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PREPARING FOR CLIL IN SOUTHERN ITALY AND BEYOND: CLIL TEACHER TRAINING

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Abstract

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is growing in importance in Italy, especially since the Italian Education Ministry made it obligatory in most secondary schools (MIUR: 2010c). However, the road to a fully working system is long and winding. It has been noted that one important aspect on the road to reaching the goal of an implemented CLIL system in schools is that of teacher training (Coyle *et al*. 2010; Di Martino and Di Sabato 2012; Muñoa Barredo 2011; Alcaraz-Mármol 2018). This article refers to the training of secondary school teachers in a CLIL methodology course at a university in the south of Italy. This paper reflects upon issues involved in preparing these teachers and their feelings about their preparation. To do this it is first necessary to identify the current situation of CLIL in Italian secondary schools and see what a teacher training programme can do to prepare these content teachers for their new future role. Further fuel for these reflections comes from the answers that a group of such teachers gave to the questions presented in a written questionnaire about their motivation and their concerns. The paper ends with some conclusions drawn from this experience. Work like this is necessary because CLIL is not the same across Europe, as the different cultural aspects produce a variety of contexts for CLIL to operate in and, therefore, a variety of CLILs (Coyle and Meyer 2021). It is hoped that reflections from one context can feed into and help the experiences of another context. The paper suggests that having limited resources and support does hinder the work that we can do but that Italy has made a start to improve the situation.

1. Introduction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has spread worldwide since its initial inception in the 1990s (Coyle and Meyer 2021), partly explained by education being “driven by market forces in a global competitive environment” (Flowerdew 2014: 341) but also by there being “a constantly evolving approach to learning and teaching in our multilingual and multicultural classrooms” (Coyle and Meyer 2021: 3). Many writers (Marsh 1994; Short 1994; Nikula and Marsh 1997; Wesche and Skehan 2002; Dalton-Puffer and Smit 2007; Lasagabaster 2008; Ruiz and Jiménez 2009; Ranieri 2013; Costa 2016; Mezzadri and Tonelli 2020) show positive effects on different aspects of learning due to CLIL; motivation, improvement in language skills, a deep processing of

the subject matter, as well as increased intercultural awareness and sensitivity. This helps explain the continual growth of CLIL.

This paper looks at how the Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR) is implementing CLIL in a top-down programme throughout the country. It also investigates the preparation of a group of future CLIL teachers and the reaction to this preparation by some of these teachers, elicited through a questionnaire. This paper refers specifically to English as the L2, or additional language, of CLIL: other languages are also involved in CLIL in Italy but to a much lesser extent (Dalton-Puffer 2011). In the final section of the paper I draw some conclusions from the comments of these future CLIL practitioners. By showing the principles behind the teacher training course, how it was implemented and the reactions to it by some stakeholders (the future CLIL teachers), it is hoped to add to the literature by presenting a model that can be discussed, criticized, and adapted to other local areas.

2. What is CLIL?

Given its worldwide diffusion and the growing literature on the subject, it should be simple to answer the question "What is CLIL?". However, even just a few years ago Broca (2016: 321) observed that "even after a decade of research and discussion, the basic tenets of CLIL are not agreed". In one of the most cited quotations about CLIL, Coyle *et al.* (2010: 1) define it as "a dual-focused educational approach in which the additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language". However, some of the main CLIL scholars provide different definitions: for example, Mehisto *et al.* (2008: 12) define CLIL as "an umbrella term covering a dozen or more educational approaches", while Coyle *et al.* (2010: 48) assert that "[i]t is not the case that any kind of teaching or learning in another language is CLIL". Ball *et al.* (2015) point out that Immersion Education, Minority Education, Bilingual education, English medium education and Content Based Language Teaching (CBLT) are all examples of forms of education that use a language different from the learner's L1 and teach subject-specific content but that they are not CLIL, although there may be some overlapping of characteristics. Dale and Tanner (2012: 4) place CLIL on a line that goes from CBLT to Immersion, which suggests that the core part of CLIL is distinct but that it merges into the other approaches.

Sometimes CLIL is compared to ESP teaching and is said to have derived from that area. Yang (2016: 45) writes:

> [W]hat differentiates ESP from CLIL is that the latter has dual focuses, i.e. both language and content, while the former places emphasis on providing learners with sufficient language skills to master content knowledge.

ESP is taught in language classrooms by the language teacher: things are not so straightforward with CLIL because of the dual focus. We also have to differentiate between hard and soft CLIL: hard CLIL refers to the subject teacher teaching, while soft CLIL has the language teacher teaching the class. Pavón Vázquez and Rubio (2010: 51) suggest that hard CLIL "puts too much emphasis on the language and not on the methodology", therefore emphasizing the need for CLIL to be based on a certain methodology

that its teachers must have acquired. There are also forms of CLIL where this is active collaboration between the content and the language teachers. Highlighting another difference, Ball *et al.* (2015) note that CLIL tends to be taught in a limited number of subjects in some schools and usually has an element of selection on behalf of the students, in that they can opt in to the CLIL programme or not as they, or their parents, wish. This is not true in all situations: in Italy the CLIL programme is compulsory. However, for this paper it is this key element of a focus on content united with a simultaneous focus on language that differentiates CLIL from the other approaches just mentioned and places it as a separate entity.

Even if we manage to agree on a rough definition of CLIL, this does not mean that CLIL will be the same everywhere. Butler (2017: 328) asserts that "there is no such thing as a universally best pedagogical approach across context and time […] [for] any […] approach", going on to state the "importance of contextualising all pedagogical approaches […] to meet local needs". This need to pay attention to the specific local context seems especially true of CLIL, and helps explain the variety that we find in the CLIL literature. These local needs unpack as being not only those at the national level but also at a regional level, and individual school level. As CLIL becomes more popular and is being implemented in different contexts, the idea of different CLIL methodologies becomes more apparent. Coyle *et al.* (2010: 48) note that it is

> […] the responsibility of the key players in those contexts to interpret according to statutory or national/regional curricular requirements what is meant by quality content language integrated teaching and learning.

This suggests that CLIL can be interpreted in different ways to suit the context it is in and the agents involved. Soler *et al.* (2017: 478) describe how there has been a "[d] iversification of CLIL models designed to fit specific contexts". Coyle and Meyer (2021: 5) try to help resolve this confusion:

> The challenges lie not in arriving at one definition of CLIL […] but in the positioning of a shared understanding of fundamental principles of plurilingual learning which inspire educators to define, design, enact and evaluate with their learners the conditions for learning that are of the highest possible quality and relevance to the communities they serve.

Notwithstanding all of this, the MIUR has decided to implement something called CLIL in Italy, and so it needs to be interpreted for this specific context and the specific stakeholders. Macaro (2018: 53) writes that in this top-down implementation:

> there seems to be an implicit recognition in Italian policy documents that foreign language teaching is not delivering the right goods and that CLIL will provide the solution.

To achieve this implementation, there is the need to resolve what Mehisto *et al.* (2008: 20) term as one of the "[b]umps in the road to good practice in CLIL", which is the shortage of CLIL teachers. This can be done via the teaching of CLIL methodology to non-language teachers at secondary school. A lot of work has to be done in teacher training courses to help acquire a shared vision of what CLIL is (Coyle *et al.* 2010; Rasulo 2014). Precisely because CLIL can have different aspects depending on the geo-

graphical, political, and social context in which it is implemented, it is necessary for the future CLIL teachers to fully understand what they will be required to do as CLIL practitioners and have a clear idea of what CLIL means for them in their specific context. Teacher training in CLIL must play a fundamental role in all this.

3. The Italian situation

In the last years of the twentieth century, Italy was already experimenting with CLIL, although not with that name. The experimental high schools – known as the *Liceo Europeo* – had two subjects partially taught in two different European languages. However, it was with the recent Parliamentary Reform (MIUR: 2010c) of schools that CLIL was introduced on a much broader scale.
Nikula (2017: 111) writes:

> Because of its potential to serve as a context for meaningful language use and situated learning, CLIL has been regarded by EU institutions as an important instrument to foster European citizens' bi- and multilingualism, to be offered alongside regular foreign language teaching for students in mainstream education.

This highlights the supranational level of CLIL, and so we must consider, as Spolsky (2009: 2) notes, "individuals, organizations, institutional and regulatory structures and interactions" when examining this aspect. Nikula (2017: 113) points out that "in countries such as Spain and more recently Italy, dissatisfaction with the results of foreign language teaching has led to top-down initiatives", a notion shared by Costa (2016). This top-down approach is seen in the fact that CLIL is now being introduced into Italian schools in a massive way by the Ministry of Education, notwithstanding Rasulo's (2014: 121) warning that:

> [d]espite the popularity of CLIL in today's Italian educational system, many concerns remain among school stakeholders about the feasibility of this methodology and its actual long-term positive impact on learning processes.

The Ministry of Education webpage, in the section about CLIL in schools, states as follows:

> Decrees of the President of the Republic 88 and 89 of 2010 govern the legislation that provides for the obligation to teach, in the fifth year of high school, a non-linguistic discipline (NLD) in a foreign language according to the CLIL methodology. In particular:
> • for technical institutes the NLD must be included in the fifth year, and must be taught in English
> • for high schools (excluding linguistic high schools) the teaching of the NLD must be carried out in one of the languages of the European Union
> • for linguistic high schools the teaching of an NLD in a foreign language is already provided for starting from the third year of the course of study; in the fourth and fifth years, a second NLD is also taught in a foreign language other than the first.
> The profile of the CLIL teacher is characterized as follows:
> • possession of linguistic-communicative skills at a C1 level in the foreign language;

• methodological-didactic skills acquired at the end of a 20 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits university specialization course for in-service teachers.
(author's translation, https://www.miur.gov.it/clil1)

This would suggest that the Ministry sees CLIL as a means to resolve the ills present in the school system, as far as foreign language teaching is concerned, and why not, if CLIL, as Ting (2013) claims, "provides a pragmatic means for establishing high-level and humanistic contexts for both learners and their teachers"?

The aim concerning the teaching of a foreign (European) language is for students to leave high schools with a B2 level in a language that is not Italian. Unfortunately, as the language centre at the University of Calabria has been able to testify by doing level-based placement tests for almost all its undergraduates, at the moment, the majority of incoming first year students have less than a B1 level in English, the main foreign language taught in schools.

The reforms of the Italian secondary school system (MIUR: 2010a; 2010b) provide for the teaching of a non-language subject (NLS) in a foreign language in the last year of high schools and technical schools and two non-language subjects in a foreign language in linguistic high schools. So as not to create too much confusion for the students who are near the end of their secondary schooling, the Ministry decided to introduce CLIL gradually, starting from the third year of the five-year secondary school cycle (MIUR: 2010b; 2015). The MIUR thus promoted a series of initiatives aimed at introducing CLIL in schools. The first was through the *Istituto Nazionale Documentazione Innovazione Ricerca Educativa* (INDIRE, the National Educational Documentation, Innovation and Research Institute). INDIRE proposed a pilot scheme for universities to implement language courses and CLIL methodological courses for future CLIL teachers. The language course is necessary, as the situation in Italy is similar to the one Nikula (2017) notes for Europe in general, in that CLIL is usually taught by non-native speakers of the foreign language. Once this initiative had finished, the Ministry of Education took over the courses, allotting to the universities the CLIL methodology courses aimed at preparing qualified teachers with language skills certified in the foreign language at least at a C1 level. This L2 level is recognized exclusively through language certificates obtained from a list of officially recognized certification bodies (MIUR 2012a, 2012c, 2013). Those teachers – the vast majority – who did not already have this level would have to do a language course. The 2012 decree stated that local schools would be in charge of organizing the language courses.

At the end of the methodological course those who pass the course and have a certified C1 level receive the CLIL teaching certificate (MIUR 2011, 2012b). Those teachers who pass the methodological course but are not at a certified C1 level are given a certificate from the university affirming their status, and this is transformed into the full certificate once the teacher has officially reached the C1 level required.

A Ministerial Note (MIUR 2014) in 2014 states that CLIL is to be taught in secondary schools and it tries to give guidelines for the schools. However, it does not say that all of the lessons in the subject chosen for CLIL have to be done in the L2, but rather that schools should try to do at least 50% of those lessons in the L2. It states that the official requirement for CLIL teachers is the possession of the certificate from a university after completing the 20 credits CLIL methodology course and a certified C1

level, but that in the meantime, when teachers have not been able to attain such certificates, then someone with a B2 level in the L2 can teach in a CLIL classroom. The Note suggests coordinating the courses with the language teachers in the school. Dale and Tanner (2012) suggest that various degrees of collaboration are possible between the various types of teachers involved in teaching CLIL, while Coonan (2012: 119) writes that until 2008-2009 "the preferred solution for teaching in the CLIL mode consisted in team-teaching" with the content teacher and a language teacher. However, the MIUR document states that this collaboration is not part of the decree, so any collaboration has to be voluntary. Where there are no qualified CLIL teachers in the school, the Note suggests activating school projects using language teachers or language conversation teachers. In this case, though, the Ministry stresses that the evaluation of the students must be the responsibility of the teacher who teaches the subject in question during normal school activity. One concern noted here regards the final year school exams. If the subject taught using CLIL is part of the second compulsory paper of the final exams, then the exam cannot be done in the L2, but must be done in Italian. The exam board for the individual school can decide how to evaluate the CLIL subject. The oral part of the final exam can only be done in the L2 if the teacher who taught the CLIL course is on the examining board. This means that students might have studied a subject using CLIL but they may not necessarily be tested in this in their final school exams in the L2.

The Ministry of Education has thus implemented a policy of promoting CLIL in Italian schools, but doing so before the required number of subject teachers are qualified to teach their subject using CLIL, and there are still some important issues, such as assessment and collaboration, that need to be adequately addressed.

Soler *et al.* (2017: 478) point out that in Spain "[o]bservations reveal that these CLIL programmes benefitted from clear design, teacher training, collaboration, administrative support, and continued exposure of students to the target language", and that school "[p]rincipals revealed that having competent, motivated, and convinced teachers was the main factor contributing towards the successful implementation of their CLIL programme" (*ibid.*: 485). It is hoped that enough has been done along these lines in Italy to allow the CLIL programmes to succeed.

One important aspect of the new CLIL programme is the fact that Italian universities will be offering teacher training courses for future CLIL teachers. Di Martino and Di Sabato (2012: 98-99) write:

> we feel the need to stress that quality training is the key to success. Once again, we are convinced that the success of CLIL in Italy will depend on the trainers' ability to offer themselves as such: only the best trainers will manage to convince teachers who are no longer young and trustful in the school system that CLIL is the right way forward. The enthusiasm they will (or will not) manage to stimulate in the teachers they will train is directly proportional to the interest and curiosity the latter will (or will not) succeed in rousing in their students.

We need to see if we are meeting this challenge. One idea behind this paper is to take some of the stakeholders into account, as Spolsky (2009) suggests, to try to understand how this CLIL is being "interpreted" and what is actually happening.

4. The project

This project is concerned with eliciting information from students on a CLIL methodology course about their perceived convictions and concerns regarding the implementation of CLIL in the Italian school system and analysing and commenting on this.

This research used questionnaires given to students participating in a classroom-based CLIL 20 credit methodology course taught at the Language Centre. Near the end of their course, participants (who were all qualified and working teachers in various subjects) were asked to complete a short questionnaire, giving their permission for the use of their questionnaires in this project. The participants could answer in English, or in their L1 if they preferred. Once the participants had completed the questionnaires and had handed them in, there was an open discussion in class concerning the questions and answers therein, thus making it an active part of the course.

In this article I want to give voice to those who will actually teach CLIL in Italian schools. The project tries to elicit how ready and motivated they are and answer the following questions:

Do future CLIL teachers feel that they are ready for the CLIL experience?

Do they feel that there are benefits in implementing CLIL in Italian schools?

4.1. *The CLIL course*

Alcaraz-Mármol (2018: 57) states:

> Trained teachers have a more clear idea on what CLIL is and how to implement it, using a wider variety of resources and activities. Therefore, our results suggest that CLIL methodological training should be as important as linguistic training. It should tend towards being compulsory.

Others who express similar views about training teachers for CLIL include Marsh *et al*. 2001; Eurydice 2006; Coyle *et al*. 2010; Banegas 2012; Di Martino and Di Sabato 2012; Martín del Pozo 2015. Exactly what such a course should be is not clearly stated, precisely because CLIL is not a homogeneous concept, but can vary considerably from one country to another. However, from the general CLIL literature (for example, Mehisto *et al*. 2008; Coyle *et al*. 2010; Coonan 2012; Dale and Tanner 2012; Ball *et al*. 2015), it is possible to identify some key elements that should be part of a CLIL methodology course.

The Ministerial documents guide the universities into how to structure the overall course, but each university can then design its own course following the principles of adapting CLIL to the local situation.

Mezzadri and Tonelli (2020: 267) refer to the three areas of specific skills that a CLIL teacher must have: "linguistic-communicative competence in the target language, that of content-disciplinary competences and finally that of language teaching competences". All of these had to be dealt with. To achieve this, the course is divided into modules; there is a module on second language acquisition, one on technology in the CLIL classroom (as this aspect is mentioned in the Ministerial documents), and one on CLIL methodology, principles, strategies, lesson planning and issues. These are designed to give the student teachers a clear and structured background in CLIL as well as an overview of possible activities to use in class. Another module is a more practical one in

which a tutor, who should be a practising CLIL teacher, guides the student teachers in preparing CLIL lessons for their subjects; this also includes micro-teaching activities.

The fact that the students on the methodological course are teachers in their own right, some with only a few years teaching experience while others were veterans, means that many aspects of a teacher training course can be ignored or dealt with quickly. As this is a hard CLIL scenario, these are mainstream content teachers and so they know what content has to be taught.

The course under consideration here involves the students – future CLIL teachers – and the course teacher in a dialogic exchange rather than in seminar-style lessons. The methodology course begins with eliciting from students what they want/need/expect from the course so it can be designed for them in this specific context. The students are seen as coming to the lessons with knowledge, therefore we start with their definition of CLIL; this is then compared to definitions from the literature. The CLIL teacher training had to start with an introduction to the theory of CLIL and this, along with much of what happened in the classroom, was done using the CLIL methodology as much as possible. This means that the students were placed as active participants and there was a lot of pair work and group work with the future CLIL teachers bringing in ideas about CLIL.

Students were encouraged through flipped classroom-style lessons to engage with the main principles they found for CLIL and propose how to implement these principles in future CLIL lessons. The following list shows much of what was planned for the CLIL course (here it is put into alphabetical order):

- Assessment in CLIL;
- Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 1984);
- Blooms' taxonomy revised (Anderson and Krathwohl 2001);
- Borrowing from EFL and ESP textbooks;
- Classroom organization and management (use of pair work, group work, flipped classrooms, presentations);
- Content-based language learning/teaching;
- Domain-specific language;
- Higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and Lower order thinking skills (LOTS);
- Language functions (for example Halliday 1984);
- Learning strategies;
- Lesson planning (including the language to be used);
- Material development for CLIL;
- Multimedia input;
- Scaffolding;
- Sequencing;
- Second language acquisition (SLA);
- Task-based language learning/teaching;
- The 4Cs (Coyle 2007): content, communication, culture, cognition;
- The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and identifying language levels and language problems;

- The Language Triptych - Language of learning, language for learning, language through learning (Coyle *et al*. 2010);
Translanguaging.

All of this helped introduce what CLIL is and how to put it into practice in the classroom. Finally, the following tools were introduced to attempt to sum up what had been taught and to help the students draw together the various strands of CLIL towards the end of the course in such a way that they obtain and can articulate a clear vision of CLIL.

The first such tool is Zaparucha's (2020) CLIL wheel in which she has attempted to pull together many of the notions of what CLIL is in a pictorial manner.

Three other useful tools that were employed were:

- Coyle *et al*.'s (2010: 75-78) six stages for reflection;
- Dale and Tanner's (2012: 15-18) Checklist. How "CLIL" are you?;
- Mehisto *et al*.'s (2008: 29) core features of CLIL methodology.

As the course began, it became apparent that we needed to work on affective ideas. Some countries such as the Netherlands have generally high levels of English, as high as C2, and the English speakers who teach in non-linguistic subjects volunteer to teach in classes where students have opted into the CLIL lessons. The Italian situation is different in that the teachers, only some of whom had volunteered whilst others had "been volunteered", indicated their reticence about using English with their students. Therefore, hard work had to be done to break any idea that English delivery of content should be done by a native speaker or an experienced non-native speaker language teacher. What had to be achieved, therefore, was to give validity to these teachers' use of English in the classroom and help motivate them to overcome their worries. The concentric circles of Kachru (1985) showing that most communication in English in the world is not between native speakers helped a lot, as did discussions on English as a lingua franca and willingness to communicate. The students also indicated that, after an introduction to the main ideas of CLIL, what they wanted was practical ideas and to be able to practise CLIL. This meant that, as well as discussion groups, it was also useful to have micro teaching lessons where the teachers put what they had learnt into practice in small groups in the classroom. Some were able to employ what they were learning directly into their school lessons, and then give feedback on this to the whole class.

Another worry that had to be dealt with during the course of the programme was that these future CLIL teachers were worried about seeing themselves turn into English language teachers. The dual focus nature of CLIL had to be reinforced continually in a hard CLIL format in which these teachers had to understand that CLIL does not mean teaching the L2, but using it as a vehicle of communication for the content. They were also made to understand that they could not rely on the help of the foreign language teachers in the school, but would have to be ready to deal with CLIL by themselves.

4.2. *The participants*

The participants on the course are all full-time teachers who applied to the local school administration office to do the course. These teachers have all attended language

courses in the local schools and are said to have a B2 level of English (according to the European Council of Ministers Common European Framework of Reference). There was a total of 96 students on the three courses at the university campus site. The questionnaire used in this investigation was administered on the last day of taught courses, but before the tutoring module. This involved 66 participants as not all of the students were present that day.

These teachers taught the following subjects (the number in brackets is how many taught that particular subject: the total is more than the number of participants, as various teachers teach more than one subject): Biology (1), Business Administration (1), Chemistry (8), Computer Science (5), Construction and Construction Techniques (1), Design (1), Economics (6), Electronics (3), Food Science (1), Geography (2), History (9), History of Art (1), Italian (1), Latin (1), Law (3), Maths (16), Mechanics (2), Natural Sciences (5), Organic Chemistry (1), PE (1), Philosophy (3), Physics (8), Science (4), Systems and Automation (1), Technical Drawing (1). Some universities were able to divide the methodology courses into courses for sciences and courses for humanities, but at the University of Calabria these were mixed courses.

4.3. *Questionnaire and results*

The questionnaire was administered in class so as to ensure the highest number of respondents and was completed anonymously. The student teachers were informed as to what the questionnaire was about and asked for their permission to use the results. Once completed and handed in, the questionnaire was also used as the basis for an in-class discussion.

The questionnaire had questions on just one side of an A4 piece of paper. As well as asking about the subject taught and a self-assessment of level of English, the questionnaire involved the following:

> On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is 'not at all' and 5 is 'completely'), please answer the following:
> 1. How confident are you that you can teach your subject in CLIL?
> 2. How confident are you in your linguistic ability to teach your subject in CLIL?
> 3. How confident are you that CLIL will be beneficial to your students regarding the content?
> 4. How confident are you that CLIL will be beneficial to your students regarding the L2 (English)?
> 5a. How satisfied are you with the CLIL methodological course?
> 5b. Why did you give this mark?
>
> On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is 'not at all' and 5 is 'total'), please answer 6 and 7:
> 6. How much support do you want from the language teacher(s) in your school?
> 7. How much support do you expect to receive from the language teacher(s) in your school?
> 8. What do you see as the biggest challenge in teaching your subject using CLIL?
>
> Questions 1 to 5a and then 6 and 7 only need a number on a Likert scale, while 5b and 8 need a longer written answer. Question 9 was an open question:
>
> 9. Why do you want to do CLIL? (write your answer in no more than 100 words).

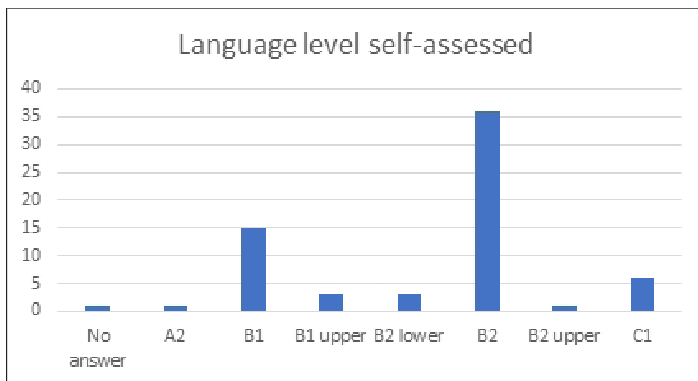

Figure 1. Self-assessment of L2

The self-assessment of L2 (English) language level showed that not all of the learners felt that they were prepared adequately for the course from a language point of view. Graph One shows the results for this question (Figure 1).

At least twenty-two student teachers (one third of the respondents) self-assess as having a level of English below the B2 level, and this calls into question the validity of having the local schools managing the language courses for the future CLIL teachers. Anecdotally, these results are replicated throughout Italy to such an extent that the people involved in organizing the methodology courses asked the MIUR for a meeting to address this problem. The course was conducted in English as this, similar to a CLIL course, gave the students exposure with comprehensible input to the L2, so their initial levels of English should have improved over the period of the course. However, these low levels of English mean that very few of the trainees would be awarded the full MIUR CLIL certificate on satisfactorily completing the methodology course.

Questions 1-5a and then 6 and 7 asked the students to reply to questions using a one to five scale. The average answers for these questions can be found below in Table 1.

On a one to five scale, three would be the median answer signifying a neutral response. For questions one to four the average results are all positive, which shows that the teachers feel that they can teach using CLIL and that they feel that their students will benefit from this linguistically and as far as the subject content is concerned. The linguistic ability to teach CLIL does not just regard the general language ability of the teacher but also knowledge of domain-specific language and classroom language and its various registers (Llinares, Morton and Whittaker 2012).

It would seem that the teachers feel that they can use the language effectively to teach CLIL, even though this was one of the worries that they had expressed at the start of the lessons. It might not be that they have improved linguistically during this time (although it is a desired outcome of doing the CLIL course in the L2), but maybe now they have the motivation and the confidence to teach in English. They should also appreciate that it is not necessary to have native-speaker-like ability, but that effective communication can occur at a B1 and B2 level of competence when lessons and interactions are properly planned. A worry concerning CLIL (see for example Bruton 2011, 2015; Paran 2013) is that it might create problems in content learning, yet these teachers felt that this would not be the case as they thought that CLIL would be an effective way to teach the content of their various subjects.

The future teachers were even more confident that CLIL would benefit their students linguistically. CLIL, as has been shown, is often seen as helping students in the

1	How confident are you that you can teach your subject in CLIL?	**3.3**
2	How confident are you in your linguistic ability to teach your subject in CLIL?	**3.1**
3	How confident are you that CLIL will be beneficial to your students regarding the content?	**3.5**
4	How confident are you that CLIL will be beneficial to your students regarding the L2 (English)?	**3.6**
5a	How satisfied are you with the CLIL methodological course?	**3.8**
6	How much support do you want from the language teacher(s) in your school?	**3.3**
7	How much support do you expect to receive from the language teacher(s) in your school?	**2.6**

Table 1. Average score results

L2 because of the deeper learning (Coyle and Meyer 2021) associated with it, as well as because of increased exposure and use of the L2 (for example Mehisto *et al.* 2008; Coyle *et al.*2010, Ball *et al.* 2015). These two positive answers concerning the benefits of CLIL should mean that these teachers will be motivated to implement CLIL despite problems of needing to use an L2 to explain content that these teachers are accustomed to teaching in their L1, needing to find, adapt and prepare from scratch material for these courses, and overcoming resistance from the students and any other worries that the teachers might have.

The course received positive feedback as well. This was backed up in the comments made in question 5b. The teacher students gave different answers as to why they had judged the methodological course the way they did. 13 considered that it had been good for their professional enrichment, while 11 used the word “satisfied” to describe their feelings concerning the course. It can be hoped that this will be reflected in the motivation that these teachers will need to continue along the CLIL path.

Although seven remarked that they now understood CLIL (this does indicate that the others did not understand but just that they did not choose to mention it here), 11 thought they needed more time for practical experiences in CLIL, and there were five comments about the course involving too much theory. Six said that the course was too short. Four people felt that the various modules needed better coordination and integration. Only two of the students felt the course had not been specific enough for their particular discipline. This was always going to be a problem in a course that involved teachers from such a wide range of subjects. Two of them also noted that they themselves had been too busy with other things to get the most from the course; for one of the students the distance they had had to travel to and from lessons had had a negative effect. Three of them stated in general that they needed to improve, while another three noted that this improvement was specifically in their level of English.

It is reassuring to note that the teacher students felt positive about the course: no one said that they still felt uncertain as to what CLIL is. This might go, in some way, to allay the fears expressed by Di Martino and Di Sabato (2012), as cited above. The fact that some teachers expressed the idea that they saw the course as being short and they

wanted to know more could be seen as a sign of their interest in CLIL and the desire to be as prepared as possible for what was to come.

The practical part of the course, where students are involved in material development and micro-teaching was, logically, at the end of the course, but this questionnaire was administered before that. Maybe the concerns about more practice being necessary would be addressed there.

The methodology students expressed a wish to be supported in their CLIL experience by the language teacher(s) in the school. However, they were more sceptical about receiving such support.

The main challenges perceived for implementing CLIL have been summed up in the following section.

11 of the respondents were worried about the participation and motivation of their students in the CLIL lessons. Four of them thought that the problem lay in the students not being involved enough with the subject. Seven felt that it was generally a problem of implementing a new methodology, while, connected to this, seven people were worried about finding, creating or adapting material for the lessons, and seven mentioned their preoccupation with the time needed to prepare and organize CLIL. Two felt that they did not have enough time in the lessons to implement CLIL properly. Obviously, some of the comments referred to language: four comments concerned the teachers' low level of English and saw this as a problem, while two felt that using the language might be difficult. However, only one person thought that the students' low level of English was going to be problematic. Four were worried about getting the balance right between language and content. Two teachers (both philosophy teachers) were specifically worried about teaching their subject in English. One person was worried about not getting enough support from the English language teachers in the school, something that we have seen is not obligatory in the Italian context. One person was not certain that he/she would be able to exploit the language learning opportunities arising in the CLIL lessons to the full. This may seem as though there could be lots of linguistic problems, but the majority of respondents did not note this as problematic.

The worry of creating material is an important aspect. The MIUR has gone ahead with asking teachers to implement CLIL lessons, but it has done little to aid them in terms of practical day-to-day organization. The Ministry does not offer a reduction in teaching hours, financial reward, or the guaranteed support of language teachers to teachers involved in CLIL. The perceived low interest of students for the subject, in CLIL or in a normal lesson, seems part of a general malaise.

The open question of "Why do you want to do CLIL?" produced a range of replies. For 27 people this CLIL course was the opportunity to learn a new methodology and approach to teaching, but not necessarily one that they will apply only in the L2, but also in the L1. For one person it was a way of "shifting the focus from teaching to learning". For three it is a way to "enrich and enhance my didactic activity". One teacher wrote:

> Over the years, I lost my motivation to teach because the students are more and more less interest (*sic*) in education. So, attending the CLIL course, I discover a new strategy to propose my subject and to make the lessons more interesting. I hope that in this way I can help my students to find again the motivation.

Indeed, 21 replies concerned the idea that students would be more interested in the subject because of this new methodology and more motivated to learn. One teacher wrote that he/she would be more motivated to teach because of this new methodology. Six people expressively stated that they expect their students to improve their results in the subject being taught because of the adoption of CLIL. For three teachers one benefit of CLIL is that it is more learner-centred, while for another teacher CLIL represents a more active style of teaching that will "enhance autonomous learning". It is also seen that CLIL develops "learners' thinking skills". One person saw CLIL as a methodology in which the "teacher puts him/herself in the shoes of students".

Obviously, some of the teachers (a total of 12) stated that "students will improve their English" and that this could be because it is a more "authentic use of L2" or that it has "practical use". One person noted that this improvement would be especially in the "micro-language" of the subject being taught. Six teachers said they wanted to do CLIL for the students' future, as it will serve as a "basis to study abroad" and enable them to become "citizens of the world". One remarked "I really think the future is in Europe", while another thought that "diversity of languages [is] unlikely to disappear". Another teacher noted that there are "a lot of technical documents in English", so it is necessary for students to learn English.

One teacher was slightly less assured of things: "I hope I will understand along the time the advantages for my students". Another was even more pessimistic: "I am wondering whether Italian students could easily understand a CLIL class, and I am afraid that they cannot. I think that CLIL could just be a waste of time". Three teachers were very direct in their answer as to why they wanted to do CLIL: "I do not want to – I have to". Three teachers noted that because of the new school reform, CLIL will be part of the school curriculum and so somebody has to do it. One was on the course because "My boss chose me". Another was uncertain about the possibility of doing CLIL because "I mainly teach literature and not history".

These negative ideas reflect the opinion of a minority of the teachers involved in the course but they remain as problems to be addressed. Maybe teachers should not be coerced into CLIL, but a strategy should be evolved to motivate teachers into wanting to do CLIL.

However, others were more positive about it, even though for one of them the answer is "First of all, I was curious", but that curiosity led him/her to do and appreciate CLIL. For another teacher "CLIL can help me to be more competitive in case of future job applications for better job opportunities". Three of the respondents saw this as "a personal challenge", while for another it was for "personal satisfaction". 16 of the people who attended this CLIL methodological course and wanted to do CLIL in the future saw it as a way to improve their own competence in English.

This variety of answers reflects the situation of CLIL in Italy. Many teachers see this methodology as a means for them to learn something new in teaching as maybe they have not had many officially sponsored possibilities to learn new techniques. It must be remembered that many of these teachers were able to enter teaching with a general degree and very little in the way of teacher training. Some are dedicating their time on the courses for personal reasons (not least the hope to learn English better), while others are thinking about the benefits the students can gain from CLIL, also lin-

guistically. A minority feel that this is merely another top-down imposition inflicted on them by the authorities with no clear advantages for anyone.

It seems that in general the course has satisfied the teachers and has provided them with the instruments and understanding necessary to try to implement CLIL. Most of them seem to suggest that the teacher training was able to arouse the necessary "interest and curiosity" that Di Martino and Di Sabato (2012: 99) were worried about.

5. Conclusion

The Italian Ministry of Education has certainly sent a clear message that it believes that CLIL can help improve language teaching/learning in Italian secondary schools. The practicalities of this are somewhat vague and left open to interpretation. The present research aimed to ascertain whether these teachers thought that this project was worthwhile and beneficial, as the teachers had various reasons for engaging in this project, and it could not be taken for granted that they would all feel the same about it.

The theoretical input was aimed at ensuring input on a variety of themes: CLIL theoretical background, differences between CLIL, immersion and English mediated instruction (EMI), ideas on CLIL practice, lesson planning and CLIL activities. It also involved an understanding of domain-specific language and World Englishes, so as to help convince some of the linguistically weaker participants that they could use their level of English to teach their subject, and that it was not necessary to have near-native fluency. How to do linguistic and content scaffolding was also dealt with, as was text analysis to help the future CLIL teachers understand how to gauge the linguistic difficulty of a text. It seems that some participants had not appreciated the theoretical complexity of what they would be doing. Once the course has finished, these teachers need to have a clear idea of what CLIL is, and what it is not, so as to fully understand what Coyle *et al.* (2010: 48) meant when they wrote the sentence quoted at the start of this paper: "It is not the case that any kind of teaching or learning in another language is CLIL".

The teachers in this research talked about a low level of interest and motivation in schools, not just on the part of the students but also by the teachers themselves. The language results from high schools that have been expected, a leaving level of B2, have not been met. Teaching a mainstream non-linguistic subject in an L2 is seen as a way of helping improve this situation. It seems, though, that this new methodology can bring increased interest into the classroom, for students and teachers alike.

The future CLIL teachers are aware that the human and material resources are not in place and that this could jeopardize the programme: collaboration with the language teachers is not being programmed into the CLIL courses but is kept as a voluntary aspect; they will need more time to prepare the CLIL lessons than their traditional lessons and they will often have to construct their own material or modify pre-existing material; their efforts might also be hampered by the uncertainty about whether the students on the CLIL courses can be assessed in the L2 that the lessons were run in, or in their L1. Notwithstanding all this, in general, the future CLIL teachers seem convinced that they are ready, and that CLIL can be advantageous for themselves and for the students, and that this is a way to introduce modern methods and techniques into a school system which needs them, so we have started to get the "competent, motivated,

and convinced teachers" that Soler *et al.* (2017: 485) say are so important for the successful application of CLIL in schools.

Further research needs to be done to see how the CLIL courses are being run in the schools, to see whether or not this early motivation is being maintained and whether the efforts made in the methodological CLIL training pay off in the classroom. The intent behind this paper is to further the discussion of how to prepare future CLIL teachers at a local level that can then be extrapolated to other areas.

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