Journal of Education, Innovation, and Communication (JEICOM)
Special Issue, June 2025 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34097/jeicom-7-3-3
Editors: Dr. Margarita Kefalaki & Dr. Fotini Diamantidaki

Emotional Engagement with Social Interactions: Exploring the Perceptions of Primary CLIL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Student perceptions can offer a reliable understanding of the experience of learning in the classroom (Lundqvist, 2014). This study explores the perceptions of learners in relation to emotional engagement with social interactions in a primary Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classroom. Philp & Duchesne's (2016) conceptualisation of engagement and their understanding of emotional engagement underpins the study. Evidence suggests a strong to moderate relationship between satisfaction and perceived linguistic difficulty for learners in CLIL contexts (Barrios & Acosta-Manzano, 2020; De Smet et al., 2018; Pladevall-Ballester, 2019; Yassin et al., 2009). These studies have primarily adopted a quantitative approach which may limit a more nuanced analysis of why some learners have negative perceptions of learning in CLIL classrooms. This study seeks to shift the paradigm and adopts a qualitative approach to explore the emotional engagement of three primary-age learners in a bilingual school in Paris. Classroom observations are followed up by focus-groups with learners to gain deeper insights into their perceptions of emotional engagement with social interactions. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis is employed to guide data analysis. Findings reveal that contextual factors influence emotional engagement which, in turn, impacts upon other facets of engagement. A key finding is that the use of existing linguistic resources and metalinguistic strategies support learners' perceptions of autonomy, mutuality, and equality during interactions, facilitating positive emotional engagement. This raises important implications for educators and have the potential to inform future practice and enhance learning opportunities.

Keywords: CLIL, emotional engagement, translanguaging, metalinguistic strategies, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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1 INTRODUCTION

CLIL is a pedagogical approach to language learning developed in the 1990s in response to the Council of Europe's plurilingual vision of all European citizens possessing a repertoire of languages (2001). It is defined as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the teaching and learning of both content and language" (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 1) with the two considered to be "integral parts of the whole" (Marsh, 2002, p. 59).

This study explores the perceptions of learners who began the academic year in a bilingual primary school in France with no English language knowledge. Teaching and learning of the French curriculum is shared between a French classroom and a CLIL classroom where the additional language is English. The most recent Eurydice CLIL France Country Report (2012) highlights that CLIL provision at primary school level is limited with the adoption of CLIL pedagogies found in thirty-four French - English bilingual state primary schools under the direction of the French Education Department (Ministère de l'Education Nationale de la Jeunesse et des Sports, n.d.). This situation reflects the level of academic research with few initiatives focusing on CLIL in primary schools in France (Mary et al., 2024).

Different terms, including "low proficiency" (Bruton, 2011) or "limited English proficiency" (Yassin et al., 2009) have been attributed to learners who enter a CLIL programme with little or no knowledge of the classroom language. These terms risk implicitly placing learners in a deficit position (Davis, 2019). This study adopts an asset-oriented approach by employing the terms, 'emergent' and 'plurilingual'. The word 'emergent' acknowledges the growing nature of linguistic resources and recognises learners' potential. The term 'plurilingual' draws on an understanding of plurilingualism whereby an individual possesses an evolving linguistic repertoire consisting of different languages of varying proficiency (Coste et al., 2009), which challenges "discourses of deficit [or] (in)competence" (Marshall & Moore, 2016, p.4). As a result, the term "Emergent Plurilingual' (EP) identifies learners who enter a CLIL programme with no linguistic resources in the CLIL classroom target language. 'Plurilingual Learners' (PL) is employed for students whose linguistic repertoire already consists of linguistic resources in the CLIL classroom target language.

Research into the use of learners' linguistic repertoires in CLIL settings has gradually gained importance (Moore, 2023). Whilst some studies have found that both teachers and learners draw freely on their linguistic resources in CLIL classrooms (Karabassova & San Isidro, 2020; Lin & He, 2017), Moore (2006) argues that CLIL teachers are often unaware of the potential of existing linguistic resources for supporting learning. Misconceptions often create barriers to the free use of existing linguistic resources in CLIL classrooms (Lin, 2015; Martí & Portolés, 2019). Research highlights the benefits of learners bringing other languages into classroom. It allows them to make connections between languages which develops their metalinguistic awareness and supports learning (Chaieberras & Rascón Moreno, 2018; Oxbrow, 2018). This is echoed in the perceptions of CLIL learners who perceive that drawing on their full linguistic repertoire can support learning (Bauer-Marschallinger et al., 2021; Mahan & Norheim, 2021).

The emotional dimension of learning in CLIL settings has been examined mostly in relation to secondary school contexts (De Smet et al., 2018). Existing research in CLIL, although not necessarily related to

emotional engagement, highlights that learners generally perceive CLIL positively (Aguilar and Rodriguez 2012; Pladevall-Ballester, 2015; Roiha, 2019). Yet, some studies suggest that learners with an EP profile have less positive attitudes towards learning in CLIL settings than their plurilingual peers (Yassin et al., 2009). In their study of primary CLIL learners in Spain, Pladevall-Ballester (2019) report that those who perceive they are dissatisfied with CLIL also say that they do not understand the teacher or the content being taught. These findings are corroborated by Barrios & Acosta-Manzano (2020) who find a strong to moderate relationship between satisfaction and perceived linguistic difficulty.

The majority of CLIL research to date has employed quantitative methods, highlighting the need for more qualitative studies that can offer deeper insights into students' perspectives (Roiha, 2019). This study adopts a qualitative approach to capture "thick descriptions of classroom contexts to enhance our understanding of how and why they work" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 86).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Emotional Engagement

Engagement has been studied in different education contexts (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012) and time frames (moment to moment to longer-term engagement) (Fredricks et al., 2016). In the past ten years it has become an emergent theme in the field of language learning (Hiver et al., 2021). Yet, many studies employ the term engagement without offering definitions or situating the term in a theoretical framework with fewer than 35% of studies analysed during a recent literature review employing a clear definition and/or operationalization of the construct itself resulting in a limited contribution to the domain (Hiver et al., 2021). In the context of CLIL, the trend continues with engagement briefly acknowledged as a key factor in successful learning in the CLIL classroom (Coyle & Meyer, 2021) but without any clear conceptualisation.

Engagement can be defined as "effortful learning through interaction with the teacher and the classroom learning opportunities" (Christenson & Reschly, 2012). It is widely considered as a "multi-dimensional construct" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 61) whose facets are interrelated and interdependent (Fredricks et al., 2004; Philp & Duchesne, 2016; Pietarinen et al., 2014; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Conceptualisations of the engagement construct vary. Fredericks et al.'s (2004) suggest that engagement is composed of behavioural, emotional, and cognitive components whereas Philp & Duchesne (2016) propose four dimensions: cognitive, behavioural, social, and emotional. Both conceptualisations envisage each dimension impacting upon how learners perceive and interact with learning. Engagement has been found to encourage positive educational outcomes (Eccles & Wang, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004) and an increased sense of well-being (Creed et al., 2003; Eccles et al., 2004), showing positive correlations to students' learning, retention, perseverance, and perceptions of learning (Dao & Sato 2021; Hiver et al., 2021). These considerations increase the attractiveness of engagement as a construct in policy, research, and practice (Fredricks et al., 2016).

Engagement has been described as malleable (Fredricks et al., 2004, p.61). It is understood to be the outcome of an interaction between an individual and the surrounding context leading to it responding to

changes in the environment (Finn & Rock, 1997). Subsequently, "intervention is possible and legitimate" (Lam et al., 2012, p. 405) and adjusting elements in the learning environment can influence student engagement. Whilst, in the context of language learning, research exploring how learning environments influence engagement appears to be limited (Sulis & Philp, 2021), broader educational research offers useful insights. A recent meta-analysis investigating factors that influence student engagement in higher education identifies several key contributors (Li & Xue, 2023). These include learners' positive emotional states, constructive learning behaviours, and supportive teacher actions. The quality of the teacher-student relationships, along with opportunities for collaboration, also play significant roles. In addition, students' cognitive and thinking abilities, access to adequate learning resources, individual personality traits, and aspects of teaching practice all contribute to fostering engagement. Factors that hinder engagement include limited support, negative student behaviour, and negative teacher actions.

This study focuses on the emotional component of engagement. As an internal form of engagement, it is closely linked to motivation. Both involve emotions which creates a conceptual confusion. Moreover, an interdependent relationship might be conceptualised, where motivation may support emotional engagement and vice versa (Christenson & Reschly, 2012). Three approaches to motivation and engagement are found in the literature: (i) the terms are employed interchangeably, (ii) motivation is understood to be subsumed by the meta-construct of engagement and (iii) motivation and engagement are considered as distinct yet interrelated (Christenson & Reschly, 2012). The third understanding is adopted here whereby motivation implies intent and therefore acts as an initial driving force whereas engagement implies subsequent action therefore the learner's direct involvement in the learning activity (Christenson & Reschly, 2012; Hiver, Mercer, et al., 2021; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

Philp & Duchesne's (2016) conceptualisation of emotional engagement underpins the research. To define emotional engagement, they draw on Skinner et al.'s (2009) work on task engagement and describe emotional engagement as a spectrum spanning from "enthusiasm, interest, and enjoyment as key indicators of emotional engagement, and at the other end of the scale, anxiety, frustration, and boredom as indicators of negative emotional engagement (disaffection)" (Philp & Duchesne, 2016, p. 56). Consideration of a sense of purposefulness and autonomy (Baralt et al., 2016) and "feelings of connection or disconnection" (Philp & Duchesne, 2016, p. 56), particularly with their peers and their task interlocutors forms part of their conceptualisation. Basing their reasoning on empirical research (Baralt et al., 2016; Early & Marshall, 2008), they suggest that emotional engagement links other facets of engagement together. Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia's (2012) work informs the conjecture that emotions are intrinsic to, rather than a facet of, engagement. To this end, emotional engagement might be understood as activating or deactivating behavioural, cognitive, or social engagement.

2.2 ZPD and Engagement in Social Interactions in the CLIL Classroom

This study explores EP learners' perceptions of emotional engagement in social interactions in a CP CLIL Anglophone classroom. In CLIL, social interactions are understood to support learners in developing their linguistic resources and content knowledge (Coyle et al., 2010; Devos, 2016). Llinares et al. (2012), in their study of the role of language in CLIL, emphasise the importance of offering students

varied opportunities to interact in different ways and for different purposes (p. 77). These interactions often involve support from more capable others, such as teachers or peers. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which posits that learning is most effective when it occurs just beyond the learner's current level of competence. Vygotsky's definition sustains that the ZPD occurs through adult guidance or collaboration with "more capable peers". Lantolf (2012) attributes the terms 'novices' and 'experts' to represent the individuals in a ZPD.

Three types of social interactions will be explored: whole class interactions, interactions between EP learners and their plurilingual peers, and interactions between EP learners and their teacher. By considering plurilingual peers and the teacher as the 'experts,' the interactions between an EP learner and their teacher or between an EP learner and a plurilingual peer can be situated in the ZPD. To position whole class interactions in the ZPD, this study employs the understanding that Vygotsky's use of language intimates a collective perspective (Guk & Kellogg, 2007; Holzman et al., 2018; Smit et al., 2013) which opens the possibility of whole class interactions being situated in the ZPD.

Another commonality shared by the three forms of social interactions is that they are all learning opportunities formally orchestrated by the teacher, rather than being informal and spontaneous interactions (Philp et al., 2013). Vygotsky (1997) suggests that the role of the teacher in the classroom is to be the "director of the social environment" (p.339). This implies that the teacher can be defined as the mediator, not only in direct interactions between themselves and the learners, but also of interactions that they orchestrate without necessarily being directly involved (Leontjev & deBoer, 2022).

Taking the literature and theoretical underpinnings into consideration, this research explores how learners perceive the impact of contextual factors on their emotional engagement with social interactions in a primary CLIL Anglophone classroom.

3 METHODOLOGY

In response to the imperative of developing a deeper understanding of learners' perceptions, this study is situated in the qualitative research paradigm. As a result, this research will focus on understanding the phenomenon in context by listening to participants' voices (Robson, 2016). The study's intention to develop small-scale research that does not search to create generalisable findings also aligns with a qualitative approach.

3.1 Participants

The sample consists of three EP learners (two girls and one boy), aged 7 years old. They are in their first year of primary school - Classe Preparatoire (CP) in a French – English bilingual school in Paris. Participants 1 and 3 are monolingual French speakers, participant 2 is bilingual with French and another European language. All participants began the academic year in the school setting with no English language knowledge. The sample was limited to participants without identified behavioural or cognitive support needs to enhance internal validity.

3.2 Data Collection

Focus groups are the primary data collection tools. Classroom observations are a secondary data collection tool and provide triangulating data and material for video stimulated recall (VSR) during focus groups. Data collection took place in May, towards the end of the academic year.

Two focus groups were conducted. The initial focus group took place two hours after the second classroom observation with a duration of 45 minutes. It explored EP learners' perceptions of their emotional engagement with social interactions. The discussion was planned around video excerpts that were grouped into three categories: whole class, peer, and EP learner-teacher interactions. Two excerpts for each category were selected. Out of the total excerpts employed during the focus groups, two focused on each participant. After watching each video excerpt, I asked the EP learner who was identified in the clip to describe what was happening and who was there. After establishing the context, discussions followed about their emotional engagement with questioning opening the discussion to the other participants.

The follow-up focus group took place 11 days later and had the purpose of enabling participants to review initial findings. It had a duration of 20 minutes. Findings were presented in child appropriate language to facilitate understanding. Participants were asked if they agreed with the findings and if they wished to add anything. Additional questions to deepen understanding of previous findings were also asked.

The lesson observations took place on Monday and Thursday mornings of the same week in the classroom. The first observation lasted 30 minutes and the second observation lasted 45 minutes. Before starting, the purpose of the observation was explained to the children in appropriate language. During the observation, EP learners were filmed whilst they interacted with their teacher, peers or during whole class discussions. Observations were noted down in a pre-defined schedule. Each instance of data collection was analysed before moving to the next.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

The research gained ethical approval from UCL and is guided by the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines (BERA, 2018) and the research settings' ethical and safeguarding policies. Parental and participant consent was sought.

Given the young age of the participants, a rigorous informed consent process was developed. Three elements were considered: the information provided by the researcher, the child's understanding of the research and what it means to be involved, and the child's response to the information provided (Cocks, 2006). Additionally, it was explained to participants in child appropriate language that their answers would be anonymous and confidential, that they could refuse to answer any question, and could stop at any time.

The primary researcher works in the research setting since 2015 as a classroom teacher and curriculum stage leader therefore the "double-edged sword" (Mercer, 2007) of insider research is pertinent. To understand the implications of conducting insider research, three elements were drawn from Mercer (2007) and Teusner (2020) - access, prior knowledge, and identity - to frame reflections on insider research and to develop mitigating actions.

3.4 Data Analysis

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is adopted as the research methodology. Noon's (2018) application of IPA in educational research guides the implementation. IPA seeks to explore the subjective lived experiences of participants whilst also understanding how participants make sense of those experiences (Smith et al., 2021). The focus groups and a semi-structured interview 'give voice' (Noon, 2018) to the participants.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Contextual Factors

Four contextual factors are found to influence EP learner emotional engagement with social interactions. No themes were found to be more prominent than others. Pedagogical strategies such as the use of games and technology, rewards, and a variety of activities and kinesthetic tasks are highlighted as supporting positive emotional engagement during social interactions. Teacher support also plays a crucial role in fostering this engagement.

An additional factor shaping perceptions of emotional engagement is the support perceivedly offered by the interlocutor during social interactions. Support during interactions with teachers is associated with positive emotional engagement, "*You could say that it helps us a lot...She has helped us a lot, and now we can do it by ourselves"* (P1) and "*I feel much better"* (P2). When interactions with PL are perceived as collaborative, EP learners describe positive emotional engagement, *"we help each other"* [P1] with P3 adding, *"we do this laughing"*. P1 describes gratitude towards their plurilingual peer, *"I must say to him 1000 times, 1000 times, 1000 times thank you".* This may be an indicator of well-being (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000) or could be framed as oppressive or dependant (Wood et al., 2016). P3 describes feeling "*strange"* and a "*bit panicked"* when working with a PL as they "*don't really know what to do afterwards",* suggesting a perceived a lack of autonomy which may imply that the 'expert' in the ZPD did not offer the needed support.

EP learners' understanding of their existing linguistic resources also impacts their emotional engagement. Participants' perceptions of their existing linguistic resources appear to provoke negative emotional engagement during interactions. P1 feels *"scared"* because they *"didn't know how to say clock hands"* resulting in them not participating and remaining silent which suggests a sense of powerlessness associated with their existing linguistic resources (Safford & Costley, 2008). P2 and P3 describe getting *"annoyed"* implying frustration with not being able to share their ideas. P3 provides a valuable insight, *"It's like a dinosaur that has only one foot and so is walking on one foot to catch a human".* The imagery seems to represent EP learners who do not fully possess the linguistic resources that their plurilingual peers have. They do not understand and cannot share their learning in the classroom language. As a result, catching a human, or participating is perceived to be more difficult for EP learners. Considering the image from another perspective - who are the dinosaurs with two feet? Possibly their plurilingual peers who are regarded as possessing appropriate linguistic resources.

Finally, emotional engagement also seems to vary depending on the interlocutor. P3 feels it is *"fine"* to draw on exisiting linguistic resources with *"friends",* who are EP learners. However, speaking French with learners who are perceived as speaking *"better"* English provoked negative emotions. Their negative perceptions of their linguistic resources seem to stem from viewing their plurilingual peers as a comparative benchmark.

Contrasting perspectives were found during analysis and might be associated with participants' linguistic identities. Whilst P1 and P3 often share how they feel and perceive negative emotional engagement, P2, who has two home languages, shares a different perspective. When discussing understanding interlocutors during interactions, they state, *"Sometimes, I take the words that I understand and I work with them, with the words I have understood".* This suggests that metalinguistic awareness helps them to overcome perceived barriers and highlights the potential of these strategies in CLIL settings.

4.2 Perceptions of Positive and Negative Emotional Engagement with Social Interactions

EP learners perceive both positive and negative emotional engagement with social interactions. EP learners describe feeling *"good"* (P1) and *"comfortable"* (P3) during whole class interactions. Contrastingly, P1 also states, "*I was all alone and I had to move the sentences, I felt a bit shy"* suggesting that P1 perceives their emotional engagement with whole class interactions as both positive or negative in different instances.

Interactions with plurilingual peers also provoked contrasting perceptions. All participants reply *"yes"* when asked if they like doing activities with their partners with P1 and P2 report feeling *"good"* or 'bien'. Later exchanges illustrated negative emotional engagement with EP learners describing feeling angry, panicked and strange.

EP Learner – Teacher interactions appear to nurture positive emotional engagement. In one example, P2 states that they felt *"good"* when interacting with their teacher with film excerpts depicting P2 smiling and maintaining eye contact with the teacher, suggesting positive emotional engagement during the interaction.

4.3 Impact of Emotional Engagement on Cognitive and Behavioural Engagement

Negative emotional engagement appears to influence cognitive and behavioural engagement. P1 states, *"I didn't raise my hand because I didn't know what I was meant to do. I was scared, I didn't know how to say clock hands…".* They remain silent and do not participate because they feel scared. In another instance, P3 describes feeling *"restless"* when they perceive that they cannot express their learning in the classroom.

5 DISCUSSION

The study's outcomes illustrate diverse perceptions of positive and negative emotional engagement with social interactions which reflects Philp & Duchesne (2016) spectrum of emotional engagement. Findings align with the previous research that finds engagement is the result of the interaction between an individual and the environment (Christenson & Reschly, 2012; Finn & Rock, 1997; Fredricks et al., 2004; Lam et al., 2012; Sulis & Philp, 2021). By framing engagement as both positive and negative, it is possible to identify contextual factors that can be emphasised, e.g. pedagogical strategies, to reinforce positive emotional engagement. Contextual factors associated with negative emotional engagement can be reconsidered and, by making adaptations, positive emotional engagement can be facilitated. As a result, emotional engagement can be understood to be a "state, not a trait" (Lam et al., 2012) that is influenced by context.

The intrinsic nature of emotional engagement is evident in the study's findings with negative emotional engagement deactivating other forms of engagement by emotional engagement. Perceptions of fear were found to hinder participation. Feelings of anxiety, manifesting itself physically as restlessness, limited cognitive engagement by restricting sustained attention and mental effort (Helme & Clarke, 2001). These findings align with the notion that emotional engagement is intrinsic to the activation or deactivation of other facets of engagement (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012; Philp & Duchesne, 2016).

Data highlights that, when planning social interactions in the classroom, two factors can facilitate positive emotional engagement. First, if the interlocutor is able to support the EP learner in the ZPD. Second, the possibility of Storch's (2002) notions of equality and mutuality to be enacted. Developed by Storch (2002) in her study on dyadic relationships in the language classroom, these factors influence the level of collaboration and learning that occurs during dyadic interactions. Storch (2002) defines equality in peer interactions as when peers recognise each other as equal active participants and will take directions from each other. It is understood to occur in both symmetrical (expert – expert or novice – novice) and asymmetrical (expert – novice) interactions. Mutuality is defined as the level of engagement by participants in the interaction. Engagement, as Storch refers to the term, implies the level of reciprocal feedback or support. Interactions with high levels of equality and mutuality e.g. when all interlocutors are perceived as actively participating, giving feedback and support, seem to be more conducive to positive emotional engagement. If this is not the case, then additional support relevant to the task needs to be offered to encourage positive emotional engagement. Existing linguistic resources and metalinguistic strategies could facilitate perceptions of equality and mutuality. EP learners might be able to draw on these independently to support their understanding and communication and perceptions of equality and mutuality.

Existing linguistic resources play an influential role in perceptions of emotional engagement with social interactions. EP learners seem to perceive their existing linguistic resources as a hindrance that limits their participation. A key implication of this finding is the need to reframe existing linguistic resources in ways that encourage EP learners to view them more positively. This also highlights the importance of raising teacher awareness, so that classroom practices are informed by theory and empirical evidence rather than shaped by misconceptions of the role of exisiting linguistic resources in CLIL settings.

The facilitation and creation of Wei's (2018) 'translanguaging spaces' may be a possible solution that supports and values all linguistic resources. Translanguaging spaces are conceptualised to "allow individuals to integrate social spaces (and thus 'language codes') that have been formerly practised separately in different places" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 24). Translanguaging is grounded in the understanding that each individual possesses their own single linguistic repertoire (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2018). It is a practice and process whereby the individual freely draws on their linguistic repertoire to make meaning, enhance experiences and develop identity (Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García, 2009). Translanguaging spaces would permit a "non-competitive perspective of languages of instruction" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 73) and would welcome all learners' linguistic resources to increase learning potential (Piccardo, 2013; Piccardo & Aden, 2014). In the field of CLIL, the potential of translanguaging has been explored (Cenoz, 2017; Lin & He, 2017; Nikula & Moore, 2019; San Isidro, 2018) however there is recognition that more research is needed (Nikula & Moore, 2019). The enactment of translanguaging spaces would permit EP learners to be agents in social interactions therefore working towards positive emotional engagement.

The research further highlights the possibility that developing the metalinguistic awareness and strategies of EP learners might facilitate positive emotional engagement. EP learners with existing linguistic resources in more than one language appear to employ metalinguistic resources to facilitate their learning in the CP CLIL Anglophone classroom and report no negative emotional engagement. EP learners with existing linguistic resources in one language appear to experience negative emotional engagement with social interactions. This finding suggests that explicitly teaching metalinguistic strategies might provide EP learners with competencies that facilitate positive emotional engagement. Building on the earlier notion that valorising existing linguistic resources can be beneficial, Lasagabaster (2013) and Garcia & Wei (2014) argue that allowing students to draw on these resources in the classroom supports the development of metalinguistic strategies.

Raising teacher awareness of the potential of existing linguistic resources and metalinguistic strategies in social interactions can help foster positive emotional engagement with social interactions among EP learners. Talk has been previously employed as a way for teachers to reframe their approaches and teaching practices (García & Traugh, 2002; Himley et al., 2000; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011). By reflecting on and discussing learners' emotional engagement, teachers can become more aware of their practice. Collaborative descriptive inquiry has been employed in previous studies to enable teachers to reflect on their roles and to enact changes in their practice (García & Traugh, 2002; Himley et al., 2000).

6 LIMITATIONS

This study has potential limitations. From a methodological perspective, focus groups were chosen in consideration of the well-being of the young participants (Mauthner, 1997; Mauthner et al., 1993; Ponizovsky-Bergelson et al., 2019). Yet, the collective nature of focus groups may have caused participants to stay silent due to inhibition or lack of focus (Kennedy et al., 2001). Additionally, dominant

characters might eclipse other perspectives (Robson, 2016). Mitigating actions included specific probing questions, considering these dynamics during data analysis and the employment of VSR.

Risks associated with insider research were limited through methodological choices and mitigations. During data analysis, a short-sightedness when questioning was found. To mitigate, an awareness of this was integrated into the analysis and triangulation with other data sources supporting interpretations.

The findings may not offer the complete picture of a complex classroom environment. The focus group discussion was guided by VSR from specific teaching moments. Filming other instances may have drawn out other lived experiences. In addition, experiences of negative emotional engagement seem to have richer descriptions. This might be linked to the researcher's wish, as teacher and researcher, to understand what does not work in the classroom to improve teaching practice.

The highly specific context of the study means that participant perceptions and subsequent implications drawn from them hold pertinence within the specific research setting. The findings can contribute to a deeper understanding of EP learners' emotional engagement with socially mediated actions in the field of CLIL but it would be misleading to generalise the findings. Moreover, the small sample, chosen to privilege rich data, also contributes to this limitation. To increase trustworthiness of the findings, it would be beneficial to conduct further studies.

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