CLIL in Higher Education: What if...?

FLORA SISTI
University of Urbino, Italy
flora.sisti@uniurb.it

ABSTRACT

What happens when traditional academic teaching strategies are modified by the CLIL approach? The present work describes the systematic application of the CLIL approach to Modern Language Teaching Methodology lessons at the University of Urbino. This course is part of a research project which began in 2010 called 'Didattica in lingua straniera @uniurb'. Its aim is to promote the internationalization process through courses held in languages other than Italian, thus to increase the level of foreign language competence of students at the University of Urbino, to attract more foreign students and researchers, and promote the mobility of students and researchers within an international framework. A CLIL consultancy centre and a website were also created to help instructors to implement their lessons being aware of crucial methodological issues related to teaching in a language which is not the students' mother tongue. New classroom management dynamics which emerge in a university CLIL course are discussed.

Keywords: *CLIL approach in Higher Education 1; Academic teaching strategies 2; New classroom management dynamics 3; CLIL consultancy centre and website 4*

1. The value-added component of CLIL

CLIL is a learning environment[1] that allows the student to study a non-linguistic discipline through communication (written and oral) in a language other than his or her native tongue (Marsh, Mehisto, Frigols 2008; Do, Hood, Marsh 2010). CLIL has been researched extensively from different perspectives (Coonan 2002; Serragiotto 2003; Ricci Garotti 2006; Cardona 2008; Coonan 2008; Mezzadri 2009; Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, Smit 2010; Dalton-Puffer 2011; Sisti 2011; Ting 2011; Marsh, Meyer 2012; Balboni, Coonan 2014; Serragiotto 2014). The effectiveness of CLIL has also been challenged (Bruton 2011). Furthermore, textbooks featuring CLIL activities have been published (Dale, van der Es, Tanner 2010).

A CLIL teacher, therefore, aims to promote learning of content, abilities and skills pertinent to the given discipline, but in students that will use a linguistic code that is not necessarily familiar to them and with which they may have varying degrees of competence. This awareness produces an immediate and extremely positive effect. It forces teachers to reflect on their own teaching strategies and prompts them to balance their classroom activities so as to make the lesson as accessible as possible to their students. This always useful, necessary, and important shift in perspective, from the transmission of content to the learning process, becomes indispensable in a CLIL environment. I think this is the most important value-added component of the CLIL approach. A CLIL teacher cannot avoid considering the quality of the teaching strategies applied in the classroom. This shift in perspective produces new classroom management dynamics that will be dealt with by analyzing a project carried out at the University of Urbino.

1.1. Didactics in Foreign Language @ uniurb

In 2010, the Commission for Teaching Innovation, which I chair, created a project called '*Didattica in LS @ uniurb'* ('Didactics in FL @ Uniurb') aimed at activating courses held in various foreign languages[2] (Sisti 2012).

This initiative[3] did not pass unobserved in the university system and instructors' reactions varied from enthusiastic to sceptical or contrary. Beginning in the academic year 2010-11, the university gradually activated courses using CLIL methodology without increasing the teaching load of staff or the number of lesson hours for students. Our students were offered the option of choosing courses held partially[4] or entirely in the foreign language, as well as the

[1] We define CLIL in terms of an 'environment' because it cannot be considered strictly a method or an approach, although the terms 'method' and 'approach' may be used in this article.

[2] The choice of using the foreign language was left entirely up to the individual professor, although most of the courses activated were in or supported in English. From the data collected, 80% of the courses are taught in or use English, 10% are taught in or use German, 5% are taught in or use French, and 5% are taught in or use other languages.

[3] The initiative was promoted in the university's online journal: *UniurbPOST* (http://post.uniurb.it/?p=2286 - 29/2/2012).

[4] 'Mixed courses' are those in which only one module or a series of lessons are taught in the foreign language.

possibility of taking exams in the FL and using FL reading lists provided by the course instructor. The latter option is defined as a 'FL supported course'.

This project had two objectives. On one hand it aimed to attract foreign teachers and students who increasingly request courses offered in English, as well those offered in Italian, that may be recognised by the International University Credit Transfer System – a widespread practice by now active in all European universities. On the other hand, the project aimed at providing our graduates and researchers, who need to study and work in a globalized society, with foreign language skills. The project identified short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives for facilitating the transformation of monolingual course offerings into plurilingual offerings that follow European trends. Initially, the intent was to help students and teaching staff become aware of the need to introduce plurilingual teaching as well as involve staff that had already shown interest in the initiative. The response was quick and enthusiastic. In the academic year 2010-11, 51 entirely FL courses were activated, along with 60 mixed courses and 154 'supported' courses.

Moreover, the first year of the project served to clear up doubts and dispel fears, and thanks to financing obtained from the *Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Pesaro* (the Savings Bank Foundation of Pesaro) it was possible to guarantee constant methodological and organizational support to the initiative. Three native-speaker language experts (one for each macro-area of study) offered language consulting through personal meetings aimed at promoting FL use in the classroom. In addition, the first configuration of a CLIL Teaching Assistance Centre was created to analyze the needs of staff participating in the project (through pre- and post-course questionnaires), identify the specific vocabulary and structures used in the micro-languages of the various disciplines involved, and plan, with each participating professor, single Learning Units and CLIL learning paths through the creation of teaching materials to use in the classroom (activities, handouts, slides) (Carloni 2013; Carloni 2015). A website was also developed – *CLIL teaching*[5] - to provide online methodological assistance to teaching staff and students.

In the long-term, the aim of this project was to create a true shift that would permit the activation of: at least one FL content course in each upper level undergraduate programme, at least one upper level degree programme entirely taught in English, and doctorate degrees with the requirement of 6-12 months of study abroad.

Today, in the fourth year of the experience, some of the medium-term objectives have already been met. Almost all degree programmes have at least one CLIL course and numerous teachers and students take advantage of the assistance service provided online and in person. Some professors and instructors ask for language support because they are concerned about providing 'imperfect' examples to their students, given that they are not expert FL users. Those that are more sensitive to methodological concerns ask for assistance experimenting with CLIL teaching strategies that require different approaches to the standard frontal lecture. Indeed students must be helped to overcome their language difficulties to cope with an increased cognitive load in their subject area that must necessarily remain at the same quality level as courses taught in Italian.

The teaching staff involved in this project are pleased and fully satisfied by the initiative; obviously they would like to improve their teaching performance and hope to travel abroad more often and host *visiting professors* from partner universities, to carry out research and practice the FL in their own disciplines.

Students, initially reluctant and discouraged, once informed about the objectives of the project (informational material was made available to them for this purpose) and made fully aware of the important opportunity offered to them, have become cooperative and achieved good results.

It is no news that a growing number of students are increasingly attracted by courses in which lessons are entirely in English, although these often limit the number of students accepted. This is an investment in their future, a strategic step in finding employment in a globalized world in which an undergraduate degree is not sufficient and specific skills and competence are required – beginning with language skills. Furthermore, Italian and European legislation is pushing university education in this direction and the CRUI[6] report on courses activated in English in Italian universities shows that more than 70% of these (57) offered a total of 671 courses using English in academic year 2011/12. These courses were distributed among the following degree types:

3% three-year undergraduate degree courses

34% doctorates

25 % upper level undergraduate degree courses

20% I and II level masters courses

18% winter/summer school

From these data emerges the previously indicated tendency to consider basic education as oriented toward national territorial areas and local professional needs, and the upper levels more open to the global job market. The most commonly involved scientific sectors are engineering, economic sciences, and statistics. Among the courses taught in English, on the other hand, 75% are closed enrolment courses with a greater concentration in the north of Italy and in the largest cities (Milano, Torino, Bologna, Roma).

The CRUI study was directed at entire curricula offered completely in the English language, and therefore it does not include experiences such as ours in which only individual courses within broader degree programmes are available in English. The complexities, however, are similar. In our university, as in other Italian universities, a sharp debate

[5] This site was created and administered by Giovanna Carloni. It is rights protected: http://clilteaching.weebly.com.

[6] The inquiry is the result of data collected between January and February 2012 from the Rectorates of the 81 universities belonging to the CRUI (Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane). Data were collected by a specifically designed questionnaire administered online: http://www.crui.it/HomePage.aspx?ref=2094.

has brought to light various problems and questions. Aside from the economic advantage that Italian families could enjoy by having their children study in English in Italy, there is the risk of discrimination toward those students that have only a basic understanding of the English language, due to scholastic learning programmes carried out entirely in Italian. This problem is accentuated in the case of the closed enrolment courses.

However, the objection put forth most strongly during the debate at the University of Urbino (a university with a long- standing tradition in the humanities) is the question of 'linguicide'.

This argument derives from the desire to protect the beautiful Italian language from the risk of possible extinction. In the opinion of some of our colleagues, legitimizing courses in a foreign language in an Italian university will allow us to be sucked into the vortex of the English language, which - as the predominant language - will become the only surviving language of the human race. Furthermore, according to this line of thinking, the increasing tendency of Italian and European universities to offer undergraduate degree programmes and doctorate programmes in English will result in the creation of future generations of students who do not know, in their own language, terms that they will have acquired only in the FL during their university education. This fear is particularly felt in economics, business, and scientific studies.

Our CLIL assistance centre has tried to provide answers to these legitimate concerns by organizing informal and formal meetings aimed at finding solutions that could be implemented at the university level. With the possibility of increased financing, FL-taught courses could be complemented by lessons and tutoring in comparative analysis (Italian v. FL) for the micro-language of the various subject areas and scientific sectors. In certain cases, a CLIL course could build on specific subject area topics which were already studied and discussed in the FL in the international academic community. In this way, the CLIL course would become a point of excellence as an educational option and a specialization course for the best prepared students[7]. The idea of activating courses in the FL, above all at the upper undergraduate level and at the graduate level (Masters, Doctorates) stems from the intent to create a subject-oriented education enriched through linguistic competence, once basic education in the native language has already been consolidated. Thus, FL-taught courses would not deprive the students of necessary skills in the Italian language, but rather would add the possibility of using these skills in an international professional panorama. The objective is not exclusive, but inclusive. Understanding of and competency in the Italian language would not be lost, but rather would be complemented by the possibility of using other languages. As we well know, universities throughout Europe are moving in the direction of multilingualism without renouncing to safeguard minority languages, perceived as a source of cultural wealth.

In light of these considerations, at the University of Urbino we regulated the activation of FL courses such that the professors could teach their subjects entirely in the FL only if their subject could be substituted with another equivalent course in Italian within the course structure of the degree programme. In this way the first phase of the project sought to avoid obliging students to participate in this type of teaching. The choice was to implement the project gradually – with the obvious exceptions of areas of prior development such as the School for Foreign Languages and Cultures and the online course in Applied Computer Science where FL teaching was already a constant factor (Sisti 2009). Regarding the 'mixed courses' (partially taught in the FL) or 'supported courses' (with a reading list and final exam in the FL) there were no restrictions, and numerous professors and instructors initially chose these options.

The following is the structure of courses activated in the various undergraduate degree programmes during the first three years of the project:

Table 1

Didactics in Foreign Language @ uniurb
Academic year 2010-11; 2011-12; 2012-13[8]

Faculties	Courses entirely in a foreign language	Mixed courses (Italian and foreign languages)	Courses supported by a foreign language
Economics	**3 – 3 - 3**	**3 – 4 - 1**	**28 – 23- 24**
Pharmacy	**//**	**10 – 0- 7**	**28 – 0 - 31**
Law	**//**	**//**	**69 – 15 - 13**
Arts and Philosophy	**//**	**5 – 12 - 4**	**2 – 0 - 4**
Foreign Languages and Literature	**23 – 18 - 23**	**18 – 12 - 15**	**2 – 12 - 19**
Education	**3 – 1 - 1**	**8 – 4 - 4**	**//**

[7] These parallel courses of excellence could involve, as classroom tutors, Erasmus students who take the course and speak the FL as a native language.
[8] The first figures in each column refer to academic year 2010-11; the second figures to 2011-12, and the last to 2012-13.

Sports Science	//	**16 – 17 - 18**	//
Science and Technology	**22 – 18 - 13**	**0 – 23 -12**	**0 – 5 - 4**
Sociology	//	**0 – 0 - 5**	**25 – 34 - 55**
Political Science	//	**0 – 0 - 4**	**0 – 0 - 2**

Table 1 shows that the first year of the project witnessed great enthusiasm on the part of teaching staff, and saw 265 courses activated – although in experimental form. The following year – 2011/2012 – the project received its first financing from the Pesaro Savings Bank Foundation and the foundations of the CLIL Assistance Centre were laid. This put into motion a series of actions aimed at developing greater awareness among students and teaching staff. Meetings were organized to compare first year experiences, and discussion was opened with the presidents of the university's Schools and Departments to create a common strategy. Moreover, a web 2.0 environment was developed to promote didactic and linguistic assistance and consultancy (http://clilteaching.weebly.com/index.html) in a more capillary and specific way for each subject area.

The conscious acceptance of the difference between a purely transmissive teaching style that uses the foreign language simply as an instrument of communication[9] and a learning environment that takes into account the students' needs, brought about a distinct shift in approach on the part of teaching staff involved – and consequently increased the degree to which such courses were appreciated. An increasing number of colleagues accessed our team of experts for both language consulting (correction of material produced in the foreign language, consulting on classroom language, questions about subject-oriented micro language) and for methodological issues. For example, colleagues asked how to facilitate FL understanding for topics of particular difficulty from a cognitive point of view, how to keep students' attention, how to check their understanding, how to evaluate their degree of interest and promote their participation, and which materials and support to offer before, during, and after the lesson to help them learn. On one hand, this service provided important resources for furthering the depth of topics related to CLIL teaching. On the other hand, it provided an important opportunity for teaching staff to reflect on the characteristics of their own teaching methodologies. This recalls the added value of CLIL previously mentioned.

As a result, during the second year, fewer courses in which subject matter was taught in a foreign language were finally implemented, but the overall quality of teaching improved significantly. Furthermore, effects on teaching practices were certainly contagious. Numerous colleagues confessed to us that they had never before seriously reflected on the needs and requirements of their students, or on the most effective practices for promoting learning that might be long-lasting and guarantee a degree of autonomy. This reduction in the number of courses created a more cohesive and informed group of teachers who renewed their participation in the project (with only a few exceptions) for the academic year 2012 -2013. The year-end questionnaire for 2012-2013 reports that 85% of the courses for that year had been taught in the FL in a previous year and that 90% of the teaching staff had already taught in the FL.

An analysis of the general picture illustrates that some Faculties (later re-named 'Schools'[10]) participated only partially, as they did not have teaching staff prepared or interested in the initiative. Naturally, the project generated varied interest among Faculties according to the degree of involvement shown by their respective Department directors and degree course presidents - as reflected in the types of initial presentation in faculty council meetings.

However, considering the 'FL supported courses' as marginal to the project, since they are aimed only at attracting foreign student participation, the other two types of courses have remained fairly stable in their offering over the three-year period analyzed. Some Faculties participated in great numbers across the three categories of courses (Foreign Languages and Literature; Science and Technology) while others primarily activated 'mixed courses' (Sports Science, Pharmacy, Arts and Philosophy). The Faculties of Law, Political Science and Sociology report little or no participation (only in the last year have they offered any 'mixed courses'). This is partially explained by the differences in disciplines and by an analysis of the biographical data collected in the initial questionnaire submitted to teaching staff[11]. From the data for 2012-2013, it appears that 45% of the staff involved were researchers, 40% were associate professors and 5% were full professors. Furthermore, 55% of participating staff were between the ages of 41-50, 35% were between the ages of 51-60 and 10% were of other ages. Considering the make-up of the various Faculties, it appears that those Faculties with a greater number of full professors and higher average age participated less in the project.

The number of CLIL courses dropped slightly in the academic year 2013-2014 due to budget cuts from the University's central administration. The third phase of the project, which included facilitations for the professors who took part in the project to study and conduct research abroad, was never implemented. Promotion of teaching exchanges between Italian colleagues and international university staff received no real funding either.

---

[9] This type of didactics is usually defined as vehicular teaching, bilingual instruction, or in the case of English as the FL, English Mediated Instruction (E.M.I.).

[10] It is also probably the case that the changeover from the Faculty system to the Department system, in turn subdividing Departments into Schools and Degree Programmes, had the overall effect of slowing participation in the project due to significant bureaucratic and administrative delays.

[11] Two questionnaires were submitted to teaching staff with CLIL experience at the beginning (preliminary) and at the end (final) of the academic year.

1.2.Didactic Strategies

This section presents an analysis of the didactic approaches as described by teaching staff before and after the implementation of the FL-taught course. These data were collected from the initial and final questionnaires. Initial questionnaires were distributed in academic year 2011-2012 and academic year 2012-2013. The purpose of these questions was to collect information about course planning before the beginning of courses, so as to help teaching staff become aware of the various didactic possibilities that could be adopted. The final questionnaires, on the other hand, report slightly different percentages. Unfortunately, these questionnaires were filled out only by about half of the professors[12], but they do provide more useful data in that they reflect what actually happened.

From these data it emerges that the lesson resources used by teaching staff were primarily based on Power Point, and scientific articles were third most important, after course manuals, during the first year of the project. There was an increase in the response "none" (no specific resources used for the FL content) in the second year of the project, which probably indicates that the teaching staff felt more sure of the content presented during lessons and did not deem it necessary to use more authoritative FL resources.

Students primarily had access to material before lessons (45%), but in class material access rose to the same percentage in 2012-2013. The use of individual homework assignments was 33% of the courses in the first year, but rose to 53% of the cases in the second. In both years, homework was predominantly assigned in the FL (from 75% to 87% of the cases from first to second year).

Another important point arises from final questionnaires with respect to the use of the FL in class. 61% of students (66,7 % in the second year) asked questions in English with the following frequency (Table 2): *always* 45,5 % (20% in the second year); *often* 9% (50 %); *sometimes* 36,4 % (20%) and *rarely* 9% (10%).

Table 2

CLIL Final Questionnaire for Teaching Staff 2011_2012		
If you answered YES, how often did they use the foreign language to ask questions?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
always	45,5%	10
often	9,1%	2
sometimes	36,4%	8
rarely	9,1%	2

From these data, it appears that in most cases lessons were organized around material in the FL and presented to the class in the form of Power Point slides that were commented on by the professor and to which the students were asked to respond with questions and requests for explanation. Questions were asked in the FL by an increasing number of students from one year to the next (from 61% to 67% between first and second years), although the frequency with which they asked questions in the FL dropped between the two years (from 45% *always* in the first year to 50% *often* in the second year). The shift in FL homework assignments from 33% to 53% in the second year demonstrates instructors' growing desire to ask students to carry out useful personal study tasks as an increasingly necessary method of sustaining the cognitive load of a course taught in a FL. Data on the usage time of materials also demonstrate the shift from primarily transmissive didactics (handing out slides first for comment in class) toward more interactive didactics (presenting group work material in class). Evaluation was increasingly carried out in the FL – from 32% of cases in the first year of the CLIL project to 40% in the second, even if half of the teaching staff preferred to continue to use their native language and traditional types of evaluation (primarily the oral exam possibly preceded by a written exam).

1.3. Teaching staff and student responses

The teaching staff involved in the project evaluated themselves to be at the B1 level of the ECFL in the vehicular language in 15.8% of the cases (21% of the cases in the second year). 43.9% (increasing to 52.6% in the second year)

[12] This drop in participation in the questionnaires by the teaching staff is entirely understandable, given their intense preparation of the course in the FL. At the end of the experience, having gained more experience they are naturally less attentive to the requests of the research team and to the evaluation instruments provided by the project, which, on the other hand, were perceived as useful guides and reference materials at the beginning of the experience.

self-evaluated their level as being at B2 and 35.1% (21.1% second year) self-evaluated at C1. Only 7% evaluated themselves to be at the C2 level (10.5% in the second year). 53% of them would like to take an anonymous language test.

A majority of the professors (54.8% in the first year and 70% in the second year) felt comfortable teaching in a foreign language and 34% (25% in the second year) reported feeling very comfortable teaching in the FL. Only 11% of the teaching staff involved (dropping to 5% in the second year) reported feeling uncomfortable teaching in the FL. This perception improved in the post-course data, for which reporting of feeling comfortable rose from 33.9% (preliminary questionnaire) to 38.9% (final questionnaire) over the first year and from 25% to 33% in the second year. Moreover, 11.3% of teaching staff who reported feeling uncomfortable dropped to 2.8% over the first year and from 5% to 0% in the second year. Evidently completing this experience has raised confidence and self-esteem among teaching staff who, as stated, repeated the experience in 90% of the cases.

Expert teaching consultancy was not requested by 56.5% of the teaching staff in the first year, and by 80% of professors in the second year[13]. Among types of consultancy requested, however, the most frequent were (in decreasing order): *lesson planning, classroom observation, material design e keywords lists*. In terms of language consulting, 62.9% of teaching staff did not request any language consulting in the first year, rising to 75% in the second year of the experience. Of the requests for language support submitted, however, the most frequent types of consultation concerned (in decreasing order) classroom *management language* (50%), *classroom observation* (40%) and content-*specific vocabulary* (36.7%). This scale of preferences changed in the second year, in which content-specific vocabulary became the most frequent request, followed by classroom management language and finally classroom observation.

These data confirm the general autonomy of the teaching staff with respect to the involvement of the native language experts, CLIL experts or project consultants who presented the CLIL experience to students. Indeed, only 30% of professors requested the presence of an expert on the first day of their CLIL lesson.

Turning to the professors' perception of the degree of difficulty that their CLIL course presented to students (question 22 of the final questionnaire), in the first year, 58.3% of the professors thought their courses *rather difficult* (dropping to 53.3 % in the second year) and 11% thought their courses were *very difficult* (6.7 % in the second year). The same number of professors thought that their course was not difficult at all.

Students, on the other hand, report having felt comfortable in the classes in 44% of the cases for the first year and in 60% of the cases in the second year. 13.9% of them reported feeling very comfortable in the first year, rising to 26.7% in the second year. These data demonstrate that repeating the experience generates greater confidence and self-esteem among students.

The final questionnaire included three more questions. The first (question 6) asked the reasons for any cessation of FL teaching activities. Only 2 professors in the first year and 1 in the second year changed their minds, due to the large number of students that were not particularly interested in attending a content course in the FL. This was due to the micro-language difficulties of the scientific sector involved (Philosophy) or due to the fact that not all of the students attending had previously studied French (the FL chosen for that CLIL course).

The second open-answer question (n. 23) "*How did your students react to the CLIL course*?" produced testimonials that range from enthusiastic (*They were very enthusiastic; They had to struggle hard, but finally they were satisfied*) to moderately positive (*Fairly well, considering the large number of students attending the course*) to those that were more critical (*They were initially surprised and disoriented, then gradually but not easily adapted to this new experience)*. There were also negative reactions (*These students are in their 1st year so they were afraid of being unable to understand the content of the course*) including: "*They stopped attending my classes*". However, on the whole, response to the experience was predominantly positive, if one sums the total of optimal, good, and satisfactory reactions. Even after initial difficulties, 75% of responses were positive after the first year and 73% after the second year.

Professors' judgement of students' reactions is naturally subjective and articulated in a great variety of ways. For example, one professor affirms that "*Initially they accepted passively, but then they relaxed a bit and gained confidence – particularly after I applied some of the suggestions given me by the consultant staff*". This type of response motivated us to create a final questionnaire[14] to administer to students. From this questionnaire emerge both the didactic strategies that were really applied in the classroom and the degree of student satisfaction.

The third question (n. 25) requested the professor to provide a brief summary of the CLIL experience, including advantages and criticisms as well as suggestions for improving the courses. The principal advantages reported concerned learning sectorial microlanguage in English, greater classroom interaction during lessons with consequent cognitive effort for the students, who were asked to concentrate on content and to be able to re-elaborate it in class. Criticism generally only reflected classes made up of students of inhomogeneous language background, sometimes too great to activate participatory didactics[15]. Furthermore, some initial resistance on the part of the students in accepting

[13] This again demonstrates skepticism regarding the utility of academic didactic reflection.

[14] Produced by Giovanna Carloni, this questionnaire was administered experimentally only to students in the foundation course *Modern Language Teaching Methodology* of the upper level degree programme in Language for Teaching, Publishing and Business. All the questionnaires are available contacting the author of the present paper.

[15] Question 9 regarding the number of students per course shows that in the first year 30.6% of classes had fewer than 10 students, 22.2% had 11-20 students and 25% fewer than 50. In the second year, these numbers increase to 33.3% with fewer than 50, 20% with 11-20 students and 20% with fewer than 10 students.

the greater learning effort requested is reported. This resistance could be overcome by the presence of a greater number of Erasmus foreign exchange students in the class.

Suggestions and proposals emerging from the questionnaires concern the will to take advantage of the language and didactic experts with greater persistence and foresight in terms of time. Professors also suggested that mixed courses might be organized differently (alternating lessons taught in Italian on basic topics with lessons taught in English on specific topics) and that they would like to allow students more time to work on foreign language content in class.

In short, the questionnaires reveal the following about the didactic framework of the three-year degree programme:

- Teaching shifted from purely transmissive to much more participated forms, although Power Point slides remain the most commonly used system of presenting content and students have access to material both before and during lessons;
- The CLIL courses were primarily organized around material in the FL and students were asked to carry out tasks – often individually – in the FL;
- Evaluation in the FL increased as professors came to see it as the natural conclusion of a teaching programme in the FL;
- The perception of confidence and self-esteem on the part of teaching staff and students increased as the CLIL experience proceeded;
- Teaching staff became progressively autonomous in managing their CLIL courses and students acquired confidence in their own abilities, as shown by the increase in perception that courses became easier.

Conclusion

To conclude it is important to restate that when we introduce CLIL into higher education – like a Trojan Horse in the 'fortress of academic teaching' – we end up forcing teachers to reflect on their own teaching strategies and to take into consideration their students' learning needs. This shift of focus makes the difference between CLIL and non CLIL teaching. CLIL teachers cannot avoid considering the quality of the teaching method applied in the classroom and this awareness remains in their consciousness forever.

This recalls the previous observation on the added value of CLIL, including and above all in the academic environment which often represents a setting closed to teaching innovation and relatively insensitive to the dictates of pedagogy, erroneously considered superfluous for adult learners.

CLIL could represent – in such a 'fortress' – a good opportunity to change one's teaching style.

References

Balboni E. Paolo, Coonan M. Carmel (Eds.). 2014. *Fare CLIL. Strumenti per l'insegnamento integrato di lingua e disciplina nella scuola secondaria***.** I quaderni della ricerca 14. Torino: Loescher.

Bruton, Anthony. 2011. "Is CLIL so Beneficial, or just Selective? Re-evaluating some of the Research", in *System*, edited by Lluïsa Astruc, Xuesong (Andy) Gao, Sarah Mercer, Ursula Stickler, 39(4): 523-532. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Cardona, Mario (Ed.). 2008. *Apprendere le lingue in ambiente CLIL. Aspetti teorici e percorsi applicativi*. Bari: Cacucci.

Carloni, Giovanna. 2013. "Integrating English corpus linguistics and online learning environments at university level." *International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Science* (IJITCS),12 (1): 68–77. Accessed November 10, 2014. http://bit.ly/1Bi6nnp.

Carloni, Giovanna. 2015. *CLIL in Higher Education and the Role of Corpora. A Blended Model of Consultation Services and Learning Environments*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari.

Coonan, M. Carmel. 2002. *La lingua straniera veicolare*. Torino: UTET Libreria.

Coonan, M. Carmel (Ed.). 2008. *CLIL e l'apprendimento delle lingue*. Venezia: Ed. Cafoscarina.

Coyle Do, Hood Phillip and Marsh David. 2010. *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge: CUP.

Dale Liz, van der Es Wibo and Tanner Rosie. 2010. *CLIL skills.* Leida: ICLON.

Dalton-Puffer, Christiane. 2011. "Content-and-Language Integrated Learning: From Practice to Principle?" in *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31:182-204.

Dalton-Puffer Christiane, Nikula Tarja and Smit Ute (Eds.). 2010. *Language use and language learning in CLIL*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Marsh David, Mehisto Peeter and Frigols Martin. 2008. *Uncovering CLIL*. Oxford: MacMillan.

Marsh David, Meyer Oliver (Eds.). 2012. *Quality Interfaces: Examining Evidence &Exploring Solutions in CLIL*. Eichstätt: Academic Press.

Mezzadri, Marco. 2009. “CLIL courses and Quality Management at University Level” in *CLIL Methodology in University Instruction: Online and in the Classroom. An Emerging Framework,* edited by Flora Sisti, 203-212. Perugia: Edizioni Guerra.

Ricci Garotti, Federica (Ed.). 2006. *Il futuro si chiama CLIL*. Trento: Ed. IPRASE Trentino.

Serragiotto, Graziano. 2003. *CLIL Apprendere insieme una lingua e contenuti non linguistici*. Perugia: Guerra Soleil.

Serragiotto, Graziano. 2014. *Dalle microlingue disciplinari al CLIL*. Torino: UTET Libreria.

Sisti, Flora (Ed.). 2009. *CLIL Methodology in University Instruction: Online and in the Classroom. An Emerging Framework.* Perugia: Edizioni Guerra.

Sisti, Flora. 2011. “Dal CLIL al TLIL: teatro e lingua straniera” in *Ianuam Linguarum Reserare. Saggi in onore di Bona Cambiaghi*, edited by Cristina Bosisio, 268-275. Firenze: Le Monnier Università.

Sisti, Flora. 2012. “CLIL Experiences in Online Higher Education” in *I Congreso Internacional de Enseñanza Bilingüe en Centros Educativos (CIEB).* Madrid: Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.

Ting, Teresa. 2011. “CLIL: un approccio ‘brain compatible’ all’apprendimento di lingua e contenuto” in *Prospettive per un’educazione bilingue. Sperimentazioni CLIL in Calabria*, edited by Cristina Piva in Quaderni di linguistica vol. 9, n.2, 55-64.

Rif. Bibliografico:

F. SISTI, “CLIL in higher Education: what if…?” in C. Coonan (a cura di), *A journey through the CLIL landscape: problems, prospects*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016;