mediAzioni 41 (2024)
ISSN 1974-4382

INTEGRATING MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES IN CONTENT AND LANGUAGE(S) INTEGRATING LEARNING: A SURVEY OF RESEARCH ON TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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Citation: D'Angelo, Francesca (2024) "Integrating Multilingual Practices in Content and Language(s) Integrated Learning: a Survey of Research on Teachers' Perspective", *mediAzioni* 41: A45-A69, https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263, ISSN 1974-4382.

Abstract: The role of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in bilingual education has been an object of debate in European countries. On the one hand, it is commonly agreed that CLIL lessons stimulate interest in language through content; on the other, several problems and insecurities about the concrete implementation of this methodology emerge through teachers' surveys and questionnaires. In particular, the most predominant issues revealed by previous and current research in the field concern the difficulties that subject teachers face due to their inadequate language competencies. This affects both teachers and learners, and becomes a substantial obstacle, especially when dealing with the specialised technical vocabulary of scientific subjects. First, the paper starts contextualising CLIL within the European and Italian framework, examining the most important policy recommendations to better understand the acknowledged importance of this methodology and the role it plays in implementing the principles of plurilingualism and multilingual education. Second, a survey of research, giving voice to primary and secondary school CLIL teachers, analyses the most significant perceived difficulties they face implementing a CLIL lesson. Specifically, the following aspects are examined: i.e. potential benefits of CLIL, teaching, assessing, and evaluating issues, adequacy of teaching resources and material, linguistic issues and support received. Third, shedding light on the linguistic challenges, the work propounds the integration of inclusive multilingual practices, specifically translanguaging, to overcome teachers perceived linguistic inadequacy. Indeed, by going beyond the existence of conventionally defined linguistic boundaries, translanguaging allows a higher degree of freedom of expression and self-confidence, for both students and teachers, as well the use of more diverse linguistic resources, others than English, as vehicular languages in CLIL.

Keywords: translanguaging; multilingual education; CLIL; language teaching; multilingual practice.

1. Introduction

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence is a crucial goal to achieve in education according to the European Commission. Indeed, it promotes the development of linguistic and communication awareness and even metacognitive strategies which enable the social agent to become more aware of and control his or her own 'spontaneous' ways of handling tasks, and in particular their linguistic dimension (Council of Europe 2001: 134). As claimed by Maalouf et al. (2008: 7), what prompts us to learn languages may be 'a whole host of personal reasons stemming from individual or family background, emotional ties, professional interest, cultural preferences, intellectual curiosity, to name but a few'. Hence, they emphasise the need to support languages other than English from a European perspective: "to encourage, even for languages which are very much minority languages, their development in the rest of the continent, is inseparable from the very idea of a Europe of peace, culture, universality and prosperity" (Maalouf et al. 2008: 8).

The achievement of communicative competence in multiple languages is one of the main goals of primary and secondary education set by the European Commission, as reported in the White Paper on Education and Training, Teaching and Learning. Towards the Learning Society: "It is becoming necessary to everyone, irrespective of training and education routes chosen, to be able to acquire and keep up their ability to communicate in at least two Community languages in addition to their mother tongue" (European Commission 1995: 67). The European Commission, thus, highlights the importance of a particular aspect - communicative awareness - focused on the knowledge of how language functions, including the communication strategies, body language, etc.

More recently, the new Council of Europe Recommendation (Council of Europe 2022) stresses the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education to achieve a democratic culture. It aims at contrasting two main concerns regarding some common beliefs of public authorities and civil society: i.e. first that proficiency in one additional language is sufficient and, second, that proficiency in minority or migrant languages, widespread in today's increasingly diverse societies, is harmful to societal cohesion. Accordingly, the Recommendation emphasises the cognitive, linguistic and social benefits of learning several languages, demonstrating how plurilingual and intercultural competencies constitute key factors for educational success, integration and social understanding, assessing and formulating the arguments and opinions that are essential to democracy. Hence, a holistic vision for language education is presented, which places language at the heart of all learning and which embraces all languages and all educational contexts.

The Council of Europe's Recommendation on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture (Council of Europe 2022) reflects the key role of support for CLIL LOTE (Languages Others than English) project (Daryai-Hansen et al. 2023). Indeed, CLIL creates situations for content-based, meaningful language use in LOTE classrooms or in other subjects, hereby promoting learners' motivation for LOTE. However, CLIL experts stress

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

that CLIL often is reduced to Content and English Integrated Learning (CEIL). The CLIL-LOTE-START project made the point that: "the translation of CLIL into classroom practice as well as its further development […] have been mainly restricted to English-language contexts. This is even though the promotion of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) is a primary objective for language teaching in schools and one of the main aims of European language policy." Yet, thanks to its potential to serve as a context for meaningful language use and situated language learning, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has been considered by the EU institutions as a fundamental tool to foster the multilingual competencies of European citizens, to be offered alongside regular foreign language teaching for students in school curricula. Overall, from the most prominent and influential literature in the field, a shift in emphasis in research can be observed from studies orienting to the effects of CLIL on language learning outcomes to studies that mainly address the need to adopt a truly integrated view on language and content and to explore the potential that CLIL has in supporting the development of subject literacies (Tommaso 2020). Nonetheless, the point of view of teachers, including their attitudes, perceptions, and needs is still generally overlooked.

The paper traces the historical phases of research on CLIL in Europe, since the 1990s, in terms of conceptualisation and implementation. It aims at providing an insight into the development of CLIL methodology in the European scenario, with a focus on the Italian context, examining the challenges that CLIL primary and secondary school teachers face due to insufficient training and/or inadequate language competence. An integration of translanguaging, as a "practical theory of languages" is presented, to overcome the criticalities revealed by previous and current research in different multilingual educational settings. More specifically, first, after contextualising CLIL within the European and Italian framework, the article discusses the most important policy recommendations to better understand the significant role of this methodology applying the principles of democracy, plurilingualism and multilingual education. Second, it presents and discusses the results of a survey of research, giving voice to CLIL teachers, to examine the most significant affordances and constraints of implementing CLIL lessons from a practical and educational point of view. Finally, the integration of multilingual practices into CLIL methodology is suggested, overcoming the concept of conventionally defined linguistic boundaries and, most importantly, allowing spaces for languages other than English as a vehicular language.

2. *CLIL in the European Scenario*

Generally speaking, CLIL refers to using an additional language as the means of instruction in non-language school subjects. The term was first used in the mid-1990s in Europe where it received political support from the European Union as a key element in favour of its multilingualism policy. Indeed, CLIL was seen as an important means by which mainstream schools could foster their students' bi- and multilingual skills. As the acronym suggests, attention to both

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

content and language learning is at the core of CLIL methodology. According to Dalton-Puffer (2011: 184), CLIL is content-driven since lessons are organised as content lessons with subject curricula defining their learning goals. In a recent work (2023), Dalton-Puffer maintains that, despite significant variation in its implementation, the defining characteristics of CLIL, the dual teaching/learning goals from content and language, remain constant across contexts. However, since the "content" differs across a broad range of curricular subjects, all with their own pedagogical traditions, it is not an easy task to stipulate one unified CLIL pedagogy. Several firm principles for CLIL pedagogy, however, have been formulated: content and language integration in planning and classroom practice, bi/multilingualism and translanguaging, scaffolding, and keyness of subject literacy. Importantly, she notices that some mediating factors seem to be the type of program, learner age, and general proficiency levels in the CLIL language. Additionally, even those contexts where outcomes of traditional foreign language classes are widely considered unsatisfactory show clearer positive effects of CLIL.

Hence, this methodology can be defined in different ways, allowing for different types of implementations. Marsh for example, defines CLIL as "any activity in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and subject have a joint role" (Marsh 2002: 58). On the other hand, the broadness of the definitions has caused disagreement among scholars on the relationship of CLIL with other forms of bilingual education, especially immersion (e.g., Cenoz et al. 2014; Lasagabaster and Sierra 2010; Nikula and Mård-Miettinen 2014).

Looking back at the Europe of the 1990s, it can be observed that the different phases of political and economic integration led to a common orientation towards bilingual education. Several policy initiatives were undertaken by European governments requiring educational institutions to meet the standards and needs of a growing multicultural and multilingual society. This led to the establishment and adoption of the term CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in 1994 to refer to a specifically European approach to bilingual education. The principles of CLIL methodology acknowledge and include other forms of bilingual education, for example, immersion. Therefore, a new label was needed to stress that CLIL is a mainstream European initiative to reinforce bilingual education also in areas where policymakers only included the L1 as the mainstream language of instruction. Of particular relevance to implementing the educational policies was the 1995 White Paper on Education by the European Commission claiming that Europeans should be able to communicate in three languages: i.e. their national language and two other European languages (European Commission 1995; Coyle 2008). In addition, CLIL was also encouraged and supported by the Council of Europe, through the activities of its European Centre for Modern Languages. The establishment of many EU-funded networks for CLIL stakeholders, such as CLIL Compendium or CLIL Cascade Network (CCN), also confirms the European core of CLIL. Thanks to these initiatives, CLIL started to spread across the continent right from the start.

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

The Eurydice Brief, built on the Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe 2017 report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017), is a useful tool providing a wide range of data on foreign language policies directed at the school level in European education systems. A particular section is devoted to “the quality of foreign language teaching with a focus on teachers and their visits abroad for professional purposes, and CLIL as a teaching approach” (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017: 4). Specifically, as regards the CLIL section, the Commission's Communication Promoting Language Learning and Language Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006, in 2003, defines CLIL as a methodology “in which pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language” and it states that CLIL “has a major contribution to make to the Union's language learning goals” (European Commission 2003: 8). Interestingly, several arguments are advanced to support the implementation of CLIL in European schools. CLIL is presented as a teaching method that increases motivation in young language learners – particularly those not performing well in mainstream language instruction but also their level of self-confidence. Besides, it is described as an instrument to improve the use of language in real life and meaningful contexts, a core principle of the communicative approach to teaching foreign languages. Finally, it has been observed that a CLIL lesson allows us to increase learners' exposure to the language without taking additional time from the curriculum.

The report claims that in nearly all countries, some schools offer CLIL provisions. Whilst the document points to the lack of internationally comparable data at the EU level to show the extent of this type of educational programme in each country, it confirms the results of the previous report (i.e. Eurydice 2006) that CLIL is not very widespread (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2012) except in a handful of countries. “Only in Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria, Malta and Liechtenstein is CLIL provision available in all schools at some stage” (13).

Indeed, the 2006 Eurydice Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe report indicates that CLIL was mostly small-scale and was mainly concentrated in (upper) secondary levels. There are various reasons which prompted European schools to adopt CLIL. For instance, in Spain and more recently Italy, it was introduced due to a commonly perceived dissatisfaction with the outcomes of foreign language learning. Hence, policymakers and stakeholders have made CLIL provision (usually in certain specified subjects only) a compulsory part of the school system (see Nikula 2017; Lasagabaster and Ruiz de Zarobe 2010; Di Martino and Di Sabato 2012).

In other countries, such as in the Netherlands, CLIL originates from a few schools for International Education and was followed by a growing number of secondary level CLIL schools reaching an important result, i.e. 50% of the school curriculum taught in English (Admiraal et al. 2006). As regards Germany, Breidbach and Viebrock (2012: 6) point out that CLIL tends to be oriented towards "upgrading top-level schools". Indeed, the spread of CLIL gained the support of the political agendas of local governments. In Austria and Finland, CLIL started to be implemented in the 1990s, even though confined to a rather small scale probably due to the lack of strict nation-level policy

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

guidelines and lack of support from the educational authorities (Nikula and Järvinen 2013; Dalton-Puffer et al. 2011).

The first studies published on CLIL were mainly aimed at providing general guidelines to implement this type of education (e.g., Fruhauf et al. 1996; Marsh and Langé 1999). Since it was strictly related to the context of use, the research was oriented towards a comparison of instances of good practices in different countries, stressing the advantages and the main challenges faced by schools. Among the most important European reports on CLIL, it is worth mentioning the CLIL/EMILE the European Dimension, edited by David Marsh in 2002. It brings together reports by European experts on the benefits and potential educational impact of CLIL, descriptions of how different countries have implemented it and general recommendations for good practice. Considering that CLIL represented a completely new educational approach in many countries where the school language was restricted to the L1, it was fundamental to provide a concrete instrument to guide and support teachers undertaking this new methodology.

An influential study that paved the way for further research in this field was the 4Cs Framework by Coyle (1999). In particular, Coyle highlights the importance of focusing on content as the starting point in a CLIL lesson, relating it to the other fundamental aspects involved, i.e. communication (language), cognition (thinking), and culture (awareness of self and others). What is important to stress about this pedagogical approach and its updates (Coyle 2007) is the dynamic role of language in the learning process, distinguished as the language of learning, for learning, and through learning. That is, language is seen as a prerequisite, as a means, and as an objective to achieve. To use Coyle's own words, this entails a view of language that "combines learning to use the language and using language to learn" (Coyle 2007: 552).

To offer a wider perspective on CLIL, it is worth mentioning an interesting work by Gearon and Cross (2020) on the role of CLIL in fostering pluringualism. It considers what lessons might be learned from a plurilingual point of view on CLIL in Anglophone contexts and implications for CLIL pedagogy in educational contexts where English is the first language. Through an in-depth analysis of different strategies used by two Australian teachers to provide comprehensible input about new content, the authors highlight how the use of English L1 can potentially benefit an integrated focus on content and language while also detracting from those aims. Importantly, a discussion of the issues this methodology raises for teachers' professional learning in such contexts is included. In particular, it regards the shift of focus of teachers from having learners merely understand and 'receive' messages to scaffolding their ability to work with all the language resources that they have available to them to access and build new concepts.

Thus, looking at different historical phases in the conceptualisation and research on CLIL in the European scenario just reviewed, two main focuses can be identified since the 1990s. The first wave of CLIL studies concentrated on language learning in terms of outcomes. In the second wave, the descriptions of practice and studies of participant perspectives are the core of interest of the

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

new approaches towards CLIL methodology. The most recent research has highlighted the peculiar aspect of CLIL as an educational approach, through theory-based interventions, not simply as a context of foreign language teaching. What is more, as claimed by Dulton-Puffer et al. (2022), the new approach is in line with the UN sustainable development goal of Quality Education (i.e. SDG n. 4) with equity and teamwork identified as future challenges and where CLIL is considered as a catalyst for a "more collaborative and multidisciplinary approach in education".

3. Translanguaging in CLIL

Following these premises, the multilingual learners' unique linguistic and cultural repertoire should be at the centre of the teaching process. Indeed, it is worth considering all the multiple varieties of languages, with different levels of proficiency and registers mastered, acquired in diverse educational contexts and social realities, the perceived social prestige of those languages as well as the attitude towards them. In other words, a shift here is needed from an ideal monolingual learner to real learners of additional languages in realistic educational contexts.

Before focusing on the concept of translanguaging as a linguistic practice which could support CLIL teachers in multilingual classrooms, it is worth mentioning that this transversal orientation is in line with the aforementioned objectives of the pluralistic approaches promoted by the CoE. They propose teaching and learning activities, which involve several linguistic and cultural varieties simultaneously aiming at the establishment of links between competences which the learners already possess and those which the educational system wishes them to acquire. Indeed, Candelier et al. (2012) introduce the acronym 'Content and Languages Integrated Learning (CLsIL)' to refer to didactic approaches that use teaching/learning activities involving several (i.e. more than one) languages/varieties of languages in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), instead of dealing with the target language in isolation. Additionally, it should be noted that some outputs also consider the transition from formal to non-formal contexts.

Hence, a translanguaging approach to multilingual education allows us to encompass the categorical dichotomies from the past between monolinguals and bilinguals, propounding innovative aspects in terms of linguistic theories and pedagogical approaches to multilingualism. First, referring to trans-system and trans-space means being focused on students' subjectivity, enabling them to engage multiple meaning-making systems through a fluid practice going beyond and between different language education systems, structures, and practices. Second, the transformative nature of translanguaging has been seen as a new configuration of language and education where old concepts and structures are surpassed to transform learners' subjectivities, identities, and cognitive and social structures. As regards the impact on language and education analysis, an interdisciplinary approach provides a lens through

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

which a broader understanding of human sociality, human cognition, and human learning is possible (Garcia and Wei 2015).

Translanguaging is used as an umbrella term including a wide variety of examples of both theories and practices of fluid use of languages, breaking the traditional conventions and the strict purist ideologies to get closer to the way people communicate in their everyday lives. An interesting work by Li Wei (2018) is centred upon the main reasons why translanguaging meets the need for a practical theory of language in applied linguistics. He states that his main concern is not to identify and define different instances of translanguaging; instead, the author recognises the need for an innovative approach to multilingualism that suits the complex linguistic realities of the 21st century. Despite the acknowledgement of multilingualism as a reality of having different languages coexisting in different parts of the world, what remains problematic, nowadays, is the mixing of languages. Indeed, the author points out that one of the most important post-multilingualism challenges concerns the recognition of multiple and complex interweaving of languages and linguistic varieties, where boundaries between languages and other semiotic means are constantly reassessed and adjusted. Following this line, concepts such as indigenous, native, and minority languages are questioned.

What is worth recalling about Li Wei's reconceptualization of translanguaging, as both practice and process, is the cognitive added value of the concept:

> By adding the trans prefix to languaging, I not only wanted to have a term that better captures multilingual language users' fluid and dynamic practices […] but also put forward two further arguments: 1 Multilinguals do not think unilingually in a politically named linguistic entity, even when they are in a monolingual mode and producing one namable language only for a specific stretch of speech or text. 2. Human beings think beyond language, and thinking requires the use of a variety of cognitive, semiotic, and modal resources of which language in its conventional sense of speech and writing is only one (Li Wei 2018: 18).

In the reported passage, the interrelation of language processing with other auditory and visual processes is particularly highlighted. Like any other cognitive process, it cannot be considered independent and, what is more, the language experience of plurilingual learners and users is closely interconnected and mutually beneficial. With language being a multisensory and multimodal semiotic system, interconnected with all the other cognitive systems, for the author, translanguaging means overcoming the separation between linguistic, non-linguistic, semiotic, and cognitive systems.

Translanguaging theorists argue that it is important to enhance and exploit the plurilingual repertoire of learners which differs considerably from the monolingual native speaker. Indeed Plurilingual learners need to speak different languages to serve a variety of functions. Hence, the idealised monolingual native speaker as a point of reference for each language mastered is far from a possible reality. Indeed, multilingual learners acquire new linguistic and semiotic skills when dealing with additional languages. In

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

addition, their linguistic repertoire is dynamic in that they reconstruct and adjust the languages they master to accommodate other languages. The features that the new language may have in common with the learners' linguistic background do not only refer to the grammatical aspects of the language but also other emotional factors of language learning including aptitude and motivation.

In the case of plurilingual speakers, it is fundamental to look at the sum of their multiple language capacities from a holistic perspective. Nonetheless, the term competence, according to some scholars (e.g. Hall 2019), is not adopted due to the idea of "homogeneity, permanence, and universality" that it carries (Hall 2019: 86). Hall suggests using the term 'repertoire' to refer to "the totality of an individual's language knowledge defining it as conventionalised constellations of semiotic resources for taking action" (86). Interestingly, Cenoz and Gorter (2019) add the pre-modifier expression "multilingual and multimodal" to the term 'repertoire' to highlight not only the heterogeneous background of multilingual learners and speakers but also the non-linguistic semiotic resources they deploy.

It has been argued (Lewis et al. 2012b), that a fundamental difference exists between teacher-directed translanguaging and the type of translanguaging employed by learners. Teacher-directed translanguaging involves planned and structured activities by the teacher and is conceived as a transformative pedagogy. Teachers need to adapt to the diverse cognitive, linguistic and cultural profiles of all learners in a classroom. In other words, they need to take into account linguistic, social, and educational factors acting holistically to differentiate instruction. Particularly for speakers/learners of multiple languages, teachers could make use of translanguaging approaches in a CLIL lesson as scaffolding to ensure that the learners can understand and process technical information and produce outputs in new language practice and knowledge. Interestingly, a change can be observed in the role of teachers in the classroom since they abandon their authority role to facilitate project-based instruction.

Busch (2011) maintains that adopting translanguaging for teaching requires a 'critical gesture' of language practices that aims at developing a high degree of linguistic awareness. Precisely, teachers' translanguaging is focused on language practice as a resource but it also includes students' discourses, concerns and topics. Most importantly, a teacher who uses translanguaging participates in the process as a learner, adopting a multivoicedness. Indeed, teachers trying to involve and include learners' multiple languages in the classroom, constantly make an effort to dynamically integrate a fluid and multilingual repertoire to mirror the classroom needs and expectations. For minority language students, as already argued, this practice is particularly important to build on students' linguistic strengths and to reduce the risks of alienation since it involves linguistic and cultural references familiar to them.

A practical example of translanguaging practice enhancing metalinguistic awareness, developed by Kano (2010), concerns Japanese students. They became more aware of the differences between Japanese and English from a structural point of view and this made them more successful with writing skills

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

in English. In particular, this translanguaging approach followed three main steps: firstly, students read bilingual texts on the topic of the assignment, presented either side by side or as an English text coupled with a parallel translation in Japanese; secondly, they discussed the bilingual readings mostly in Japanese. Thirdly, students produced essays in English on the topic of bilingual reading and the discussion in Japanese. Since this practice leads Japanese learners to move back and forth along the continuum of their whole multilingual repertoire, overcoming the strict boundaries between languages, one of the features enhanced was greater linguistic awareness. That is to say, their written production in English was linguistically enriched by the attention paid to their Japanese language and cultural practices.

On the other hand, García et al. (2012) have reported the use of translanguaging by teachers working in New York schools with emergent bilingual students. Three main metafunctions can be identified: conceptualisation of keywords and elements; development of MLA; and creation of affective bonds with students. An interesting example of an analysis of the language used by teachers and students comes from a recent study by Muguruza et al. (2020). The study is set in the Basque country, where students' reactions to the flexible use of three languages as a medium of instruction were analysed: i.e. English, Basque, and Spanish. It was an English medium instruction (EMI) course with a flexible language policy. More specifically, materials and lectures are in English, but students were free to use English, Basque, and Spanish to actively participate in the class and to complete their work.

This approach was aimed at reducing comprehension problems due to the use of English as the only medium of instruction. It is based on a translanguaging approach described by Canagarajah (2011: 401) as: "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system". The findings confirm that the flexible use of languages by teachers and students helped students to feel free to communicate their meanings and interact by choosing among three languages. Not only was translanguaging an instrument to ameliorate the overall comprehension of the course but also a lower level of anxiety was reported.

To sum up, it is paramount to recall seven main purposes of translanguaging as used by teachers, identified by García and Li Wei (2015): (1) to differentiate among students' levels and adapt instruction to different types of students in multilingual classrooms (i.e. monolinguals, bilinguals, emergent bilinguals); (2) to build background knowledge so that students can make meaning of the content object of study; (3) to deepen understandings and cognitive engagement, develop and extend new knowledge and develop critical thinking; (4) to enhance cross-linguistic transfer and MLA to strengthen the students' ability to translanguage to meet the communicative needs of a particular sociocultural context; (5) for crosslinguistic flexibility; (6) for identity investment and positionality, to engage learners; (7) to interrogate linguistic inequality and disrupt sociopolitical structures to engage in social justice.

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

4. The Study: Teachers' Perspective on CLIL

For the current discussion, it is important to stress that the aforementioned EU documents on CLIL highlight the need for teachers to be adequately prepared for this new type of didactic approach and methodology. Indeed, they mention an adequate proficiency of teachers in the foreign language used in the classroom as well as adequate teaching materials. More specifically, the European Framework for CLIL training was created as a point of reference to train CLIL teachers across Europe, describing the different types of expertise required for CLIL teachers. It pinpoints, among others, CLIL expertise "in the content subject; in a language; in best practice in teaching and learning; in the integration of the previous three; and the integration of CLIL within educational institutions" (ECML 2011: 5).

To achieve these goals, teachers' education as well as a close collaboration between initial and in-service teachers becomes fundamental. Nonetheless, the results of the already mentioned CLIL LOTE research (Daryai-Hansen et al. 2023) reveal that teacher education is one of the key factors that make it difficult to implement this educational practice as the participants of the survey emphasize that not enough teachers are trained to use the approach and that CLIL often is not part of teacher education. They recommend that CLIL LOTE transitions should be addressed in initial and/or in-service teacher education. However, it is worth reporting from the study that less than 10% of them assume that CLIL LOTE transitions are supported in their context through initial and/or in-service teacher education.

In the case of the Italian school context, the ministerial guidelines mainly focus on vehicular language, English in the majority of the cases, and on the specific methodology required to develop a CLIL lesson. If on the one hand, the multitude of academic papers published on CLIL teachers' performance, their required skills, linguistic level etc. suggest that more attention is being devoted to teachers, on the other, teachers' opinions and attitudes towards CLIL methodology worldwide show a commonly perceived inadequacy and concern about their own linguistic level. An interesting study by Costa (2017), for example, indicates that teacher trainees were insecure about their level of English as an additional language. Another controversial issue with CLIL methodology concerns to which point of the lesson and to which extent it is advisable to introduce the vehicular language.

Di Martino and Di Sabato (2012), on the other hand, recorded a negative attitude towards the imposition of English as a medium of instruction at the upper secondary level due to the lack of prior linguistic training of students and teachers. Moreover, it can be noticed that the majority of needs analyses of teachers towards CLIL methodology are oriented toward learners' difficulties, perceptions and needs rather than their own needs. Hence, a shift of focus is required that integrates surveys targeted at teachers and trainee teachers with aspects relating to their perceptions, needs, and insecurities through the different phases of a CLIL lesson, i.e. design, looking for teaching resources,

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

assessing etc. Ruiz-Garrido and Fortanet Gómez (2009), in their work, underline the importance of understanding teachers' needs through interviews and questionnaires since they can tell us what they need and what they're lacking. Hence, they are crucial to understanding where the problem arises and how to tackle the difficulties faced by teachers.

Along the same line, Cinganotto (2016) makes important observation regarding the challenges of CLIL implementation in the Italian school system. Specifically, on teacher training, she maintains that it is highly demanding for CLIL teachers in Italy, requiring proficiency in both the target language and CLIL methodology. Indeed, balancing these training requirements with existing professional and personal responsibilities presents a significant challenge. It is worth stressing that, despite the mandate for CLIL across Italy, only a small percentage of teachers have been trained.

A further challenge is represented by the lack of appropriate lesson materials. While the market for CLIL-specific books is expanding, aligning content delivery with suitable language levels remains difficult, as much of the available material is designed for native speakers. The National Digital School Plan (PNSD) aims to assist teachers in planning and implementing CLIL activities using ICT and creating original digital content, in line with innovative teaching models like flipped classrooms and the BYOD model (Bring Your Own Device). Besides, an additional criticality reported by the author lies in assessment methods, as CLIL requires evaluation of both subject content and language proficiency, which is a departure from traditional assessment practices in Italy.

The following section of the study focuses on a questionnaire conducted on teachers' perception and attitudes towards CLIL taking into account the most challenging aspects reported in the implementation phase of a CLIL lesson in a foreign language. After commenting on the results of the survey, an integration of the pedagogical practice of translanguaging is presented to support teachers and facilitate CLIL implementation. Indeed, it must be noticed that the latest indications on CLIL in Italy (see nota ministeriale 4969 25.07.2014 Ajello et al. 2015) dealing with the teaching of non-linguistic subjects in a foreign language, a specific part is devoted to the skills required for a CLIL teacher: i.e. obtain a C1 level in the vehicular language according to the CEFR and to attend and pass a higher education course on CLIL methodology (corso di perfezionamento).

4.1. Participants

35 teachers and trainee teachers enrolled in a higher education course on CLIL methodology (the aforementioned "corso di perfezionamento"), in Italy, were recruited to participate in the survey through the virtual forum session of the course. The eligibility criteria were the following: being enrolled in the course, having completed all the course modules, and a previous practical experience (direct or indirect) of CLIL methodology. For instance, some trainee teachers declared to have assisted other mainstream teachers in preparing the material for the CLIL lesson.

https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/19263

It is important to bear in mind that the course was aimed at introducing the scientific background of CLIL and included the most prominent and influential theories propounded by experts in the field. Moreover, the course includes a practical laboratory focused on explaining, step by step, how to practically implement a CLIL lesson in the vehicular language. The laboratory-recorded material is taken from CLIL lessons delivered in English, French, Spanish, and German to broaden the opportunity of implementing a CLIL lesson in the four most commonly taught languages in the Italian school curricula. The topics developed in the course focus on notions concerning the legal aspects of CLIL in the European and Italian contexts, pedagogy, and psychology. The laboratory of CLIL illustrates lessons in science, history, arts etc. in the four languages. More specifically, the participants attended the following modules:

- The European Education Landscape
- Innovation in the Italian school system
- Developmental psychology in education
- Didactics and teaching
- General Teaching
- Teaching Students with Special Educational Needs
- Teaching technologies
- Modern Foreign Languages Teaching and CLIL
- Special aspects of CLIL
- Language of Schooling and Education and CLIL
- CLIL Laboratory: practical examples of CLIL lessons in English, French, Spanish and German.

4.2 Material: the E-Questionnaire

The e-questionnaire we designed, generated through Google Forms, includes 9 items. Q9 focusses on translanguaging, Q1-8 are general questions on CLIL. Each item is scored on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 = the statement is false or you strongly disagree; 2 = the statement is mostly false or you disagree; 3 = the statement is about equally true or false, you cannot decide, or you are neutral on the statement; 4 = the statement is mostly true or you agree; and 5 = the statement is definitely true or you strongly agree. The instructions provided were: “Please read each item carefully and provide an answer that best corresponds to your agreement or disagreement. There are no right or wrong answers. State your opinions as accurately as possible”. Research literature on questionnaires highlights several methodological and ethical considerations that have been addressed in the study to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings. Methodologically, since the design of questionnaires is paramount, the questions have been structured in a clear, unbiased, and appropriate way to elicit accurate responses (Dillman et al., 2014). A close-ended structure has been opted for since, as demonstrated by previous research in the field (e.g. Reja et al., 2003), the choice between open-ended and closed-ended questions can significantly impact the depth and nature of the data collected. From an ethical point of view, informed consent has been ensured;

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the data collection guarantees the respondents anonymity and maintains data confidentiality to protect participants' privacy and promote trust (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The statements, reported in the following section, focused on the benefits and challenges of CLIL methodology. Since the questionnaire was administered in Italian, an English translation of each statement has been added in brackets:

1) Il CLIL permette di sviluppare le competenze linguistiche di base applicandole a contesti reali (CLIL allows the development of linguistic competences applied to real life contexts).

2) Il CLIL facilita l'ampliamento del lessico generico e il lessico specialistico della disciplina oggetto di studio (es. matematica, storia, geografia etc.) (CLIL contributes to broaden both the general and specialised lexicon of the subject).

3) Il CLIL contribuisce a migliorare sia gli apprendenti che gli insegnanti (CLIL helps both teachers and learners improve the learning process).

4) La terminologia specialistica può essere difficile da comprendere per gli studenti (Specialised terminology may be difficult for students to understand).

5) A volte è difficile bilanciare tra contenuto e lingua soprattutto nella fase di valutazione (In the assessment phase, it may be difficult to balance out content and language).

6) Le risorse didattiche, gli strumenti e i materiali disponibili sono insufficienti e/o inadeguati (the didactic materials, the instruments and tools available to teachers are inadequate or insufficient).

7) La preparazione della lezione CLIL richiede maggiore impegno e tempo da parte dei docenti (Preparing a CLIL lesson requires more effort and time on behalf of teachers).

8) Il livello linguistico dei docenti di disciplina dovrebbe essere migliorato attraverso corsi di lingua extra offerti dalla scuola (The linguistic level of teachers should be improved through additional language courses offered by the school).

9) L'uso della L1 e/o di ulteriori L2 conosciute dagli apprendenti può essere di supporto nella lezione CLIL (the use of the L1 and/or additional languages known by learners may be of help during a CLIL lesson).

5. Findings

This section discusses the results of the survey, targeted to in-service and trainee teachers after attending a CLIL methodological course grouped by the following areas: advantages and potential benefits of CLIL (Qs 1-3); Teaching, assessing, and evaluation issues with CLIL (Qs 4-5-6-8); Teaching material and resources (Q7); Linguistic support (Qs 9-10).

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5.1. Advantages and Potential Benefits of CLIL

Questions 1-3 of the survey focus on the potential benefits and advantages of CLIL methodology concerning three main aspects: i.e. enhancement of linguistic competencies applied to real-life contexts, broadening of the general and specialised lexicon, and general development of both teachers and learners. In particular, in Q1, course participants were asked to evaluate the statement "CLIL allows the development of linguistic competencies applied to real-life contexts" (fig. 1). 70% of teachers declared to strongly agree and 30% rated it 4 (agree).

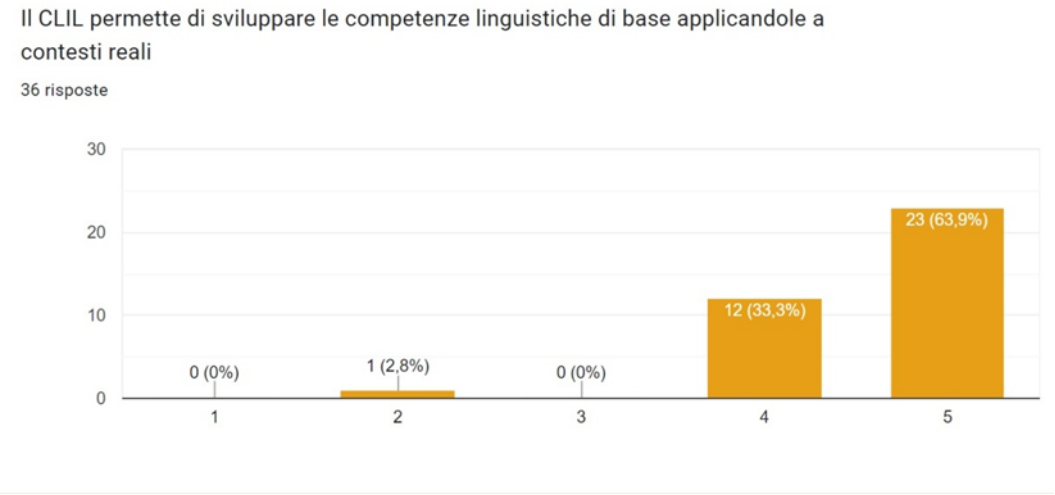

Figure 1.

For Q2, aimed at evaluating the potential usefulness of CLIL for the broadening of the general and specialised lexicon of the subject being taught (fig. 2), 62% of participants rated the statement 5 whereas 24% rated it 4.

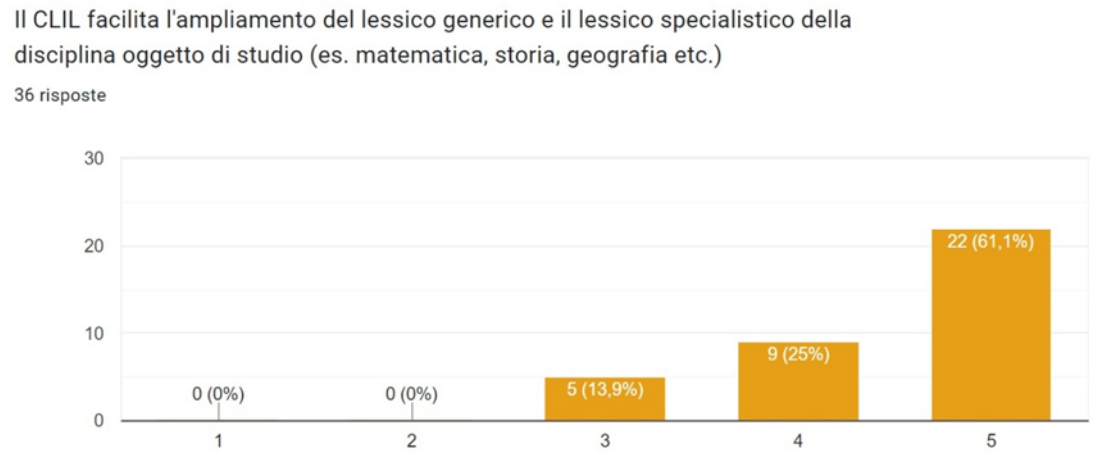

Figure 2

Q3 described CLIL as a methodology contributing to the general development of both teachers and learners (fig. 3). For this statement, 62% of participants strongly agreed, and 30% marked it as 4 (i.e. agree).

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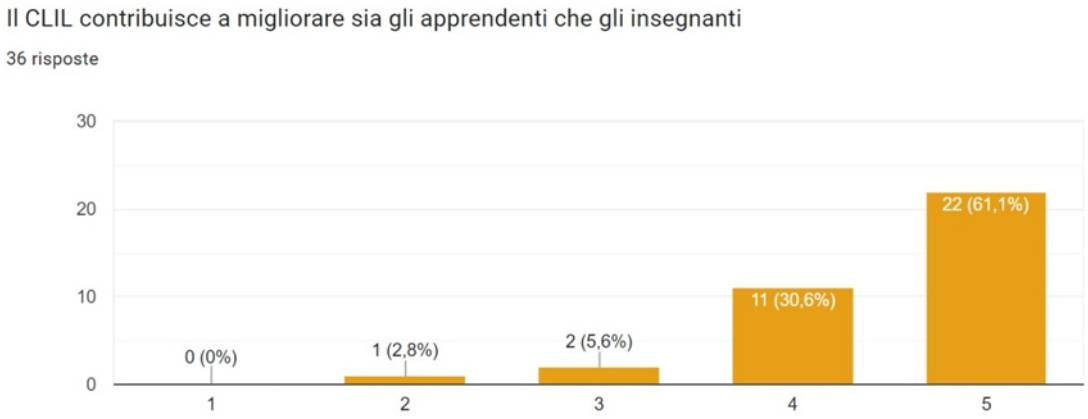

Figure 3.

5.2. Teaching, assessing, and evaluating issues with CLIL

In questions 4-5-7 teachers were asked about the challenges they face implementing a CLIL lesson, from the specialised terminology to the extra time and cognitive effort needed to prepare the lesson. Specifically, Q4 states that specialised terminology may be difficult for students to understand (fig. 4). The results show that 12% of teachers did not agree with the statement, 27% could not decide or were neutral, and about 55% agreed or strongly agreed with it.

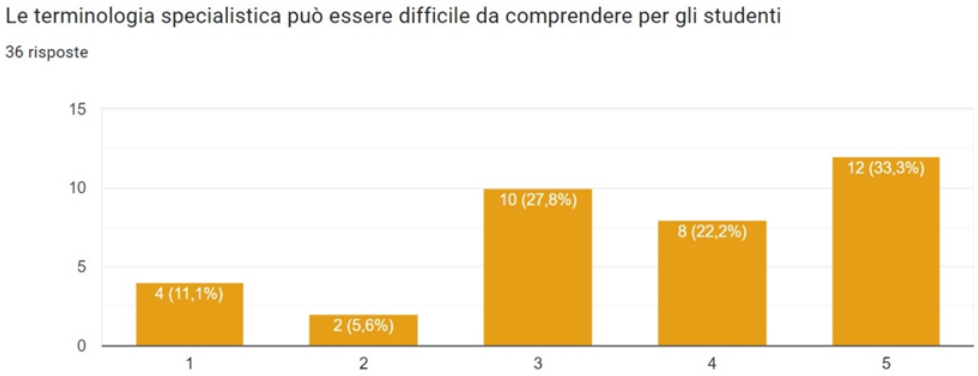

Figure 4.

Q5 focuses on the difficulty, in the evaluation phase, of balancing content and language (fig. 5). 44% of teachers could not decide or were neutral to the statement, followed by 30% of them who declared to agree with it and 24% strongly agreed.

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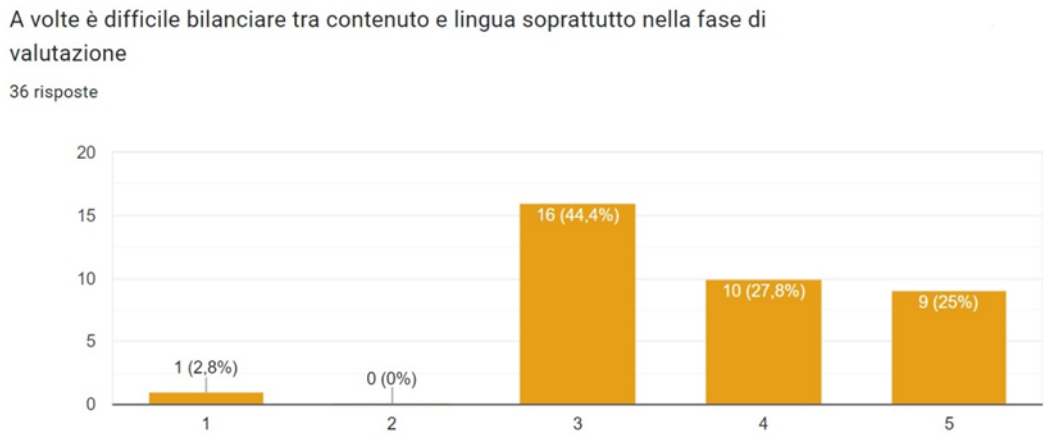

Figure 5.

Q7 of the survey states that extra time and cognitive effort are required on behalf of teachers to design a CLIL lesson including the teaching materials (fig. 6). The majority of teachers agreed (35%) or strongly agreed (32%) with the statement, 17% were neutral, and 12% did not agree.

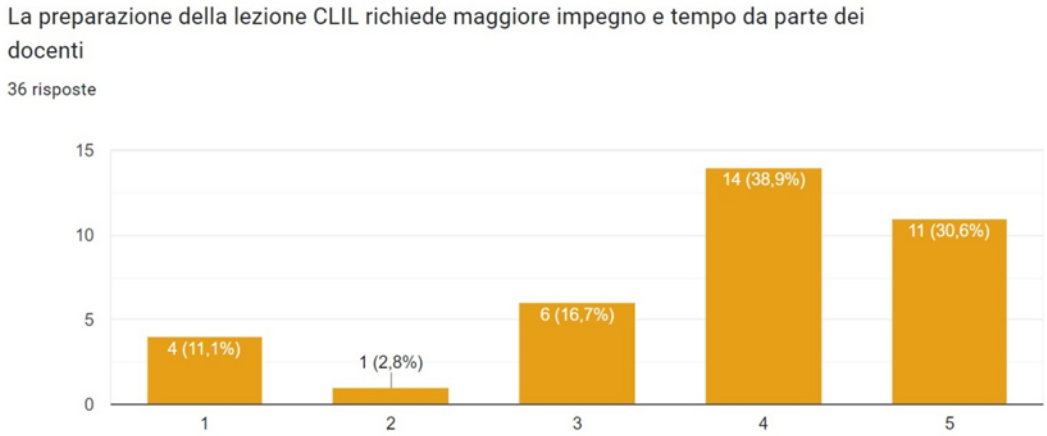

Figure 6.

5.3. Teaching Resources and Material

In Q6, teachers were asked to evaluate the teaching material and resources available at school to implement a CLIL lesson (fig. 7). In particular, 42% agreed that the didactic materials, instruments and tools available to teachers may be inadequate or insufficient, followed by 30% who could not decide, and 15% who strongly agreed.

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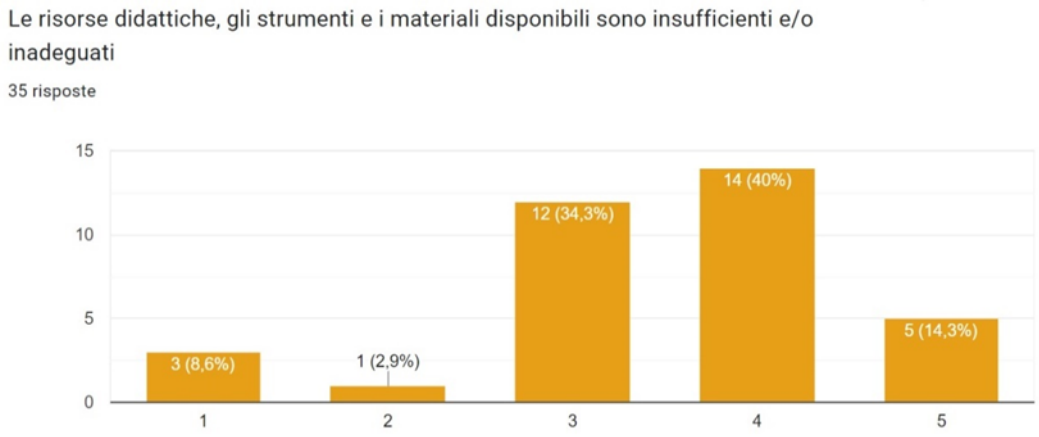

Figure 7.

5.4. Linguistic Support

Qs 8-9 concern the linguistic issues of CLIL methodology with a specific focus on teachers' perceived inadequacy of the linguistic level required to teach a CLIL lesson. Q8 suggests that the linguistic level of teachers should be improved through additional language courses offered by the school (fig. 8). About 76% of participants shared this view (56% strongly agreed and 21% agreed), followed by 24% who were neutral or could not decide.

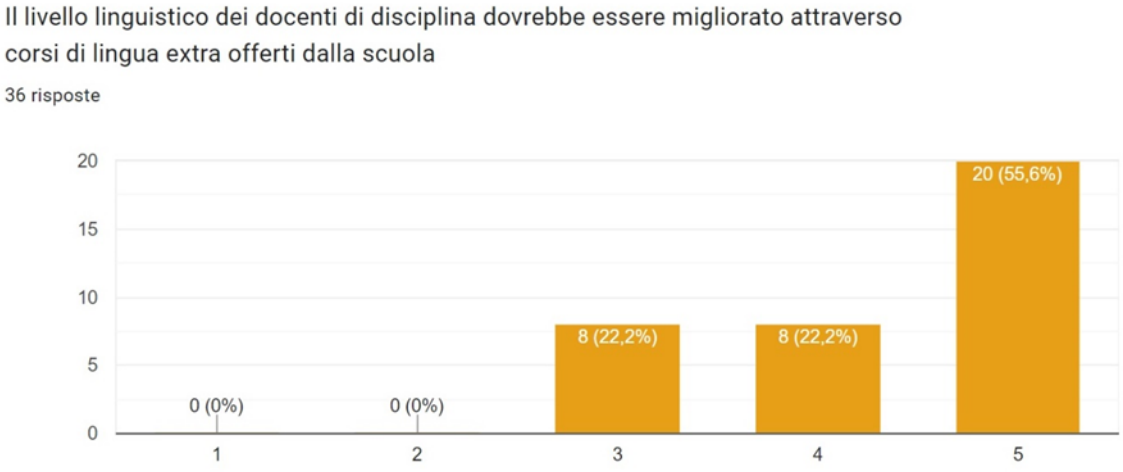

Figure 8.

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Q9 states “The use of the L1 and/or additional languages known by learners may be of help during a CLIL lesson” (fig. 9). 53% of participants agreed with this statement and 43% of the surveyed teachers rated the statement 5, meaning that they strongly agree.

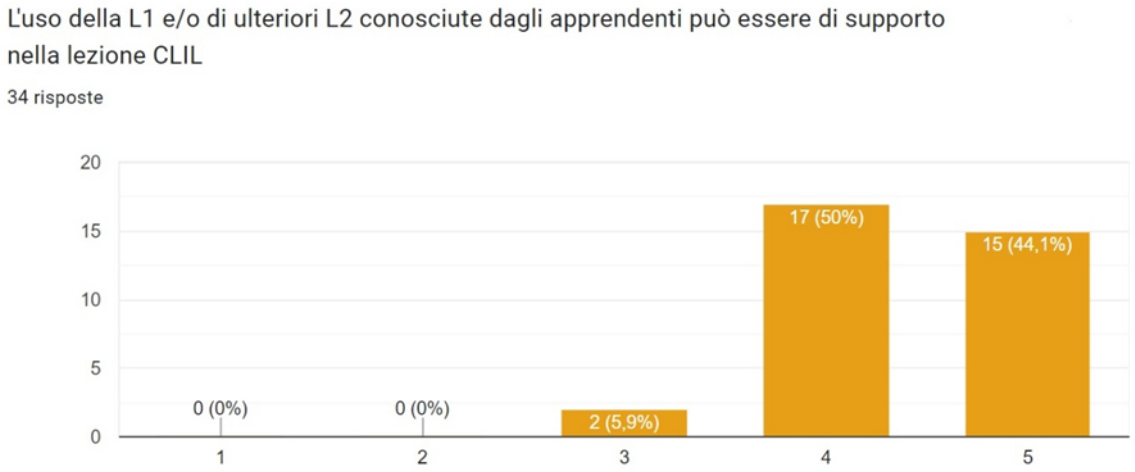

Figure 9.

6. Discussion

This survey revealed significant data on the attitudes of teachers towards CLIL methodology and, most importantly, on their perceived insecurities, and the challenges they face implementing a CLIL lesson. As regards the first aspect under investigation, i.e. the advantages and potential benefits of CLIL, the results confirm a common positive approach towards CLIL methodology. In particular, concerning the concrete application of language in real-life contexts, the questionnaire elicited a common agreement on the overall broadening of both the general and specialised lexicon of the discipline object of study. Interestingly, the majority of the interviewed teachers shared the view that CLIL methodology contributes to the general growth and development of both teachers and learners.

As regards the second examined aspect of the survey, which focused on teaching, assessing, and evaluating issues with CLIL, results reveal that some aspects of CLIL have been overlooked. The answers to Q4, concerning the difficulty students experience with the acquisition of specialised terminology, reveal that a significant percentage of teachers could not decide or were neutral to the statement. This implies that an aspect of crucial importance in CLIL methodology is taken for granted, and some teachers are still not sure about the pedagogical outcomes from a linguistic point of view. It is an aspect that has been confirmed by looking at the answers to Q5, on the difficulty of balancing between content and language in the evaluation phase. Even though the majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed on this issue, a considerable part of the interviewees were neutral or could not decide. What can be inferred

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is a commonly perceived sense of doubt about the procedure and criteria to follow in the evaluation and assessment phase of a CLIL activity.

Q7 sheds light on another important aspect of putting teachers' needs at the centre of CLIL methodology, i.e. the extra time and effort required to design a CLIL lesson. About 70% agreed or strongly agreed, confirming that there is a sense of insecurity on how to develop, design, and implement a lesson following a CLIL methodology. It is an issue that anticipates other perceived critical aspects of CLIL, related to lack of resources and perceived linguistic inadequacy, examined in the following sections. In particular, Q6 relates to the teaching resources and materials available at school to implement a CLIL lesson. 40% of the participants agreed and 15% strongly agreed that the didactic materials are inadequate or insufficient to implement a CLIL lesson.

Specifically, it could be the case that schools do not have enough funds to provide digital tools for all students involved in the lesson. On the other hand, it can be linked to the fact that the resources available (e.g. dictionaries, computers, lab, electronic boards etc.) are not adequately set up for the CLIL lesson. For instance, if teachers focus the lesson on the creation of a glossary while watching a video on a science topic, a school may not have enough computers and/or updated dictionaries to allow students to carry out the task with autonomy.

A crucial aspect revealed by the survey concerns the sense of linguistic inadequacy perceived by content teachers and the need for additional linguistic support. This is in line with other works published worldwide (e.g. Aiello et al. 2017, McDougald 2015, Lin & He 2017) where teachers required extra linguistic support on behalf of schools to tackle the inadequate linguistic level required by policymakers to design, implement, teach and assess a CLIL lesson. Interestingly, Q9, specifically focused on the potential benefits of using the L1 or any additional language known by students and teachers to support and facilitate overall communication in a CLIL lesson, revealed that all the interviewed teachers agreed and strongly agreed with this statement. It is a crucial aspect to address since it is important to bear in mind that in language education, there has been a tendency to focus on achieving a certain level of language proficiency trying to reach a native-like competence, especially as regards pronunciation, in a monolingual setting. Likewise, CLIL methodology only allows space for one vehicular language, usually English, leaving both teachers and students with a sense of perceived linguistic inadequacy.

Hence, an innovative pedagogical practice, translanguaging, defined as a "practical theory of languages" (Li Wei, 2018) is propounded to integrate, facilitate and support teachers through the different phases of designing, implementing, and evaluating a CLIL lesson. This would be useful in several aspects: first, it would allow teachers and students to overcome the sense of linguistic inadequacy by resorting to the multilingual and semiotic repertoire they have at their disposal. Second, the ability to freely switch from one language to another, while accomplishing a task, could reinforce their metalinguistic awareness of languages by fully exploiting their potential as language learners. Third, translanguaging is a particularly inclusive practice

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since it could also benefit those immigrant students whose L1 is not the school language, nor the vehicular language chosen to teach the CLIL lesson.

7. Conclusion

The main reason why translanguaging has drawn the attention of teachers and educators working in multilingual contexts is to be found in its transforming power of the notion of language boundaries. Indeed, it is particularly suitable for the context of multilingual acquisition since it allows us to overcome the distinctions and delimitations of languages and language varieties (García & Li Wei 2014). More specifically, the advocates of this innovative methodology conceive languages as unbounded, fluid, and interwoven systems.

One of the crucial points of the current discussion has been the analysis of the strategies and contexts of use of translanguaging, in multilingual classrooms, to support and enhance CLIL methodology. We view it as a precious didactic instrument to overcome the challenges that CLIL teachers face due to the perceived inadequacy of their linguistic level in the L2, recorded through the e-questionnaire, on behalf of content teachers. First, based on the described survey conducted on CLIL methodology, focused on the advantages and critical aspects of a CLIL lesson, the study identifies the main issues raised by CLIL teachers. Second, it presents translanguaging as a facilitator for CLIL teachers through the different phases of the lesson, including planning, selecting material, and assessment. Third, a description of the social contexts where translanguaging is particularly advisable is offered to enhance the multilingual repertoire of learners coming from diverse linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural backgrounds.

In light of this, translanguaging is presented as a naturally occurring enriching phenomenon during which both teachers and learners fully exploit their multilingual and multisemiotic resources in the dynamic and multicultural CLIL classroom. This practical theory of languages, applied to CLIL classrooms, allows us to overcome the rigid linguistic boundaries as well as the imposition of using only one vehicular language for instruction. Rather, the flexible use of multiple communicative codes enables subject teachers to overcome the insecurities due to the observed perceived linguistic inadequacy to implement a CLIL lesson. Nonetheless, a potential limitation of this research is the relatively small sample size, which may affect the generalisability of the findings. Future research should consider replicating the study with a larger number of survey respondents to enhance the robustness and reliability of the results.

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