final Report Gender Equality Statement

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Introduction

Gender in language education has been the focus of a steady body of scholarship, exploring issues related to gender roles, ideologies, relationships, and practices that can privilege or marginalize groups in wider society (see e.g., Widodo & Elyas, 2020). The study “Implementing CLIL: Introducing Safety and Health Education in English in Primary Schools in Chongqing” was designed to provide teachers and school students of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in English with equal opportunities to participate in the online learning process and give them a balanced understanding of different aspects of content, with no barriers based on gender. The study focused on materials that include the historic, cultural, and social studies from the perspective of safety and health education, with special focus on English use in the process. All situations presented in these materials attempted to eschew gender inequality and discrimination.

In this way, the project promoted gender equality in and throughout CLIL education to ensure that women and men, girls and boys have equal access to learning opportunities in the process, as well as fair treatment in the learning processes, equitable outcomes, and advancement in all aspects of the project.

In this research statement, we provide a summary of how gender was shown to amount to a very small aspect of our study. We highlight the gender-relevant findings of the quantitative and qualitative stages in turn.

Quantitative data and gender

Data for the study were collected from both female and male teachers. In the pool of respondents, 73.34% identified as female, 25.93% as male, and 0.34% chose not to specify their gender.

Our findings revealed that both female and male teachers were actively engaged in the CLIL pedagogical process, with a higher representation from female teachers, reflecting the demographic distribution of respondents. There were no significant discrepancies in the level of active participation, contribution, or the benefits derived from the CLIL process based on gender. Both groups exhibited equal enthusiasm and commitment to the teaching and learning process.

When we delved into the data on interactions with the materials, which encompassed historical, cultural, and social studies from a safety and health education perspective, no discernible difference was identified between female and male teachers in terms of content comprehension, interpretation, or application.

Furthermore, a majority of both female and male respondents acknowledged that the materials used effectively eschewed gender biases, fostering a balanced and equitable understanding of the content. This sentiment resonated with the study's aim to offer content that is devoid of gender inequality and discrimination.

Whilst both gender groups expressed a keen interest in further professional development in CLIL, there were no pronounced gender-based preferences concerning training methods or desired resources. This finding suggests a shared vision of CLIL pedagogy's objectives and methods amongst both female and male educators.

In conclusion, the quantitative data from our research confirm that gender played an insubstantial role in influencing the outcomes and experiences within the CLIL process. The prevailing sentiment among participants, irrespective of gender, was one of appreciation for an educational approach that championed equality and inclusivity. This not only reinforces the study's intent but also exemplifies the potential for gender-neutral educational platforms that ensure all educators, regardless of their gender, have equal access to opportunities.

Qualitative data and gender

As there was no quota for gender balance in the study, for the qualitative stages, an open invitation was sent to all primary level English teachers in Chongqing. Like the quantitative stage of the study, the teacher participants in the study were mainly female. This was unsurprising, given that most English language teachers in China are female (see Ruan & Toom, 2022).

Our findings from the classroom observation and interviews showed that the majority of English language teachers in Chongqing were highly receptive to the notion of integrating gender-equal materials in their teaching process. In this study, we also

shed light on local teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the CLIL materials, revealing that materials without gender bias were seen as beneficial for providing an unbiased education environment in Chongqing. In addition, several teachers mentioned that the process of making CLIL materials pushed them to re-evaluate their previous teaching practice and encouraged them and their students to challenge stereotypical gender roles in society regarding health and safety. A few teachers did emphasize potential areas of improvement, suggesting enhanced training to better convey and embed gender-equity principles for students. During classroom observations, it was evident that students, regardless of gender, engaged enthusiastically and uniformly with the materials. Such interactions strongly suggest the effectiveness of materials in fostering a learning space where every student feels acknowledged and valued.

Conclusion

This statement emphasizes the importance of weaving gender-neutral content into language education. This approach goes beyond merely advancing gender equality within educational settings; it sets the foundation for the broader objective of realizing a gender-equitable society. The affirmative responses from the predominantly female teaching community in Chongqing bolster the relevance and urgency of adopting such measures in today's educational landscape.

References

- Ruan, X., & Toom, A. (2022). Exploring Female EFL Teachers' Professional Agency for Their Sustainable Career Development in China: A Self-Discrepancy Theory Perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 906727.
- Widodo, H. P., & Elyas, T. (2020). Introduction to gender in language education. *Sexuality & Culture, 24*(4), 1019-1027.