



**CLILing in Italy: teachers' experiences with
Content and Language Integrated Learning
methodology**

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Preface

This 40 ETC credits research paper is the final fulfillment for the completion of my Master's degree in International Studies in Education at the University of Iceland. The idea of this project came to my mind during the first semester as a student in the programme, when I realized how important it is to foster the concept of equality and social justice in education, also through the teaching of languages and academic subjects.

My sincere thanks go to my cousins for supporting my research idea and for the help provided to find the participants for the study. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the teachers who enthusiastically welcomed me and devoted time to my project.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisors Samúel Currey Lefever and Susan Elizabeth Gollifer for their valuable feedback, guidance and support, especially in difficult times like these. When the coronavirus started to spread around the world and was declared a pandemic, I felt anxious and lost. I thought I was not going to be able to work on my project, but they were there and offered me their understanding and encouragement.

Finally, a special thanks to Marco and my son Matthías for their patience and for putting up with my absence during my studies. Without them this would not have been possible.

This thesis was written solely by me, the undersigned. I have read and understand the University of Iceland Code of Ethics

(https://english.hi.is/university/university_of_iceland_code_of_ethics) and have followed them to the best of my knowledge. I have correctly cited all other works or previous work of my own, including, but not limited to, written works, figures, data or tables. I thank all who have worked with me and take full responsibility for any mistakes contained in this work.

Signed:

Reykjavík, May 8th 2020

Caterina Poggi

Abstract

The study focuses on teachers' experiences with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology in Italy. CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. This methodology has been implemented in many countries in Europe, but Italy is the first country that made it policy. Since 2013, teachers in upper secondary schools must include CLIL in their programs.

There is little research on how teachers experience working with CLIL methodology in high schools, therefore, the purpose of this narrative inquiry is to explore and understand it, in order to inform teacher education and consider if and what can be improved.

My research question is:

How do teachers running CLIL in two upper secondary schools in Italy experience working with this methodology?

Participants in the study were six upper secondary school teachers in Italy who were implementing CLIL in English in their teaching. The focus was on two main areas: the teacher training process and the implementation of CLIL in schools. Data was collected by interviewing the six teachers. After that, I conducted a reflexive thematic analysis of the data and I identified three main themes. My findings show how teachers are interested in the methodology and believe it complements their professionalism but, on the other hand, they feel there is a lack of support and recognition that can dilute their enthusiasm.

The results of this research suggest the need to clearly define the purposes of CLIL in the Italian educational context and provide support to teachers both in the training and implementation process. My study is a contribution to Foreign Language Teaching and the innovative education approaches in the context of the developing 21st century skills in Italy and internationally.

Ágrip

CLILað á Ítalíu: reynsla kennara af *Content and Language Integrated Learning* aðferðafræðinni

Rannsóknarverkefnið fjallar um reynslu kennara af Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) aðferðafræðinni á Ítalíu. CLIL er þverfagleg kennsluaðferð sem felur í sér samþættingu kennslu í erlendu tungumáli við aðrar námsgreinar. Þessari aðferðafræði hefur verið hrint í framkvæmd í mörgum Evrópulöndum en Ítalía er það fyrsta til að gera hana að menntastefnu. Þar í landi hafa framhaldsskólakennarar þurft að innleiða CLIL í kennsluáætlanir sínar frá því árið 2013.

Lítið er um rannsóknir á upplifun kennara af því að vinna með CLIL í framhaldsskólum, því er tilgangur þessa rannsóknarverkefnis sá að fara ofan í saumana á aðferðafræðinni í því skyni að upplýsa um kennaranámið og kanna hvort, og þá hvað, megi betur fara.

Rannsóknarspurningin mín er:

Hvernig upplifun hafa kennarar í tveimur framhaldsskólum á Ítalíu af því að vinna með þessa aðferðafræði?

Þáttakendur í rannsókninni voru sex framhaldsskólakennarar á Ítalíu sem höfðu hver og einn innleitt CLIL á ensku í kennslu sinni. Áhersla var lögð á tvenn meginatriði: þjálfunarferli kennarans og útfærsla CLIL í skólum. Gagna var aflað með viðtölum við kennarana sex, sem ég síðan þemagreindi og dró þannig út þrenn meginþemu. Niðurstöður mínar gefa annars vegar til kynna sterkan áhuga kennara á aðferðafræðinni, þar eð þeir telja hana geta stuðlað að eflingu eigin fagmennsku. Á hinn bóginn leiddu þær í ljós dvínandi áhuga sökum skorts á stuðningi og takmarkaða viðurkenningu fyrir það nám sem krafist er til þess að öðlast CLIL kennsluréttindi.

Niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar benda til þarfar á að skilgreina með skýrum hætti tilgang CLIL innan ítalska menntakerfisins, sem og að veita kennurum betri stuðning bæði í þjálfunarferli þeirra og við útfærslu aðferðafræðinnar. Rannsóknarverkefnið mitt er framlag til kennslu erlendra tungumála og nýsköpunar í menntunaraðferðum í takt við færniþróun 21. aldarinnar á Ítalíu og á alþjóðavettvangi.

Table of Contents

Preface	3
Abstract	4
Ágrip	5
Table of Contents	6
Table of Figures	8
Table of Tables	9
1 Introduction	10
1.1 Purpose and significance of the study	10
1.2 The structure of the thesis	12
2 The context	13
2.1 CLIL historical background.....	13
2.2 CLIL implementation in Europe	14
2.3 Upper secondary school education in Italy	15
2.3.1 The curriculum.....	16
2.4 CLIL in upper secondary education	17
2.5 The CLIL teacher profile.....	18
2.6 CLIL teacher training.....	19
2.7 Legislation on CLIL implementation	20
3 Literature review and contribution to the research	22
3.1 The European discourse on multilingualism	22
3.2 CLIL and its purpose.....	23
3.2.1 A conceptual framework for CLIL: the 4Cs model.....	23
3.2.2 CLIL as a pedagogy.....	25
3.2.3 CLIL and intercultural citizenship theory.....	26
3.2.4 CLIL and languages involved.....	27
3.3 Research on CLIL teachers' training and CLIL implementation	28
3.4 Research on CLIL in Italy	30
4 Methodology	33
4.1 Research design.....	33
4.1.1 Data collection method	34
4.2 Sampling, participants and research site	34
4.2.1 The research sites.....	35
4.3 Data collection.....	36
4.4 Data analysis.....	37

4.5	Ethical issues.....	39
4.5.1	The role of the researcher.....	40
4.6	Limitations of the study.....	41
5	Findings	42
5.1	Conflicting understandings and interpretations of CLIL.....	43
5.2	Lack of comprehensive support mechanisms can dilute teachers' enthusiasm.....	44
5.2.1	The training course.....	44
5.2.2	The implementation	48
5.3	CLIL offers an alternative to traditional teaching approaches.....	52
5.3.1	CLIL complements innovative teaching and teacher professionalism.....	52
5.3.2	CLIL promotes self-critique of teaching and learning styles	53
5.3.3	CLIL pedagogy promotes learners' autonomy and motivation.....	55
6	Discussion	58
6.1	A new way of understanding CLIL and the purposes it serves.....	58
6.2	The language(s) issue	60
6.3	Quality CLIL teacher training produces quality CLIL teachers	61
6.4	The implementation of CLIL: the need to address systemic constraints	63
7	Conclusion	66
	References	69
	Appendix A: Introductory letter and consent form	77
	Appendix B: Interview guideline questions	79

Table of Figures

Figure 1. The 4Cs framework for CLIL (Coyle, Marsh & Hood, 2010)	24
Figure 2. The language triptych (Coyle, Marsh & Hood, 2010)	25

Table of Tables

Table 1. Study plan for foreign languages in the language high schools (Eurydice, 2019)	17
Table 2. Italian CLIL teacher profile. Translated from Italian by Cinganotto (Cinganotto, 2016)	18
Table 3. Participants in the study	35

1 Introduction

From a young age, in particular when I started my academic path, I have been interested in languages and cultures and language learning. I have always been fascinated by the number of living and dead languages that can be studied, learned, written, read or spoken. Due to this passion, I first studied Linguistic and Cultural Mediation at university and, after that, I obtained a master's degree in Teaching Italian to Foreigners. During my studies, I began to develop an interest in how multiple languages coexist in the same community, especially in Italy, my country of origin.

At the time of the Italian unification in 1861, it was decided that the inhabitants of the Italian territory had to learn and speak the same language, but just 2.5% of the population spoke Italian, while the rest spoke minority languages or the regional dialects (De Mauro, 1963). That being said, it is not difficult to understand the linguistic revolution that resulted in the context of a newly established country in order to enable people to communicate with each other. The process of linguistic unification in Italy has been long and the *questione della lingua* (the language question) is a topic that has been extensively discussed through the centuries and that continues to this day.

Currently in Italy we are witnessing a second language revolution, due to the migration of different populations to Italian territory (Vedovelli, 2006). From a linguistic point of view, it is estimated that in recent years approximately 130 “new” languages joined the approximately 34 native living spoken languages and related dialects already used in Italy (Vedovelli, 2006; Ethnologue, 2017). Among these, the biggest language communities are: Arabic (from Morocco), Chinese, Albanian and Ukrainian (ISTAT, 2017). The total population in Italy on January 1, 2019 consisted of 55,157,000 people with Italian citizenship and 5,234,000 without; that is 8.7% of the total population (ISTAT, 2019). Individuals from Morocco, China, Albania and Ukraine constitute 40% of the actual migrant population (Vedovelli, 2006). Therefore, we can state that multilingualism, understood as the presence of many different languages in Italian territory, is a phenomenon that has existed for a very long time. What has changed over the centuries is the origin of languages that have been introduced.

1.1 Purpose and significance of the study

In such a context, it is necessary to reexamine the educational context and its role in a multilingual and multicultural society. Being a foreign language teacher myself, I find it particularly interesting to focus on how learning a second or additional language for all learners in the classroom can be combined with recognizing other languages which some students may bring to the classroom; what the main orientations of integrated multilingual

curricula are and exploring teachers' language practice (Conteh & Meyer, 2014). In my study, I will pay particular attention to a specific pedagogical approach developed in the framework of multilingualism: *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL). CLIL is a "dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language" (Coyle, Marsh & Hood, 2010). This means that the focal point is not only on one specific subject. According to the European Commission, the language in the CLIL methodology is used as a way to learn the content (for example natural science, geography, arts) and the content is used as a resource to learn languages (2005).

In Italy, CLIL was introduced to the Italian educational system as mandatory for upper secondary schools in 2003 as a reform law influenced by European discourse on multilingualism (Cinganotto, 2016). Both the Council of Europe and the European Commission consider CLIL an innovative methodology that can foster multilingualism and they include it in many reports and resolutions as part of the European educational language policy (Marsh, 2013). The implementation in schools took place many years later, after the Ministerial Decrees 87, 88 and 89 in 2010. The Minister for Education at that time, Mariastella Gelmini, introduced these new decrees according to which most Italian upper secondary schools had to offer at least one subject taught in a foreign language as part of the national curriculum as of the 2012-2013 scholastic year. The aim was to develop learning environments where plurilingual attitudes and multicultural awareness are promoted (MIUR, 2010). The decision to adopt CLIL reflects the intent to improve the quality of school curricula and better meet the challenge of multilingualism (Cinganotto, 2016). Research on CLIL and its methodological approach has been implemented in other school levels and higher education. However, I find it appropriate to explore its implementation at the upper secondary school level as the decrees refer to CLIL as compulsory at this school level (MIUR, 2010).

In my research I look at the implementation of CLIL from the perspective of upper secondary school teachers in a town in Italy. Among the 5387 public upper secondary schools in Italy (ISTAT, 2019), I focused on two schools in the same town. The reasons for my choice is that I come from this area of Italy and two of my cousins are both teachers and have been working in these schools for many years now. This facilitated my contact with the schools and participants to the study.

The purpose of the study is to explore and understand teachers' experiences with CLIL methodology in upper secondary schools in order to inform teacher education and consider if and what can be improved. Therefore, my research question is:

How do teachers running CLIL in two upper secondary schools in Italy experience working with this methodology?

To support my overarching question, I identified two main areas to research: the training process and the implementation of CLIL in schools.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

This Master's thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter introduces my motivation to conduct the study, its purpose and the research question.

In the second chapter I outline the context of my research, looking into upper secondary schools in Italy and the laws and regulations related to CLIL methodology. I describe the CLIL teacher profile, the CLIL teacher training and the implementation, according to the policy.

The third chapter is devoted to the review of the literature on the topic and my contribution to the research. I focus on the definition of CLIL and its purposes, I discuss the prior research on CLIL training and implementation, as well as the existing literature on CLIL in Italy.

In the fourth chapter I describe the methodology of my study and I discuss my choices of methods for data collection and analysis, as well as providing information on the ethical issues and the limitations of the study.

The fifth chapter concerns the findings of my research. The report is organized into three main sections, corresponding to the three themes I generated.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to the discussion. In this chapter I discuss the findings of the study and I link them to the literature review and the context.

In the seventh and final chapter I draw the conclusions of the research and I comment on the implications of this study.

2 The context

In this chapter first I will briefly introduce the history of CLIL methodology and its implementation in Europe. Then I will discuss specifically about the Italian context, by describing the upper secondary education system and the CLIL legislation.

2.1 CLIL historical background

Although the acronym CLIL was coined in 1994 by David Marsh, it is not a completely new educational methodology. CLIL is a “consequence of the influence of bilingualism, second language acquisition theories, cognitive learning theories, and constructivism” (Hanesová, 2015, p. 7). Prior to the 1970s, similar provisions were popular in linguistically distinctive regions, because they were bilingual areas or were close to national borders. The purpose was to provide an adequate education to bilingual children, enabling them to acquire language competences to understand and communicate with the native speakers of the region where they lived (Eurydice, 2006; Hanesová, 2015). One of the most known provisions of such sort it is the Canadian immersion teaching programme. Immersion teaching was developed thanks to an initiative of a group of English-speaking parents with the aim of offering their children an education both in French and English language, and facilitates the appreciation of “the traditions and culture of French-speaking Canadians, as well as English-speaking Canadians. In short, the aims were for children to become bilingual and bicultural without loss of achievement” (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 496). The initiative had a lot of success and it was implemented in different levels of schooling, thanks to the support of the parents and the education authorities (Eurydice, 2006).

In the 1970s and 1980s immersion teaching was used as a synonym of bilingual education. The programmes started spreading all over Northern America and then to the rest of the world (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008), taking different forms according to the context. In Europe the focus was placed on the integration of language and content. In 1978 the European Commission (EC) started encouraging schools to teach “through the medium of more than one language” (Marsh, 2002, p. 51) and a few years later the European Parliament invited the EC to “forward a new programme to improve foreign language teaching” (Marsh, 2002, p. 52). According to the European recommendations many schools in Europe started developing new teaching and learning methods and implementing the teaching of school subjects in a foreign language (Hanesová, 2015). These types of programmes led to the development of CLIL methodology in the mid-1990s. Marsh (2012) states that:

The European launch of CLIL during 1994 was both political and educational. The political driver was based on a vision that mobility across the EU required higher

levels of language competence in designated languages than was found to be the case at that time. The educational driver, influenced by other major bilingual initiatives such as in Canada, was to design and otherwise adapt existing language teaching approaches so as to provide a wide range of students with higher levels of competence. In forging relationships across disciplines, namely linguistic and non-linguistic, educational innovation became steadily established, resulting in outcomes which led to new ways of professional cooperation within and across schools, and new ways of teaching and learning (p. 1).

In the last three decades CLIL has been implemented in most of the European countries at all levels of education, according to the need of each educational system and its stakeholders.

2.2 CLIL implementation in Europe

Since 1994 CLIL type provisions have been spreading in Europe as a result of European initiatives and educational legislative actions (Marsh, 2012). Considering the variety of context in which CLIL has been implemented, the reports on CLIL use in European countries usually “describe all types of provision in which a language different to the language of schooling is used to teach certain curriculum subjects other than languages themselves” (Eurydice, 2017, p. 55). In 2017, Eurydice stated that there are CLIL provisions in most of the countries, except Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Turkey. The range of languages involved varies from one country to another, although the majority implement CLIL in at least one foreign and one regional or minority language (Eurydice, 2017). Among the foreign languages, the most widespread for CLIL provisions are English, French and German, which are also the most learned foreign languages in schools in Europe (Eurydice, 2017). In 14 countries (Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Belgium - French and Flemish Communities - and Switzerland) CLIL is provided in at least two types of languages (Eurydice, 2017). In France and Germany CLIL is implemented in more than 10 languages (Eurydice, 2017). Finland is the only country in Europe where CLIL methodology is implemented in 3 types of languages: foreign, another state and non-territorial language¹ (Eurydice, 2017).

¹ Non-territorial language: “A language used by nationals of the state which differs from the language or languages used by the rest of the state’s population, but which, although traditionally used within the territory of the state, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof. (Definition based on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe, 1992)). For example, Romany is a non-territorial language” (Eurydice, 2017).

CLIL provisions across Europe target all levels of education, in particular ISCED levels from 1 to 3² and it seems that they are not concentrated in one specific level more than the others (Eurydice, 2017). The organization and the assessment criteria vary considerably from one country to another (Marsh, 2012). According to the national recommendations, the subjects taught are selected from the entire curriculum of the school where CLIL is implemented (Eurydice, 2017). However, the 2006 Eurydice report on *CLIL in schools in Europe* reveals that in the schools of 12 countries science subjects are preferred.

The official teaching time dedicated to CLIL varies widely due to the schools' freedom to determine the activities, although the Eurydice report (2006) suggests that the hours devoted to CLIL are from 1 per week upwards.

It is difficult to provide a clear picture of the many different types of CLIL provision in the European countries because the use of the methodology is strictly connected to the context in which it is implemented and it often varies from a region to another. In the next sections I will provide more details on the Italian educational context, in particular on upper secondary school and CLIL provisions.

2.3 Upper secondary school education in Italy

General upper secondary education is part of the second cycle of education. It lasts five years, from grade 1 (aged 14/15) to grade 5 (aged 18/19), and the first two years are compulsory (Eurydice, 2014).

The programs are generally decided at national level and it is also the duty of the State to ensure that all the adolescents in Italy can access education “regardless of the geographical condition of the area they live in and their individual social and economic situation” (Eurydice, 2014). This type of education is delivered by *licei* (high schools), technical institutes and professional institutes.

There are six different types of *liceo* (high school), divided by specialization: arts, languages, science, classical studies, music and human science. The technical institutes provide technical education and aim to offer to the learners a “strong scientific and technological background in the economic and technological professional sectors” (Eurydice, 2014). There are 11 programmes in total that can be economics-based or technology-based. The economic-based courses offer two pathways:

- management, finance and marketing
- tourism

The technology-based courses offer nine different options of study:

² ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education. Levels 1 to 3 correspond to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education.

- mechanics and energy
- transport and logistics
- electronics and electrical engineering
- ICT and telecommunications
- design and communication
- chemistry, biotechnology
- fashion design
- agriculture, food and agriculture, agroindustry
- construction, environment

The learning outcomes for each pathway and for each subject taught in those curricula are set out by specific guidelines that outline the competences and skills.

To be admitted to upper secondary education, students need to possess a first cycle leave certification. There is no selection process, parents or guardians apply for their children and they can choose which school the children should attend (Eurydice, 2019).

Students are divided in classes. In each class there are usually between 22 and 30 students, but the number is lower if there are students with special needs (Eurydice, 2019).

The educational system is subject based. In every class there are different teachers who are specialists in one subject each (e.g. physics) or in more subjects from the same area (e.g. natural science: biology, physics, chemistry, earth science) (Eurydice, 2014). In the technical institutes, especially in the technology-based curricula, two teachers cooperate to teach the theory and the practical lessons in the laboratory.

The Ministry of Education, University and Research (in Italian: Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca or MIUR) establishes the dates of the final examination and the calendar of the national holidays; the regions take care of the school calendar (e.g. beginning and end of the school activities) because they know better the needs of their area; the schools decide the timetable.

The teaching activities are carried from the 1st of September until the 30th of June. The final examination in the fifth year has to be completed by the end of July. It is called *esame di maturità*, it is a mix of national and school-based exam that gives access to higher education (Eurydice, 2014).

2.3.1 The curriculum

Curricula in upper secondary school are defined in National Guidelines issued by the ministerial decree 211 in 2010 (MIUR, 2010). The National Guidelines outline the learning objectives and competencies that students should acquire by the end of the five years. However, the Constitution determines the principle of freedom and teaching (art. 33), which

means that schools can choose the materials and teaching methods that are more appropriate to their local reality, as long as they are consistent with the general learning objectives indicated in the national guidelines (Eurydice, 2019). For each type of high school, technical institute and professional institute, the curriculum indicates how many hours per year should be dedicated to each subject (Eurydice, 2019).

The language of instruction in the schools is Italian. Each upper secondary school must offer 99 hours per year in a foreign language and culture, which usually is English (Minardi, 2014). In the *licei linguistici* (foreign language high schools) students must learn three foreign languages for 5 years. The hours per year devoted to the first foreign language and culture are 132 in the first two years and 99 in the following three years (Eurydice, 2019). As for the other two languages compulsory in *licei linguistici*, the hours of instruction are 99 in the first two years and 132 in the other three years (Eurydice, 2019) (see Table 1). In the technical institutes the law established that in each curriculum there must be 99 hours per year devoted to English (MIUR, 2010). Depending on the branch that students will choose, they might have to study a second or a third foreign language of their choice, according to the languages offered by each school (MIUR, 2010).

Table 1. Study plan for foreign languages in the language high schools (Eurydice, 2019)

	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade
1st foreign language and culture	132	132	99	99	99
2nd foreign language and culture	99	99	132	132	132
3rd foreign language and culture	99	99	132	132	132

2.4 CLIL in upper secondary education

Since the scholastic year 2012-2013 CLIL has been introduced in upper secondary education as compulsory, first in the foreign language high schools and, from 2014, in all the other schools (Cinganotto, 2016), with the aim of developing learning environments where plurilingual attitudes and multicultural awareness are promoted (MIUR, 2010). Among the many countries who have experience with CLIL methodology, in particular Spain, Italy is the first country that made CLIL mandatory policy (Cinganotto, 2016; Mindardi, 2014).

In all kinds of secondary schools, the CLIL methodology is mandatory in the last year (fifth year), except for the foreign language high schools, in which CLIL is compulsory in the first foreign language from the third to the fifth year, and from the fourth to the last year in the second foreign language. In the technical institutes CLIL must be implemented in English. The experiences of the implementation of CLIL in Italy will be discussed in the section 3.4 Research on CLIL in Italy.

2.5 The CLIL teacher profile

According to the decree number 6 of the 16th of April 2012 and the ministerial note on the CLIL transitional rules for upper secondary schools of July 2014, in Italy, the teachers working with CLIL are non-language teachers (MIUR, 2012; MIUR, 2014; Minardi, 2014). Thus, foreign language teachers cannot be official CLIL teachers. To become a CLIL teacher, teachers have to show interest in the methodology and discuss their intent with the principal of the school (Martinelli, 2016). The principal and the teachers of the school make a decision together and then report it to the relevant regional office of education (MIUR, 2010).

The decree of April 2012 also defined the complex profile of the CLIL teacher in Italian schools (MIUR, 2012). The different competences and skills that a CLIL teacher must have are divided into three dimensions: language competences, subject competences and teaching competences. In table number 2, the competences and skills are explained in detail (Cinganotto, 2016).

Table 2. Italian CLIL teacher profile. Translated from Italian by Cinganotto (Cinganotto, 2016)

<p><i>Language dimension</i></p> <p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a C1 level of competence in the foreign language (CEFR)³; • is able to manage, adapt and use subject materials in the foreign language; • has a mastery of the specific subject language (specific lexicon, discourse types, text genres and forms) and of the subject concepts in the foreign language.
<p><i>Subject dimension</i></p> <p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is able to use the subject knowledge according to the national curricula of the relevant school level; • is able to teach the subject content integrating language and content.

³ The CEFR is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment. It provides guidelines about the learning objectives, competences and skills to teachers and learners of foreign languages in Europe (Council of Europe, 2001). The framework divides learner into 6 levels: A1 and A2 are the basic language users; B1 and B2 are independent users; C1 and C2 are the proficient users.

Therefore, if CLIL teachers in Italy must possess a C1 level of competence in a foreign language, it means they must have advanced skills in that language. In particular, according to the CEFR, these is what they are supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, writing and speaking:

Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices (Council of Europe, 2001).

Methodological dimension

The teacher

- is able to plan CLIL paths in cooperation with language teachers and teachers of other subjects;
- is able to find, choose, adapt, create materials and resources to enhance the CLIL lesson also using ICT;
- is able to plan a CLIL path autonomously, using methodologies and strategies aimed at fostering the learning of content through the foreign language;
- is able to identify, create and use assessment tools which are consistent with CLIL methodology.

Concerning the language dimension, the ministerial note of July 2014 established that also teachers with a language certification of level B2, enrolled in language courses in order to obtain the C1 level certification, could access the CLIL methodological training courses (MIUR, 2014). The decision has been made due to the lack of teachers with an advanced level of competences in the foreign language.

2.6 CLIL teacher training

In order to develop the competences and skills required teachers have to attend in-service training methodology and language courses (MIUR, 2012; Minardi, 2014). The methodology courses are organized by universities on the Italian territory; the language courses can, instead, be taken by teachers in different training institutes (Cinganotto, 2016). On the website of the Ministry of Education it is possible to find the list of all the centers that offer language courses and certification exams for CLIL teachers (MIUR, 2017a).

The methodology courses delivered by the universities are 20 ECTS blended learning training courses and each one is intended for a maximum 30 teachers. According to the 2016 CLIL report on the training experiences (Martinelli, 2016), the first courses started in April 2012, for a total number of 30 courses in 15 different universities on the Italian territory. These courses involved a total number of 1,088 teachers, but only 877 finished the training, with a dropout rate of 14%, due to the amount of work required (Martinelli, 2016). At the end of the process, the teachers with a C1 level certification in the foreign language received an official certificate as CLIL teachers; those who did not possess a C1 level yet could only get a certificate of participation in the course. In order to complete the CLIL training, they have to attend the language courses and take the exam, in order to have the certification in the foreign language chosen.

The methodological courses are divided into three main sections:

- basic learning activities, concerning the theories and concepts related to CLIL (9 ECTS);

- practical teaching activities in CLIL methodology (9 ECTS);
- internship, action research and final oral presentation (2 ECTS).

Although the language certifications are delivered by different institutions, the universities also offer language courses for the teachers. According to the 2016 report (Martinelli, 2016), in the school year 2013/2014 a total of 40 language courses were offered to teachers; the languages involved were only English and French, albeit the regulations on CLIL (MIUR, 2012) provide indications for German and Spanish as well. The lack of teachers interested in CLIL in these two languages caused a reduction of the language training courses from 50 to 40 (Martinelli, 2016). In 2017, two other languages were added: Chinese and Slovenian (MIUR, 2017a).

As stated in the ministerial note of November 2017, the last official update on the number of active CLIL training courses, there are 76 methodological courses and 64 language courses in Italy, distributed between 18 Italian regions (MIUR, 2017b).

2.7 Legislation on CLIL implementation

The guidelines provided on CLIL implementation are scarce and confusing. Most of the provisions are described in the 2014 ministerial note on CLIL transitional rules (MIUR, 2014):

- the implementation of CLIL methodology should be in one of the main subjects of the pathway of the school, which means that if a school implements CLIL in a technology – based course in a technical institute, the subject chosen for CLIL could be mechanic or chemistry, for example;
- The subject is chosen jointly by the principal of the school and all the teachers, according to the availability and interest of the teachers and the resources available;
- CLIL should be taught for at least 50% of the yearly hours intended for the subject chosen, for example, if the total amount of teaching hours in mathematics is 99 (as it is in the technical institutes), it means that 49.5 of those must be taught in English with CLIL methodology;
- all the CLIL modules or lessons must be planned based on the learning objectives of the subject chosen for CLIL;
- the activities planned must be organized in workshops and must be based on a hands-on approach;
- CLIL sessions should rely on the use of ICT, web conferences, web seminars, distance learning and could involve more than one class (group of students);
- it is highly recommended that the CLIL teacher plan all the activities in collaboration with the language teacher. The aim is to create a *CLIL team* that would involve the

language teacher and the subject teacher (but only the second one can be an official CLIL teacher);

- it is suggested to build up school networks, both local and international;
- it is desirable to implement job shadowing experiences for the teachers to promote and improve the CLIL methodology implementation.

The emphasis on collaboration between teachers in the same school, between schools in the territory and between schools and other institutions in other areas of Italy or abroad is considerable. However, in the regulation it is specified that there are not extra hours planned for language teachers to cooperate with the CLIL teacher and there are not funds invested in it (MIUR, 2014). One of the suggestions to overcome this issue, in particular the international collaboration or cooperation, is to rely on European projects and grants (MIUR, 2014).

Concerning the assessment, the only information provided is related to the final exam at the end of the fifth year, the year of graduation from school. A subject taught in a foreign language through the use of CLIL methodology cannot be part of the written exam, or, at least, not the topics taught with CLIL (which should be the 50% of total amount of hours destined for the subject). On the other hand, the subject can be part of the oral exam if the CLIL teacher who taught that subject through the year is on the final exam commission (MIUR, 2014).

3 Literature review and contribution to the research

In the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of research studies concerning different aspects of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); however, it appears that stakeholders' opinions and perceptions are still "an under-researched area in CLIL research" (Barrios and Milla Lara, 2018). In particular, there is little investigation on how teachers experience CLIL in upper secondary schools in Italy.

In this chapter, I present some of the studies that have been conducted and suggest that stakeholders' perceptions and experiences are essential to understand whether CLIL is being successfully implemented. The review of the literature is divided in four different sections. The first one looks into the definition of multilingualism and it shows that CLIL methodology is developed in the framework of multilingualism, as a tool to promote it. The second section deals with CLIL and its purposes, while the third focuses specifically on CLIL training and implementation in various contexts. Finally, the fourth section explores the previous studies on CLIL in the Italian educational system.

3.1 The European discourse on multilingualism

Multilingualism is a phenomenon that can be defined in different ways, depending on the perspective chosen. One of the most known definitions is the one provided by the European Commission, which describes multilingualism as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives" (2007, p. 6). Both the individual and the social dimension of the phenomenon are included in this definition.

The European promotion of multilingual policy and practices is renowned, minority languages are protected and diversity is celebrated (Spătaru-Negură, 2016). Darquennes (2011) provides us with an overview of the main points of the EU multilingual policies. Among the findings of his study, he insists on the importance of the contribution of academia to research on multilingualism as relevant, implying that there are gaps and insufficient research on the topic.

As we live in a multilingual and globalized society, the inclusion of different languages in education should be the norm (Wedin and Wessman, 2017), especially considering that education is one of fields that are most affected by multilingualism (Ruiz de Zarobe and Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015). Wedin and Wessman (2017) also remark on the importance of the strict relation between policy and practice and the importance of ethnography, because it is fundamental to identify the relevance of policies at the local level. Therefore, multilingual societies require a transformation of education, of teaching and learning methods, in order to

respond to the local needs and prepare the students to face the challenges they will meet (Ruiz de Zarobe and Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015). Among the new pedagogical transformations, “the integrated approaches of content and linguistic development [...] seem to be favorable for education” (Ruiz de Zarobe and Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015, p. 396), as they encourage the students to play an active role in their own learning process and to become more critical and independent (Ruiz de Zarobe and Coyle, 2015).

Another pertinent aspect to take into consideration when investigating multilingual policy and practice is the role of teachers. They are the main actors; they are the ones who spend a lot of time with students and should know (or be able to identify) their needs. In particular, Ziegler (2013) focuses on the importance of multilingualism as a key element in language teacher education. One of the recommendations that emerged from his study is to develop a framework with multilingualism at its center by making use of some of the existing pedagogical approaches, like CLIL.

3.2 CLIL and its purpose

The will to foster multilingualism induced the Council of Europe and the European Commission to promote CLIL methodology (Merino and Lasagabaster, 2018), a type of bilingual education that was developed in the mid-1990s and became really popular in Europe (Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2014). Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) define it as a “dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 1), in other words, when using CLIL methodology, a school subject, like mathematics or art history, is taught through the medium of a language that is not the usual language of instruction. Therefore, the main aim of this methodology is to improve the student’s competence in a foreign language and to facilitate the learning of a subject matter (Van Kampen, Admiraal & Berry, 2018). CLIL is flexible and effective, so that it can be used to respond to different types of needs (Cambridge, 2016).

3.2.1 A conceptual framework for CLIL: the 4Cs model

To contextualize CLIL methodology and understand the importance of my research, it is necessary to provide information on the conceptual framework for CLIL: The 4Cs model by Do Coyle (Coyle, Marsh & Hood, 2010). The 4Cs were developed in the 1990s by Coyle after working with teachers, teacher educators, and researchers in Europe. Coyle proposes an integrated multilingual curriculum that includes four dimensions (4Cs) with the intent to provide a conceptual framework for CLIL which connects Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture (see figure 1). Culture and intercultural understanding lie at the core of the framework, offering the key to deeper learning and promoting social cohesion (Cinganotto, 2016). The 4Cs Framework is based on the principle that strengthening and deepening a

learner's conceptual understanding requires social, cultural, linguistic and cognitive processes (Coyle et al., 2010). The 4Cs are now used to raise awareness of CLIL and to support teachers in their planning.

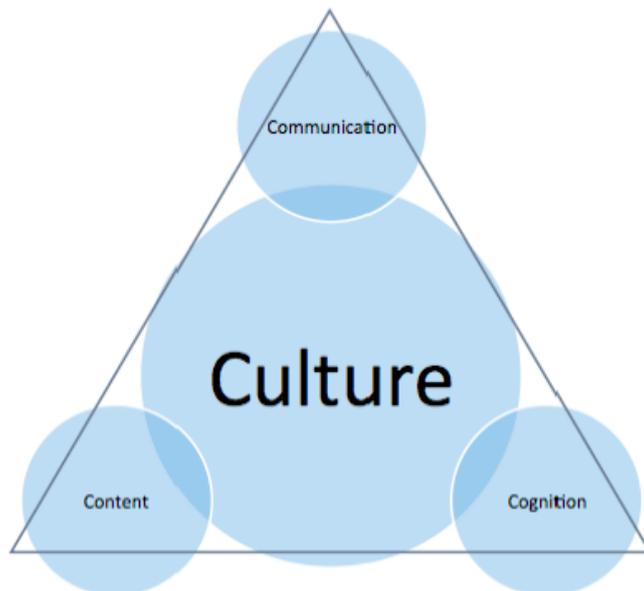


Figure 1. The 4Cs framework for CLIL (Coyle, Marsh & Hood, 2010)

The first C is for Content and it refers to the subject or theme chosen for the lesson or the course, for example, science or arts, sustainability or gender equality. When working on the content, teachers must be aware of their students' knowledge and skills and make sure to define the learning objectives of their students. The second C is for Cognition and its objective is the development of the critical thinking skills of the students. Learners are asked to reflect on the learning process to make sense and meaning of their learning experiences adding to their knowledge. The third C is Communication and it refers to the use of the language to reflect and express opinions on the content. When planning a lesson or a course, group work is very common as the learners engage in meaningful conversations with each other. Communication involves language use and language learning at the same time: language *of* learning, language *for* learning and language *through* learning (Coyle et al., 2010) (see figure 2). The language *of* learning concerns the language skills that the students need to be able to access the content. It is the language related to the subject, the theme or the topic selected. The language *for* learning refers to the linguistic competences the learners need to understand each other in a foreign language in the educational context. It is linked to the learning skills of the students. The language *through* learning is the language that emerges through the learning process, when students apply what they are learning (Coyle, Marsh & Hood, 2010).

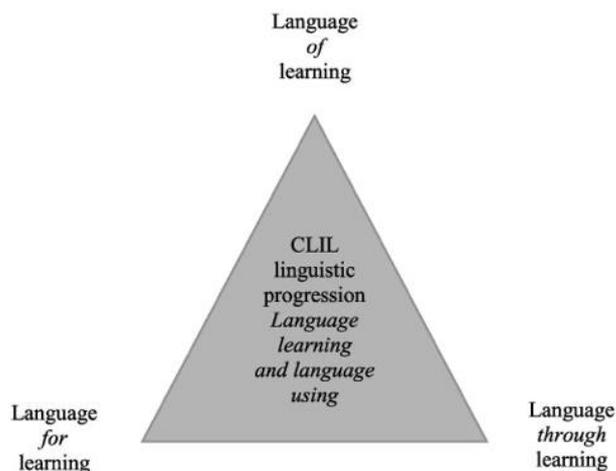


Figure 2. The language triptych (Coyle, Marsh & Hood, 2010)

The fourth C is Culture, it refers to local and global culture and it is important as it is the filter with which people interpret the world. CLIL requires learners to develop intercultural understanding which impacts also the other Cs. Therefore, culture is at the core of this conceptual framework for CLIL in order to “encourage stronger links with values of community and citizenship” (Bentley, 2010, p. 6).

The 4Cs is a useful conceptual framework to refer to when planning CLIL classes; it helps increase students’ involvement and centrality in the learning process and implicates skills like creative thinking and problem solving, reasoning and evaluating (Zhyrun, 2016). To use Coyle’s words (2007):

It is through progression in knowledge, skills and understanding of the content, engagement in associated cognitive processing, interaction in the communicative context, the development of appropriate language knowledge and skills as well as experiencing a deepening intercultural awareness that effective CLIL takes place (p. 550).

The 4Cs framework provides the teachers with a solid structure to plan the courses towards a better intercultural understanding.

3.2.2 CLIL as a pedagogy

The benefits of the CLIL methodology are various: learners become more confident, academic cognitive processes and communication skills improve, intercultural understanding and community values are fostered (Cambridge, 2016). Coyle (2018) states that “CLIL holds a pivotal position for reframing its potential as a pedagogic, rather than a linguistic, phenomenon within the (plurilingual) education agenda” (p. 166).

The CLIL approach offers the opportunity of “strengthening cross-curricular approaches, transversal skills and collaborative work” (Langé, 2015, slide 54) and it is understood as an innovative, student-centered pedagogical approach (Van Kampen et al., 2018). As the focus

on the students in education is a crucial component to achieve effective learning, CLIL serves this purpose by being flexible and dynamic and being able to adapt to a wide range of learners' typologies (Coyle, n.d.). However, the success of CLIL depends also on other components, it is deeply connected to the context in which it is implemented and on how it is supported, especially concerning teachers' professional education, understood as an appropriate quality training, which includes methodologies and practice (Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, 2015; Díaz Pérez et al., 2018).

One of the main purposes of CLIL is to build intercultural communication skills, which are fundamental in multilingual and multicultural societies (Leone, 2015). This means that the methodology comes out of the classroom and moves according to the sociopolitical and sociolinguistic context (Coyle et al, 2010; Leone, 2015). If teachers are prepared and CLIL is implemented correctly, it has a great potential, as it is not limited to the acquisition of a subject and a language, rather it contributes to the development of a wide range of skills like "problem-solving, risk-taking, confidence building, communication skills, extending vocabulary, self-expression and spontaneous talk" (Coyle, n.d., p. 7), and, even more important, it raises awareness towards different cultures and global citizenship (Coyle, n.d.).

3.2.3 CLIL and intercultural citizenship theory

Despite its potential, CLIL is often seen just as a tool to develop language competences and/or subject knowledge (Porto, 2018). Byram (n.d.) suggests that CLIL could be used to introduce citizenship education in schools. According to the White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*, of November 1997 (as cited in Crick, 1998), citizenship education refers to "the nature and practices of participation in democracy; the duties, responsibilities and rights of individuals as citizens; and the value to individuals and society of community activity" (p. 4); therefore, it includes moral and social responsibility, community involvement and being politically aware and effective (Deakin Crick et al., 2005). In a multilingual and multicultural society, intercultural communication is a necessary element which is strictly connected to citizenship education and can lead to action in the world (Byram, n.d.). In particular, in the *Resolution on a European agenda for culture* it is recommended to "promot[e] intercultural dialogue as a sustainable process contributing to European identity, citizenship and social cohesion, including by the development of the intercultural competences of citizens" (Council of European Union, 2007, p. 287/2). Authentic intercultural communication promotes a positive exchange of views, so that the people involved in the dialogue can listen and learn from each other, and then, at a later time, cooperate and take action.

How can CLIL be linked to and foster intercultural dialogue and, in particular, citizenship education? In general, language teaching should aim towards communication as an exchange of ideas and views and to action in the world, to involvement in the community and society

(Byram, n.d.). CLIL methodology in particular can introduce the notion of citizenship as it combines four principles: content, communication, cognition and culture. Content refers to the knowledge we want the learners to pursue; communication concerns the language used to learn; cognition includes all the thinking skills that help the learner to develop a concept; culture regards the exposure to different perspectives (both local and global) and helps people to become more aware of otherness and respect it (Byram, n.d.).⁴ CLIL includes all the elements needed to learn more about “otherness” and includes the concept of intercultural competence and not only linguistic competence. This understanding is seconded by Porto (2018) who claims that “foreign language teaching, when framed within intercultural citizenship as CLIL, develops students’ democratic competences and values (Council of Europe 2016; Nussbaum 2006) by encouraging them to take social or civic action beyond the classroom” (p. 18). These focuses on individuals and society’s development, are, unfortunately, still insufficiently researched in CLIL studies (Nussbaum, 2006).

Framing CLIL in intercultural citizenship theory can help students to engage in critical thinking in and outside the classroom (Byram, 2008; Porto, 2018). In practical terms, CLIL lessons should include elements of social importance, citizenship, and community relevance (Porto, 2018). In this way, the focus of CLIL shifts to language and content learning “with an intercultural orientation” (Porto, 2018). Education and in this particular case, CLIL, should address contemporary issues and concerns like racism, segregation, violence and other matters in the hope to be able to sensitize students and aim for social justice (Porto, 2018).

3.2.4 CLIL and languages involved

In sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 I discussed the relevance of intercultural communication and citizenship in the current world. In order to be able to communicate with other individuals in society and foster multilingualism, which is one of the main purposes of CLIL, it is important to possess intercultural communication skills and speak other languages; be they foreign, immigrant, regional or minority languages. In some studies and reports on CLIL it is argued that, by definition, the methodology includes “all types of provision in which a second language (a foreign, regional or minority language and/or another official state language) is used to teach certain subjects in the curriculum other than language lessons themselves” (Eurydice, 2006, p. 8). The Cambridge English Language Assessment (2016) states that there are contexts in which CLIL is implemented to facilitate the integration of students, especially those from minority language groups, mentioning programs like English as an Additional Language (EAL) in Britain and Content Based Instruction (CBI) in the United States, although

⁴ The description refers to the 4Cs model by Do Coyle (Coyle et al., 2010), illustrated in the paragraph 3.2.1 A conceptual framework for CLIL: the 4Cs model. See also figure 1.

those programs do not share the same purposes as CLIL, being focused only on language learning (the EAL) or on content (the CBI).

According to Díaz Pérez, Lee Fields & Marsh (2018) teaching minority languages was one of the purposes of CLIL when it was first developed, but research shows that other widely used foreign languages are usually preferred (Somers, 2017; Díaz Pérez et al., 2018; Ander Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018; Ruiz de Zarobe, Sierra, Gallardo del Puerto, 2010). Although one of the first aims of CLIL was to promote and spread multilingualism in Europe, it emerges that the use of English is prevailing in most cases of implementation (Ander Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018). As Busse (2012) remarks in her review of the book *Content and Foreign Language Integrated Learning. Contributions to Multilingualism in European Contexts*, multilingualism is valued and it is a helpful tool in the labor market only if you speak the right language, meaning one of the languages considered more valuable in a society. As a matter of fact, immigrant, regional and minority languages are often underestimated or ignored in educational contexts (Busse, 2012).

The incorporation of other languages could be seen as a way to inclusion and intercultural citizenship.

3.3 Research on CLIL teachers' training and CLIL implementation

In the past twenty years there has been increasing interest in CLIL, in particular in Europe, which has led to extensive research on this methodology. Nonetheless, according to Wolff (2005) and Pérez Cañado (2016), most of these studies do not take into consideration teacher training needs. They focus on the benefits of CLIL for learners and its effects on the acquisition of the foreign language and competences in the content subject. The few studies that involve teachers indicate that, although they can see the benefits of CLIL in teaching and learning, there is a need for greater support, teamwork, ICT availability, access to teaching materials in the foreign language and quality teacher training (Pérez Cañado, 2016). Marongiu (2019) states that CLIL teacher education needs to address many different questions related to the content, the language and the methodology. In contexts in which the CLIL teacher is not a foreign language teacher, as in Italy, it is important to take into account the issues that teachers face in understanding the difficulties the students might have with CLIL lessons and materials (Marongiu, 2019). Moreover, subject teachers tend to undervalue the importance of their linguistic choices when teaching the content (Lopriore, 2018). Therefore, teacher training should guide teachers in selecting and evaluating adequate materials for their students, as the integration of content and language could be complicated for teachers with inadequate language competences (Lazarević, 2019). The findings of previous research on teacher training reveal the lack of adequate methodological training including a focus on

linguistic and intercultural competences and ongoing professional development (Pérez Cañado, 2016; Ramírez-Verdugo, 2012). The results of the study conducted by Pérez Cañado in Spain in 2016 suggest that researchers have to explore further the needs of the teachers, so that a contribution to teacher education can be made. Quality teacher training is crucial because, as Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) state, of all the factors that influence student's achievements, teachers are the most important. There is an increasing urge to have quality teachers who are "highly committed, thoroughly prepared, continuously developed, properly paid, well networked with each other to maximize their own improvement, and able to make effective judgments using all their capabilities and experience" (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, p. 2).

Although, on one hand, the studies on CLIL teacher education are scarce, on the other hand, the literature on CLIL implementation is rich and points out a number of unresolved issues. According to the latest report of the European Commission on *Teaching Languages at School in Europe*, there are CLIL provisions in most of the countries in Europe and at all levels of education, except in four countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Turkey and Iceland (Pérez Cañado, 2012; Eurydice, 2017). In some of the Northern countries in which CLIL programmes have been extensively implemented, most of the studies carried out focus on language competences and issues related to subject learning (Pérez Cañado, 2012). In general, publications on CLIL "have engaged in extensive theorizing on CLIL, its principles and models, recommendations for its implementation, or reviews of the research conducted on it. However, solid empirical studies have been sparse" (Pérez Cañado, 2012, p. 329) and they focus on CLIL benefits. According to research, future CLIL studies should involve the stakeholders and deal with their needs and the issues they face when working with CLIL (Fernández Fontecha, 2009; Pérez Cañado, 2012; Pérez Vidal, 2007).

Research on CLIL implementation process suggests that teachers experience obstacles in developing projects, and choosing and designing the material for CLIL (Lorenzo, 2013). There are also issues related to lesson planning and the development of evaluation criteria that merge both content and language concerns (Meyer et al., 2015).

Other significant aspects that emerge from the literature include the need for collaboration between stakeholders. Consistent and effective collaboration would help improve the implementation of CLIL in the classroom and shed light on the opinions and beliefs of the participants involved in the process (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017; Pladevall-Ballester, 2015). Since teachers often argue that they lack support from the institutions, it is necessary to listen to and analyze their ideas and views to know what their needs are (Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2013). Spratt (2017) takes further the notion of collaboration between stakeholders, affirming that it is only "through cooperation in the verbal exploration and social construction of ideas that learning fully takes place" (p. 51), therefore such

cooperation should involve teachers, learners and institutions like the school and the government, in order to gain a common understanding of CLIL. In particular, Spratt (2017) emphasizes the importance of collaboration between subject and language teachers for developing materials and lessons.

In their book *Professional capital. Transforming teaching in every school*, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) greatly emphasize the importance of cooperation and professional networking in education. According to them, professional capital is made up of three other kinds of capital: human, social and decisional. The first one refers to the individual talent; the second to the working in teams and the third to the ability to make judgments (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). To build professional capital, in order to become a professional, all three types of capital need to be developed at the same time. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that the development of human (individual) capital has to rely on social capital, which is the collaboration and cooperation with peers, principals and the schools. Teams and groups are far more powerful than individuals and they positively influence the human capital through sharing ideas, providing feedback to each other and cooperating. Interactions among stakeholders targeting students learning have a great influence on sustainable students' achievements (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

Prior research on CLIL methodology implemented in Europe finds that it is necessary to offer guidelines for implementation to guarantee excellence in learning (Ramírez-Verdugo, 2012). When I refer to learning, I do not restrict it to language or content learning, but I mean in a broader sense. In education there is the need to develop the idea of the importance of CLIL as a means to foster values like social justice, global citizenship and intercultural citizenship; therefore, teachers need proper training, adequate motivation and good leadership.

In spite of the acknowledgment of the importance of CLIL and its increasing implementation in the education system, there is a lack of research that focuses on CLIL from the point of view of teachers (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017; Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2013). We know very little about their experiences, opinions and reactions to the implementation of this methodology. Therefore, my study contributes to creating a background and starting point for further research and underlines the need for more attention to multilingual practices and, specifically, CLIL methodology from the teachers' perspective.

3.4 Research on CLIL in Italy

There is a paucity of studies concerning the different ways in which CLIL has been adopted by schools and teachers since this methodology became policy in Italy in 2010 (Leone, 2017). In fact, the only official report published by the Italian Ministry of Education on CLIL

implementation dates back to 2014 and it refers only to the first year of experimentation in the *licei linguistici* (languages high schools) in the school year 2012/2013 (Langé, Benvenuto, Cinganotto, & Vacca, 2014). Up until the present time, research studies on CLIL in Italy are based on different local projects developed by schools or group of schools with great autonomy, therefore “the realities of compulsory CLIL have yet to be explored” (Leone, 2015, p. 45).

The results of one of the most recent publications in the field of CLIL implementation in Italy (Cinganotto, 2016) shows what the challenges for CLIL teachers are. In particular, the importance of increasing studies on the perceptions and experiences of the stakeholders emerges, especially of the teachers who appear to be the ones facing important issues. One of the most relevant issues is the need to work in teams (Cinganotto, 2016). The provisions of the Ministry of Education suggest that the CLIL teacher (who, according to the policy, is the subject teacher), should collaborate with the language teacher and other colleagues in the *team CLIL* (MIUR, 2014). However, the creation of CLIL teams requires investments that the Italian government is not able to make (Leone, 2017). The relevance and the urgency of collaborations between the professionals involved in CLIL training and implementation is highlighted in many of the studies conducted on the topic (Cinganotto, 2016; Di Sabato, Cinganotto, Cuccurullo, 2018; MIUR, 2014). Langé (2015), one of the most important CLIL specialists in Italy, points out the importance of international cooperation, along with local projects.

The first and only official report on CLIL in Italy (Langé, Benvenuto, Cinganotto, & Vacca, 2014) describes some of the beneficial aspects of the implementation of CLIL, for example, teachers’ enthusiasm about the methodology and the positive influence that CLIL has on their daily practice. On the other hand, the report outlines some challenges that still need to be addressed:

- Difficulties in finding appropriate materials;
- Lack of collaboration;
- Need of quality teacher training, especially for the methodology; in fact, in spite of their enthusiasm, the participants to the study affirmed that the most used method of teaching was lectures (Langé, Benvenuto, Cinganotto, & Vacca, 2014);
- Need for guidance to develop an adequate and efficient assessment system;
- Lack of training on the use of ICT in CLIL planning and implementation.

As claimed by the authors of the report, the study represented a first step in analyzing the first attempt of implementing CLIL in upper secondary schools in Italy, but no other official reports have been published since then.

Interesting suggestions on how to manage the change with the introduction of CLIL in the educational system are provided by Langé (2015). In addition to recommending local and international cooperation, she suggests that it is crucial to offer long term training programmes, monitor the experiences of implementation in the schools, increase and improve the use of ICT, and develop integrated school curricula. These recommendations are seconded by Serragiotto (2017), who points out that there are actions that can be taken in order to make CLIL effective. He stresses the importance of the methodology in the educational context and suggests a greater focus on the quality of the training courses and more collaboration between teachers.

The very limited publications on teachers' beliefs with regard to CLIL training and implementation in Italy show that teachers consider "CLIL as an ideal environment for pedagogical innovation" (Aiello, Di Martino, Di Sabato, 2017) and it helps them to understand better their students' needs.

This study attempts to give space to the teachers and to listen to them in order to learn about their experiences and needs regarding CLIL methodology and its implementation.

4 Methodology

In this chapter I will describe in detail the research design. The methodology, the research methods, the sampling and the participants, the data collection and data analysis procedures will be explained. In addition, the ethical issues and the limitations to this study will be addressed.

In my study I look at the implementation of CLIL from the perspective of upper secondary school teachers as the purpose is to explore and understand their experiences running CLIL methodology in order to inform teacher education and consider what the improvements needed are. The research question that I wanted to answer is: *How do teachers running CLIL in two upper secondary schools in Italy experience working with this methodology?*

4.1 Research design

This research is a qualitative study with the main objective of describing and understanding human behavior (Lichtman, 2009). In particular, this project focuses on the experiences of the participants and their own perceptions (Creswell, 2014), and it intends to look at the way individuals create meaning of their lived experiences through story. Therefore, among the different approaches in qualitative research I selected narrative inquiry within a social constructivist framework. Narrative inquiry values and provides a rich description of individual experiences (Clandinin, 2013). As defined by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) "Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as a story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience" (p. 375); it is a methodology that understands the lived experiences as a phenomena represented through narrative (Clandinin, 2013). The experience of the participants of this study is the training and implementation of CLIL methodology in their schools. I gathered rich in-depth data on the experience of six upper secondary school teachers in a small town in Italy in order to explore and understand their experiences with CLIL methodology.

Narrative inquiry considers the importance of the participants' experiences and the stories they tell by taking into account the context in which the narratives develop (Clandinin, 2013). In this specific study, the stories of the teachers generate and occur in the schools where they work. In narrative inquiry, the focus is not just on the story of the experiences as they are told; the researcher and the participants actively construct together the narrative throughout their interactions (Clandinin et al., 2016). Thus, the researcher has an active role in the inquiry as she contributes to the narrative.

4.1.1 Data collection method

The information needed for this project was collected by means of interviews with the teachers. My purpose was to work with the point of view and the opinions of the teachers who had attended CLIL training courses, prepared materials, and implemented CLIL in the classroom. For this reason, semi-structured interviews seemed the most appropriate data collection method for this study. Semi-structured interviews “allow the researcher to address the phenomenon profoundly” (Padilla-Díaz, 2015, p. 104), giving enough space to the participants to express themselves and talk about their experiences in details. The question guide (see appendix B) is open and allows for development of the response based on individual experiences. The order of the questions is not prescribed but follows the train of thought of the participants; however, it ensures that all aspects of the research focus are covered: the training process, the implementation, and teachers’ opinions and perceptions about CLIL.

The data collection was based on face-to-face interviews with CLIL teachers. Each of the six participants was interviewed once. All the interviews were conducted in the teachers’ mother tongue, Italian. The data collection process will be described in detail in section 4.3.

4.2 Sampling, participants and research site

I purposefully selected the site and the participants for this study. Creswell (2014) describes purposeful sampling as when “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 294). The participants in this narrative inquiry are six teachers working with CLIL methodology in English, who are teaching different subjects in two different upper secondary schools in the same town in Italy. The number of interviewees respects the suggestions provided by Creswell (2014), according to which the adequate number of participants in this type of study is between 3 and 10 individuals. At an early stage of the research, the intention was to interview eight teachers, but I could only find six who met the requirements of my study and were willing to participate. To guarantee access to the teachers, I believe that the presence of my cousins as gatekeepers in the research was an advantage: they work in the two schools I selected and they could assist me with finding the teachers that match the criteria (teachers working with CLIL in English). The gatekeepers provided me with the contacts of some of their colleagues. I then sent them an email to introduce myself as the researcher and interviewer, and to briefly describe the research and its objectives. This gave the teachers an opportunity to decide if they were interested in participating.

While planning the steps of the research, I had anticipated what to do if purposeful sampling did not work to find the teachers needed for my study. I was ready to use snowball sampling and use the teachers willing to participate to help me recruit others (Creswell, 2014).

However, that was not necessary as the teachers I contacted immediately accepted the invitation to participate in the research with enthusiasm. The number of teachers running CLIL in the two schools is limited; therefore, snowballing as a selection process would not have been as effective.

The six teachers I interviewed are equally distributed in two different schools in the same municipality. The teachers teach a variety of subjects, including science, mathematics and technical subjects. They all have many years of teaching CLIL, range from 1 – 13 years (see table 3).

Table 3. Participants in the study

Teacher	Subject taught	Years of teaching	Years teaching CLIL
Anna	Art and Territory (Art History)	15 years	5 years
Chiara	English	Approximately 20 years	8 years (she started before it became compulsory)
Luca	technical subjects, such as Constructions, Planning and Design, Topography and Construction Site Safety	26 years	4 – 5 years
Serena	Mathematics	30 years	13 years (she started before it became compulsory)
Giulia	Physical Education and Sport Science	30 years	1 year
Marco	Information Technology	38 years	6 years

4.2.1 The research sites

The interviews took place in two upper secondary schools in the same municipality in Italy. Both schools are technical institutes and the six teachers were equally distributed between those. According to the decree of the President of the Italian Republic number 88/2010 (MIUR, 2010), technical institutes are entrusted with the task of facilitating student learning of not

only the skills necessary for their future jobs and professions, but also the ability to understand and apply the innovations that the development of science and technology continuously produces.

The first school offers four different curricula: administration, finance and marketing; tourism; agriculture, agri-food and agribusiness; construction, environment and territory. In the current school year, 2019/2020, there are 1,215 students enrolled, divided into 55 classes and there are in total 146 teachers working in the school (MIUR, 2020). On the website of the school there is a detailed description of the services offered and activities the school takes part in. There is also a webpage dedicated to CLIL and the projects developed since the year of the first pilot project in 2010/2011.

The second school offers five different programs of study: mechanics, mechatronics and energy; electronics and electrical engineering; IT and telecommunications; graphics and communication; applied sciences. At the time of the interviews, the number of students was also 1,215; however, the students are divided into 53 classes (MIUR, 2020). Currently, there are 144 teachers employed (MIUR, 2020). In the three-year plan of the school educational syllabus 2019 – 2022, it is specified that CLIL in English is implemented in the last year of upper secondary school (the fifth year), but no further details are provided.

4.3 Data collection

During seven days in October 2019 six teachers from two different schools in the same municipality were interviewed. The teachers were asked where they felt most comfortable for the interview process. All the participants requested to be interviewed in their place of employment, as it was more convenient for them to use the free time in between their lessons. Each interview took place in a different room: an empty classroom, the reading room or the cafeteria of the school, according to availability. Each interview last between 35 and 50 minutes as planned. The atmosphere was positive, the participants were at ease and they were not afraid of expressing their opinions. Before starting the interviews, I described the study briefly, I explained how I intended to deal with the issues of confidentiality and anonymity, and I asked them to sign the informed consent form (appendix A).

The interviews were recorded with a portable digital recorder device, but I, in the role of researcher and interviewer, also kept an observation protocol where relevant information needed for an effective interview were noted down: time, place and date; descriptive notes (setting, dialogue) and reflective notes (ideas, impressions, thoughts); instructions for the interviewer and, of course, the questions (Creswell, 2014). Having an interview guide and a solid structure helped me to conduct meaningful and effective interviews (Waller et al., 2015). As I made use of a semi-structured interview guide, I prepared the questions (see appendix

B), which guided me through the interview; however, I was aware that I needed to remain flexible and to respond with follow up questions to the answers of the participants. The interview questions were open-ended to receive broad data and to stay open for new information.

The informed consent and the interview guide questions (see appendices A and B) were in Italian, as the interviews were conducted in the participants' mother tongue, Italian. The questions were divided into four main groups: introductory questions, questions on the training process, questions on the implementation of CLIL and questions on general opinions and perceptions of the methodology.

4.4 Data analysis

For the data analysis process of the six interviews that I transcribed, I made use of reflexive thematic analysis, following the suggestions provided by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012 & 2019). I considered this method to be the most appropriate as it provides clear guidelines on how to conduct the analysis of the data and how to generate the themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), the themes do not emerge from the interviews, but they are created and developed by the researcher through her reflexive interpretation of the data collected. I focused both on the participants' responses that were common to most of the teachers, and, also, on significant aspects that were not necessarily brought up by all of them. The number of times a pattern is repeated is not evidence of the quality and relevance of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In particular in qualitative studies such as mine that focus on the experiences of the participants and their own perceptions (Creswell, 2014).

As already mentioned in section 4.3, I had an observation protocol during the interviews, I recorded the conversations and I also took notes. After that, I proceeded with transcribing the interviews and then started to analyze and interpret the data to make sense of the text. I focused on the data that were relevant to the purpose of the study, I generated the main themes and connected them to the overarching research question and the two main areas mentioned above: the training process and the implementation in schools. As I did not conduct a large study, I did not use a data analysis software, but I hand coded the data that I collected. In this narrative inquiry, I "use the analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units and the development of the essence of description" (Creswell, 2014, p. 246). After the word by word transcription, the data were analyzed following the six steps for thematic analysis recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006):

1. reading the data, read carefully the data more than once to become familiar with them and get a general sense and ideas;

2. coding the data, identify important features of the data that might be relevant to answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012);
3. generating initial themes, bracketing chunks and write a word representing a category in the margins (search for themes);
4. reviewing themes, review and develop the themes identified in step 3 in the light of the research question;
5. defining themes, develop a detailed analysis of each theme; make sure that the themes are telling a convincing story of the data;
6. writing up, produce the report, “provide a compelling story about your data based on your analysis. The story should be convincing and clear, yet complex and embedded in a scholarly field” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 69).

Thematic analysis has been revisited by Braun and Clarke in 2019, to differentiate it from other types of analysis that were often misused and mistaken for it, and to emphasize the importance and the active role of the researcher in the process. They recognize three common forms of thematic analysis: coding reliability TA, which is deductive and theory-driven; code book analysis using a structured framework to organize themes; and reflexive TA, which is inductive in nature and aims to critically develop themes using data set collected (Braun and Clarke, 2019).

I conducted the analysis using a reflexive inductive approach, starting with a careful observation of the participants’ responses, to create domain summaries and then analyze these further to develop themes. The inductive approach applied to this study is a bottom-up process in which the researcher works on the narration of the teachers’ experiences to generate themes that create a critical argument in response to the research question, “describ[ing] a picture of the phenomenon that is being studied” (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtele, 2010, p. 10).

The data I collected were rich, in spite of the small number of participants, thus the data analysis started with several levels of coding, before generating the final three themes. In the first level of analysis, I went through all the interviews line by line more than once and annotated comments within the interviews’ transcriptions, then I organized the initial codes in groups and tried to give a descriptive title to each group. In the next phase of my analysis I generated the initial themes, based on the categories identified in the previous step. Those themes were related to the rich data I had and reflected the opinions and the feelings of the teachers regarding the CLIL methodology, its benefits, and the issues with the training process and the implementation, as this was the main focus of the research. I reviewed the initial themes and developed them further according to my understanding of the data and in relation to the research question. The last two steps concerned the renaming and reduction of the number of themes created and the writing up of the report as a narration, presented in

chapter 5. In the report of the findings I translated the quotes into English, as the interviews were conducted in Italian.

The intent of this study is not to generalize, but to explore a particular phenomenon experienced by different teachers operating in the same geographical area, in the same grade of schools and working with CLIL methodology in the same language. In line with reflexive TA, my findings represent my interpretations of teachers' perspectives to generate a critical response to my research question.

4.5 Ethical issues

A central issue in qualitative studies is to reflect on and be able to identify the possible ethical issues that the researcher has to address in each step of the study. As a thinking human being, I obviously have my ideas in which I believe. Therefore, when I do research I have to accept that I bring my own perspectives and views. However, I am aware that it is necessary to employ strategies that help me to reduce the bias, especially in this specific case, considering that two of the individuals involved in my study as gatekeepers, are members of my family. This can be viewed as a strength in that they facilitated access to the two schools where I conducted my research. This was important because I live in Iceland and the research took place in Italy. At the same time, I had to make sure that this relationship would not influence the research process and the presentation of my findings. I did so by not involving them in the other steps of the research and ensuring confidentiality to the participants of the study.

I have reason to believe that no physical or psychological harm has been caused by my research. I obtained the informed consent (see appendix A) from all the participants prior the interviews, I clarified the purpose of my study and the possible risks, even if minimal. I did not push the participants to sign the consent and I accepted the idea that someone might have decided to not participate or to withdraw from the research (Creswell, 2014). Fortunately, that did not happen.

I ensured anonymity of the participants of this study by replacing their names with pseudonyms and not mentioning the name of the town and the schools where they work as teachers, or any information that could trace back to their identity.

I also ensured the confidentiality of the data I collected from all the participants involved. I wanted them to express themselves freely, especially in case they wanted to criticize the school where they work or their colleagues, without worrying for possible negative repercussions on their position at the work place. Therefore, I clarified that all the information they provided me with was not going to be revealed and would be kept safe. In order to do that I was careful that nobody else had access to my data (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011). When I transcribed the interviews and wrote the report of the research findings, I followed

the APA style and I took into consideration the respect for intellectual property, the anonymity and the matter of plagiarism.

Even if I planned to study CLIL practices in upper secondary schools, my research did not directly involve the students, which means that no children were involved. I find this important to specify as research with minors always requires special attention (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011).

In my research the possibilities of problems of deception were not high. I disclosed the purpose of the study and the procedure for the data collection (Creswell, 2014) before starting the interviews. I also considered worthwhile to reveal why I believe that their opinions and experiences are important and, when requested, what is the theory that guided my research. I avoided disclosing my perspective and opinion on the issue as I find that this could have influenced their answers when talking about the practices in the context they operate.

Another ethical aspect concerns the translation of the quotes from Italian to English. As the interviews were conducted in Italian, I proceeded with the verbatim transcription in Italian and when I wrote the findings report I translated the quotes that I selected for this thesis in English. In order to ensure that I was doing justice to participants' opinions and reflections I translated the quotes without twisting the sentences and cleaning them up to make them more grammatical (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

In the discussion about the ethical issues in the study, it is important to specify who will benefit from the research. This research project intends to benefit the literature on teachers' experiences and perceptions on CLIL methodology and to inform CLIL teacher education and policy makers.

4.5.1 The role of the researcher

As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) remind us "behind the theory, method, analysis, ontology, epistemology, and methodology of qualitative research stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective" (p. 21). Therefore, the readers need to understand the role of the researcher in the study. I am a white Italian woman in her thirties who teaches Italian as a foreign language in Iceland. As I interviewed teachers working with languages, my position helped create a bond between the researcher and the participants. The participants of this research are my peers and we speak the same language, which helped to facilitate the communication. As a trustworthy peer, but not working in the same context, the teachers felt distant, but comfortable enough, to allow them to open up on certain issues.

4.6 Limitations of the study

As with any research, there are some limitations to this study. The first limitation I identified is the number of the participants. The size of the population sample could not be increased as in the two schools, in spite of the fact that CLIL has been policy in upper secondary schools for 7 years, there are not many teachers running CLIL at present. However, according to Creswell (2014), six participants are sufficient for a qualitative research; therefore, this possible limitation did not have a negative impact on my study.

A second limitation is related to time and logistical issues to conduct the interviews. As I live, work and study in Iceland, I had to find the right time during the academic year to be able to go to Italy and conduct the face to face interviews, taking into consideration the needs of the teachers. I am grateful to the gatekeepers and the participants of the study for their flexibility with their schedules and being able to meet me in the month of October when I could be away from my studies, my job and my family for a week to conduct the research. I could not consider the possibility of going to Italy again to conduct follow-up interviews, especially because of the COVID-19 pandemic that we are currently facing. However, as I could gather very rich data from the interviews, that would not have been necessary.

Additionally, when I was in the process of writing the thesis, I felt pressurized and stressed because of the impact of COVID-19 on my personal life and my work. I could not be as productive as I wanted to be and the more I wanted to focus on my research, the less I could find time and energies to do it. The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted on my approach to the study and the writing up of the thesis. However, with the support of my peers, my advisors and other teachers, I managed to approach my study again, one step at the time, and to be able to complete it. This experience is an important lesson learned and it is part of my lifelong learning process. It will be useful in future researches I intend to conduct.

5 Findings

In this chapter the experiences of the six teachers from the two schools will be introduced. The main themes generated from the data analysis process will be presented in a narration, based on the teachers' beliefs. These themes were created through the researcher's interpretation of the data, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2019), who outline the importance of the researcher as a storyteller when doing reflexive thematic analysis. Therefore, the narration portrays the researcher's understanding of the teachers' opinions, the description of their experiences with the CLIL methodology, in particular with the training process and the implementation of CLIL in class.

The three main themes developed are:

- Conflicting understandings and interpretations of CLIL
- Lack of comprehensive support mechanisms can dilute teachers' enthusiasm
- CLIL offers an alternative to traditional teaching approaches

Before presenting the findings of my research, I believe it is important to paint a picture of the participants (see also table 3 in chapter 4). I interviewed six teachers who teach a range of different subjects and they all have many years of experience in teaching and applying CLIL methodology.

Anna has been teaching since 2005. She teaches Art History, but in the school where she is working now, the subject is called Art and Territory. She started experimenting the CLIL methodology five years ago and officially since when she moved to the current school, four years ago.

Chiara is an English teacher and she has been teaching for approximately twenty years. She has been in this school since 2004 and she is working with CLIL since 2012, before it became compulsory in upper secondary schools.

Luca has been teaching for twenty-six years, eleven of which in the current school. He teaches technical subjects, such as Constructions, Planning and Design, Topography and Construction Site Safety. He started using CLIL four or five years ago.

Serena is a Mathematics teacher and she started teaching in 1990. This is the fourth year in this school. In regard to CLIL methodology, she has been working with it since 2007, a few years before it became policy.

Giulia has been teaching Physical Education and Sport Science since 1990. In 2011 she became a tenured teacher and started working in the current school. She is new to CLIL methodology as she started familiarizing with it last year.

Marco started working as a teacher in 1982 and became tenured teachers after two years, in 1984. In the current school he is teaching Computer Science and he has been using the CLIL methodology for 6 years.

5.1 Conflicting understandings and interpretations of CLIL

The very first theme that I generated from the data analysis is related to the different opinions of the participants about what CLIL is. In the interviews with teachers I never asked them if they could provide me with a definition of the methodology, but it emerged that not all of them agree on what it is. In particular, it seems that most of them believe that CLIL methodology consists in teaching a non-linguistic subject in a foreign language, as Marco claims: “That’s the concept, right? I do it because I teach English, while I teach another subject”. In line with what Marco affirms, also other teachers see the methodology merely as a way of getting the best of both worlds: the subject on one side and the foreign language on the other. Serena focuses especially on the social and work-related relevance of language learning and claims:

I really believe in it because it is the future. If you work in a pizzeria and a group of foreigners somehow gets there, you have to know how to talk, you have to be able to communicate with other people in any work environment.

She believes one of the benefits of CLIL is the fact that it provides the students with better possibilities and opportunities to communicate with people when they move into the labor market.

The foreign language that the participants often refer to is just English, because “In Italy, the L2 [second language] is English, even if it shouldn’t be like that” (Anna). Another teacher takes for granted that the foreign language used in CLIL is always English. This comes out in a few statements during the interviews, for example: “I use CLIL because I was already using English before in my job. The CLIL methodology is nothing more than a complement to what I was already doing” (Marco). He implies that the CLIL methodology is similar to the method he was already using in class, that is, teaching Computer Science by means of the English language.

On the other hand, two of the teachers interviewed see the CLIL methodology as something more and they believe in the importance of CLIL as a pedagogy, as a way of teaching that is more than a lecture on a subject in a foreign language:

CLIL is not a language lesson...if I have to explain something [to the students]...it's not that I explain it in English. It's not just that. Many colleagues do this, many

understand it as if it would be just teaching a subject in a foreign language, but it is not this. [...] It is something different, because there is everything...it is a way of preparing the lesson, a way of leading [the students] to reflect on certain topics you want to talk about (Luca).

Luca mentions also a course that he attended and he adds:

I also attended mathematics lessons. The subject was taught in English but that is not CLIL, that is the subject taught in another language [...] In my opinion it would make no sense to explain something, a topic, in a foreign language when I can explain it in Italian...[In the CLIL] I have to put something else (Luca).

Chiara, a teacher who shares the same perspective as Luca, claims that: “there are still too many teachers who prefer lectures, instead of using the CLIL methodology...it would be interesting to apply it in other contexts”. Both participants imply that CLIL is often understood as teaching a subject in English, instead of taking into account the active learning approach of CLIL methodology.

Even if the references to CLIL and to the methods that such methodology involves are not explicit, it clearly emerges that they acknowledge it cannot just be considered as teaching a subject in a foreign language.

5.2 Lack of comprehensive support mechanisms can dilute teachers' enthusiasm

Teachers are really enthusiastic about CLIL. However, in spite of their interest in the methodology and their intent to learn more about it, during the interviews they talked a lot about their frustration and dissatisfaction with the training courses they had to attend. In particular they talked about the methodological course, and, also, about the many issues they had to face and still are facing in the implementation process. The second theme generated from the analysis deals with these matters.

5.2.1 The training course

Dissatisfaction about the training course is the main issue I identified when interviewing the teachers. I asked them to describe their training course and their personal experience with both the methodology and the language course. I also asked them to tell me about the challenges of the training. A number of teachers talked about having to pay for the language courses out of their own pocket and finding this expensive. They unanimously complained about the CLIL methodological course delivered by the universities in Italy.

5.2.1.1 *The structure and content of the course*

They all pointed out that it was obligatory to attend these courses in order to become an officially certified CLIL teacher. The participants showed their disappointment towards different aspects of the course. For example, Anna and Luca used harsh words and described it as “quite heavy and a bit frustrating” (Anna), and “challenging” (Luca).

The complaints were related to the organization of the course and the way the lessons were taught: “I enrolled in this course - badly organized - because I knew it had started...by chance. I had not received any communication” (Serena). Even though CLIL is compulsory in the last year of upper secondary schools, Serena explains that despite being compulsory, CLIL courses were not advertised. This meant that the teachers who were interested in taking the course were unable to do so. Like the others, she also wanted me to know that “this course was a total disappointment. The modality should have been completely different” (Serena).

The participants provided detailed descriptions of their experiences. For example, Anna says:

Those 3 hours hearing about Chomsky were really unbearable! [...] Some lessons were taught by high school teachers who used CLIL and told us their experience...and those [lessons] were from excellent to bad. There were lessons that had the sole purpose of encouraging you...that is: "If he/she does it, then I can do it too!"

She is sarcastic about her personal experience and she depicts the lessons as boring and, sometimes, really bad, adding that some of the teachers were so unprofessional that she felt she should not worry about using CLIL in the proper way. She pointed out that the training has led her to develop an attitude that she surely could manage to do it better than some of the instructors teaching the methodology course. Other teachers insisted on the tediousness and uselessness of this mandatory course as it consisted in “a series of purely frontal and theoretical lessons, just the opposite of what they would like to teach us to do...if I had to learn from this course, I wouldn’t have learned anything” (Luca). Frontal instruction is one of the most discussed issues during the part of the interviews concerning the training course. The teachers believe that, as they have to learn how to use new methodologies and techniques, it would have been useful to learn them in class and practice them, as confirmed also by Serena:

The people who came there to teach were surely prepared in their field...however, each one of them taught four hours of frontal lessons, explaining what we should have done in class. They should provide some material and, instead of staying

there for four hours talking, make us do something! Let us prepare a teaching unit, let us prepare some material!

Giulia's comment reflects these sentiments:

It is too long, it was endless, based on theoretical principles and very little practical. They told us to give importance to the active role of the students, that frontal teaching is not good, that you have to try activities, that students have to create their own vocabulary, their activities...and they kept us for twenty 3-hour lessons sitting at the table listening to their speeches!

These statements contain the disappointment and the frustration of the teachers, who were hoping and expecting to learn by doing. When the participants discussed the challenges of the training course, some adopted a sarcastic and humorous stance: "Yes, sitting there for four hours! Sometimes I felt terribly sleepy...One of my colleagues, who was sitting next to me, fell asleep and snored!" (Serena).

Chiara, an English teacher, was not allowed to be an official CLIL teacher, despite having eight years of experience with the methodology and having attended several training courses:

[I could not attend] the one delivered by the Ministry of Education, because in Italy language teachers cannot access that training. So, I did all kinds of extra training courses: first the course at Ca 'Foscari [University in Venice], then I attended for two years in a row an online course on CLIL called TecnoCLIL.

Throughout the interview with Chiara I could feel her disappointment for not being able to attend the course and become certified as an official CLIL teacher. She is an experienced and willing teacher, but she is being stopped from pursuing her professional development and in a way that she feels is most appropriate and that suits her current experience and skills.

5.2.1.2 Language of instruction

The language of instruction used in the methodological training course was another major point of concern for a number of teachers. For example, Luca did not like the fact that "it is taught mainly in English. I understand that CLIL involves the use of a language...but it's not just about English!". He does not appreciate that it is somehow taken for granted that all the participants on the course will do CLIL in English. Given that the course is delivered by the university of the province where they work and that not all the teachers might opt to use that language, he adds: "a teacher can do it [CLIL] in the languages they speak or that the students are learning. The fact that the lessons are taught in English basically seems to mean it should only be done in English" (Luca). A completely different point of view is provided by another

participant, who seems annoyed by the fact that “it's taught in Italian, which...Come on! (Laughs)...at least do it in English!” (Marco). Marco thinks that the methodological course should be in the language of instruction used for CLIL, assuming that all the teachers will choose English. This difference of opinion might be due to the fact that they attended the methodology course in the same university, but in different years, therefore, the language of instruction could have been different.

5.2.1.3 Proposed changes to the training

The participants proposed some suggestions to improve the training course. The propositions of the participants were mainly related to the necessity of teaching CLIL active learning techniques by using active learning strategies. The teachers point out that there is the need for “a more practical methodology training course” (Giulia); “a training courses [where] they provide more concrete ideas” (Luca), instead of still relying on frontal teaching. Anna adds an interesting idea: “I would add job-shadowing”. However, she admits she “know[s] it is complicated, though...” (Anna). She believes that an internship or a job-shadowing experience would be helpful to learn more about the possibilities of CLIL implementation in the classroom. However, she claims that this idea is not so feasible, because it requires time for the institution to organize these types of experiences and for the teachers to take part in them.

Chiara shares the suggestions made by her colleagues; however, she is talking from the perspective of a language teacher which provides a different point of view. She suggests that: “teachers who are officially invested of the CLIL teacher title are few compared to actual needs, [therefore] easier access to the training courses, without all these bureaucratic mechanisms [is necessary]”. She finds it illogical that, considering there are not enough CLIL teachers who completed the training process, the law does not allow language teachers to officially access the methodology course and become CLIL teachers: “open these training paths to everybody, make them more flexible and use all the possible opportunities to let those who want to educate themselves do it” (Chiara). She comments further on this part:

For example, to teach computer science you need a degree in computer science, but maybe there is someone who didn't graduate but knows a hundred times more of the graduated teacher, because in the meantime in his job he achieved advanced skills. I think the same for CLIL (Chiara).

Chiara not only suggests to open the CLIL training courses to language teachers, but also to allow all the teachers who are willing to commit to CLIL to do so. In particular, she calls for the need to recognize the skills acquired in different contexts that may be considered different from the traditional and formal educational context: “perhaps to recognize all previous

experiences, acquired also in informal contexts. Unfortunately, at least in Italy, if you don't have a piece of paper, you can't do certain things" (Chiara).

5.2.2 The implementation

In addition to the reasons of dissatisfaction related to the training course, the participants in the research discussed the issues they had to face and are facing in the implementation process. My interview questions ranged from the relationship with institutions and colleagues, the students' interest, motivation and needs, the preparation of the material and the lessons. In particular, three interesting thematics were explored and discussed by the teachers: the lack of support, collaboration and recognition that reduce their enthusiasm.

5.2.2.1 Lack of higher level of institutional support

One of the major issues is the lack of support from institutions. All the participants are happy with the help and support they receive from the schools where they work and, in particular, from the principals. They refer to principals who encourage them to explore new methodologies and usually approve their ideas and project proposals. On the other hand, the support received from the government "is very, very low!" (Anna). "Support?! Nothing...NOTHING! I believe in it [CLIL], every year I do it, however...it's hard! Because you have no support...for anything" (Marco). "Institutions, apart from offering the training course, they don't do ANYTHING else" (Luca). Anna, Marco and Luca's disappointment, and even anger about the lack of support, is shared by their colleagues, especially because CLIL methodology is policy: "the Italian government made CLIL compulsory, but then the few teachers who are willing to educate themselves have to do it autonomously and when they complete the training process they are left alone, like...ok, go, sort it out for yourself!" (Anna). She feels abandoned and her statement is backed by Marco: "CLIL was thrown there and then not adequately supported".

Serena adds that, as there is not any type of support, often the schools do not use the CLIL methodology at all, even in the classes in which it would be mandatory. She talked about an event that happened to her when she was the chair of the examination commission in another school a few years ago:

Most of the schools do one or two modules with CLIL methodology and that's it. Some schools don't even bother to activate the CLIL methodology, and that is disturbing, isn't it? I mean...there is a law that establishes it. It happened once that I was the chair of the examination commission in another school, and I verified that the CLIL methodology had not been implemented for any subject, despite the fact that in the class council there was a teacher in possession of the linguistic

certification of level C1. I could not do anything, not even report it! The committee chair has to fill out a form in which she reports certain things about the exam. There is no specific question for CLIL [in that form]! So, it doesn't matter to anyone if CLIL is activated or not...this is the greatest sadness, isn't it? A lot of energy is invested...and for the students it is a fundamental thing...for their future!

Her story raises a number of different points and not only the fact that there is no support at all. For example, she suggests that there is no follow up, so that, in some contexts, the principal and the teachers do not respect the regulations and just ignore the law. Serena is also annoyed by the negligence of some teachers and of the Ministry of Education, which does not monitor the implementation process and the results.

5.2.2.2 Lack of collaboration and cooperation

A second relevant issue that challenges teachers' enthusiasm in their profession is the lack of cooperation and collaboration. It often seems that the school system struggles in facilitating cooperation and collaboration amongst teachers. On this subject a teacher tells me: "I rely on a teacher outside the school, who has a lot of experience with CLIL and who has taught me a lot" (Luca), and referring to the school where he works: "here it is difficult to cooperate. More than anything else, the problem is that we do not have time. I carve out time for that, but I can't force another person to do the same" (Luca). He needs to cooperate with a teacher who does not work with him in the school, even if he would like to collaborate with his colleagues. According to him, the main problem is the lack of time to do so. This is also confirmed by another teacher, Marco; in fact, when I ask him if there is any collaboration with language teachers, he replies: "eh...don't twist the knife in the wound...we just have 18 hours of teaching, but then we don't even have an office where to stay and discuss or consult the other teachers". He believes that, apart from those 18 hours, or included in them, there is the need to have some hours in which the language and the subject teacher are together in class or, at minimum, have the possibility to collaborate. For this to happen, Marco says that they would, at least, need to have access to facilities that would allow them to meet, discuss and prepare the lessons. Other participants said that they have experienced collaboration with other colleagues, even if only on a voluntary basis. One in particular told me that she approached CLIL thanks to an English teacher who she was working with and they started exploring and experimenting together in 2007. Prior to the introduction of the policy it seemed that the idea was to introduce CLIL as a project that called for close collaboration between the subject and the language teacher. Yet, when CLIL as a methodology became policy, things were different: "we realized that the language teachers would have been completely cut out. We were all furious" (Serena). The benefits of a collaboration are clear also to those who did not

experience it: “it takes time and energy to prepare a lesson...and not having an entourage to collaborate with [it’s a problem]” (Marco). Anna states that sometimes it happens that other teachers are the first ones to refuse to collaborate:

I did it on my own, because there wasn’t the slightest collaboration with the English teacher. Actually, the initiative was abruptly rejected by her. On the other hand, when I arrived at this school I started teaching CLIL in the best way.

As mentioned before, she and the other participants are always showing their appreciation of the schools where they are teaching now and their current colleagues. In fact, talking about the present, they never blame the other teachers for not collaborating with them, but they are disillusioned by the lack of support from higher levels.

The need for collaboration is of primary importance in CLIL as it is mostly based on active learning strategies. Compared to the traditional, lecture-style teaching, active learning requires teachers to invest more time and energy in preparation, therefore a collaboration with other teachers is a precious part in CLIL implementation. As Marco said: “not having an entourage to work with [it’s a problem]”. Anna says she is doing “CLIL in the best possible way”, thanks to the voluntary collaboration of Chiara, the English teacher. She seconds what her colleagues believe is needed: “having the language teacher with you in class is another story” (Anna). These perspectives emphasize the need for and benefits of a collaborative work ethic. Another teacher specifies the minimum type of collaboration needed: “there should be the possibility of having teaching hours with another teacher” (Luca). He is very pragmatic and when I asked him what he thinks could be improved, he suggested that it would be necessary to implement CLIL in class with another teacher, as Anna and Chiara do.

5.2.2.3 Lack of recognition

The third significant issue that abate teachers’ enthusiasm is the lack of recognition of their work, especially in terms of salary and points for the school ranking.

As regards the financial aspect, the participants claim that is not acceptable that there is no increase in their salary; especially given that CLIL is mandatory and they have to attend training courses, get language certifications and their workload is increased: “in any job, if a person has an additional qualification, they get a higher salary, isn’t it? I don’t see why this thing shouldn’t happen in the school...lack of appreciation” (Serena). “Why do I have to earn exactly the same amount as the others? I have a higher qualification...they make us use CLIL for a semester in the last year, but they do not give you a penny” (Marco). Both Serena and Marco think that they should have a higher salary, as happens in other professions where a person has gone through a training process to improve and add to their qualifications. Marco

makes a reference to the government in his discussion of the need for increased recognition of teachers' who are qualified to work with the CLIL approach:

I do CLIL, I do more than my job...do I get anything? The law makes no provision for that. It is compulsory for the school to do CLIL, but it is not compulsory for the State to pay for it.

He is disturbed by the attitude of the institutions, in particular of the government. He is disillusioned by a system that decided to increase the workload of the school and, in particular the teachers, without considering how to reward them. The only reward that teachers get is one point for their position in the school rankings. This is a list from which the teachers are selected and offered positions in schools. The more points teachers have, the more possibilities to be selected. With respect to this, Anna confirms that "the complete professional training is worth 1 point, which is LITTLE", remarking how their work is underestimated.

Chiara is in a very different situation because she is a language teacher. Therefore, she cannot be a CLIL teacher, but she can only experiment. In that regard, she tells me:

It would be interesting if language teachers could teach CLIL formally. I've always been interested in marketing, for example...but I do not have an official education [...] Anyway, if you think about it, it is easier to learn contents, instead of learning a language from scratch.

She raises an important issue that is widely discussed among teachers and that I will expand on in the discussion chapter: would not be easier for language teachers to learn the content of subjects, instead of making subject teachers learn a language? Chiara finds this decision illogical and when I asked her how she feels about the fact she cannot participate in the training, she says: "It's not a nice thing. We [language teachers] do not like it. In my opinion it is an unresolved issue of this useful law that makes CLIL mandatory. Having this kind of rigidity does not make it fully feasible" (Chiara). Although she believes the decision to make CLIL policy is valuable, she is disappointed by the fact that language teachers' expertise is not recognized and valued and they cannot become official CLIL teachers.

The participants ask for recognition: "we really need more appreciation" (Marco). According to them, the appreciation can be expressed in different ways, for example, showing that the institutions believe in CLIL's efficacy by promoting it more: "I believe that the CLIL methodology is very important, so it should be even more valued" (Serena), or "maybe, give more recognition, even if only in terms of points" (Chiara), and recognized economically: "there should be a salary supplement, because I have an additional task, I do something more"

(Serena). As described above in this section, the points Chiara refers to are the points teachers receive to be better positioned in the school ranking. According to the law, teachers get one point once they have completed the CLIL training process, composed of the methodological course and foreign language certification. Apart from the extra points, some teachers ask for a salary increase, as they have an extra task and in other professions, if you have an additional responsibility or duty, you are paid more in proportion to the type of work you have to do.

5.3 CLIL offers an alternative to traditional teaching approaches

During the interviews I discussed participants' beliefs about CLIL being an important methodology in the context in which they are working and it became obvious that, although the participants were dissatisfied with many aspects of CLIL, they strongly believed in its relevance and they thought it was important for them and for the students. In this section I will discuss teachers' beliefs about CLIL, and in particular, what they find positive about it and what they consider important to improve.

5.3.1 CLIL complements innovative teaching and teacher professionalism

Most of the teachers are really passionate about teaching and enjoy working with students: "I like to teach the subject I studied and researched before teaching it. I also like to be with the students" (Anna). Serena describes it as "the most fun part [of this job]." Marco mentions another important aspect of this profession, referring to the constant dedication needed to perform in the best way: "This is what teaching is about, right? You keep going, searching for the best way to do something". Two other teachers also mention the relationship with their students: "I really like teaching and being in class with students, I like the relationship I have with them" (Chiara). "About my job at the school [what I like the most is] mainly the relationship with the students" (Luca).

Serena is the first teacher who started to familiarize herself with CLIL methodology, which was in 2007, a few years before it became policy in Italy. As was the case with most of the participants, she talked about her interest in new things, new approaches and also about her curiosity towards innovation:

I am always fascinated by new things. One of my colleagues told me: hey, let's do something together, there is this new thing...and I was completely unaware, I didn't even know what this acronym means! [...] We had a lot of fun! (Serena).

Another teacher approached CLIL because she is "curious and fascinated by everything that is new, that is experimentation" (Giulia).

All the six participants in the interviews show how fond of their profession they are and how they are eager for innovation and change in teaching.

5.3.2 CLIL promotes self-critique of teaching and learning styles

In line with the Italian tradition, teaching in upper secondary school in Italy is mostly characterized by frontal teaching, which means that the instruction is teacher-centered: they stand in front of the class and give a lecture to the students. A feature of CLIL methodology that is well received by the participants is the novelty in teaching and learning techniques. As Luca explains, it is “a much more precise way of working” (Luca), even if, for some teachers these methods are not completely new: “The techniques I use with CLIL are similar to the ones that language teachers use” (Anna). This statement is backed by Chiara, who is an English teacher, and believes that she is used to this type of approach to teaching, which is more student-centered:

Compared to a traditional lesson, it involves the students much more. We usually give inputs, then there is an activity in pairs or groups and, very often, they also have to look for information on the internet, check things, verify hypotheses, things like that. Sometimes they have to compare things...the students are encouraged to constantly take part in activities [...]. In general, we [language teachers] are more used to interactive lessons.

CLIL lessons are more dynamic and students are encouraged to take an active role in class. This way of working is more common in language teaching and learning, especially the group work, which is believed to be really beneficial for the students, and teachers like it too: “I always try to make them work in groups. Then I use different CLIL techniques: mixing the groups, taking one student from each group and then forming other groups, so that everyone talks and puts the experiences together” (Luca). “There are groups of 2 or 3 people who have to talk, ask questions, prepare questions for the others...that is, all the techniques typical of the [CLIL] methodology, to encourage the students to produce language” (Marco). Teachers value the students’ active participation and try to motivate them with activities that involve talking to their peers and confronting their ideas.

As the activities and the carrying out of the lessons differ from the traditional teaching, the preparation and selection of the materials also change when planning a CLIL lesson or module. Participants told me that they rely on different tools and instruments, for example: “now my preparation is mainly on YouTube, because you go there and there is an incredible amount of material” (Serena). Online there is a considerable amount of information and useful educational material that can be selected and used by the teachers as a tool to prepare

lessons. However, this means that teachers need the skills to “pick the valid ones and to know the ones to avoid, obviously” (Serena).

Apart from drawing information from the Internet, teachers described how they use other resources, that are not necessarily and directly related to the subject they teach, and develop a CLIL lesson plan:

When I taught the Gothic style, I introduced it with a song in English from the sixties and from then I developed the whole lesson. The song has nothing to do with the Gothic style, but it is about a cathedral which is English Gothic style, so...it worked well, also because it is a very catchy song! (Luca)

These different techniques and resources are usually more appreciated by the students, who enjoy the lesson more and are more motivated to actively participate: “In my opinion it is much more effective and also much more interesting to draw on and work with films, songs or literary texts” (Luca). According to him and other participants, this new way of working is also helping the students overcome the idea that subjects are separated and they do not have anything in common: “beyond the efficacy, you can make them understand [...] that there are transversal things to work on, that concern the 4Cs” (Luca). He is really committed to putting CLIL into practice, highlighting the importance of the 4Cs⁵, in particular Culture. The various teaching techniques mentioned by the participants in the interviews have the purpose of developing the fourth C Luca is talking about, Culture. They help improve students’ learning and critical analysis skills, two aspects that are of primary importance in CLIL methodology. For example, when I asked them if they could describe one of their typical CLIL lessons, Giulia mentions cooperative learning:

I look for material that can be interesting for the students, and also with a specific technical language that is easy to understand [...], articles from magazines on the internet...I also create crossword puzzles and organize games in the gym where they have to do some practical exercises and tests, which they have to explain in English and then work in groups...cooperative learning, basically.

Giulia, as the other teachers, considers it important to motivate the students. She searches for ideas and material online and then makes them actively work in groups.

The participants offered practical suggestions for the implementation of CLIL to make it feasible and efficient; for example, one teacher asserts that there should be “perhaps, a database of useful materials” (Anna). They suggest that this could be a website where CLIL

⁵ 4Cs: Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture. See also section 3.2.1.

teachers can find videos or documents to use in class, activities or even a module that could be used as an example and then adapted to the subject taught and the context in which a teacher works.

Apart from cooperative learning, which is one of the most well-known and used CLIL techniques, Marco talks about other possibilities. He talks about how he plans the lessons and says: “the material can also be consulted from home, because it is on the Moodle platform. Sometimes they can access it before the lesson, so that they watch it at home and then come to discuss it at school” (Marco). Students can read documents or watch the video before going to school, so that they are able to discuss the subject, instead of using the time in class for a lecture on the topic. This teaching strategy, called flipped classroom, reverses the traditional way of teaching and learning and allows the teacher to use the time in class for group discussions which are believed to be more productive for students.

All the participants seem to be enthusiastic by the new techniques described above and they sometimes use them also for their non-CLIL lessons as they find them beneficial for the students’ learning development.

5.3.3 CLIL pedagogy promotes learners’ autonomy and motivation

The participants believe in CLIL and in its benefits and, according to them, also all of the students see the methodology in a positive light. In fact, some of the teachers said: “I think it is very important, students like it and have fun” (Serena); “the lesson is more active...less boring and tiring” (Marco). Teachers highlight the relevance of CLIL in offering an alternative to traditional methods.

A beneficial aspect of CLIL methodology is that it helps overcome the feeling of self-consciousness and it helps students to overcome their stress, especially when they have to speak in a foreign language:

It's funny, because when I speak with the English teacher it turns out that the students give it a try with me and speak English, whereas they don't in her lessons! [...] Maybe with the English teacher they do not try because they are afraid of making mistakes (Serena).

The reason why they do not try to speak in English during the language lesson is further explained by another teacher:

Students in upper secondary school in Italy are very influenced by the performance. They think “If I say something, I could be wrong, so I shut up”. Students are scared. The idea of speaking English in front of the class...and another thing that scares them is the assessment (Anna).

According to her, one of the scariest issues for the students is the evaluation. Students do not feel comfortable in having a go and trying to speak English if they are not sure they are speaking correctly, because this might reflect negatively in their grades. Anna's thoughts are seconded by Chiara: "In the Italian scholastic tradition there is this idea that students must be very good, otherwise they should be ashamed of speaking languages". In the CLIL lesson the situation seems to be different according to the teachers because students understand they do not have to worry too much about the assessment or how they use the foreign language:

They see that sometimes I turn to my colleague because I can't say something and therefore, they relax, they say "oh well, if she doesn't know, I'm authorized to not knowing either". It is just something that breaks down all the barriers of shame, of fear, of judgment (Anna).

Anna collaborates with Chiara in planning and teaching CLIL. Chiara, who is an English teacher, supports her colleague's statement: "teenagers in general are ashamed to expose themselves, so, seeing a [non-language] teacher who gets involved and speaks in English, even if her knowledge is not perfect, it helps the students to get over their fears".

Students are afraid of the evaluation, so they are not always at ease in class and do not engage completely. According to the participants, CLIL is already creating a more positive environment and students are more motivated and more focused on learning, rather than worrying about the assessment. Anna believes that CLIL could be assessed in a less traditional way or that there should not be any assessment procedure at all, so that the students' learning would benefit from CLIL even more: "if the CLIL lesson would not be evaluated, perhaps it would become more productive. Let students attend, but nobody evaluates them" (Anna).

In addition to encouraging the students to not be afraid and to engage in their learning because they choose to do so based on intrinsic motivation rather than because of assessment processes, CLIL presents other beneficial features. Most of the teachers assert that since they started using the CLIL methodology, they noticed improvements in the other non-CLIL lessons taught in Italian: "the dynamics in the class changes and so changes also when you teach the subject in Italian...the situation is much more relaxed. This is an undeniable advantage" (Anna). CLIL improves the quality of teaching and learning in general, not only while using the methodology in class. Anna's belief is backed by another teacher: "the way of working has also improved even when I teach in Italian, in fact, CLIL [techniques] should be in every lesson" (Luca). CLIL helps to overcome students' stress, therefore the atmosphere in class is generally more positive.

CLIL is seen as a challenge; yet also as the catalyst that encourages teachers and students to explore teaching and learning from a different perspective: "it messes up with the plan. For

me, it is always useful to break the mold in a class” (Anna); “it helps us [the teachers], to look at education from another point of view” (Chiara).

All the participants agreed on the importance of CLIL and could only describe the advantages it can bring into the school system: “it is important because it provides a transversal knowledge...there is more, beyond linking a language with a technical subject” (Luca). He remarks how this methodology is much more than merely teaching a subject in a foreign language. There are more aspects in CLIL and all of them are believed fundamental for an efficient learning experience: “the concept is to give them something more, to lead them to look at a topic from different points of view. One of the Cs is Culture...we have to give it to them, somehow...beyond the content there is more” (Luca).

A conclusive and very interesting reflection on the necessary improvements regards the possibility of extending the use of CLIL methodology to different situations, instead of focusing just on teaching one subject in a foreign language, which usually is English, as suggested by Chiara. When I asked her if she thought CLIL was important in the educational context in which she works, she replied:

Yes, in my opinion, yes. It could also be interesting to use it with foreign students, for example, to help them learning Italian by using the CLIL methodology...instead of just doing frontal lessons...unfortunately, there are still many teachers who do that (Chiara).

The importance of considering CLIL as more than a simple method to teach a subject in a foreign language was expressed by other participants. Luca for example acknowledges “it is not just that, we have to think about the 4Cs”. What Chiara adds is the possibility of implementing CLIL in contexts that are not taken into consideration by the law, but that would benefit a lot from CLIL methodology and active learning techniques, like the Italian as a second language courses. This finding is important and helps to make sense of the previous findings presented in this chapter. Despite the negative aspects of the training process and the struggles with implementing CLIL that the teachers face, they strongly support this methodology and are certain of its value in the educational context.

In this findings chapter I presented the main themes I generated from the six interviews with the participants to my study. In the following chapter, I will discuss these findings in relation to my research question, in order to be able to provide information on the use of CLIL as an effective methodological approach.

6 Discussion

The purpose of this research project is to explore teachers' perspectives on CLIL training courses and the implementation of the methodology in their schools. In this chapter I will discuss the findings of my study in the light of the literature review and the Italian laws and regulations described in chapter 2 (*the context*). The aim of this chapter is to present my reflections on the findings in order to provide useful information for CLIL teacher education and CLIL implementation.

This discussion section is divided in four main categories of learning. These reflect the discussion of the findings in relation to the research question *How do teachers running CLIL in two upper secondary schools in Italy experience working with this methodology?*

The four categories of learning are: CLIL needs to be clearly defined as a pedagogical approach that can serve multiple purposes; issues of language usage in CLIL need to be addressed; ensuring quality CLIL teacher training is a key requirement; and systemic challenges to CLIL implementation in schools need to be recognized and addressed.

6.1 A new way of understanding CLIL and the purposes it serves

The first relevant topic that needs to be explored and discussed is the understanding of CLIL methodology, its definition and purposes. In my study I could initially determine two main interpretations of CLIL. The first one coincides with the belief that CLIL methodology consists of teaching a non-linguistic subject in a language different from the usual language of instruction; it reflects the basic definition provided by Coyle, Marsh and Hood, according to which CLIL is the “dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language” (Coyle et al., 2010). On the contrary, in the conversation with other participants, the understanding of CLIL as a pedagogical approach and not just a method emerged. In particular, Luca and Chiara see the potential of CLIL as a pedagogy. Their perspectives reflect what was said about CLIL in the literature review; CLIL is much more than teaching mathematics in English, it is an innovative, student-centered pedagogical approach (Van Kampen et al., 2018) and to grasp the concept properly, it is necessary to take into account the 4Cs model by Coyle (2010), active learning strategies and the intercultural citizenship theory.

As explained by most of the teachers, including those who do not refer to the innovative nature of CLIL when compared to the Italian tradition of lecture-style lessons, they make use of different strategies that move the focus from the teacher to the students. Application of CLIL leads to active student participation; there is a lot of pair or group work and students are

encouraged to develop problem-solving and communication skills that will be useful outside of the classroom.

My interpretation of the findings suggests that there is a need to have a common understanding of CLIL as a tool to foster multilingualism and develop environments where plurilingual attitudes and multicultural awareness are promoted, as expressed also in the Italian Ministerial Decrees 87, 88 and 89/2010. The mistake that is often made is to think of multilingualism as the coexistence of many different languages in the same context, as if these languages and cultures should not necessarily be in contact with each other. Different cultures and languages in the same community are inevitably in contact; therefore, individuals need to be encouraged to become interested in intercultural communication, which is much more than speaking a second or third language. Thus, intercultural citizenship in education is a crucial element to promote intercultural dialogue and aims for social cohesion (Council of European Union, 2007). CLIL is a powerful tool to educate students to take action outside the classroom (Council of Europe, 2016; Nussbaum, 2006). CLIL has a key role in this as it involves four principles that correspond to the 4Cs: Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture. As the participants of this study claimed, the active learning techniques and strategies used in CLIL lessons, like cooperative learning, flipped classrooms and project-based learning, help to develop the Cognition and Culture, understood as intercultural awareness. Active learning approaches foster students' motivation in actively participating, engaging in conversations and strengthening their critical thinking skills. At the same time, the Culture, which is at the core of the 4Cs conceptual framework for CLIL, fosters and strengthens the value of citizenship (Bentley, 2010), and raises awareness towards different cultures (Coyle, n.d.).

The participants' conflicting interpretations of CLIL methodology represent the lack of a common understating of CLIL and its purposes. I believe that it is not possible to successfully implement CLIL if stakeholders are not aware of what it offers and the purposes it serves. Without a common understanding of CLIL as a pedagogy and not just as a tool to learn a language and a subject at the same time, there is limited opportunity or scope for the four Cs to be developed and for CLIL to act as potential motivator that foster learner autonomy, self-confidence and other social as well as academic skills.

Legislation is not that helpful in clarifying the true aims of CLIL as it is often focused on the importance of learning a language. For example, CLIL regulations require all technical institutes implementing CLIL only in the fifth year of upper secondary school in English and in one of the core academic subjects (MIUR, 2014). Given that the Italian government has made CLIL policy, which suggests the intention to follow the European provisions on multilingualism, it should also commit to providing a precise and explicit definition of CLIL and its purposes.

6.2 The language(s) issue

In this section I want to explore further the use of language as part of CLIL based on the findings that raised a number of related concerns.

In the findings chapter I mentioned the contrasting opinions of the participants regarding the languages that should be involved in CLIL: some of them believe in the importance of English in contemporary society; they therefore do not argue with the decision of the government to focus on CLIL in English, especially in the technical institutes; others think that it should not be taken for granted that CLIL should be in English as there are also other languages that the teachers and the students might prefer or might feel more comfortable using and learning.

According to the ministerial regulations, the training language courses offered are in English, French, Spanish and German (MIUR, 2010). Chinese and Slovenian languages were added later (MIUR, 2017a). The 2014 ministerial note lists the official languages for certification centers and only the first four of the aforementioned languages are listed. The research on CLIL in Italy tells us that in the first year of implementation of CLIL, only language courses in English and French could be activated due to the lack of teachers interested in implementing CLIL in Spanish and German (Langé et al., 2014). These results are not dissimilar to the situation in the other countries where CLIL is implemented. In fact, according to previous research on the topic, the use of English is more dominant than other languages (Ander Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018).

To study and understand the functioning of a phenomenon, we cannot underestimate the importance of the context in which such phenomenon happens or is implemented. In this specific case, this statement is supported by the literature, according to which, the success of CLIL implementation depends highly on the context and its needs (Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, 2015; Díaz Pérez et al., 2018).

I touched upon the linguistic history of Italy in the introduction of this thesis, but I believe it is important to look closer at the historical context as this inevitably has influenced the decisions for CLIL implementation. Italy is a linguistically diverse country, with many historical minority languages protected by the Italian Constitution, regional varieties and dialects, and also immigrant languages (Vedovelli, 2006; Ethnologue, 2017). In 2006 Vedovelli estimated a total number of approximately 164 different languages coexisting in Italy. In spite of that, since 1963, when Latin was completely substituted by Italian as the language of schooling, Italian has been the only official language of instruction in schools (Tosi, 2001; Leone, 2015). In 1975,

the GISCEL group⁶ published the *Dieci tesi per un'educazione linguistica democratica* (Ten theses for a democratic linguistic education), with the idea of bringing attention to the injustices of language education policies and practices in the Italian educational context (GISCEL, 1975; Leone, 2015); in particular it criticized the lack of attention to the reality of the country as, during this period, more than 50% of the population was still speaking a dialect or a regional variation at home (Ruffino, 2006). The critiques had positive consequences and led to two reforms in education in the following years. However, up to the present time, dialects and non-standard variations have been underrepresented. In the report on CLIL at schools in Europe (Eurydice, 2006), the definition of CLIL includes foreign, regional and minority languages as a source to teach CLIL. Yet there is no evidence of this variation in studies conducted in Italy (Cinganotto, 2016; Leone, 2015; Minardi, 2014). The use of a variety of languages for CLIL would better reflect the characteristics of contemporary Italian society. This then allows students to bring part of their identities into the classroom.

A second interesting perspective on the use of languages in CLIL is provided by one of the participants, Chiara. She believes that the approach could be very useful in the teaching of Italian as second language (SL) to immigrant students. She believes that the active learning techniques used in CLIL would enhance SL learning. According to the Cambridge English Language Assessment report (2016), there are some programs that claim to implement CLIL to facilitate the integration of students, for example, English as an Additional Language (EAL) in Britain. However, they do not exactly share the same principles and purposes of CLIL as they are focused specifically on language learning. Based on research, Italian as a second language in compulsory education is not effectively taught, therefore, I believe that Chiara's proposal is a very important cause for reflection and could represent a starting point for future research. CLIL approach in teaching Italian as a second language should have more space in the Italian educational context, especially considering the benefits it has on the learning process.

6.3 Quality CLIL teacher training produces quality CLIL teachers

In the interviews all the participants showed their dissatisfaction and sense of frustration with CLIL training courses. The only element of disagreement among the teachers was the language of instruction used in the methodological courses. In fact, it seems that the lessons were in some cases taught in Italian and in English in others. In the policy there is no trace of provisions regarding the language of instruction to be introduced during the methodology training. However, as Luca pointed out, those courses are not just for teachers who want to run CLIL in

⁶ Gruppo di Intervento e Studio nel Campo dell'Educazione Linguistica, in English: Group for Intervention and Study in the Field of Linguistic Education. It is a subgroup of the Società di Linguistica Italiana (Italian Linguistic Society).

English. Therefore, it is not appropriate to use one dominant foreign language; this suggests that certain languages are more valued than others.

A core issue in the discussion about the training courses is the organization. The participants of this study were very critical, using words like “heavy”, “frustrating”, “challenging”, “boring” and “a total disappointment”. As there is a paucity of research on teacher training needs (Pérez Cañado, 2016; Wolff, 2005), it is not possible to know for certain if the experience of the six teachers involved in this study coincides with the reality of other teachers in other contexts. However, in the 2016 report on CLIL in Italy (Langé et al., 2014), the authors do not mention any complaints from the teachers, or, at least, not specifically related to the disorganization and inadequacy of the training courses. The report covers instead the characteristics of the implementation in schools (teachers’ profile, subjects taught, methods used). This suggests a lack of attention towards stakeholders’ perspectives and needs, especially teachers. My study reveals a need for teacher training that draws on teacher opinion and that uses suggestions or solutions to improve the CLIL teacher training. A quality teacher training produces a quality teacher who will have positive influence on the learners’ motivation and their learning experience (Boekaerts, 1995; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Another critique related to the organization of the courses is the choice of methods used by the instructors. CLIL is a student-centered approach, based on active learning strategies. The participants in the study claim that it would be appropriate and useful if the same type of approach that they will have to use in class with the students is modeled in the training. This would probably also help to overcome feelings of boredom and frustration expressed by the teachers in the interviews.

CLIL is claimed to be an innovative approach that subverts the Italian traditional teaching style. However, there are still many teachers and other stakeholders who do not put this into practice and still prefer the lecture style approach to teaching and learning. That is also stated in the 2014 report, in which the participants, who were really enthusiast about CLIL, said the methods they were using in CLIL classes were mainly lecture based and group work (Langé et al., 2014). As Luca claimed “this is not CLIL, this is teaching a subject in a foreign language...but CLIL is not just that”. Some of the participants decided to attend CLIL courses abroad or join online projects to be able to learn something more about the methodology and be better prepared for the implementation. Chiara, for example, who is a language teacher, cannot become an official CLIL teacher. She has approximately 20 years of experience in teaching English and 8 years of experience working with CLIL methodology; she attended online CLIL courses and is very motivated about implementing it. She believes in the importance and benefits of making CLIL policy, but she argues that “this kind of rigidity does not make it fully feasible” (Chiara). The law excludes language teachers (MIUR, 2010) without providing any kind of explanation. This seems nonsensical. The government suggests the cooperation

between subject and foreign language teachers, through the creation of *CLIL teams*, but It does not provide any kind of support or recognition. The participants who have experienced collaboration with other teachers affirm that it is valuable and necessary. Hence, the request of opening training courses also to foreign language teachers, to give them the possibility to be officially qualified CLIL implementers. This is particularly pertinent in the current context given that, as some of the participants indicated, there are not enough official CLIL teachers. Furthermore, Chiara as an English language teacher is more familiar with the methods applied by CLIL; therefore, it would also make sense she would be included to work with the trainers to share her experiences of the participatory and student-centered methodologies.

In the rich data I gathered there are other useful suggestions on how to improve the CLIL methodological courses: make the training accessible to all teachers who are interested and motivated in participating and implementing CLIL; make use of active learning strategies and provide materials, so that it will be easier for future CLIL teachers to implement the approach in the classroom; organize the courses in a better way, so that teachers' enthusiasm is not diluted; and organize short internships or job shadowing experiences. Job shadowing is mentioned in the 2014 ministerial note on CLIL transitional rules (MIUR, 2014) as *desirable*. However, this is just a recommendation and there are no guidelines on how to make it feasible. As teachers influence students' learning achievements, it is important to invest in quality teacher training (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012), according to the context, to teachers' needs and based on a shared understanding of CLIL and its purposes.

According to the literature, the need for materials has been discussed since the first year of implementation (Langé et al., 2014). It seems that up to the present time, nothing has been done. As Anna said, it would be interesting to have a database with the material used by other teachers. In line with Hargreaves and Fullan's recommendation (2012), I believe in the potential of learning communities that foster social and human capital development. As well as teacher training, learning communities can positively contribute to quality education, through cooperation, mutual support and sharing of good practices.

6.4 The implementation of CLIL: the need to address systemic constraints

Despite the valuable enthusiasm and interest for CLIL methodology, the participants raised their concerns and disappointment about the implementation due to systemic constraints, as the lack of support and recognition.

Prior studies show that CLIL success depends on the context of implementation and on the institutional support teachers receive (Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, 2015; Díaz Pérez et al., 2018). In this research the lack of support is one of the main complaints. In fact, it seems that the government does not follow up the implementation process and once teachers complete their

CLIL education, they are left alone. They can only count on the schools where they are working and, sometimes, on their colleagues, but not on the government who does not provide support for the implementation process. Teachers rely on their peers and on the online resources to plan the activities to decide how many hours they can dedicate to CLIL and how to assess it. In fact, there is not a clear action plan for implementation or guidelines for assessment. From the conversations with the participants I could infer that they assess the CLIL projects, modules and lessons in the way they consider most appropriate. In most of the cases the CLIL teachers, who are subject teachers, focus more on the content as they do not feel comfortable in evaluating the students' language skills. Although this works to create a more relaxed atmosphere in the class, as the learners do not have to worry about their grades, it does not appear to be a strategic decision to enhance learning but a result of lack of guidelines. The fact that teachers are finding that students are more motivated to participate in the discussions and activities because of the lack of assessment in CLIL is interesting; not least because it offers an opportunity for progressive approaches to assessment that challenge traditional assessment practice. One of the teachers even suggested that the experience of working with CLIL opened up the possibility of omitting a grade for the modules or lessons taught with CLIL methodology.

Research suggests that stakeholders' cooperation positively affects the quality of teaching (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Teachers, administrators, policy makers should cooperate, share ideas and support each other in the implementation process to accomplish their purposes. The participants of the study felt left behind by the government as it did not provide guidelines for CLIL implementation. Nevertheless, the absence of guides seems to have helped teachers to be more creative, and it opened their eyes to new possibilities and solutions that CLIL offers as a progressive pedagogical approach than challenges traditional ways of teaching. They note that this increases and enhances student motivation, self-confidence and both language and subject knowledge. Therefore, this suggests that the teachers' experience become important in the development of informing guidelines and support mechanisms.

Besides the lack of support, another systemic constrain is the lack of recognition. The institutions, in particular the government, does not nurture teachers' professionalism in any way, except by giving them 1 extra point for their positioning in the school ranking. Marco and Serena point out that in any other job, if employees have an extra task, they also get an increase in their salary. They demand financial incentives because they have to work hard for the training and the implementation, and they have to do it all on their own. Four years ago the government invested 1,500,000 euros on CLIL, especially for the development of innovative projects and production of material (MIUR, 2016). However, up to the present time, teachers are still complaining because they have to create the material on their own, without any additional time and support and any collaboration. Teachers want to engage with

CLIL and they want to do it well, but they feel as the system is against them. Without recognition of their professionalism teachers might feel frustrated and unmotivated, they might perform badly or leave the profession. The lack of recognition faced by teachers is an important point of concern that needs to be addressed. The frustration and anger of teachers expressed by the participants of this study can lead to unhealthy forms of professionalism; lack of interest in what one teaches; lack of innovation and creativity; dilution of enthusiasm and low-quality teaching. Therefore, there is a need for improving CLIL training and promote professional networking that leads to informed decision making to enhance the implementation of CLIL and sustain it as a core of the national curriculum.

Professional networking, collaboration and cooperation are central issues, because they are believed to be fundamental for teachers' professionalism and, therefore, students' achievements (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In line with previous studies (Spratt, 2017; Langé et al., 2014) the participants of this project expressed the need for cooperation; working and planning with teachers is an invaluable experience that leads to effective learning. The teachers argued that working alone requires great effort. The possibility of working with their peers would benefit their teaching and thus the students' learning. The Italian government made clear that the cooperation between the subject and the language teachers, as well as the collaboration between schools is encouraged, but it does not provide any support or funding to implement it. Unfortunately, it seems that this would "require an investment that the Italian government is ill-equipped to make at the present time" (Leone, 2015).

Teachers are enthusiastic about CLIL and they perceive it as a constructive and useful practice. They are aware of the benefits the approach has on their professionalism, on their teaching and on the students; they think it has a beneficial effect also on their non-CLIL lessons and that it helps to overcome the idea that subjects are separated because it provides transversal knowledge. This supports Langé's proposal (2015) of developing integrated school curricula. However, without a quality training and governmental support, it is complex to implement CLIL in the most effective way.

Teachers play a pivotal role in CLIL implementation process, therefore they should be listened to, involved in the decision-making process and they deserve the support they need. They need to feel valued, as they are professionals and they put great effort in their daily practice.

7 Conclusion

Content and Language Integrated Learning is a pedagogical approach developed in the mid - 1990s in the framework of the multilingual turn. In the last two decades the use of CLIL spread around Europe and in 2010 it officially became compulsory in upper secondary education in Italy. Since the school year 2012/2013, the year of the implementation, there has been a paucity of studies undertaken to explore the stakeholders' viewpoint, in particular the teachers.

Therefore, my study is a contribution to CLIL teacher education and the implementation of CLIL in upper secondary schools in Italy, 10 years after CLIL became policy. The main purpose was to explore and understand teachers' experiences of working with CLIL methodology in upper secondary education in order to inform teacher education and consider if and what can be improved. Thus, my research question was:

How do teachers running CLIL in two upper secondary schools in Italy experience working with this methodology?

To support my overarching question, I identified two main areas to research: the training process and the implementation in schools.

In spite of the limitations of my study, described in the methodology section, I gathered rich data to answer this question. I believe that the findings of this narrative inquiry will provide useful information for CLIL teacher education and CLIL implementation.

Through reflexive thematic analysis I generated three main themes, that were presented in the findings chapter: conflicting understandings and interpretations of CLIL; lack of comprehensive support mechanisms can dilute teachers' enthusiasm; CLIL offers an alternative to traditional teaching approaches. The six participants to this study expressed their interest and motivation in the methodology, however there are some elements that need to be improved, as I argued in the discussion chapter.

Based on the findings of this study, I have identified seven recommendations:

1. There is a need to review the definition and the purposes of CLIL, in order to have a common understanding of it. The policy should be more specific and underline the importance of CLIL as a pedagogy, not just as a tool to learn a language and a subject. CLIL is flexible and effective, it can be adapted to students' learning needs; it facilitates them becoming critical and independent and to bring these skills outside the classroom. Thanks to CLIL, learners build intercultural communication skills and fosters a sense of community, which are fundamental in multilingual and multicultural societies.

2. Government and school policies regarding the language involved in CLIL need to be revised. The context in which CLIL is implemented has to influence the linguistic choices made, therefore it would be important to include the languages that students bring into the class, or to involve teachers and students in the decision-making process, according to their needs and interests. It should not be a top-down procedure.
3. CLIL approach should be adopted also in teaching Italian as a second language. The CLIL active learning strategies would facilitate the learning and integration process of the students who do not have Italian as a mother tongue. I believe this is a valuable starting point for future research on CLIL implementation settings.
4. CLIL training courses need to be revised and improved. Quality teacher training would produce quality teachers, who will positively affect the students' learning process. To revise and improve the courses, there is a need of further research on teachers' needs and experiences. It is important to listen to them, as they are the beneficiary of the training courses.
5. The governmental policy should grant foreign language teachers the possibility of becoming CLIL teachers. It seems that there is not a rational explanation behind the decision of excluding them.
6. It is demonstrated that CLIL success depends on the context of implementation, on the support provided to schools and teachers, and on the recognition of their professionalism. Hence, there should be a clear plan for CLIL implementation informed by teachers' needs and experience. The guidelines should include concrete actions aimed at supporting teachers and facilitate their professional development and the cooperation amongst them, as they are the key elements that lead to effective learning.
7. Beyond CLIL, this study brings to light several areas worthy of further investigation: students' self-consciousness, active learning pedagogies and techniques, assessment, teacher dedication and teacher dissatisfaction.

CLIL is an invaluable concept that can really benefit all the stakeholders involved in the education system as they can bring the skills acquired beyond the classroom and take civic action.

The process of conducting this study and writing this thesis represent an inestimable occasion for my personal lifelong learning path. This research has deepened my interest and knowledge in CLIL methodology and the theories behind it and it has motivated me to continue researching its role in enhancing the quality of education in upper secondary schools. This is only the first step and the process of this study has led me to identify the need for more research on issues raised in this thesis.

Being an Italian citizen residing and working as a teacher in Iceland, I believe it would be interesting to explore the possible implementation of CLIL in the Icelandic educational system, one of the four countries in Europe in which there is no CLIL provision.

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Appendix A: Introductory letter and consent form

The original letter and informed consent form were in Italian

Dear teacher,

My name is Caterina Poggi and I am a master student in the International Studies in Education program at the University of Iceland.

With this letter you are being invited to voluntarily participate in a research project, as I believe your experience and knowledge will provide an important contribution to the study.

Please, read through this letter and consent form to make an informed decision to participate. You will be given a signed copy of this document.

Purpose of the Study

I am currently conducting a research on teachers' experiences with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology in Italy. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to explore and understand teachers' experiences with CLIL methodology in upper secondary schools in order to, possibly, inform teacher education.

Structure of the Interview

Your participation will consist of a 40 – 50 minutes interview to explore your personal experience with the training process and the implementation of the CLIL methodology. The interview will take place at a location and time at your convenience. It will be audio-recorded and, later, transcribed. Notes will be taken during the interview.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The content of the interview will be used to write my thesis, as well as for informal presentations in class and conferences. Your name, the name of the school where you teach, or anything else that might identify you will not be mentioned in my publications or presentations.

The information collected will remain confidential. Only the researcher and the supervisors will have access to the tape and this document.

The recordings and transcriptions will be destroyed once the thesis will be presented and published.

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw from this research at any time, even after you have consented to participate.

Please, feel free to contact me if you need further information or have any questions.

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I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me, I have read the introductory letter and I agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature of the participant

Date

Signature of the researcher

Date

Appendix B: Interview guideline questions

The original guideline questions were in Italian

Research question:

How do teachers running CLIL in upper secondary school in Italy experience working with this methodology?

Three main areas to research:

the training process, the implementation, and teachers' opinions and perceptions about CLIL.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- For how long have you been teaching?
- What do you like the most about your job?
- Which subjects are you teaching (in general)?
- For how long have you been using the CLIL methodology?
- Which subjects are you teaching through CLIL?

TRAINING

- How was your training in CLIL?
- Could you describe your personal experience with the methodology course?
- Could you describe your personal experience with the language course?
- Could you tell me something about the challenges of the training?

IMPLEMENTATION

- How was this new methodology introduced to you in the school?
- Do you cooperate with the other teachers? If so, could you tell me how?
- What type of support do you receive from the school and the institutions?
- How do you prepare the material for your CLIL lessons?
- Could you describe a typical CLIL lesson?
- Could you tell me something about students' interest and motivation in CLIL from your point of view?
- How do you respond to student's needs?

GENERAL OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

- What is your understanding of the CLIL methodology?
- What do you think about CLIL methodology?
- How do you feel about using CLIL in class?
- In your opinion, which are the positive aspects of CLIL?
- What do you think needs to be improved?

- Is there anything else you would like to add?