An Inquiry into the Methodological Awareness of Experienced and Less-experienced Italian CLIL Teachers

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Abstract   The role of CLIL teachers is crucial for the quality and effectiveness of CLIL programs. In order to fully understand the teacher's role in CLIL, 'the hidden side of the work' is of pivotal importance: cognitive aspects related to what they 'know, believe, and think' exert a substantial influence on how they actually teach. Given the linguistic and methodological nature of CLIL, teachers' awareness of the methodological features of CLIL appears to be particularly relevant in this respect. Based on the Italian context – where a recent School Reform has made CLIL compulsory in the final year(s) of high school – an investigation on the differences in terms of methodological awareness has been carried out between teachers who have been teaching in CLIL since before it became compulsory in the last year of high school (in 2014/15) and teachers who started teaching in CLIL as from 2014/15. Implications will be discussed and suggestions for practice and further research will be offered.

Summary   1 The CLIL Teacher. – 1.1. Teaching in CLIL: CLIL Methodology. –.2. The Study: Context, Participants and Data Collection Instrument. – 2.1 Participants. – 2.2 Data Collection Instrument. – 3 The Analyses. – 3.1 Preliminary Data Analysis. – 3.2 Data Analysis and Results. – 4 Discussion and Conclusions. – Appendix 1: Instrument Used. – Appendix 2: Examples of Quantitization.

Keywords   CLIL teachers. CLIL methodology. Methodological awareness. School Reform.

1   The CLIL Teacher

CLIL teachers are "the innovators of our school systems, the educational reformers of the 21st century" (Wolff 2007, 23). They are responsible for unlocking CLIL's "innovative potential [which] is so high that it will break down encrusted structures and outdated pedagogical ideas" (23). This quotation helps us understand the crucial role played by teachers in order for CLIL programmes to be successful. But for this to happen, it is also necessary that "teachers […] be *believers*" (Kiely 2011, 157; emphasis added): they need to be aware of what CLIL means and convinced of its value before truly becoming those 'innovators' Wolff talks about.

A number of studies, not only in the field of CLIL, tell us that teachers'

cognition[1] could have an important impact on their teaching practice, improving it or making it worse. In particular, as regards CLIL, Viebrock found that teachers' *implicit theories* about i. education in general, ii. the teaching of their discipline, iii. (foreign) language teaching, and iv. the integrated teaching of content and language, can collide with each other, thus leading to an incorrect use of CLIL to justify heavily teacher-centred methods (Viebrock 2011). At the same time, a *fixed mindset* (Dweck 2008) not only can prevent teachers from acquiring *awareness* about the role language plays in learning in general, but also from adopting different teaching strategies and techniques that might help students access contents more easily, overcoming language difficulties (Mehisto 2008).

CLIL is a "linguistic and cognitive challenge" (Coonan 2014a, 18; Author's trans.) for teachers. If teaching can be considered a synonym for *communicating effectively*, CLIL teachers need to possess a series of competences (Coonan 2014a; Ludbrook 2014a, 2014b): i. *linguistic-communicative* competence, that is a mastery of the code (i.e. grammar and syntax, orthography, phonology, pronunciation) as the main tool for effective communication; ii. *microlinguistic* competence, i.e. a wide knowledge of the discipline's specific vocabulary, of the links between specific terms and everyday language, of recurring grammatical patterns, of discipline-specific textual types and genres; iii. *teaching* competence, which is reflected in the intelligibility, accuracy and comprehensibility of one's speech, in the ability to interact with students, highlighting key concepts, reformulating, paraphrasing, or exemplifying them; iv. *linguistic flexibility*, that is the capacity to deal with unforeseen situations, to deviate momentarily from the lesson plan thus favouring students' active contributions to the lesson.

Coonan (2006a) proposes a definition of CLIL which puts great emphasis on the role of teachers, highlighting not only CLIL's language aspects but also its methodological dimension. According to Coonan, CLIL is "a type of educational programme […] characterized by *strategic*, *structural* and *methodological* choices, apt to guarantee the dual integrated learning" (23; Author's trans.). In traditional subject teaching (in L1, for example), these methodological aspects are often underestimated, or they are given very little attention. On the contrary, they are crucial in CLIL because they offer the scaffolding through which the teacher helps and facilitates his/her students learning.

In the light of what we have said so far, we can affirm that there are two macro-dimensions which CLIL teachers need to be *aware* of: i. a *language* dimension and ii. a *methodological* dimension. What makes the difference between a CLIL teacher and a non-CLIL teacher is not only his/her compe-

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[1] Teachers' cognition is "what teachers *know, believe,* and *think*" (Borg 2003, 81; emphasis added).

tence in the FL, but the higher *degree of awareness* s/he has with respect to the role of language (be it a FL or the L1) as a medium for teaching and learning – i.e. *language* awareness, and of the methodology adopted – i.e. *methodological* awareness – which is "the most important factor, for the role it plays in transforming a mere foreign language medium model into a CLIL model" (Coonan 2014a, 31; Author's trans.).

Some relatively recent studies conducted in Andalusia show that the competence in the FL is the aspect which worries CLIL teachers the most (Pavón Vázquez, Rubio 2010; Pavón Vázquez, Ellison 2013). In particular, a poor FL competence can be a source of great anxiety for teachers, enough to suggest that "it would be a better option to train foreign language teachers to teach specialised content" (Bowler 2007, in Pavón Vázquez, Ellison 2013, 70). These studies reveal that a wrong idea of what CLIL is and entails is still widespread, and that there is a low degree of awareness with reference to the methodology itself: CLIL does not only imply a change in the medium of instruction, a switch from the L1 to a FL, but foresees the adoption of a different teaching methodology, which we will now explore in more detail.

1.1   Teaching in CLIL: CLIL Methodology

CLIL teaching could be defined as "language-sensitive content *teaching*".[2] CLIL teachers are subject teachers who teach their subject *through* (not *in*, as Pavón Vázquez, Rubio 2010, point out) a foreign language (FL): the first and most important objective that is pursued in CLIL is the *teaching of subject matter* content and skills while at the same time being sensitive to the FL.[3]

The adoption of CLIL has an impact on three aspects, in particular. First of all, it brings about a deep transformation of the traditional lesson model: from the *banking model* (Freire 1972) typical of frontal lectures – in which the teacher transfers knowledge to students, who passively listen to him/her – to a *participated model*, in which teacher and students – or students in pairs/groups – are active partners, collaborating to co-construct their

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2   This is an adaptation of Leisen's definition of CLIL, i.e. "Sprachsensibler Fachunterricht", namely a "language-sensitive content lesson" (Leisen 2010).

3   With reference to language, Pavón Vázquez and Ellison (2013) point out that CLIL teachers should become "'language teachers' in the content class", whose role is not to replace the FL teacher (who pursues *focus on formS*, Doughty, Williams 1998) but to *promote* the use of language, to help *notice* language structures (*focus on form*, Lyster 1998; Swain, Lapkin 2001), assisting learners to put their language skills – receptive and productive – into practice in order for them to learn subject matter content.

knowledge and build their skills and competences.[4] Second, CLIL changes the idea of what should be considered *central*, during a lesson. CLIL lessons are neither teacher-centred nor student-centred but "*thinking*-centred" (Pavón Vázquez, Ellison 2013, 73; emphasis added): cognitive and metacognitive processes – such as understanding, analyzing, summarizing, hypothesizing, assessing one's own knowledge, problem-solving, reflecting critically, creating – are therefore the centerpiece of CLIL classes. Third, the adoption of CLIL foresees a radical change in the *teacher's language* (cfr. § 1): CLIL teachers need to master an array of strategies in order to *facilitate* students' comprehension (scaffolding strategies); to *encourage* student deep reflection upon content and oral production of what has been understood; to *assess* students' comprehension.

Based on what has just been said and after a careful examination of the literature, *four main dimensions* characterizing CLIL methodology have been identified, each of which includes a number of specific aspects.

The first dimension concerns the issue of module/unit *planning* (Coonan 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2012a, 2012b; Menegale 2014a; Ricci Garotti 2008; Serragiotto 2014b), which comprises the following three aspects:

a. detailed, specific and clear *definition of learning objectives* – content and language ones. These should inform the accurate selection of the topics to be dealt with during the module, and therefore the aspects on which students are to be assessed;

b. rigorous *scheduling of each lesson*, not only of the whole module. The timing of the activities needs to be carefully pondered in order to avoid unprofessional improvisation;

c. *collaboration with colleagues*, synergistic planning of the module/unit by both the subject teacher (who is the main responsible for the CLIL module) and the FL teacher, who can be of considerable help especially as far as language aspects are concerned.

The second dimension that has been identified regards the *teacher's role* in CLIL (Coonan 2006a, 2007, 2011, 2012a, 2014a, 2014b; Cuccurullo 2014; Favaro, Menegale 2014; Ludbrook 2014a; Mezzadri 2014; Serragiotto 2014a). It is characterized by four aspects:

a. attention paid to the *issue of student comprehension*, i.e. the teacher is called to take great care to support his/her students' understanding of content, thus promoting effective learning: to this end, scaffolding strategies – such as exemplification, reformulation, redundancy, paraphrasing, use of visuals etc. – are to be adopted, and

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4 Dr. Eric Mazur, a Harvard physics professor, in an interview with Sir Ken Robinson, discriminates the "guide on the side" (i.e. the teacher-facilitator) from the "sage on the stage" (i.e. the omniscient teacher) (Robinson 2015, 115).

teaching material should be prepared accordingly, in line with the module objectives but especially with the students' levels, both in the subject and in the FL;

b. attention paid to the *issue of communication/relation with students*, which manifests itself in the sharing of agreed-upon learning objectives, and in everyday class dialogue and constructive discussion;

c. *focus on form*, i.e. the teacher is called to draw students' attention to the language used, to help them notice specific vocabulary, recurring patterns and functions which characterize the discipline and its style;

d. *use of Information and Communication Technologies* (ICTs, henceforth), that is the use of digital media to support student comprehension during lessons and to prepare teaching materials. ICTs are also necessary when the flipped-learning model is adopted.

The third dimension is that of the *student's role* in CLIL (Coonan 2003, 2006a, 2008, 2012a, 2014a, 2014b; Coyle, Hood, Marsh 2010; Dalton-Puffer 2007; Favaro, Menegale 2014; Menegale 2008, 2014b; Ricci Garotti 2008), which is defined by the following two aspects:

a. *active and central role of the student*, which is the result of the traditional frontal lesson transformation: students are centrepiece in participated lessons, while the teacher works in the background as a facilitator. Students are actively involved in every phase of the module/unit: from the negotiation of learning objectives to assessment; students *learn by doing* during both individual classwork and homework, collaborative and cooperative groupwork, during task-based activities and flipped learning activities;

b. *cognition, metacognition and competence acquisition-oriented lessons*, i.e. lessons that are *thinking-centred*, placing great emphasis on the development of students' LOTS and HOTS,[5] of their metacognition[6] and autonomy[7]: all these (meta)cognitive processes are highly important for students in order for them to develop effective practical and creative skills and competences, not only a wide inert knowledge of content.

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5 Low Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). With reference to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive processes (Bloom 1956), LOTS are represented by *remembering*, *understanding*, *applying*, while HOTS are represented by *analyzing*, *evaluating*, *creating*.

6 Metacognition is conceived as the learner's ability to reflect upon his/her own learning process.

7 Autonomy is "a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (Little 1991, 4)

The fourth and last dimension concerns *evaluation and assessment* in CLIL (Serragiotto 2003, 2006, 2014b). It is characterized by three aspects:

a. *diversified evaluation*, that takes account of students' learning outcomes in the subject, in the FL but also in the transversal competences linked to students' attitudes and behaviours, both in classwork and homework;

b. *process assessment*, i.e. a continuous assessment, from the beginning of the module/unit to its end, considering each student's whole learning route, not only his/her final product (e.g. the written test). One of the most effective means to achieve this is through the adoption of the learner's portfolio;

c. *self-assessment and self-evaluation*, that is the creation of self-reflection tools to be used by students, with the purpose of making them more aware of their own learning process, of their strengths and weaknesses.

2 The Study: Context, Participants and Data Collection Instrument

In Italy, a relatively recent School Reform (*Riforma degli Ordinamenti della Scuola Superiore* 2009, and subsequent decrees, d.P.R. 15/3/2010, n. 88-89) has foreseen that CLIL be compulsory in the final year(s) of high school[8] and has given full responsibility for teaching in CLIL to non-language subject (NLS) teachers, while FL teachers are not directly contemplated in the implementation of CLIL in schools (cfr. d.m. 10/9/2010, n. 249, art. 14). According to this Reform – which was applied to all 5th grades of *Licei* and *Istituti Tecnici* in the 2014/15 school year – the *entire curriculum* of a NLS should be dealt with in CLIL: however, given the novelty of the approach and due to the fact that the training of NLS teachers was still under way,[9] transitional rules were issued for the same year (cf. *Norme transitorie*, Nota MIURAOODGOS, prot. n. 4969, 25/07/2014): as stated in these rules, at least 50% of the NLS curriculum had to be developed in CLIL, and the topics covered through the FL had to be assessed during the State Examination, at the end of high school. The 2014/15 school year

[8] The School Reform came into force in the 2010/11 school year and was applied to 1st grades of all *Licei* and *Istituti Tecnici*. According to this Reform, CLIL became compulsory in all 3rd grades of *Licei Linguistici* two years later, as from 2012/13, and in all 5th grades of *Licei* and *Istituti Tecnici* four years later, as from the 2014/15 school year.

[9] Formal training in CLIL for NLS teachers has been supplied by means of methodological courses organized by Italian universities in collaboration with the Ministry of Education: *Corsi di perfezionamento in servizio sulla metodologia CLIL* (20 CFU), funded by the Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR) (ex d.d. 16/04/2012).

was thus crucial: in Italian public high schools, all students attending their 5th and final year were compulsorily involved in CLIL.

In the light of the national legislation on CLIL that has just been briefly presented, we wish to ascertain whether there exists a difference in the degree of *methodological awareness* (cf. § 1) shown by teachers who had been teaching in CLIL since before it became obligatory in the final year of high school (i.e. experienced CLIL teachers) and by those who started to teach in CLIL in 2014/15 (i.e. less-experienced CLIL teachers). Our research question is the following: *Is there a difference in terms of methodological awareness between experienced CLIL teachers and less-experienced CLIL teachers?* We hypothesize that experienced CLIL teachers have a higher degree of methodological awareness, compared to less-experienced ones.

2.1   Participants

This study – which is part of a broader Ph.D. research project, whose overall aims are beyond the scope of the present contribution – took place between April and November 2015: 187 Italian high school CLIL teachers took part in the data collection.[10] This sample was not selected through a rigorous random sampling procedure but it represents a *convenience sample*:[11] respondents were reached via email using the LaDiLS[12] mailing list and the writer's professional and personal contacts. In addition to this, with a view to increasing the number of respondents, we adopted the strategy of *snowball sampling*, asking our direct contacts to identify other potential participants and invite them to take part in the study.

Participating teachers were from all over Italy (74.87% Northern Italy, 24.06% Central Italy, 1.07% Southern Italy) and taught a variety of non-language subjects, the most frequent being Maths-Physics (21%), History-Geography-Philosophy-Human Sciences (20%), Natural Sciences-Chemistry, Biology (16%), ICT (8%), Law (8%), Graphics-History of Art (7%), Economics (7%), and some other less frequent subjects (13%). As for the foreign

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10   Participants are the same as those in Bier 2016.

11   According to Dörnyei, a *convenience sample* can be defined as follows: "Members of the target population are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, or easy accessibility" (Dörnyei 2010, 28).

12   The Laboratory of Foreign Language Teaching (*Laboratorio di Didattica delle Lingue Straniere*, LaDiLS) of the Department of Linguistics and Comparative Cultural Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice is coordinated by professor Carmel Mary Coonan. Its mission is to inquire into the field of foreign language teaching and provide pre- and in-service training to teachers of all school levels. For further information: `http://www.unive.it/pag/16977/`.

language adopted for CLIL, the most widely used was English (95.19%), followed by Spanish (2.67%), French (1.60%) and German (0.53%). Almost half the participants taught in *Licei* (48.7%) and *Istituti Tecnici* (47.6%), while the remaining ones taught in *Istituti Professionali* (3.7%).

2.2 Data Collection Instrument

The instrument we are going to describe is part of a larger questionnaire which will not be further explored in the present article. For the aims of this contribution, suffice it to say that the questionnaire was created online using Google Forms,[13] an application freely offered by Google. It was thus possible to contact respondents via email, copying and pasting the link to the questionnaire in an email message.

The instrument used to collect the data for the present study is composed of four questions: two multiple-choice questions, and two open-ended questions. They are formulated in Italian as they are addressed to Italian respondents.[14]

The aim of the first multiple-choice question – *Experience of CLIL teaching* – is to inquire into the participants' *experience of CLIL teaching*: respondents can choose between 14 options, ranging from 0 to 20 (and above) years of experience.

The second question – *With reference to your experience, do you believe that the adoption of CLIL has influenced your way of teaching (in general)?* – intends to ascertain whether respondents perceive the influence of CLIL methodology on their teaching practice, not necessarily in the FL. There are three possible answers to this question: *Yes*, *No*, and *I can't answer because I have no practical experience of CLIL in class*. Only those who select the affirmative answer are directed to the questions that follow.

The third question – *Could you briefly indicate what aspects of your teaching practice have been mostly influenced by the adoption of CLIL?* – and fourth question – *In what ways has the adoption of CLIL influenced the aspects you mentioned above?* – are open-ended and are aimed at gathering information about teachers' degree of *methodological awareness*: the assumption behind these questions is that if respondents are able to identify the aspects of their teaching practice and explain the ways in which these have been influenced by the adoption of CLIL, they are aware (more or less aware, depending on the answers given) of the methodology characterizing CLIL.

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13 https://www.google.it/intl/it/forms/about/.

14 The Italian version of the instrument used is available in Appendix 1.

3   The Analyses

In this section, two distinct phases of the analysis process will be presented. First of all, a preliminary analysis of collected data will be illustrated (cf. § 3.1): its aim was to transform raw data into two variables – an independent, grouping variable (i.e. CLIL experience) and a dependent variable (i.e. methodological awareness). Second, the statistical analysis will be described (cf. § 3.2): its aim was to detect any possible difference in the dependent variable as due to the independent one. In order to answer to the research question formulated above, the results of these analyses will be offered (cf. § 3).

3.1   Preliminary Data Analysis

As for the data collected through the first question, a graphical representation of results is available in Figure 1. As may be noticed, the whole sample can be nearly equally subdivided into two groups, on the basis of our *independent* variable (i.e. CLIL experience):

a. *experienced CLIL teachers*, with 2 or more years of CLIL experience (42.8%; N=80): these were already teaching in CLIL when CLIL became compulsory in the final year of high school in 2014/15;

b. *less-experienced CLIL teachers*, at their first CLIL experience or with just 1 year of experience (57.2%; N=107): these started teaching in CLIL during the year 2014/15.
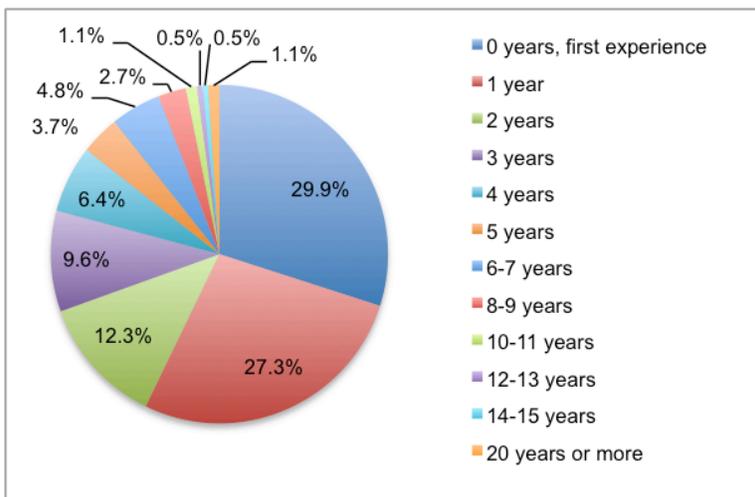

Figure 1. Experience of CLIL teaching (whole sample N=187)

As for the second question, the great majority of respondents answered *Yes* (80.2%; N=150), thus acknowledging that the adoption of CLIL has produced an influence on their way of teaching. A small percentage of participants answered *No* (4.8%; N=9), while the remaining chose the option *I can't answer* (15%; N=28) because they had no practical experience of CLIL teaching yet. Only those who gave an affirmative reply were invited to answer the last two questions.

As for questions three and four, all the open-ended qualitative answers (80.2%; N=150) have been carefully read and examined in order to be *quantitized*, i.e. converted into numerical codes to be used in the subsequent statistical analysis (Dörnyei 2007). To convert the open-ended answers, the following grid has been conceived (tab. 1), which is based on the main characteristics of CLIL: as you may notice, the four dimensions and the corresponding indicators are the ones explored in § 1.1.

Different scores have been assigned to the various indicators as a result of the following consideration: i. indicators that represent *defining* features of CLIL have greater relevance and therefore a higher score is attributed to them (1 point); ii. indicators that are *less characteristic* of CLIL – as they are typical of traditional teaching as well – have less relevance and so a lower score corresponds to them (0.5 points). The maximum score that one can obtain is 10 points, which represents the total sum of all the indicators.

On the basis of this grid, each *set of answers* has been considered: for every respondent, answers to questions three and four have been evaluated together, thus leading to the formulation of a single score for both questions.[15]

Table 1. Conversion grid to quantitize open-ended answers

Dimension with indicators	Score
Dimension 1: PLANNING	**2 points**
definition of learning objectives	0.5 points
lesson scheduling	0.5 points
collaboration with colleagues	1 point
Dimension 2: TEACHER'S ROLE	**3.5 points**
issue of student comprehension	1 point
issue of communication/relation with students	1 point
focus on form	1 point
use of ICTs	0.5 points
Dimension 3: STUDENT'S ROLE	**2 points**
active and central role of the student	1 point
cognition, metacognition and competence acquisition-oriented lessons	1 point

15 A few examples of how open-ended answers have been quantitized are available in Appendix 2.

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Dimension 4: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	**2.5 points**
diversified evaluation	1 point
process assessment	1 point
self-assessment and self-evaluation	0.5 points
Total	**10 points**

Conversely, respondents who answered *No* to the second question received a total score of 0, since they explicitly affirmed that the adoption of CLIL has not produced any impact on their way of teaching. Finally, as for those who chose the *I can't answer* option, no score has been attributed to them, and therefore will be treated as missing values in the subsequent statistical analysis.

The entire list of scores (i.e. 187 scores) obtained by all the participating teachers in questions three and four represents our *dependent* variable, which indicates the degree of their *methodological awareness*. This numerical variable is continuous and it has been submitted to a preliminary check, in order to ensure no violation of the assumption of normality: it can therefore be submitted to statistical analysis using parametric techniques.[16]

3.2   Data Analysis and Results

In order to answer to our research question – *Is there a difference in terms of methodological awareness between experienced CLIL teachers and less-experienced CLIL teachers?* – an independent samples t-test has been performed: its aim was to compare the *methodological awareness* scores for *experienced* CLIL teachers (i.e. with 2 or more years of experience) and *less-experienced* CLIL teachers (i.e. at their first experience or with just 1 year of experience).

A significant difference in methodological awareness scores has been detected: *experienced* CLIL teachers (M=2.21; SD=1.14; t(157)=-2.88; *p=.01* two-tailed) are *more* methodologically aware than their *less-experienced* counterparts (M=1.70; SD=1.10).[17] The magnitude of the differ-

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[16]   The reason for which *parametric* techniques should be preferred over their *non-parametric* alternatives can be found in Dörnyei: "The reason is that we want to use the most powerful procedure that we can find to test our hypotheses. [...] Parametric tests utilize the most information, so they are more powerful than their non-parametric counterparts" (Dörnyei 2007, 227-8).

[17]   This result has been confirmed by the corresponding non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test: it has revealed a significant difference in the methodological awareness level of *experienced* CLIL teachers (Md=2.0; N=80) and *less-experienced* CLIL teachers (Md=1.50; N=79), U=2424.50, z=-2.56, *p=.01*, r=.20. As for the interpretation of r values, Cohen (1988) suggests the following guidelines: .1 = small effect; .3 = medium effect; .5 = large effect

ences in the means (mean difference=-.51; 95% CI: from -.86 to -.16) is medium-low (eta squared=.05):[18] this means that 5% of variance in methodological awareness is explained by the fact of having a CLIL teaching experience above or below 2 years.

4   Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the results of the analyses that have just been described, the hypothesis according to which experienced CLIL teachers are more methodologically aware than their less-experienced colleagues has been confirmed. With this in mind, three aspects will now be discussed and some suggestions for practice and research will be offered.

First of all, it should be noted that *all* participating teachers – regardless of the experience group they belong to – showed quite a low degree of awareness of what CLIL means, methodologically speaking:[19] this suggests that what researchers have found among Andalusian teachers – namely that a poor idea of what CLIL is is still common (cf. § 1) – might apply to the Italian context as well.

Second, the majority of less-experienced teachers, i.e. those who have been teaching in CLIL since 2014/15, have recently received their formal training in CLIL during methodological courses organized by Italian universities in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (cf. § 2): nonetheless, their degree of methodological awareness is still significantly lower than that of their more experienced colleagues.

These considerations lead to a suggestion for practice, i.e. for *CLIL training*. Based on the results of this study, it seems that there is a need for training courses to insist (or insist more) on the *methodological nature* of CLIL, in order to help teachers reflect upon and become conscious of it: as we have seen in the introductory sections (cf. §§ 1, 1.1), CLIL does not only mean changing the language of instruction but invites teachers *to question* their routinized practices, in favour of the adoption of a whole series of strategies to put students in the foreground, as the main actors of thinking-centred lessons.

The third aspect we wish to comment upon regards the magnitude of the difference in methodological awareness for the two groups of teachers. We have seen that the fact of belonging to the group of experienced CLIL teachers or to that of less-experienced ones accounts for 5% of variance in the vari-

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18   Cohen (1988) suggests the following guidelines for interpreting eta squared values: .01 = small effect; .06 = moderate effect; .14 = large effect.

19   *Experienced* CLIL teachers: M=2.21, Md=2.0 (maximum score=10); *less-experienced* CLIL teachers: M=1.70, Md=1.50 (maximum score=10).

able under study. Therefore, we deduce that experience – albeit crucial – is obviously *not* the only factor responsible for the difference between teachers who have been teaching in CLIL since *before* it became compulsory in the final year of high school and teachers who have been teaching in CLIL since 2014/15. We believe that this difference may also be linked to the *compulsory nature* of CLIL, which has been imposed top-down by the national government, without contemplating bottom-up perspectives[20] in the political debate.

Given that "teachers are often the individuals most involved in educational reforms and just how they *perceive and react* to different reforms is critical" (Van Veen, Sleegers 2009, 234; emphasis added), we argue that issues of attitude[21] and motivation[22] are crucial in this respect. As for further research, it appears that there is a need to inquire into the still opaque area of CLIL teacher *motivation*, since the various reasons for which teachers undertake (voluntarily or because they *have* to) the CLIL journey may also have an impact on their degree of methodological awareness and therefore on the quality of their teaching.

As for the limitations of the present contribution, one important limit needs to be acknowledged: as previously said, we were not able to involve a rigorous random selected sample to carry out our data collection, but we opted for a convenience sample. As a consequence, caution ought to be paid when presenting results that, rigorously speaking, cannot be generalized to the whole reference population of Italian secondary high school CLIL teachers.

We are also aware of another limiting aspect which, in this specific case, can be regarded more as a strength rather than a weakness: our study is rooted in a very specific context, i.e. Italy, and the results obtained might be different (and/or not significant) if the study were repeated elsewhere. Nevertheless, we believe that this 'limit' may not be considered exactly as such in that it represents the very *raison d'être* of the present contribution: its aim was to offer a snapshot of the Italian situation after the School Reform, presenting a comparison between teachers who started teaching in CLIL before and after it, on the basis of their methodological awareness. In

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20 "Both top-down and bottom-up perspectives are essential for the success and sustainability of CLIL" (Coyle, Hood, Marsh 2010, 156).

21 An attitude is "a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects" (Sarnoff 1970, 279).

22 Motivation is the stimulus that "moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort and persist in action" (Dörnyei, Ushioda 2011, 3).

agreement with Baetens Beardsmore (1993),[23] Dalton-Puffer (2007),[24] Coyle, Hood, Mash (2010)[25] and Bruton (2011),[26] we are deeply convinced of the great importance of the socio-cultural and educational context in which CLIL sees its implementation. The fact of being context-sensitive can thus be considered a strength of the present study, whose aim was to identify possible grey areas that might be improved with further research, on the one hand, and more focussed training, on the other.

Acknowledgements

[23] "The social situation in each country in general and decisions in educational policies in particular always have an effect, so there is no single blueprint of content and language integration that could be applied in the same way in different countries – *no model is for export*" (Baetens Beardsmore 1993, 39; emphasis added).

[24] "CLIL classrooms cannot be seen as 'L2 islands' but are *deeply embedded* in the [country's] educational context. CLIL lessons are part of the L1 matrix culture" (Dalton-Puffer 2007, 202; emphasis added).

[25] "CLIL is not a phenomenon which can be isolated from the wider context" (Coyle, Hood, Marsh 2010, 155).

[26] "CLIL cannot be seen in a vacuum" (Bruton 2011, 530).

Appendix 1: Instrument Used

1. Esperienza di insegnamento in CLIL (solo una risposta è possibile)
   – 0 anni, è la mia prima esperienza di CLIL
   – 1 anno
   – 2 anni
   – 3 anni
   – 4 anni
   – 5 anni
   – 6-7 anni
   – 8-9 anni
   – 10-11 anni
   – 12-13 anni
   – 14-15 anni
   – 16-17 anni
   – 18-19 anni
   – 20 anni e oltre

2. Facendo riferimento alla Sua esperienza, ritiene che l'adozione della metodologia CLIL abbia influenza sulla Sua pratica didattica (in generale)?
   – Sì
   – No
   – Non posso rispondere perché non ho esperienza pratica di CLIL in classe

3. Brevemente, potrebbe indicarmi QUALI ASPETTI della Sua pratica didattica sono/sono stati maggiormente influenzati dall'adozione della metodologia CLIL?

4. IN QUALE/I MODO/I la metodologia CLIL influisce/ha influito sugli aspetti di cui sopra?

Appendix 2: Examples of Quantitization

INS ID	3. Brevemente, potrebbe indicarmi QUALI ASPETTI della Sua pratica didattica sono/sono stati maggiormente influenzati dall'adozione della metodologia CLIL?	4. IN QUALE/I MODO/I la metodologia CLIL influisce/ha influito sugli aspetti di cui sopra?	Dimensione 1 Progettazione			Dimensione 2 Ruolo dell'insegnante				Dimensione 3 Ruolo dello studente		Dimensione 4 Valutazione			TOTALE
			1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	2	3	
67	1. Ridimensionamento del ruolo della lezione frontale 2. Maggior coinvolgimento degli studenti in attività autonome 3. Necessità di pianificazione molto dettagliata della lezione 4. Necessità di curare gli aspetti linguistici, soprattutto nel primo e secondo anno di corso	1. Riduzione dei tempi dedicati alla lezione frontale 2. Predisposizione di attività autonome atte ad un maggior coinvolgimento degli studenti 3. Stesura di schede sulla lezione sia per me per la conduzione delle attività, che per gli studenti come materiali didattici. 4. Ad ogni lezione, riflessione su aspetti linguistici specifici che emergono dalla trattazione dei contenuti, soprattutto nel primo e secondo anno di corso.		0.5		1		1		1	1				4.5
109	CLIL non ha influenzato questi aspetti, in quanto erano già presenti in modo sistematico nella mia didattica, ma li ha potenziati inserendo anche il punto di vista sugli obiettivi linguistici -cooperative learning -didattica con tecnologie -relazione fra obiettivi e valutazione	La risposta è contenuta nella domanda sopra	0.5						0.5	1		1			3
113	L'utilizzo delle TIC. Le uso di più.	Maggior utilizzo e maggior conoscenza.							0.5						0.5

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