Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Master's Degree

in

Language Sciences

Final Thesis

CLIL AND STUDENTS' MOTIVATION: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CLIL IN LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Academic Year
2024 / 2025

Ringrazio….

Ancora incredula di avercela fatta, desidero innanzitutto ringraziare tutte le persone che mi hanno accompagnata e sostenuta durante questo percorso.

Un sentito grazie va alla mia relatrice, Professoressa Marcella Menegale, e alla mia correlatrice, Dottoressa Tiziana Lorenzet, per la loro disponibilità, la loro tempestività nelle risposte e i preziosi consigli e spunti che mi hanno donato.

Desidero ringraziare anche l'istituto scolastico, che mi ha ospitata, per la disponibilità e la collaborazione offerta durante il tirocinio. Un grazie va a tutto il personale, che con pazienza e dedizione mi ha trasmesso insegnamenti preziosi che porterò sempre con me.

Un ringraziamento speciale alla mia tutor, che mi ha accolto con calore, professionalità e gentilezza, facendomi sentire subito a mio agio e rendendomi partecipe. La sua attenzione e i suoi consigli resteranno per me un bagaglio prezioso che accompagnerà il mio futuro cammino da insegnante.

Ringrazio profondamente la mia famiglia, in particolare i miei genitori, per avermi sempre sostenuta e sopportata lungo questo cammino. Grazie per essere stati al mio fianco e per continuare a farlo sempre. Senza di voi, nulla di tutto questo sarebbe stato possibile.

Un pensiero speciale ai miei nonni, per le loro carezze, i loro sorrisi e i dolcetti che hanno addolcito e rallegrato i miei pomeriggi.

Un grazie di cuore va anche ai miei amici, ai miei compagni di università e a tutte le persone incontrate lungo il cammino, con cui ho condiviso vittorie e difficoltà. Grazie per avermi spronata ad andare avanti, per avermi regalato sorrisi anche nei momenti difficili e per aver reso questo percorso meno pesante e più divertente con la vostra presenza. Grazie per il sostegno, la spensieratezza e i ricordi indimenticabili vissuti insieme.

E infine, un piccolo promemoria per la me del futuro e per l'insegnante che desidero diventare:

> "I ragazzi possono dimenticare ciò che hai detto, possono dimenticare ciò che hai fatto, ma non dimenticheranno mai come li hai fatti sentire".

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TESI MAGISTRALE IN LINGUA INGLESE

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the relationship between CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodology and students' motivation and emotions in lower secondary school (11-13 years old). The aim of the study is to verify whether teaching a non-linguistic discipline in English, such as Geography, promotes motivation towards both the discipline and the foreign language (FL[1]), or, on the contrary, activates the affective filter, thus limiting learning.

The research was conducted during the internship at a lower secondary school in the Veneto region, in Italy. The sample included three classes: a first-year class, a second-year class, and a third-year class of the lower secondary school, in order to observe how and whether motivation changes and how emotions affect students' learning during CLIL lessons.

Data were collected through a student questionnaire and through classroom observations conducted by the researcher. The obtained data were analysed using a mixed-methods approach and interpreted to identify motivation and emotions related to CLIL, with a view to highlight the factors that can contribute to the success or the failure of the approach.

The results showed that the CLIL methodology increases students' motivation towards the English language and, to a lesser extent, towards the non-linguistic subject. Emotions play a fundamental role in this process by supporting learning. However, this methodology can also generate anxiety, insecurity or fear of making mistakes, which can hinder learning.

In conclusion, the findings of this study were expected to offer insights into the motivational and emotional dynamics involved during CLIL lessons of lower secondary school. By comparing data, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how students' experiences influence their responses to CLIL.

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[1] In this research, the term "Foreign Language" and "Second Language" are used interchangeably without distinction. However, in the specific context of this study, the focus is on Foreign Language, as the participants are Italian students studying English as a foreign language in Italy.

INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the impact that motivation and emotions can have on lower secondary school students during CLIL methodology.

The study begins with an introduction to the CLIL methodology.

> Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is an increasingly popular educational approach given its dual focus on enabling learners to acquire subject matter through an additional language, while learning this second language in tandem with content (Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2023, p.2).

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is an innovative teaching approach that involves the teaching of a non-linguistic subject through a foreign language (Balboni, 2020), which means that the foreign language is no longer an isolated and abstract subject of study, but rather a concrete and functional tool to acquire non-linguistic knowledge.

The importance of this methodology is evident in today's society, which is characterised by processes of globalisation and interconnection that make multilingual competence essential for education, professional life and social communication (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). Therefore, CLIL provides a pedagogical response to these needs by offering an approach that combines language learning with subject learning. Learning in authentic and meaningful contexts is useful to strengthen students' motivation, as it stimulates curiosity, interest, and the perception of usefulness (Lasagabaster, 2010). Furthermore, learning a foreign language can facilitate the development of transverse skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration (Balboni & Coonan, 2014).

Numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of CLIL in schools, confirming that this approach can have a positive impact on various aspects of learning. The main advantages include the improvement of language skills and the development of higher cognitive abilities (Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2023). In addition to cognitive and linguistic benefits, CLIL also promotes openness to different cultures and ways of thinking. Learning in a foreign language exposes students to diverse contexts and cultures, fostering tolerance, curiosity, and the ability to interact in multicultural environments

(Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). This aspect is particularly relevant in nowadays increasingly globalised society.

Motivation is one of the key factors for educational success. Motivation directly influences how students engage and participate in classroom activities, the strategies they use to tackle complex tasks, and how they accept the results they achieve (Balboni, 2020). Motivated students are more likely to explore new content, maintain concentration during lessons, and overcome the difficulties that can arise when working with a foreign language. Conversely, weak motivation can reduce interest, limit participation, and increase the likelihood of failure, even when effective teaching methodologies such as CLIL are employed (Balboni, 2020). For this reason, understanding motivational dynamics is essential to assess the benefits of CLIL and to identify teaching strategies that can enhance learning, reduce anxiety, and promote positive emotions during lessons (Coonan, 2012).

Although CLIL is often described as an approach that enhances motivation, it is also important to consider the emotional challenges students may face while learning through CLIL. Using a foreign language to teach subject content can activate the affective filter, which is a set of psychological barriers that can reduce the learning ability (Balboni, 2020). Common negative emotions include anxiety, fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, frustration, feelings of linguistic inadequacy, and stress related to the difficulty of expressing themselves correctly in a foreign language (De Smet et al., 2018). These emotional states can reduce active participation, limit engagement in activities, and have a negative effect on school performance. At the same time, CLIL methodology also stimulates positive emotions that enhance motivation and learning. These include enthusiasm, curiosity, satisfaction, enjoyment of collaborating with classmates, confidence and pleasure in authentic, stimulating learning experiences (Castro & Shelton-Strong, 2024). When supported by appropriate teaching strategies, positive emotions promote engagement, encourage participation and reinforce students' perception of self-efficacy, thus creating a good learning experience (Beal, 2025). Therefore, recognising and managing these emotional dynamics is a fundamental aspect that teachers need to

notice to make learning through CLIL methodology effective, long-lasting and motivating.

This research arises from a desire to investigate this precise aspect: to what extent and in what ways CLIL affects the motivation of lower secondary school students, and how emotions influence students' learning. The objective is twofold: firstly, to verify whether teaching a non-linguistic subject (Geography, in this case) through the English language can increase interest and motivation in both the subject and the language itself; and secondly, to analyse how emotions experienced by students during CLIL lessons can affect their learning.

This study is based on data collected during the internship at a lower secondary school in Veneto. It involves three classes of the lower secondary school: a first-year class, a second-year class, and a third-year class studying Geography through English.

From a methodological point of view, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. This approach enabled the researcher to better observe how motivation and emotions evolved and influenced students' perceptions of CLIL.

The thesis is structured into four main chapters. The first chapter introduces CLIL methodology, tracing its origins and development and analysing the roles of language, teachers and activities, as well as its associated benefits. Particular attention is given to its development in the Italian context. The second chapter addresses the issue of motivation during the learning process. It presents the main theoretical models and key concepts, including the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, theories of possible selves, and the role of emotions in the educational process. This leads to an analysis of the previous studies on the relationship between CLIL and motivation. The third chapter is devoted to the study, presenting the research context, the research questions, the participants, the data collection tools and the analysis procedures. It concludes with the description of the obtained results. The fourth chapter discusses the results in relation to the existing literature, comparing the obtained data with the evidence found in previous studies. These observations are used to answer the two research

questions. Finally, the conclusion summarises the main findings and highlights the limits of this research, indicating possible future developments.

CHAPTER 1. AN INTRODUCTION TO CLIL

This chapter deals with an overview of the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach. First, a general definition of CLIL is described, followed by an outline of its origins (chapter 1.1). Subsequently, the role of the language in this approach is analysed (chapter 1.2). In chapter 1.3 the role of the CLIL teacher is described, focusing on the teachers' skills, and the CLIL activities are explained in chapter 1.4. The benefits of CLIL are outlined in chapter 1.5. Finally, it concludes with a focus on the CLIL situation in Italy (chapter 1.6).

1.1 The birth of a new approach: CLIL

CLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning, is an approach where subject content is taught through a foreign language and, at the same time, a foreign language is taught through the subject content (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019). It is one of the plurilingual approaches because it is a way of teaching students an additional language through content that is not strictly linked to the language itself. In other words, the language is used for meaningful purposes (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019). The acronym CLIL is employed as a generic term to describe all types of systems in which a foreign language (FL) is employed to teach specific subjects in the curriculum other than languages themselves.

This methodology was formalised by David Marsh and Anne Maljers in 1994 (INDIRE). Its innovative aim is to "build bridges between content and language" (Cinganotto, 2018, p. 1). This approach has been developed for various reasons. Firstly, it improves language learning (Coonan, 2010). Students are exposed to the language more frequently and in a more authentic way since they learn not only the micro-language of the discipline, but also how to carry out cognitive processes in that language (Coonan, 2010). These processes relate to both the subject being taught through CLIL and other disciplines (Coonan, 2010). Another reason for the development of this approach is its ability to

generate authentic learning. In CLIL lessons, the foreign language plays the same role as the mother tongue in other lessons: it is a vehicle for knowledge rather than simply an object of study (Van de Craen et al., 2007). Consequently, students perceive the language as concrete and natural, distancing themselves from the feeling of pretending or engaging in abstract activities that are often experienced during traditional language lessons (Coonan, 2010). In traditional language lessons, the foreign language is used exclusively during constructed dialogues, simulations, or exercises. Although they are useful, they do not reproduce the authentic context in which communication occurs. CLIL, on the other hand, enables students to use the foreign language as a vehicle for knowledge in real contexts. It is for this reason that the concept of "authenticity" (Coonan, 2010, p. 2) is employed in this approach.

Another feature of the CLIL methodology is that it focuses on learning rather than teaching. This is what differentiates CLIL from other plurilingual approaches used throughout the world. For example, *Language Across the Curriculum (LAC)* is based on the idea that language learning occurs within all school subjects. Consequently, all teachers should incorporate language improvement into their lessons. In this approach, language is seen as a tool for facilitating learning (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019). Another one is the *Content-Based Instruction (CBI),* which has been mainly adopted in the USA, where there are many non-American people who need to learn English. This method integrates language teaching with subject teaching, so language serves as both a means to teach content and an object of learning itself (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019). *English for Specific Purposes (ESP)* is another method of language education that involves teaching language for a specific purpose, such as English for Business. Thus, the language itself is the primary goal (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019). *English for Academic Purposes* is defined as "the language of study", which students need to master in order to achieve their academic goals. So, for instance, it is the language of geography, of history, etc. (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019). *English-Medium Instruction (EMI*) is a teaching method in which English is used to teach subject content, particularly at university level. The emphasis is on the content rather than on the language (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019). When the CLIL approach was first devised by the Italian Ministry of Education, approximately fifteen years ago, it was initially referred to as "Insegnamento attraverso la lingua straniera veicolare" which is

the Italian translation of EMI. The difference between EMI and CLIL lies in their respective objectives. The aim of EMI is not learning a language but teaching subject content through a foreign language. Whereas the aim of CLIL is content and language integrated learning, meaning that an integrated approach to learn content and language is required (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019).

Therefore, the main difference between CLIL and all the above-mentioned approaches is that CLIL involves integration of learning, whereas these other approaches focus on education and teaching. So, the perspective is different: it is not about teaching, but about learning. It is evident that learning and teaching have many similarities, but the focus during CLIL lessons is on learning rather than on teaching. This change of perspective has made CLIL so popular. In fact, this methodology, which was initially developed in Europe, has spread throughout the world, reaching South America and Asia. This shows how

> such geographically extensive involvement in CLIL endeavours attests to its relevance as a global educational force regarded as a modern form of educational delivery designed to even better equip the learner with knowledge and skills suitable for the global age (Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2024, p. 1).

It also explains why this methodology is becoming more popular. We live in a society that is increasingly interconnected with the rest of the world, where knowing only one's native language is insufficient. This is why CLIL aims at "a challenge of educating plurilingual citizens" (Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2024, p. 1). Today's society is an increasingly globalised, digital, and rapidly changing society (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023), where knowing just one language is no longer enough. It is now necessary to understand and produce content in multiple languages and cultural contexts (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). In order to enable learners to convey knowledge across different cultures and through different languages, teachers should adopt innovative and multilingual teaching approaches (Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2023).

It is precisely CLIL that can provide young people with this opportunity, since learning new subjects in a foreign language gives students the chance to look at the world from a different cultural perspective. In this way CLIL supports both personal growth and the development of skills needed for global citizenship (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). Moreover,

cultural differences play an important role in shaping how emotions are experienced and how learning develops (Kralova et al., 2025). Therefore, CLIL is useful because it opens people's minds to the globalised world, and it allows young people to experience emotions that can facilitate learning.

1.2 Language in CLIL

The language used during CLIL lessons varies from the abstract, constructed language typically used in traditional language lessons. Indeed, CLIL requires learners to engage in discussion and debate, using more complex and varied vocabulary than in standard language lessons (Coyle, 2006). This is what distinguishes CLIL from micro-language teaching, both in terms of purpose and methodological approach. In CLIL, subject content is taught through a FL, which serves as a means of accessing knowledge. The focus is on learning disciplinary content, while the FL is used as a tool to understand the concepts. In micro-language teaching, on the other hand, the emphasis is on language: on the form, structure and specialised vocabulary of a given discipline. In addition, the content is already familiar to the students (Balboni, 2020). For this reason, these activities are carried out by the FL teacher, who focuses on improving communicative and linguistic skills through specific content. In fact, the aim of micro-language teaching is to improve language skills, and to master the vocabulary of already acquired knowledge (Balboni, 2020). In contrast, the aim of CLIL is to integrate subject learning with foreign language learning, giving greater emphasis on the content.

To explain what kind of language is taught and used in a CLIL classroom, we need to first consider the distinction made by Jim Cummins' theory between two types of language competences: BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) (Cummins, 2008). BICS is developed through social interaction and involves simple language use related to everyday topics. It is part of the traditional teaching (Balboni, 2020), which is based on immediate communication and on everyday language. CALP, on the other hand, is the language competence required in school and academic settings. It involves elaborated and sophisticated language use with

higher order cognitive activities, such as learning, reformulating and constructing abstract thought. It is part of the vehicular teaching (Balboni, 2020). Therefore, CALP represents the language of the study in disciplinary contexts. It is evident that, in contrast to BICS, CALP is not a competence that develops spontaneously through everyday use of language. It is a language competence that is closely linked to disciplinary study and learning. CALP is the language for learning, which is built through extended contact with the vehicular language and through activities typical of the school, such as reading complex texts, written production, elaboration, and critical reflection (Cummins, 2008). Unlike BICS, which develops in the context of socialisation and daily interaction, CALP is associated with the learners' cognitive dimension, and it grows in parallel with their ability to understand abstract concepts, engage in reasoning, and engage with disciplinary content (Balboni, 2020).

When teachers work with CALP, they work with the disciplinary micro-language, namely the language specific to the discipline: symbols, vocabulary, genres, styles, and other elements typical of that subject. Contextually, the student is involved in activities that require higher order cognitive skills, such as deducing, evaluating, hypothesising, observing, and others (Balboni, 2020). These skills are accompanied by the development of metacognitive skills and learning strategies, such as the ability to take notes in a FL. For instance, notetaking is a particularly relevant and complex skill. It is an integrated and personal ability that each learner develops subjectively. It is already a challenge in the L1; in a FL, the difficulty increases more.

Coyle's model also fits into this framework, distinguishing between three types of language: "language of learning, for learning and through learning" (Coyle, 2006, p. 10). The term "language of learning" refers to the vocabulary and linguistic structures necessary to understand the fundamental concepts and skills of a discipline. The "language for learning" concerns the linguistic resources essential for studying in a foreign language, such as discussion, summarisation, and hypothesis formulation. Finally, the "language through learning" emphasises that learning cannot take place without the active and conscious use of language, which is closely linked to cognitive processes.

Consequently, the language employed in the CLIL methodology is different from the language used in traditional language lessons because students are required to use foreign language in an analogous manner as their mother tongue. In this way, CLIL facilitates language acquisition and promotes a deeper understanding of content, critical thinking and autonomous learning.

1.3 CLIL teachers

CLIL is not usually carried out by foreign language teachers, but by non-linguistic subject teachers who deliver their lessons through a FL. In certain situations, however, CLIL is conducted by language teachers.

In order for CLIL to be effective, the language and subject-content teachers should work together in a team. The decision to team teaching should not be imposed by the head teacher or the institution (Menegale, 2009), but rather it should be a choice made by the two teachers. Although there are no precise rules for team teaching, it has been suggested that "being part of a team-teaching means teaching together and integrating one's knowledge and skills" (Menegale, 2014, p. 63). Working in a team involves constant interaction among its members, so there must be affinity between group members. These two teachers need to have both personal and professional affinity (Menegale, 2014) and "similar learning style" (Menegale, 2009, p. 143), or otherwise, they should be willing and flexible to adapt to each other's styles. However, not all teachers are willing to work in teams, and they are even less willing to collaborate on subjects they dislike. For instance, if a teacher studied English and has always disliked maths, why should they collaborate with the maths teacher to create a CLIL module? For this reason, "mutual support between the two teachers" (Menegale, 2009, p. 143) is essential.

Once the team has been formed, the two teachers must agree on the roles they will play and the objectives they will achieve during CLIL lessons (Menegale, 2014). The decisions that the two teachers need to make together include selecting the topic, establishing the teaching objectives, choosing the materials, designing activities and setting up the

assessment grid (Menegale, 2014). The first step is to define the roles of the two teachers to avoid misunderstandings that may arise during the lessons (Menegale, 2009). The selection of topics is then guided by three main criteria: the class's language proficiency, the complexity of the content, and the students' interest and motivation (Menegale, 2009). The following step is to clarify both the disciplinary and linguistic aims of the lesson (Menegale, 2009). As the FL is used as a means to convey content in CLIL methodology and a greater emphasis is placed on the content, it is evident that the main goals are linked to the non-linguistic subject (Menegale, 2009). Therefore, the subject teacher sets the subject-specific objectives, while the language teacher defines the language-specific objectives to support the content covered (Menegale, 2009). A useful tool in this phase is the "pyramid of objectives" (Menegale, 2009, p. 147), which is divided into three sections. At the base there are "the skills that all students should acquire", in the middle there are "the skills that most students should acquire", and at the top there are "the skills that some students should acquire" (Menegale, 2009, p. 147). This schema enables the two teachers to set different objectives in terms of both content and language.

In most CLIL teaching practices, only the subject teacher is present in the classroom, conveying the content through the foreign language. In other cases, however, both the language and the subject teachers are present. In fact, there are several co-teaching models, which vary according to the roles of the teachers and the type of lesson (Menegale, 2009). The six main co-teaching models are: "classical, collaborative, supportive, parallel, differentiated groups, and supervisory" (Menegale, 2009, p. 149). In the classical co-teaching model, both teachers conduct the lesson, taking turns to speak. They can opt for a lecture or more interactive methods that involve the students. In the collaborative co-teaching model, there is active interaction and participation between students and teachers. In the supportive co-teaching model, the subject teacher presents the content to the class, while the language teacher intervenes to propose activities that facilitate comprehension and develop linguistic accuracy. In the parallel co-teaching model, the class is divided into two groups. One group works with the subject teacher on the content, and the other group works with the language teacher on the linguistic aspects; then they switch. In the differentiated groups model, the class is divided according to the students' level and abilities, and they work on different materials. Finally, in the

supervisory model, the subject teacher delivers the content while the language teacher monitors, observes, and records the progress of the lesson and the students' difficulties (Menegale, 2009). Among the models described,

> the collaborative model is the one that most closely reflects CLIL lessons in general, as it promotes balanced roles for the two teachers and balanced interaction between the team and the students. And, at the same time, it promotes a meaningful learning situation (Menegale, 2009, p. 149).

The teacher who carries out the CLIL methodology must have essential competences. The theoretical knowledge of CLIL methodology is the first essential requirement (Serragiotto, 2008). The teacher needs to be aware of the characteristics, aims, and implications of this methodology, as well as the differences from more traditional approaches. Therefore, knowledge of the literature and theory of CLIL is essential for the development of efficient teaching practices.

The CLIL teacher must also demonstrate flexibility, a spirit of initiative and considerable planning skills (Serragiotto, 2008). CLIL planning involves the selection of subject content, the identification of both linguistic and content objectives, the organisation of classroom activities and the definition of assessment methods. The efficacy of the teaching strategies depends on the careful planning of classroom activities, including the organisation of activities in pairs or groups, the use of authentic or adapted materials, and the provision of language scaffolding. These are crucial strategies to consider.

Furthermore, CLIL teachers must continually search for appropriate resources and materials and monitor and evaluate both the learning process and its outcomes. This implies a joint assessment of both content and language proficiency, which must be fair and consistent with the established objectives. During the assessment, the non-linguistic subject teacher focuses on communicative effectiveness and content coherence, while the language teacher analyses linguistic errors and addresses them in subsequent language lessons. In this way, the subject teacher evaluates the understanding of the content and communicative coherence without dwelling on every linguistic error, which will be addressed by the language teacher. This collaborative approach ensures a balanced assessment in relation to the educational objectives of CLIL (Serragiotto, 2008).

Regarding specific competences, the CLIL teacher must have adequate linguistic proficiency in the vehicular foreign language. According to the ministerial decree, this competence should correspond to at least level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Serragiotto, 2008). However, in practice, a B2 level is also considered a good starting point. In addition to the linguistic competence, the teachers must have a solid knowledge of the subject content and mastery of the didactics specific to the discipline they teach. Teaching English requires a different approach than teaching chemistry, history, or maths. Each discipline has its own specific and specialised language, its own communicative style and specific teaching strategies. Consequently, CLIL teachers require specific methodological preparation to convey subject content through a FL without compromising the didactics of their own discipline. Fundamental is also the mastery of the micro-language of the discipline, namely the technical and specialised language employed by experts in the specific field (Serragiotto, 2008). It is not enough to have a general knowledge of the FL; it is necessary to know how to use the specific terms, structures, and conventions specific of their discipline (Serragiotto, 2008). Furthermore, the teacher must know how to manage the class also through the use of the FL. In the laboratory, for example, it is necessary to be able to give precise operational instructions in the language: "Put on the lab coat", "Open the drawer", "Take the material", etc.

During the planning phase, the subject teacher selects the content to be covered, while the language teacher evaluates the appropriateness of the chosen materials in relation to the linguistic level of the students. This collaboration is particularly important because, as it is known, classes are never linguistically homogenous. The two teachers, therefore, need to work together to find appropriate materials for their students.

In the operational phase, the two teachers also agree on the language skills to be worked on. For example, they might decide to focus on reading comprehension and oral production, at the expense of other skills. Furthermore, in order to facilitate learning, it is preferable for the language teacher to introduce grammatical structures and vocabulary in their lessons, which will later be used in the CLIL modules.

1.4 CLIL teaching strategies

As mentioned above, the CLIL methodology emphasises primarily subject knowledge and cognitive engagement, but it also integrates language learning and cultural awareness (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). In order for the CLIL methodology to be effective, it is necessary to adopt focused strategies that integrate the two areas in a balanced way.

The first step is to create "a physical environment in which the foreign language is present in its forms" (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023, p. 226). To become familiar with the target language and feel comfortable, students need to be surrounded by it. For this reason, it is useful to decorate the classroom with posters, images and charts containing vocabulary and linguistic structures.

Another effective CLIL strategy is to adopt pair or group activities (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023), because they encourage active participation, allowing students to practice the foreign language while also enhancing their comprehension of the content (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). An example is the Think-Pair-Share method (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023), which involves three stages. First, students are given an initial prompt and some time to think about how to answer it individually. Then, they discuss the prompt with a partner, in pairs. Finally, they discuss the initial question with the whole class (Balboni, 2020). Another strategy is Total Physical Response (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023), a language teaching method that uses physical movement to help learners understand and respond to verbal input (Balboni, 2020). Storytelling is another useful tool since it fosters imagination and creativity, makes learning funnier and promotes positive attitudes towards language acquisition (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). Moreover, according to Fazzi and Menegale (2023), game-based learning can make an important contribution to the CLIL methodology, since it not only promotes the enjoyment of learning but also gives students and teachers the opportunity to build personal plurilingual and pluricultural experiences (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). In addition, tools such as "logbooks, diaries, learning journals and portfolios" (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023, p. 233) are useful for encouraging metacognitive reflection. On the one hand, they help students to become aware of their progress and the difficulties they encounter. On the other hand, they allow

teachers to gather meaningful information about students' learning progress, behaviour, and attitudes (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023).

In order for the CLIL methodology to be useful, the activity must promote the learning of subject content and the development of language skills. If it does not integrate the two areas, it cannot be considered a real integrated learning (Balboni, 2020). However, this principle is often disregarded due to the students' limited competence in the foreign language, which is not usually considered. If the input is overly complex, students will encounter difficulties to understand the content and develop the target language. Consequently, in order to achieve integrated learning, it is necessary to create activities suitable for the classroom. Such activities should enable the language teacher to provide the essential tools for understanding the content, and the non-linguistic teacher to make the input as comprehensible as possible. In order to do that, certain teaching attentions can be adopted. For example, it is useful to provide students with a lesson plan that presents the topics in a logical order, highlights key words, and recalls concepts already covered (Balboni, 2020). This activates prior knowledge and guides attention. Reading the outline together also allows students to familiarise with correct pronunciation and to understand the essential information (Balboni, 2020). It is also important to provide input in a redundant manner using diverse communication channels, including pictures, videos, concept maps and gestures (Balboni, 2020), which can support the decoding of information. Illustrating abstract elements with concrete examples or references and highlighting markers can facilitate the comprehension of the logical structure of the discourse (Balboni, 2020).

In a CLIL context, it is also important to adopt the glottodidactic approaches typical of language teachers, such as linguistic simplification, paraphrasing and using vocabulary in a controlled manner (Balboni, 2020). In order to encourage interaction and autonomy, it is recommended that students work in pairs or groups, thereby interrupting frontal lessons in which only the teacher speaks (Balboni, 2020). This way stimulates peer tutoring and scaffolding, thus promoting shared construction of knowledge. At the end of each lesson, the teacher can ask students to summarise what they have understood to help them consolidate their learning (Balboni, 2020).

Another teaching strategy concerns error management. In CLIL context, the focus remains on content rather than on formal correctness. Teachers should only intervene when errors hinder comprehension, and they should simply repeat the correct form without dwelling on the error. For example, if a student says, "Spain are in Europe", the teacher does not correct the verb, but the teacher simply repeats "Spain is in Europe", because CLIL's primary objective is to maintain active communication and facilitate the exchange of information. Indeed, CLIL uses language as a vehicle for learning content, rather than an object of study (Balboni, 2020).

Finally, another essential aspect is the physical layout of the classroom. The traditional layout, with the teacher's desk facing the students and students' desks arranged in rows, is not suitable for this methodology, as it keeps the teacher and the frontal explanation at the centre of the lesson. In contrast, in CLIL courses, the focus of learning is on the student. Since CLIL promotes learning through collaborative approaches, in which students engage, share information, solve problems together and work together (Menegale, 2009), the classroom should be arranged in a way that encourages interaction and collaboration. The classroom should be organised in groups, i.e., the various desks should be arranged in small circles of four people. This organisation promotes cooperative work, facilitates communication and allows the teacher to move between groups, observing activities, providing linguistic support and monitoring learning processes (Menegale, 2009).

Therefore,

> CLIL programmes must consider language learning and prepare the environment to facilitate it. This environment is created not only by the presence of the target language, but also by the methodological interventions and strategies (Coonan, 2010, p. 134).

1.5 The benefits of CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has several benefits. First, CLIL fosters students' metacognitive awareness (Coonan, 2010), which is why it is important to introduce this methodology from primary school (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). CLIL

creates a rich language learning environment where students can develop new knowledge by building on their existing communication skills (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). Furthermore, CLIL promotes intercultural competence by helping students to develop a greater self-awareness and an understanding of other cultures (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023). Learning content through another language also encourages students to view the world from different perspectives. For instance, studying history in English involves engaging with British ideology and perspectives, which differ from those in Italy. An English history textbook is not the same as an Italian one. In this sense, "CLIL allows students to explore the world through another cultural lens" (Fazzi & Menegale, 2023, p. 225). Introducing CLIL from primary school, therefore, lays the foundations for a path that can be consolidated and expanded in lower and upper secondary school.

Moreover, CLIL promotes learner autonomy (Menegale, 2014). Autonomy is defined as "the ability to think critically, make decisions and act independently" (Menegale, 2023, p. 97). In the CLIL context, this aspect is particularly important because, as previously mentioned, language and subject learning cannot be passive processes. Students must actively participate, ask questions, address their gaps in knowledge and revise the content. Consequently, results depend primarily on the individual responsibility of students, who can transform language from an obstacle into a tool for growth through an autonomous and participatory attitude. Therefore, promoting autonomy in CLIL increases motivation, self-esteem and self-efficacy, fostering more lasting and effective learning (Menegale, 2014). In this way, CLIL provides students with the opportunity to develop a critical spirit (Serragiotto, 2023), which is useful not only in school, but in all areas of life. Therefore, CLIL can be considered innovative because it embraces cultural and linguistic diversity as a means of understanding reality and promoting inclusion (Serragiotto, 2023).

Several glottodidactic reasons explain why this methodology is becoming more widespread at different school levels. The first advantage is the increased exposure to the FL (Serragiotto, 2023). Typically, English is taught for a maximum of two or three hours a week at school, and classes are very large; as a result, it is difficult to develop all language skills sufficiently. The skill that suffers most is oral production because there is not enough time to work on it with all the students. Adding more hours in which the FL

is used is a highly advantageous opportunity. In addition, there is a greater authenticity of the language use and of the activities (Serragiotto, 2023), as students work on specific and concrete topics. In this way, authenticity is perceived because the language is closely linked to the world of work and to the students' future careers. Through activities that simulate professional situations or deal with practical topics related to their field of expertise, students become more motivated and aware of the importance of language as a fundamental competence for their future.

Students' extra-linguistic knowledge helps to make the input more comprehensible (Serragiotto, 2023), facilitating their understanding and application of the language content. Indeed, language itself can present a challenge, and it is at this point that extralinguistic knowledge becomes essential. When language is used to teach other non-linguistic disciplines, such as geography, history, and other subjects, language functions as a medium for conveying knowledge and the knowledge of that discipline, such as graphs, maps, and other tools, enables students to better understand the input. Furthermore, the integration of multimedia elements, such as video, images, and gestures, with other contextual tools, can be used to make the input clearer and more accessible, thereby facilitating communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Serragiotto, 2023). The shift of attention from linguistic form to content (Serragiotto, 2023) enables learners to focus more on the content, rather than on the formal structure of the language. Consequently, learning becomes more natural and effective. Students no longer see the use of the FL as an obstacle, but rather as a tool for expressing themselves and interacting with others. This approach reduces the fear of linguistic accuracy and of making mistakes, as they work mainly on content, thereby encouraging students' active participation and desire to express themselves without fear of making mistakes. This idea is supported by Krashen's rule of forgetting (Balboni, 2020), according to which the process of acquiring a language is facilitated when a person forgets that they are acquiring something, because the affective filter does not intervene to hinder the LAD, Language Acquisition Device, when confronted with certain gaps or errors.

These glottodidactic benefits demonstrate that this approach encourages students to maintain their concentration and engage more actively, and it has a positive impact on

their learning outcomes. To be effective, the CLIL approach must be characterised by an added value, otherwise there would be no point in adopting it. Moreover, CLIL is becoming increasingly popular because it is a flexible methodology that can be adapted to the needs of the class. Indeed, it is a "non-cloneable project", meaning that it cannot be replicated for multiple classes, but rather it is created specifically for one class, according to the needs and language levels of the students (Serragiotto, 2023).

In conclusion, CLIL methodology is important, as it facilitates the acquisition of language competences, with a particular emphasis on English proficiency, an essential element for successful integration into the global job market. Consequently, schools try to offer students opportunities to learn English, thereby facilitating the use of these competences outside the educational setting. The use of the language should not be limited to social contexts, it should also be employed for professional purposes, with the objective of achieving success around the world (De Graaff & Housen, 2019). Plurilingualism is a key factor in enhancing competitiveness. CLIL should not be regarded simply as another method of language learning methodology; rather, it has implications for the entire learning process, and it offers an innovative approach to language education (Menegale, 2023).

1.6 CLIL in Italy

In Italy, the 1999 law on school autonomy enabled CLIL projects to be launched at the request of schools. This gave rise to models created "from the bottom" (Serragiotto, 2023, p. 186), characterised by flexibility and adapted to different local contexts. Cà Foscari University in Venice played a pioneering role in this field, thanks to the work of Carmel Mary Coonan (Serragiotto, 2023), who established the first CLIL laboratory (Menegale, 2023), whose "aim is to integrate Italian schools into the European context" (Serragiotto, 2023, p. 186). To this end, many schools have launched projects funded by European programmes such as Socrates and Leonardo (Serragiotto, 2023), which promote cultural

exchanges and training courses that integrate language and content while developing linguistic and professional skills (Serragiotto, 2023).

The current stage of the CLIL methodology in Italy is characterised by a variety of experiences linked to the different language levels of the students, different school types, and the implementation of adopted methods. Teachers' competences are varied and there is a lack of shared standards. However, many experiences have been demonstrated to be positive because they originated on a voluntary basis, rather than being imposed from above. It is evident that the motivation of teachers and the quality of collaboration are essential factors for the success of CLIL in the Italian school context (Menegale, 2009).

This methodology has developed in several European countries thanks to the development of European projects organised by various institutions and universities. Italy was the first country in the European Union to introduce CLIL in secondary schools by law (Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito, 2010). Following the introduction of the Riforma Gelmini in 2010, the role of CLIL became more structured, particularly in upper secondary schools (Serragiotto, 2023). After a period in which CLIL was optional, namely schools could decide on a voluntary basis whether to apply CLIL methodology or not, in 2010 it became officially compulsory at the upper secondary school level (Ministro dell'Istruzione e del Merito, 2010). In particular, this decree law made teaching a subject in a foreign language compulsory in the final year of upper secondary schools. In language upper secondary schools, teaching a subject in a foreign language is compulsory from the third year: one subject must be taught in a foreign language in the third year, and in the fourth and fifth year, two subjects must be taught in two foreign languages (Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito, 2010).

In the Italian school context, "the 2010 Reform of the Regulations for High Schools and Technical Institutes became law, and it stipulated that it is the responsibility of the non-language teacher to teach their subject in the vehicular language" (Menegale, 2023, p. 239). But the ways in which CLIL is implemented can vary. In primary school, a single teacher, the so-called generalist teacher, who usually has level B2 and teaches several subjects, may be both a non-linguistic subject teacher and a language teacher, as occurs in the case of teachers who teach both history and English. In rarer cases, it is possible to

find a teacher with a double qualification, for example in geography and English. Nowadays, the role of CLIL teachers is still a topic of great interest and discussion in Italy (Menegale, 2023).

Regarding the languages in which it could be adopted in the Italian context, CLIL can be delivered "in foreign languages (primarily English, followed by German, Spanish and French), second languages (e.g. Italian L2), and minority languages (e.g. Friulan and Ladin)" (Menegale, 2023, pp. 237-238).

CHAPTER 2. THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN CLIL

The second chapter focuses on the role of motivation during CLIL lessons. It begins with a definition and explanation of motivation (paragraph 2.1), followed by an analysis of its different types (paragraph 2.2). In the third paragraph some motivational models are presented, and the fourth paragraph focuses on the theories of the possible selves. The fifth paragraph focuses on emotions, and the final paragraph explores the relationship between CLIL and motivation by examining past experiments and studies.

2.1 Motivation

Motivation is the fundamental element around which the whole learning process revolves. Without students' motivation, teachers would not be able to fulfil their role as educators, as transmitters of knowledge. Motivation is essential for deep and lasting learning. In fact, the educational model is tripolar, i.e., composed of three actors: student-teacher-discipline (Balboni, 2020). The cornerstone of these three factors is motivation. Motivation is studied by the psychology of learning and psycho-didactics. These fields are also concerned with the fundamental mechanisms behind acquisition, cognitive and learning styles, and the role of relationships between learners and teachers in supporting or hindering learning (Balboni, 2020). Motivation is, therefore, the force that drives the behaviour needed for the achievement of the goals it sets. This concept is present in the etymology of the word "motivation". It comes from the Latin "motus", meaning to move or to go towards. It is, therefore, a movement that drives a person towards a goal, a purpose (Treccani).

But what is motivation? Motivation is not an easy concept to define. There have been, and still are, different scholars who study this concept, and therefore, different definitions of motivation have been developed. This is because motivation is present in many

different fields; consequently, depending on the various areas of expertise there are different definitions.

Starting with the general definition found in the Italian dictionary Treccani, motivation is defined as:

> L'insieme dei bisogni, desideri o intenzioni che prendono parte alla determinazione del comportamento e che conferiscono a questo unità e significato: si distinguono aspetti primari, quali i bisogni fisiologici o sociali, e aspetti secondari, quali i fattori di stimolazione esterna o di progettualità individuale (Treccani).

In other words, it is a set of fundamental elements that enable students to be involved and to achieve the goal they have set for themselves. These factors vary from person to person and change according to the cultural background, the needs, and the priorities of each student.

Turning to the field of education, numerous scholars have defined motivation. According to Rossana De Beni and Angelica Moè (2000), motivation can be considered as a structured set of personal experiences that enables us to understand the direction and the intensity of a behaviour, as well as how long it is pursued in order to achieve a specific goal. It is something necessary to mark the path, which a person wants to take in life, and the way it is to be taken (De Beni & Moè, 2000).

Thus, it can be said that all theories and scholars agree that motivation is the expression of the will that drives an individual to perform certain actions, to invest attention and effort to achieve a precise and predetermined goal.

2.2 Different types of motivation

Individuals differ in cognitive traits, personality, personal history, and motivation. The motivation of an individual can, therefore, manifest itself in a variety of ways. The different types of motivation appear in antinomian pairs. The first and most important distinction is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Balboni, 2020), which is also useful in understanding the cyclical conditioning explained by motivation theorists.

Intrinsic or self-motivation is part of an individual's inner nature. It is an emotional response that the individual gives to the proposed activities. It arises from pleasure, need, desire, interest in the subject matter, and a sense of competence. This type of motivation is fundamental for growth and psychological development, fostering learner autonomy and self-determination. Intrinsically motivated students seek new skills and knowledge that will be useful for their future, driven by a need for growth and satisfaction, as highlighted by Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The SDT explains how to motivate students who are not intrinsically motivated to engage in learning tasks. To do this, Ryan and Deci identify three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and connection (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy refers to the need to feel in control of one's own actions and decisions, enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning path (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Competence is the ability to achieve the desired goals, which promotes confidence and perseverance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Connection reflects the need to feel supported, fostering engagement through positive relationships with peers and teachers (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Meeting these needs can increase intrinsic motivation, prompting students to participate and engage more deeply during the learning activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Conversely, extrinsic motivation is based on the learner's need for external approval, reinforcement, rewards and the avoidance of punishment. Students are motivated by the desire for external rewards such as prizes, recognition, and parental pride, or by the fear of negative consequences. The activity is merely a means of obtaining good marks which will then bring rewards (Balboni, 2020). Extrinsically motivated activities are, therefore, supported by external reinforcement and performed to gain approval and gratitude. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, characterises students who are interested in doing activity without thinking about subsequent external rewards.

Related to the student's motivation is the student's approach to learning. The approach to study is the set of strategies, processes, and meanings that the student uses in the process of learning. In 1983, the English educational psychologist Noel Entwistle classified three different approaches to learning (Entwistle, 1998). The first is when students study deeply, tackling the task in a meaningful and non-superficial way; this is because they are

driven by intrinsic motivation, interest in the subject and desire to do well. The second type of approach is the "strategic approach", typical of students who are in competition with their peers and will do anything to get a good grade, better than their peers. The third is the "surface approach" which is adopted by students who want to hurry, finish as quickly as possible, with as little effort as possible, but always aiming to please the teacher. Students driven by extrinsic motivation are characterised by the last two approaches (Entwistle, 1998).

Other types of motivation can occur during a lesson, such as "endogenous motivation" (Balboni, 2020, p. 93). Endogenous motivation arises from the teacher's engaging methodology and style, making the class enjoyable and fostering continuous engagement. For instance, in the case of foreign language students, one type of motivation is to fall in love with a foreign country, and vice versa: falling in love with a country encourages students to learn the language of that country. This can be achieved by watching films in the language, intercultural exchanges, and other language activities. These activities become necessary when students lack the "perceived utilitarian motivation" (Balboni, 2020, p. 93), which is the motivation driven by concrete and external benefits, such as the need to pass a test. In such cases, endogenous motivation can enhance the approval for the subject. A positive relationship with the teacher also provides security and encourages active participation. "Playful or recreational motivation" (Balboni, 2020, p. 92), a basic form of pleasure associated with play, is another valuable tool in the classroom, allowing even shy students to participate without fear of judgement and reducing learning fatigue.

2.3 Motivation and language acquisition

The subject of language acquisition is the learner. To understand how a person learns, it is necessary to look at the functioning of the brain, which is the "hardware" (Balboni, 2020, p. 67). Psychology focuses its studies on how the hardware is set in motion, while psycholinguistics studies the language acquisition, the mechanism of encoding and decoding, i.e., the functioning of the software (Balboni, 2020). There are two mechanisms

of acquisition: Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device (LAD), and Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) (Balboni, 2020). The language learner is an active subject, predisposed to language acquisition, equipped with a Language Acquisition Device (LAD). The LAD needs to be supported, guided, facilitated, and made more efficient in terms of acquisition time by the LASS. The learning process takes place in two interrelated ways, as Marcel Danesi stated, which can be identified by the following terms: "bimodality and directionality" (Danesi, 1998 cit. in Balboni, 2020, pp. 67-71). The brain is divided into two hemispheres: the left hemisphere is analytical, linear, rational, and verbal; and the right hemisphere is global, simultaneous, emotional, and visual. This is why bimodality is important: both hemispheres are involved in linguistic communication and need to be integrated, so that the whole mind of the learner is involved in learning a language. The principle of directionality is also present. This means that the bimodal use of the brain occurs in a specific direction, from the right hemisphere (contextualising and globalising mode) to the left hemisphere (more formal modes). There is, therefore, a complementarity between the two hemispheres, from right to left, which means that language is bimodal and that is perceived directionally (Balboni, 2020). Therefore, in the context of teaching, learning is motivated by engaging both the affective dimension (right hemisphere) through contextualised, sensory, and culturally rich material, and the logical dimension (left hemisphere) through formal analysis. Engaging the entire brain is crucial for learner motivation and stimulation (Balboni, 2020).

Motivation serves as the driving energy for both the brain (hardware) and the LAD (software) in the process of language acquisition. Acquisition is an effort, in fact, Piaget hypothesised that development takes place by means of two mechanisms: "assimilation" (Hanfstingl et al., 2022, p. 320) that is the incorporation of data received from experience into the mental schemas that the student already possesses; and "accommodation" (Hanfstingl et al., 2022, p. 320), the modification of mental schemas according to the experience. Assimilation is the action of the student on the environment. Accommodation, the reverse action, is the action of the environment on the student, namely "acquisition" (Hanfstingl et al., 2022, p. 320). The mental hardware and software, therefore, make a considerable effort: the energy to do this is motivation. In fact, there is no acquisition without motivation. A teaching unit needs a motivational phase that makes learning

meaningful, that creates the desire to embark on this path which will lead to the acquisition of the concepts defined at the beginning of the teaching unit.

Human beings are both emotional and rational, with emotions often playing a significant role. This is why humanistic psychology highlights the role of emotions, particularly pleasure and displeasure, as the affective filter during language acquisition. Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory (SLAT) (Balboni, 2020), building on Chomsky's LAD, emphasizes the teacher's role in facilitating acquisition. While successful learning can feel like a positive outcome, it is often temporary. Drawing on Chomsky's distinction between knowing and cognizing, Krashen differentiates between "acquisition" (Balboni, 2020, p. 47), an unconscious process involving both brain hemispheres and leading to long-term knowledge, and "learning" (Balboni, 2020, p. 47), a rational process controlled by the left hemisphere that results in provisional competence. Krashen also outlines three principles for promoting acquisition over mere learning. The first principle is that of "comprehensible input" (Balboni, 2020, p. 47). This means that in order to acquire, learners have to focus their attention on the comprehensible meaning of the input rather than on the form. In fact, it is the meaning the motivating factor and not the form. The second principle is "natural order and i+1, the zone of potential development, interlanguage" (Balboni, 2020, p. 48). The first condition for the acquisition of input is that it is in the natural order immediately following previously acquired input. The area of potential development, which was called by Vygotsky "zone of proximal development" (Balboni, 2020, p. 48), is the distance between the part of a task that a person is already able to do and the potential level they can reach in trying to do the remaining part of the task. This second principle can, therefore, be summed up in the Krashenian formula $i+1$, where i is part of the linguistic or communicative task that the learner is already able to perform, and $+1$ is the area of potential development. Thus, the fact of having already acquired the previous elements is a sufficient condition for the acquisition of the new concepts if the input is made comprehensible. Interlanguage is the object of study of acquisition linguistics, which studies the acquisition processes of a language. Interlanguage is the language used by a person learning a language and it represents a part of the whole language system of a native speaker. Interlanguage can, therefore, be defined as "the partial system that the learner has built up to that point" (Selinker, 1972).

The term interlanguage is coined by Selinker (1972), who states that interlanguage is a system, however partial. It has its own grammatical basis; a structure and it has mechanisms that make it efficient in communication (Selinker, 1972). The error made at a given stage of interlanguage is not an error, but a production which is appropriate to that stage of learning. Therefore, a distinction between "error and mistake" (White, 2021) can be made. An error can be defined as a noticeable deviation that reflects the competence of the learner at that stage of L2 or FL development. It is a systematic deviation because it is made by the learner who has not mastered the rules of the target language yet. Since errors stem from a lack of competence, they cannot be self-corrected by the students themselves. Moreover, students often do not even perceive these deviations as incorrect, as they represent their current understanding of the linguistic norm. Therefore, a teacher is needed to identify and correct them (White, 2021). A mistake, on the other hand, can be defined as a random guess or an oversight. It is a failure to use a known linguistic system correctly, often due to factors such as fatigue, speaking speed, or oversight. Unlike errors, mistakes are not systematic and do not reflect a deficit in the learner's linguistic competence. For these reasons, mistakes can be self-corrected. Native speakers and students can readily recognise them and correct them (White, 2021).

The "affective filter" (Balboni, 2020, p. 48) is the third principle. For $i+1$ to be acquired, the affective filter must not be active. Otherwise, what is understood will be stored in short-term memory and will not be acquired in a stable and definitive way. In fact, in a state of calmness, adrenaline is converted into noradrenalin, a neurotransmitter that facilitates memorisation (Balboni, 2020). In states of anxiety and stress, a steroid is produced that blocks noradrenaline and puts into conflict the amygdala (the emotional gland that defends the mind against unpleasant events) and the hippocampus, the gland that instead plays a role in activating the frontal lobes and initiating memorisation (Balboni, 2020). The affective filter is, therefore, a precise self-defence mechanism that is activated in situations that provoke anxiety. For example, a self-corrected dictation does not provoke anxiety, it is only a challenge to oneself, but a dictation corrected by the teacher is anxiety provoking. Activities that jeopardize one's image, for instance, making students speak in a foreign language before they feel confident is useless for acquisition. Therefore, situations that undermine self-esteem and activities that provoke the feeling of

not being able to learn do not allow the language to be acquired. To avoid this, motivation is needed. Motivation is what drives learners to achieve a goal. Indeed, students' perception that they are learning and the belief that mistakes and errors are not fatal to their school career is one of the main sources of motivation. Mistakes and errors must be seen as a normal and useful part of the learning process. They must be used to improve the learning process. Students must feel encouraged and motivated to overcome the difficulties they may encounter along the way. The difficulties are there, and they are many, but if motivation is high and strong, students will manage to overcome them and reach the end of their path. In fact, as mentioned earlier, motivation is the energy that sets hardware and software in motion. So, motivation is "fundamental to any kind of learning" (Coonan, 2012, p. 2).

2.4 Possible selves' theories

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System Theory (L2MSS) is an attempt to explain individual differences in language learning motivation (Dörnyei, 2009). This theory consists of three main components: "the ideal L2 self" that refers to the language learner the student aspires to be. "The ought-to L2 self" which is influenced by external expectations; and "the L2 learning experience" which refers to the impact of past learning experiences on current motivation (Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 9-10).

This framework is rooted in the "possible selves" concepts in social psychology (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The possible selves concept states that all learners have a current self, and that they are working towards a future self.

> There is a strong visualization component to the ideal L2 self, and this future self-guide has been shown to be essential for language learning; the ought-to L2 self can also be a strong motivator but has been shown to not be as influential to language learning success as the ideal L2 self (Sylven & Thompson, 2015, p. 31).

The ideal L2 self represents the learner's vision of their optimal future self. This future image integrates all desirable characteristics, such as happiness, success, and achievement, as they relate to L2 proficiency and identity. It is an internal projection of

who the learners aspire to be (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). Conversely, the ought-to L2 self is heavily influenced by external social factors, particularly family expectations. It reflects the attributes people believe they should possess to avoid negative outcomes. This self-perception is shaped by what others expect, and the characteristics necessary to fulfil those expectations (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). The L2 learning experience itself includes the learner's current attitudes towards the language, along with influential factors such as the impact of the L2 teacher, curriculum design, peer group dynamics, and past successes. These elements collectively shape the learner's present reality in the L2 learning journey (Kalja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). This relates to "envisioning" (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2018, p. 6). Envisioning is a critical technique connected to the concept of possible selves, as these future self-perceptions only become relevant for behaviour when individuals believe them important for their future image. This technique has been increasingly used with both language learners and teachers in recent years. For second language learners, envisioning plays a significant role in motivation. Visual stimuli and experiences can enhance the language learning process by making it more engaging, memorable, and relatable. For example, when students are prompted to envision themselves in two years, they are likely to establish concrete goals. This is because they aspire to see themselves as skilful and capable language users. This future self-image provides a powerful internal drive for their learning efforts. The envisioning technique is equally beneficial for teacher development. As Dörnyei and Kubanyiova in 2009 said, the goal should not be to create an unrealistic or idealised image of a language classroom that may never be achievable. Rather, the aim is to develop a personally meaningful and realistic vision that conforms with the teacher's identity and considers the specific context in which they work (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2018).

Cultivating a personal vision is essential as it serves as a foundational point for reflection on how teaching practices can be constructed. Given that all teachers possess distinct orientations and experiences, their individual visions will naturally differ, leading to diverse and personalised approaches to their pedagogical work (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2018).

So, according to Marcus's possible selves' theory, identity consists of a real self (who people are now), and a future self. The latter is divided into two components: an ideal self (how people would like to be) and a normative self (how people should be). The discrepancy between the real self and the future selves is a powerful driver of motivation and behaviour. This tension motivates improvement, thereby guiding actions towards the fulfilment of desires and of self-control, which is essential for avoiding problems and respecting commitments (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In the field of education, it is, therefore, crucial to establish a significant connection between the contents of the study and the concept that students have of themselves in the present and of how they aspire to evolve in the classroom context (Ferreira Barcelos, 2015). This suggests a pedagogical approach that is not "one size fits for all", but rather it involves the implementation of specific activities designed to engage the interests of students, even if this involves focusing on particular aspects that may not be relevant for the entire class. This methodological choice is based on the idea that even activities designed for a wide audience risk not to fully satisfy individual needs. Thus, it is suggested the potential effectiveness of more targeted activities, which can be truly connected with the self and the future aspirations of the students (Balboni, 2020). As stated by the renowned thinker and heroine of freedom and of the fight against ignorance Emma Goldman "all claims of education notwithstanding, the pupil will accept only that which his mind craves" (Goldman, 2019, p. 53). This sentence underlines how important it is to work in harmony with the intrinsic motivation and aspirations of the students. Consequently, the quality of the proposed materials and the attention in its preparation become of primary importance. When students perceive that the teacher has worked with attention and passion, they are more open to learning, and learning becomes more effective (Balboni, 2020).

Motivation plays a crucial role in the learning process, and not just in the initial phase of an educational path. Unmotivated students perform below their potential. In fact, strategies should be designed to foster and sustain motivation throughout the whole learning process, providing students with various opportunities to achieve success (Coonan, 2012). The genesis of motivation in the school environment is a complex, multifactorial phenomenon intrinsically linked to the motivation of the teaching staff and the enthusiasm of the students, as well as external variables on which direct action is

limited. The classroom is configured as a complex, dynamic system, in which each variable interacts with the others, even influencing the initial premises. This interdependence makes future developments difficult to predict. In this scenario, the classroom is like a laboratory where people meet and create relationships. In such a complicated system, it is not uncommon for students to encounter difficulties in applying concepts from one context to another. Teachers try to understand why students are not able to learn that concept, and teachers try to fix it through various solutions. However, it must be acknowledged that teachers cannot control everything. A concrete example that illustrates the complexity of these dynamics is the situation in which a teacher prepares a teaching activity specifically aimed at the interests of a particular student. Despite the attention dedicated to creating an engaging and potentially enjoyable learning experience, the actual response of the student may differ from expectations. Maybe the student's silence or lack of participation might not be attributed to a lack of interest in the topic. But external factors, such as events that happened during the break, may stop them from getting involved during the lesson. This underlines the numerous factors that are beyond the immediate control of the teacher. Nevertheless, it is possible to cultivate a perception in reading the dynamics of the classroom. This capacity has been proven to be a valuable tool for capturing the unexpected and, to a certain extent, modulating the teaching action in a more conscious and effective way (Balboni, 2020).

Therefore, motivation is the energy that enables both students and teachers to move forward and continue on the path to achieve their goals. It is the central element and the starting point that must be maintained throughout the entire school career. Without motivation, progress cannot be made, and goals cannot be achieved.

2.5 Emotions

> Emotions are short-lived, feeling-arousal-purposive-expressive phenomena that help us adapt to the opportunities and challenges we face during important life events (Richards, 2020, p. 3).

Emotions are a fundamental part of everyday life, they constantly accompany human beings and influence how they interact with external events (Gay et al., 2022). They can be defined as internal responses that arise from encountering an environmental stimulus (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). They manifest themselves through somatic, physiological, and cognitive changes (Richards, 2020). In other words, when something happens in the external environment, the body reacts, and this reaction translates itself into an emotional experience. Studying emotions is not easy because they are complex phenomena that involve three levels: physiological, expressive-motor, and cognitive (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015).

From a physiological point of view, all intense emotions are accompanied by involuntary bodily changes that affect the automatic nervous system, the central nervous system and the endocrine system (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). For example, fear and anger activate the automatic nervous system, mobilising the energy needed to fight or to run away: the heart races, muscles contract, the skin becomes pale, digestion stops, and the mouth becomes dry (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). Positive emotions are also accompanied by bodily changes, such as the feeling of butterflies in the stomach (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015).

Emotions manifest themselves through an expressive-motor component that allows them to be communicated to others (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). The face, with its ability to combine thousands of muscle movements, is the main tool of emotional expression. Darwin highlighted how certain facial expressions, especially those related to primary emotions such as happiness, anger, sadness, fear, disgust and surprise, are universal and present in all cultures (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). He also emphasised the evolutionary value of emotional expressions, which promote survival. For example, baring one's teeth as a sign of threat communicates aggression, while a newborn's smile or cry stimulates caregiving and protective responses in adults. Subsequently, Ekman and Friesen confirmed the universal nature of facial expressions, demonstrating that individuals from different cultures recognise the same basic emotions (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). However, the rules governing their manifestation, known as display rules, vary culturally. In some countries, such as Japan, people tend to avoid showing sadness or other negative emotions

in public. While in others, such as the United States, these emotions are expressed more openly (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015).

The third component of emotions is the cognitive component. According to Scherer's model, every external event is subjected to hierarchical evaluations that determine the type of emotion experienced (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). This dynamic is linked to the theory of stimulus appraisal (Balboni, 2013), which states that people do not react uniformly to the same stimulus but evaluate the experience on the basis of five parameters: innovation, pleasantness, relevance, sense of competence, and compatibility (Balboni, 2013). This evaluation is not made through logic, but through emotions. Innovation consists of presenting new and varied stimuli (Balboni, 2013). Pleasantness concerns the ability to connect with students' interests and passions to increase motivation and engagement (Balboni, 2013). Relevance involves doing things that are meaningful to the students and their future, providing concrete examples and exercises (Balboni, 2013). The sense of competence develops into several elements. Firstly, students must understand that they can do that activity, which increases their autonomy and sense of self-efficacy (Balboni, 2013). Encouragement can be used to achieve this, but it must be credible and genuine, for instance, teachers should not encourage students when they both know they have made some errors. But they should encourage them when they do something right. The attribution of marks is also linked to the sense of competence (Balboni, 2013). The marks given to students must be truthful, but teachers must also provide real opportunities for success and recognise when students struggle to achieve a pass mark. By doing so, they will feel more relaxed and happier. The final element of this theory is compatibility, which is linked to the idea of the self, as seen in the previous paragraph. As self-image is particularly important during adolescence: brutally correcting students and making them feel ashamed will cause them to block. Proposing activities that affect their self-image will also prevent students from participating in class (Balboni, 2023). Emotions, therefore, depend not only on the objective characteristics of the stimulus, but also on personal interpretation and on the integration of various cognitive factors.

In terms of development, basic or primary emotions are distinguished from secondary or complex emotions (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). The former, identified by Ekman, are

universal, appear early in life and are biologically programmed. Happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and surprise appear in the first months of life and manifest themselves in the same way in all cultures (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). Reactions such as disgust, distress, interest and satisfaction can already be observed from birth. Around two months of age, the social smile appears, and between two and seven months, anger, joy, sadness, fear and surprise emerge (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). Secondary emotions, such as embarrassment, shame, guilt, envy, and pride develop between the first and second year of life, when children acquire self-awareness and the ability to perceive themselves as distinct from others (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). They require not only self-awareness, but also the ability to compare one's behaviour with social and ethical rules. For example, guilt implies the perception of having caused harm to another person (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015).

Emotions also have a profound influence on memory and cognitive processes (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). There is a relationship between mood and memory: people tend to remember information more easily when their emotional state is similar with the emotional state experienced when they stored the information (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). Furthermore, memory is subject to emotional state dependence, as it is easier to recall memories if we are in the same emotional state in which they were learned (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015).

The same argument about emotions also applies to schools, where emotions play a fundamental role in the learning processes. Students who experience school as a peaceful environment, where they feel welcome and valued, are better able to learn, participate actively and get involved without the fear of making mistakes. On the contrary, students who experience anxiety, fear or shame tend to block; since their affective filter is activated, meaning that they are unable to store information in their long-term memory (Plonsky et al., 2022). In this context, teachers play a crucial role. "Emotions can shape the way teachers teach and can influence learners' willingness to make use of what they have learned" (Richards, 2020, p. 1). The classroom is influenced by many factors that teachers cannot fully control. However, teachers can adopt certain relational and teaching strategies to promote a positive, stimulating and respectful atmosphere (Balboni, 2013). Small adjustments can make a big difference: avoiding harsh or humiliating corrections when a student makes a mistake, proposing activities that are tailored to their abilities,

and enhancing their participation (Balboni, 2020). "Teachers need an emotional thermometer so as to lower foreign language classroom anxiety" (Richards, 2020, p. 4). This aspect is particularly important during adolescence, a phase in which young people are extremely sensitive to the judgment of others and may perceive criticism as a personal attack (Shaffer & Kipp, 2015). Public reproaches can generate feelings of shame, anxiety and rejection, while genuine and respectful encouragement can reinforce a sense of competence and motivation to learn. For this reason, the teacher's ability to manage the emotional dynamics of the classroom is essential for effective and long-lasting learning (Balboni, 2013).

In conclusion, emotions are complex processes that arise from the interaction between biological, cognitive and social factors. While they have a universal and innate basis, their manifestation is modulated by cultural environment and individual experiences. Emotions guide the behaviour and relationships, influence memory, motivation and perception of themselves. Thus, they are an essential element for personal and social development. In education, the link between emotions and learning is particularly important: positive emotions such as interest, curiosity and satisfaction can promote motivation, concentration and memorisation of content, while negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and shame can hinder learning and reduce participation (Beal, 2025).

> An affectively positive environment puts the brain in the optimal state for learning, resulting in minimal stress and maximum engagement with the material to be learned (Richards, 2020, p. 7).

For this reason, teachers should create a peaceful, stimulating and respectful emotional climate.

2.6 CLIL and Motivation

Researching addressing the influence of emotions on language learning remains limited. One possible reason for this is that the term "emotion" was absent from the second language acquisition (SLA) theory literature until the early 2000s, even though there had been a prior focus on foreign language anxiety (De Smet et al., 2018).

Studies on anxiety during CLIL learning produce mixed results. Some research suggests that CLIL students may experience greater anxiety, particularly during the initial stages of the learning process. However, this anxiety appears to diminish over time as students become used to utilising the foreign language to learn the content (De Smet et al., 2018). Conversely, other studies report lower levels of anxiety among CLIL students, suggesting that focusing on content rather than on linguistic form may reduce anxiety. This phenomenon is known as "the mask effect" (De Smet et al., 2018, p. 50). Anxiety can have a negative impact on motivation, since stressed or insecure students may be less willing to participate in learning activities. Therefore, motivation, emotions and learning are closely interconnected. Managing emotions is crucial for maintaining motivation and supporting effective learning, including during CLIL courses.

Moreover, several recent studies have shown that students who follow CLIL courses tend to be more positive and motivated than their peers who do not participate in CLIL lessons (Rosi et al., 2023). Furthermore, this motivation tends to remain stable throughout the whole CLIL course (Rosi et al., 2023). According to Sylven and Thompson (2015), CLIL students tend to have a more positive attitude towards school, and they are more motivated than their non-CLIL peers (Sylven & Thompson, 2015). This may be because CLIL lessons offer more meaningful opportunities to use the target language than EFL lessons do (Sylven, & Thompson, 2015). Unlike in traditional English lessons, where language may seem artificial and abstract; in CLIL lessons, language is used as a tool to learn content. This approach makes the use of language more authentic and meaningful.

Three studies are now presented to further explore and support these findings.

The first study was conducted by Rosi, Amato and Zappoli. It focused on three research questions: the first question asked if CLIL students acquire content more effectively than their traditionally educated peers (Rosi et al., 2023). The second question asked whether there is any difference between the acquisition of content in CLIL applied to core or non-core subjects (Rosi et al., 2023). The third research question asked whether motivation towards the subject influences the acquisition of disciplinary competence (Rosi et al., 2023, p. 136). In order to answer these research questions, the three researchers analysed the learning of 64 Italian students "with an A2-B1 level of CEFR (Council of Europe

2018) in EFL" (Rosi et al., 2023, p. 136) in the third and fourth year of two Italian upper secondary schools in Salerno: a science-oriented upper secondary school with a focus on Chemistry and a humanities-oriented upper secondary school. Fifteen students from the science-oriented upper secondary school participated in CLIL courses, while the other fifteen attended traditional Chemistry lessons, a core subject for this course of study. Fifteen students from the humanities-oriented upper secondary school participated in CLIL courses, while eighteen students enrolled in traditional Physics lessons, a non-core subject in this course of study. The CLIL students completed a questionnaire before, during and after these CLIL lessons. A questionnaire was given also to the students who attended traditional Chemistry and Physics lessons, before, during and following these lessons (Rosi et al., 2023). The results showed that CLIL is more effective in facilitating the acquisition of content in non-core subjects (e.g. Physics in a humanities-oriented upper secondary school) than in core subjects (e.g. Chemistry in a science-oriented upper secondary school). CLIL students in non-core subjects demonstrated significant improvement over time than their non-CLIL peers. In core subjects, where students are already highly motivated, CLIL may be perceived as an obstacle due to language difficulties. The study also revealed that lower initial motivation towards the subject is linked to the greater effectiveness of CLIL. Students with lower initial motivation find CLIL more engaging and stimulating (Rosi et al., 2023).

Another study focuses on emotions such as anxiety and pleasure in the context of learning English and Dutch, comparing CLIL and non-CLIL students (De Smet et al., 2018). This study involved 896 primary and secondary school students from French-speaking Belgium. The results revealed that CLIL students reported less anxiety than non-CLIL students. However, a significant difference in favour of CLIL was only observed among secondary school: English is associated with greater pleasure and less anxiety than Dutch (De Smet et al., 2018). Therefore, the study highlighted the beneficial effect of CLIL on anxiety, as well as the positive impact of English on pleasure and anxiety, particularly in lower secondary school. However, it should be noted that emotions may vary according to the educational context, the language, and the level of education (De Smet et al., 2018).

The final study to be considered is a research conducted by Professor Coonan, which focuses on the motivations and emotions of 189 students from five upper secondary schools in Friuli-Venezia Giulia during the CLIL course (Coonan, 2012). Data were collected through a questionnaire containing both open and closed questions about the students' reactions to the use of foreign languages and Italian, the difficulties they encountered, and their desire to continue with CLIL (Coonan, 2012). The analysis of the data revealed that the majority of students (66%) (Coonan, 2012, p. 6) reacted positively to the use of foreign language in teaching. However, a minority (27%) (Coonan, 2012, p. 6) expressed negative reactions, which were often related to comprehension difficulties and inadequate linguistic competence. The reasons for the positive reactions were success, interest, perceived improvement in language competence, and the future usefulness. The main reasons for negative reactions were comprehension problems, insufficient language skills and inadequate teaching methods (Coonan, 2012). Additionally, 62% (Coonan, 2012, p. 6) expressed their desire to continue with the CLIL course to improve their language competence. In this study, Professor Coonan hypothesised that the positive reactions and willingness to continue may be linked to Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, in which learners' view of themselves as a future foreign language users fuel both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation towards CLIL (Coonan, 2012). Consequently, language development and future self-image are key factors in students' motivation towards CLIL (Coonan, 2012), as well as towards the entire learning path.

In conclusion, CLIL appears to foster an engaging and motivating learning environment, thereby reducing language anxiety and encouraging a positive attitude towards foreign language and content acquisition. This is especially beneficial when the initial intrinsic motivation to study the subject is lower.

CHAPTER 3. THE STUDY

The third chapter analyses the study that was conducted during the internship. The first paragraph presents the context in which the research was carried out. The second paragraph introduces the research questions that guided the study, and the third paragraph describes the participants. The fourth paragraph specifies the research method and the type of collected data. The fifth paragraph focuses on the research tools used, namely students' questionnaires and classroom observations. The sixth paragraph focuses on the procedures used for data analysis, and, finally, the seventh paragraph presents the results.

The objective of the research is to explore the relationship between CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodology and students' motivation in lower secondary school (11-13 years old). Understanding the motivational impact of CLIL is crucial in order to improve its use and increase student engagement and learning outcomes. Specifically, the aim of the present study is to verify whether teaching a non-linguistic discipline, such as Geography in English, effectively fosters motivation towards the learning of both the discipline and the foreign language (FL). Conversely, the research will also observe if CLIL activates the affective filter, a psychological barrier that has been demonstrated to hinder language acquisition and, consequently, limit learning. By examining these dual possibilities, this study seeks to provide an understanding of the motivational implications of CLIL.

3.1 Research questions

The research questions on which the present study is based investigate the effects of CLIL methodology on students' learning experience. The two research questions are the following:

RQ1: Does teaching a non-linguistic discipline through CLIL methodology increase students' motivation towards the English language and the subject itself?

RQ2: How do emotions affect students' learning during CLIL?

RQ1 aims to understand how the CLIL approach, which uses English as the vehicular language for learning content, influences students' motivation and engagement with both the English language and the subject matter. Conversely, the second research question (RQ2) focuses on the role of emotions in the learning process within the CLIL context.

3.2 Context

This empirical study was conducted in a lower secondary school located in the Veneto region, in the North-East of Italy during the internship from 25 February to 15 April 2025. This specific setting has been chosen to observe the practical application of CLIL within a lower secondary school. It is a private educational institution consisting of three levels of schooling: primary school, lower secondary school, and upper secondary school. This school is particularly renowned for its English language teaching, with a considerable number of hours dedicated to the learning of the foreign language in both primary and lower and upper secondary schools. Specifically, lower secondary school students follow an enhanced English language course, which provides a total of seven hours per week. The course is divided into three hours of curricular English, which focuses mainly on grammar; two hours of enhanced English, which focuses on developing oral communication skills; and two hours of Geography, which is taught in English according to the CLIL methodology. The CLIL course lasts the entire three-year school term, from September to June, and it forms an integral part of the students' curriculum.

This project has been going on for several years. For this reason, teachers have created some workbooks that contain materials to use in different classes. There is a book for each school year (one for the first-year class, one for the second-year class, and one for the third-year class), containing reading materials and exercises.

In this school, CLIL is implemented through supportive co-teaching (Menegale, 2009). During CLIL lessons, the Geography teacher, who often teaches Italian and History, is always present together with the English teacher. However, in this case, the co-teaching

method is reversed compared to the classic model: the English teacher does the lesson in English, while the geography teacher observes the class and intervenes to answer questions or clarify some doubts. Both teachers mark tests: the language teacher checks and corrects the linguistic form, while the geography teacher assesses the content. Both teachers assign a mark, and then the average is calculated. The mark assigned by the geography teacher has greater weight. The same procedure is followed during oral tests. The teachers prepare a list of questions, to which others are added depending on how the oral test is going. Again, the final mark is an average of the linguistic and content aspects. The geography teacher's mark always carries more weight in the finale average.

3.3 Participants

The sample includes three classes, one for each year of the lower secondary school: a first-year class (11 years old), a second-year class (12 years old), and a third-year class (13 years old).

The participants involved are 51 lower-secondary school students who are native Italian speakers and attend the enhanced English curriculum. The questionnaire was given to 19 first-year students, 14 second-year students and 18 third-year students (see Table 1), for a total of 34 male (66.7%) and 17 female (33.3%) (see Graph 2).

	N. Students
First Year Students	19
Second Year Students	14
Third Year Students	18
TOTAL	51

Table 1: Number of participants

Indica
51 risposte

● Femmina
● Maschio

66,7%

33,3%

Graph 2: Genre of the participants

3.4 Research method and types of collected data

The data collected in this study are both quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative data, derived from responses to open-ended questions and from the classroom observations, were analysed using an interpretative approach to highlight recurring themes and significant insights. The quantitative data, obtained from responses to closed questions, for instance multiple choice, were analysed statistically to identify trends and correlations between variables. These data were analysed, indeed, using a mixed methods approach.

> A methodology and method to research in the social, behavioural, and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates or combines the two, and then draws inferences (called "metainferences") from the integration that provides insight beyond what can be learned from the quantitative or qualitative data. (Creswell, 2022, p. 2).

The mixed methods approach is, therefore, more flexible and adaptable, as it allows researchers to choose how to integrate research tools by combining different types of observation and data (Maugeri, 2022). Furthermore, this approach gives researchers greater control over their tools (Maugeri, 2022). In fact, this approach has been used because the phenomenon is investigated from different perspectives. The qualitative and quantitative data are then converged or triangulated, with the aim of identifying as many interpretations as possible (Maugeri, 2022). The process of combining different types of

data is known as "integration" (Creswell, 2022, p. 97). It enables researchers to explore the data more accurately.

3.5 Research tools

Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions and a Likert scale, and through classroom observations. The use of this variety of questions enabled to collect students' opinions and attitudes regarding their school experience and learning English through CLIL methodology in a more articulate manner.

3.5.1 Students questionnaires

This research study used a questionnaire divided into seven parts composed of a total of 25 questions. These questions are designed to thoroughly explore students' perceptions of the effectiveness of CLIL lessons and their motivation. The first section asked students to indicate their class and gender. The second section focused on motivation towards English as a foreign language, using four multiple-choice questions designed to investigate students' attitude and interest in this discipline. The third part examined motivation towards Geography as a non-linguistics discipline, conveyed through the CLIL approach. It consists of three multiple-choice questions. The next part focused on the emotions experienced during CLIL lessons. Here, seven multiple-choice questions explored the feelings students had when they used this approach. The fifth section explored the perceptions of the effectiveness of CLIL through a combination of open and multiple-choice questions, offering a comprehensive view of how students assessed the impact of this methodology. Finally, before the acknowledgments, the sixth part compared CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons. Six mixed questions and a Likert scale encouraged students to reflect on the similarities and differences between the two

teaching approaches, providing valuable feedback for this research. In the last section, students are thanked for their participation in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered through a Google link. All questions were read out in class by the researcher to clarify any uncertainties. Students were subsequently provided with a link to complete the questionnaire at home. They had three weeks to fill in the questionnaire. Out of a total of 67 students, 51 completed the questionnaire (see Table 3).

CLASS	Total number of students per class	Students that replied to the questionnaire
1C	21	19
2A	21	14
3C	25	18

Table 3: Number of the students who replied to the questionnaires.

3.5.2 Classroom observations

In addition to the administration of the questionnaires, direct lessons observations were carried out during CLIL lessons throughout the two-month internship at school. These lessons observations allowed the collection of further qualitative information on the interaction between teachers and students, classroom dynamics and the teaching strategies employed to integrate subject content and foreign language. Moreover, they were particularly useful in order to capture spontaneous attitudes, emotional reactions, and levels of participation, thereby enriching the data from the questionnaires.

During the curricular internship, a diary of the lessons was kept in which all topics covered, and methods used to conduct lessons were recorded. For each activity, the time, the class involved, the topic covered, and the teaching methodology adopted were written. The internship lasted 28 days in total, from Monday to Friday, from 07:55 a.m. to 01:25 p.m., for a total of 154 hours. In total, the observations were 140 (see Figure 4), which formed the basis of the reflective analysis reported in this study.

Figure 4: Classroom observations

3.6 Analysis procedures

The research adopted a mixed methods approach, with a qualitative (thematic) analysis of data from open-ended questions and classroom observations, and a quantitative (descriptive) analysis of the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire.

The analysis can be described as descriptive, as it focused on the calculation of the mode and percentages, which are useful tools for identifying trends, similarities and differences among the students. However, it was also an interpretative and qualitative analysis because students gave their responses based on their own considerations and experiences to provide a richer interpretation of the quantitative data, incorporating deeper reflections, and opinions.

Regarding the data from the questionnaire, once all students had completed the questionnaire, the answers were initially divided and grouped according to the seven sections, each of which dealt with a specific aspect of the survey (motivation, emotions, perception of the effectiveness of CLIL, and comparison with the curricular English lessons).

After collecting and organising the data, tables were created, and raw data were transformed into percentages to facilitate the reading and comprehension of the students' responses. Pie charts and bar charts were then created to graphically represent the results, thereby highlighting the most frequent responses or levels of agreement or disagreement on each topic.

A thematic analysis was conducted on the open-ended questions and responses included in the "Other" category option. First, a table for each open-ended question was prepared containing all the answers provided by the students. These answers were then grouped based on keywords or recurring elements, to highlight the main themes. Summary bar charts were then drawn up based on these categorizations, which are useful for representing the distribution and frequency of the various themes identified in an immediate and clear way.

The questionnaire was designed and organised based on the two research questions.

To answer RQ1, the following data were used:

- questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 20.

To answer RQ2, the following data were used:

-questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 19 and 25.

Relevant data to answer both RQ1 and RQ2 were:

-questions 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23 and 24.

-classroom observations.

All these data allowed the researcher to collect more extensive information and to better understand the observed phenomena.

3.7 Results

The data of the study are analysed to identify motivation and emotions related to CLIL, highlighting the factors that contribute to the success or difficulties of the approach.

3.7.1 Student questionnaire

The first section of the questionnaire, which concerned motivation towards learning English as a foreign language, consisted of four questions. The first question asked, "Do you enjoy studying English?". The majority of the students (51%) answered "enough", while a small portion (5.9%) answered "not at all". Additionally, 13.7% of the students answered, "a little", and 29.4% answered "a lot" (see Graph 5).

1. Ti piace studiare l'inglese?
51 risposte

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
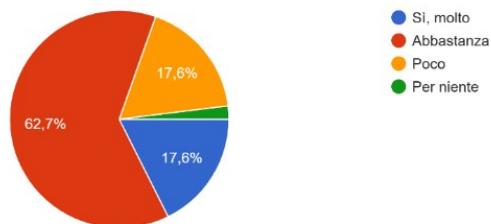- Per niente

51% 13,7% 29,4%

Graph 5: Part 1 Motivation towards English (FL), Question 1: Do you like studying English?

The second question in this section asked the students whether they considered themselves to be good at English. The majority of the respondents (62.7%) answered "enough"; conversely, 2% answered "not at all", while 17.6% answered "yes, a lot", and "a little" equally (see Graph 6).

2. Ti senti bravo/a in inglese?
51 risposte

- Sì, molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

62,7% 17,6% 17,6%

Graph 6: Part 1: Motivation towards English (FL), Question 2: Do you feel confident at speaking English?

The third question asked students how much they enjoyed doing activities in English. Results showed that 43.1% answered "enough", 35.3% answered "a lot", 19.6% answered "a little", and 2% answered "not at all" (see Graph 7).

3. Quanto ti piace fare attività in inglese (es. giochi, letture, conversazioni)?
51 risposte

- Molto
- Abbastanza
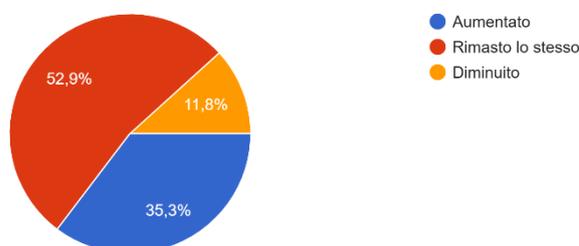- Poco
- Per niente

43,1% 19,6% 35,3%

Graph 7: Part 1: Motivation towards English (FL), Question 3: How much do you enjoy doing activities in English (e.g., games, reading, conversation?)

The last question of this first section investigated the level of interest in English. In response to the question, "Thanks to CLIL lessons, your interest in English is…", 52.9% of the respondents said that their interest remained the same, 35.3% said it increased, and 11.8% said it decreased (see Graph 8).

4. Grazie alle lezioni CLIL, il tuo interesse per l'inglese è:
51 risposte

- Aumentato
- Rimasto lo stesso
- Diminuito

52,9% 11,8% 35,3%

Graph 8: Part 1: Motivation towards English (FL), Question 4: Thanks to CLIL lessons, your interest in English is…

The second part of the questionnaire focused on motivation in the non-linguistic subject, specifically Geography. The first question in this second part, namely question number five, asked: "Do you like studying geography?". 33.3% answered "a little", 29.4%

answered "enough", 21.6% answered "a lot", and 15.7% answered "not at all" (see Graph 9).
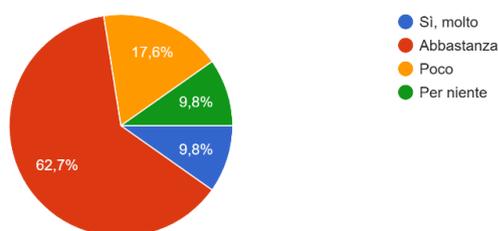

Graph 9: Part 2: Motivation towards Geography (non-linguistic discipline), Question 5: Do you like studying Geography?

The sixth question asked whether the participants thought they were good at Geography. The majority (62.7%) answered "enough", and 17.6% answered "a little". The answers "yes, a lot" and "not at all" received an equal score, namely 9.8% (see Graph 10).
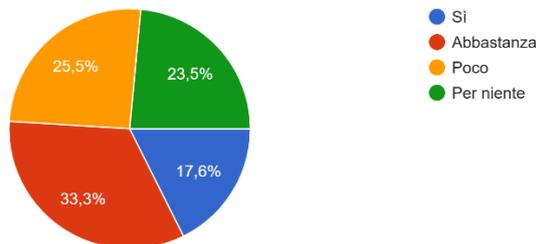

Graph 10: Part 2: Motivation towards Geography (non-linguistic discipline), Question 6: Are you good at Geography?

The seventh question asked whether CLIL lessons made the study of Geography more interesting. Respondents answered as follows: 33.3% "enough", 25.5% "a little", 25.5% "not at all", and 17.6% "yes" (see Graph 11).
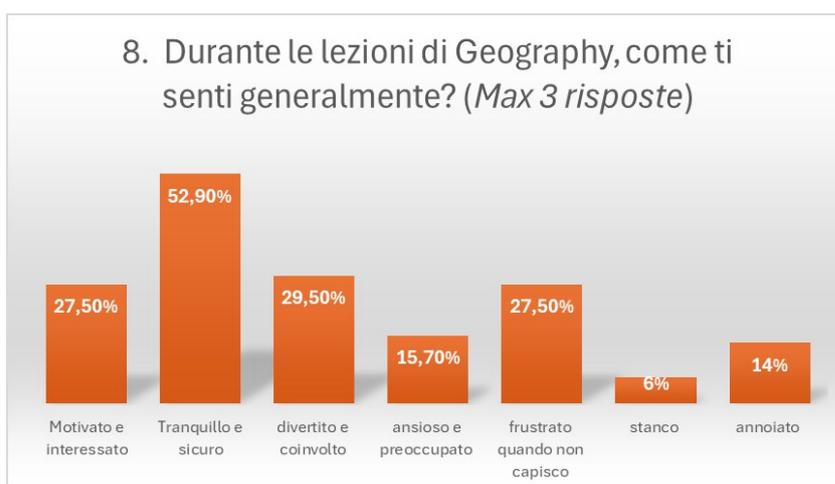
7. Le lezioni CLIL hanno reso lo studio della geografia più interessante?
51 risposte

- Sì
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

25,5% 23,5% 17,6% 33,3%

Graph 11: Part 2: Motivation towards Geography (non-linguistic discipline), Question 7: Have CLIL lessons made studying Geography more interesting?
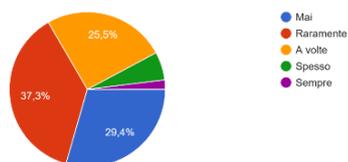
The third part of the questionnaire focused on the emotions experienced by the students during CLIL lessons. Question eight asked about the emotions students experienced during CLIL lessons. Students could give a maximum of three answers to this question. The majority of the students (52.9%) said that they felt calm and confident, 27.5% answered that they felt motivated and interested. However, 15.7% said they felt anxious and worried, and 18% said they felt bored. A small percentage of students said they did not experience any emotion because they did not like the way concepts were explained or because they understood nothing (see Graph 12).

8. Durante le lezioni di Geography, come ti senti generalmente? (*Max 3 risposte*)

27,50%	52,90%	29,50%	15,70%	27,50%	6%	14%
Motivato e interessato	Tranquillo e sicuro	divertito e coinvolto	ansioso e preoccupato	frustrato quando non capisco	stanco	annoiato

Graph 12: Part 3: Emotions experienced during CLIL lessons, Question 8: During Geography lessons, how do you generally feel?

The ninth question investigated the level of anxiety experienced during Geography lessons. 37.3% of respondents said that they rarely felt anxious, 29.4% never felt anxious, 25.5% sometimes felt anxious, and 2% always felt anxious during these lessons. Another question followed on from this one, to which only those who experienced anxiety during CLIL lessons had to answer. In fact, 40 out of 51 students answered this question. The majority (52.5%) replied that they felt anxious because they were afraid of making mistakes when they spoke English. 25% said they lacked confidence, 20% found it difficult to understand explanations in English, and 8% attributed their anxiety to their teachers (see Graph 13 and Table 14).
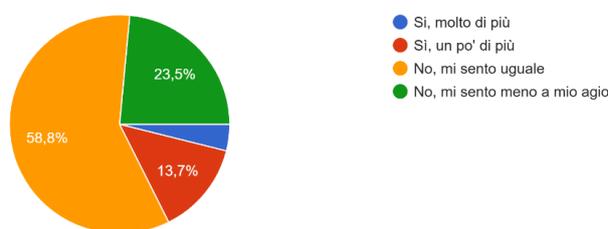

Graph 13: Part 3: Emotions experienced during CLIL lessons, Question 9: During Geography lessons, do you feel anxious? If you feel anxious, what are the main reason(s) for your anxiety?

Categoria		Citazioni
Cause dell'ansia	Paura di sbagliare	"ho paura di sbagliare l'esercizio."
	Voti	"ho paura dei voti che mi potrebbero arrivare."
	Insegnante	"la prof mette ansia." "i prof che insegnano Geography non ti fanno sentire a tuo agio durante le lezioni." "a volte mi distraggo e ho un po' di ansia che l'insegnante mi chiami quando sono distratto." "ultimamente mi capita spesso di essere ansiosa."

Table 14: Content Analysis, Question 9: "Other" option

Question 10 compared the use of English during CLIL lessons with the use of English during curricular English language lessons. Specifically, it asked, "During Geography lessons, do you feel more comfortable using English than during English lessons?" The majority of the students (58.8%) felt the same in both types of lesson. 23.5% of the respondents felt less comfortable in CLIL lessons, 13.7% felt slightly more comfortable in CLIL lessons, and 3.9% felt much more comfortable in CLIL lessons than in curricular English lessons (see Graph 15).
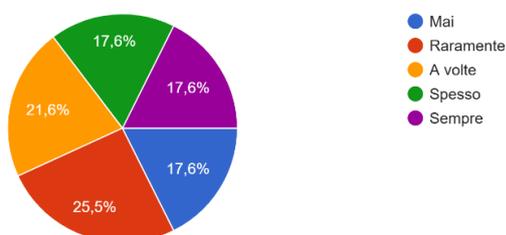
10. Durante le lezioni di Geography, ti senti più a tuo agio nell'usare l'inglese rispetto alle lezioni di lingua inglese?
51 risposte

- Sì, molto di più
- Sì, un po' di più
- No, mi sento uguale
- No, mi sento meno a mio agio

Graph 15: Part 3: Emotions experienced during CLIL lessons, Question 10: During Geography lessons, do you feel more comfortable using English than during English language lessons?

The eleventh question asked whether students worried about making mistakes when speaking English. 25.5% of the respondents answered "rarely", 21.6% answered "sometimes". 17.6% answered "never", 17.6% said "often" and 17.6% answered "always" (see Graph 16).
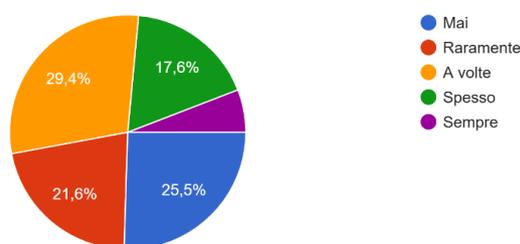
11. Ti preoccupi di fare errori quando parli in inglese?
51 risposte

- Mai
- Raramente
- A volte
- Spesso
- Sempre

Graph 16: Part 3: Emotions experienced during CLIL lessons, Question 11: Do you worry about making mistakes when you speak English?

Question number 12 asked, "Do you feel frustrated when you do not understand something in English during the lesson?" 29.4% of respondents indicated that they sometimes experienced frustration, 25.5% said that they never experienced frustration, 21.6% stated they rarely experienced frustration, 17.6% said that they often experienced frustration and 5.9% always experienced frustration (see Graph 17).
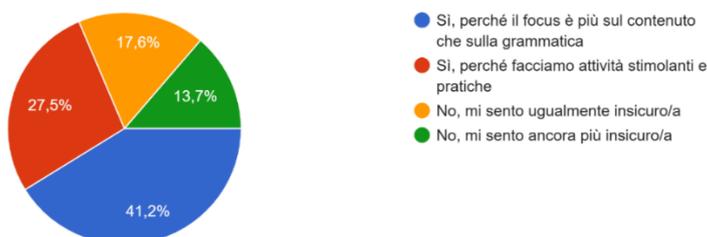
12. Ti senti frustrato/a quando non capisci qualcosa in inglese durante la lezione?
51 risposte

Legend:
- Mai
- Raramente
- A volte
- Spesso
- Sempre

Graph 17: Part 3: Emotions experienced during CLIL lessons, Question 12: Do you feel frustrated when you do not understand something in English during the lesson?

The final question of this third part asked whether using English to study Geography made students feel more confident in the language. 41.2% answered "yes because the focus is more on the content rather than on the grammar". 27.5% said "yes because the activities are stimulating and practical". 17.6% said that they felt equally insecure; and 13.7% said that they felt more insecure (see Graph 18).
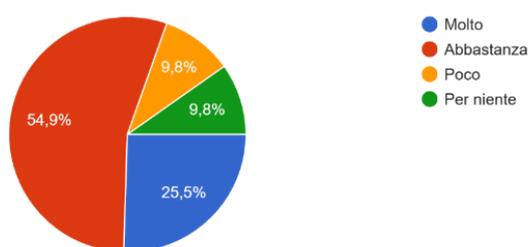
13. Pensi che il fatto di usare l'inglese per studiare geografia ti aiuti a sentirti più sicuro/a con la lingua?
51 risposte

Legend:
- Sì, perché il focus è più sul contenuto che sulla grammatica
- Sì, perché facciamo attività stimolanti e pratiche
- No, mi sento ugualmente insicuro/a
- No, mi sento ancora più insicuro/a

Graph 18: Part 3: Emotions experienced during CLIL lessons, Question 13: Do you think using English to study geography helps you feel more confident with the language?

The fourth part of the questionnaire examined the perception of the effectiveness of CLIL. Question 14 posed the following question: "Do CLIL lessons help you improve your English?" The majority of the students (54.9%) answered "enough", 25.5% answered "a lot", 9.8% answered "not at all", and "a little" equally (see Graph 19).
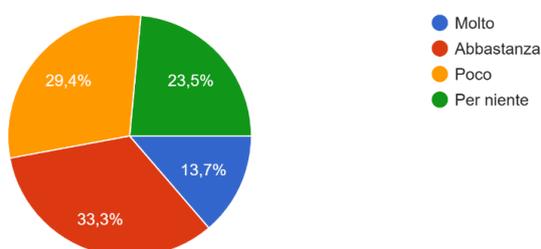
14. Le lezioni CLIL ti aiutano a migliorare il tuo inglese?
51 risposte

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

9,8%
9,8%
54,9%
25,5%

Graph 19: Part 4: Perception of the effectiveness of CLIL, Question 14: Do CLIL lessons help you improve your English?

Question 15 asked whether CLIL lessons helped students to better understand Geography. The responses were: 33.3% "enough", 29.4% "a little", 23.5% "not at all" and 13.7% "a lot" (see Graph 20).

15. Le lezioni CLIL ti aiutano a capire meglio la geografia?
51 risposte

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
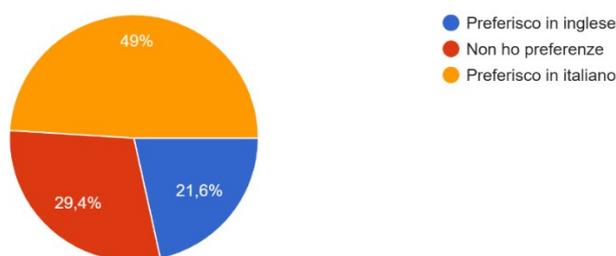- Per niente

29,4%
23,5%
13,7%
33,3%

Graph 20: Part 4: Perception of the effectiveness of CLIL, Question 15: Do CLIL lessons help you understand Geography better?

In question 16, students were asked to indicate whether they would have preferred to study Geography in English or in Italian. The majority of the students (49%) opted for Italian, while 29.4% had no preference, and 21.6% chose English (see Graph 21).

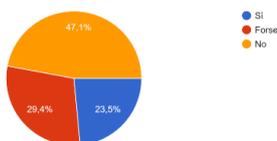16. Preferisci studiare geografia in inglese o in italiano?
51 risposte

- Preferisco in inglese
- Non ho preferenze
- Preferisco in italiano

Graph 21: Part 4: Perception of the effectiveness of CLIL, Question 16: Do you prefer studying Geography in English or in Italian?

Question 17 asked, "Would you like to use CLIL methodology in other subjects as well?" 47.1% answered "no", 29.4% answered "maybe" and 23.5% answered "yes". In addition, students were invited to suggest in which other subjects they would like to use the CLIL methodology. The subjects named by the students were: science (seven times), history (five times), art (four times), physical education (twice), epic (twice), literature (twice), civic education, mathematics, anthology, and music. The most selected subject was science (see Graph 22).

17. Ti piacerebbe fare lezioni CLIL anche in altre materie?
51 risposte

- Sì
- Forse
- No

Se sì, in quali altre materie?

| Arte | P.E. | Educazion... | Matematica | Epica | Antologia | Storia | Scienze | Letteratura | Musica |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 |

Graph 22: Part 4: Perception of the effectiveness of CLIL methodology, Question 17: Would you like to do CLIL lessons in other subjects too? If so, in which other subjects?
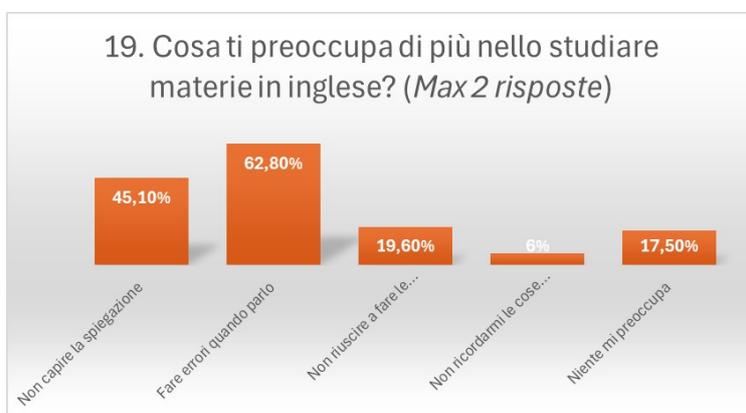
Question 18 asked whether students would like to continue studying other subjects in English in the future. Results indicated that 52.9% of the students maybe would like to continue studying other subjects in English, 31.4% of the students would like to continue studying other subjects in English, and 15.7% of the students would not like to continue studying other subjects in English (see Graph 23).

Graph 23: Part 4: Perception of the effectiveness of CLIL, Question 18: Would you like to continue studying other subjects in English in the future?

The final question of this fourth part focused on what worried them the most when studying Geography. Respondents could select a maximum of two answers. 58.8% said that making mistakes when they spoke worried them the most, 45.1% wrote "not understanding the explanation", 19.6% said that not being able to do the activity worried them the most, 4% wrote "getting the wrong pronunciation", also because the teacher corrected them in a rude way, and 17.6% said that nothing worried them (see Graph 24 and Table 25).
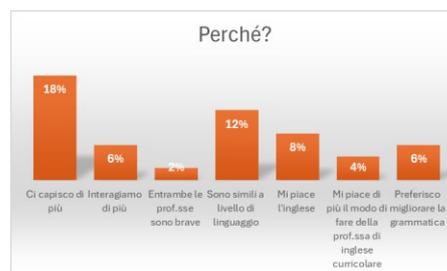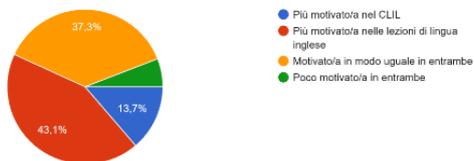
Graph 24: Part 4: Perception of the effectiveness of CLIL, Question 19: What worries you most about studying subjects in English?

Categoria		Citazioni
Preoccupazioni maggiori	Non ricordarsi le parole	"non ricordarmi le parole." "scrivere." "sapere le cose ma poi dimenticarmele all'interrogazione/verifica."
	Correzioni sgarbate	"quando parli in inglese in classe i prof ti correggono le pronunce, e in certi casi ti sminuiscono perché te le correggono in modo sgarbato già alla seconda volta che sbagli." "sbagliare pronuncia."
	Voti	"i voti."

Table 25: Content Analysis, Question 19: "Other" option

In the fifth and final part, a comparison was made between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons, i.e., lessons that focus on English grammar. Question 20 asked whether students felt more motivated in CLIL lessons or in English lessons: 43.1% felt more motivated in language lessons; 37.3% felt equally motivated in both lessons; 13.7% felt more motivated in CLIL lessons; and 5.9% felt less motivated in both lessons. Students were also asked to give a reason for their answer. The two most common reasons given were that they like English and they are, therefore, equally motivated in both CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons. And that they felt uncomfortable in CLIL lessons and, thus, they prefer curricular English lessons (see Graph 26 and Table 27).

Graph 26: Part 5: Comparison between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons, Question 20: Do you feel more motivated in CLIL lessons or in curricular English lessons? Why?

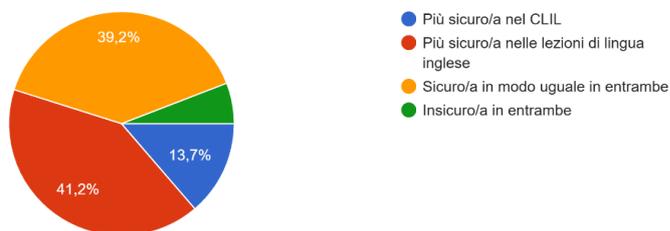| Categoria		Citazioni
Maggiore motivazione nelle lezioni di inglese curriculare	Comprensione maggiore	"ci capisco di più." "capisco di più ed è più facile." "capisco di più la grammatica." "mi sento più sicuro nella comprensione di quello che la prof spiega."
	Facilità percepita	"è più facile." "sembra più semplice." "capisco di più ed è più facile."
	Sicurezza e comfort	"mi sento più sicuro." "sono più sicuro." "mi sento più sicuro nella comprensione di quello che la prof spiega." "nel CLIL non mi sento a mio agio."
	Apprendimento linguistico	"miglioro la grammatica." "mi piace di più la grammatica e il lessico."
	Piacere e divertimento	"la preferisco." "inglese curriculare è più divertente." "la prof è molto divertente e ci fa capire tutto." "mi piace molto di più." "è più divertente."
	Metodo e interazione	"durante le lezioni di Geography non apprendo bene gli argomenti."

		"Geography non è fatta bene, invece inglese curricolare è spiegato meglio." "le prof mi piacciono entrambe, ma interagiamo di più in inglese curriculare." "non interagisco molto durante le lezioni di Geography."
Motivazione uguale nelle lezioni CLIL e nelle lezioni di inglese curricolare	Apprezzamento delle docenti	"le prof mi piacciono entrambe." "le prof sono entrambe molto brave."
	Somiglianza tra le due discipline	"non cambia molto." "sono sempre in inglese." "è sempre in inglese." "è sempre in inglese, quindi, non cambia molto." "le ritengo simili a livello di linguaggio." "il lessico che usiamo è quasi uguale."
	Piacere e interesse	"sono due materie bellissime." "mi piacciono entrambi gli argomenti." "mi piace l'inglese."
	Facilità di apprendimento	"non sono difficili e imparo bene in entrambe." "ho una buona preparazione in inglese dalla scuola primaria."

Table 27: Content Analysis, Question 20

Question 21 asked: "Do you feel more confident in curricular English lessons or in CLIL lessons?" 41.2% of the students answered that they felt more confident in curricular English lessons, 39.2% answered that they felt equally confident in both lessons, 13.7% answered that they felt more confident in CLIL lessons, and 5.9% answered that they felt insecure in both lessons (see Graph 28).

21. Ti senti più sicuro/a in inglese durante le lezioni CLIL o nelle lezioni di inglese curricolare?
51 risposte

Legend:
- Più sicuro/a nel CLIL
- Più sicuro/a nelle lezioni di lingua inglese
- Sicuro/a in modo uguale in entrambe
- Insicuro/a in entrambe

39,2%
13,7%
41,2%

Graph 28: Part 5: Comparison between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons, Question 21: Do you feel more confident in English during CLIL lessons or during curricular English lessons?

Question 22 asked whether CLIL lessons were more difficult than curricular English lessons. 45.1% of the respondents said English lessons and CLIL lessons were of the same difficulty, 37.3% said CLIL lessons were a little bit more difficult, 11.8% said CLIL lessons were much more difficult and 5.9% said CLIL lessons were easier (see Graph 29).

22. Le lezioni CLIL sono più difficili delle lezioni di inglese curricolare?
51 risposte

Legend:
- Molto più difficili
- Un po' più difficili
- Della stessa difficoltà
- Più facili

45,1%
11,8%
37,3%

Graph 29: Part 5: Comparison between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons, Question 22: Are CLIL lessons more difficult than curricular English lessons?

Question 23 asked whether the students would recommend the CLIL methodology to their friends. Most of the students (56.9%) answered they would recommend it to their friends "only if they like English", while 25.5% said "yes, it is useful and it makes lessons less boring", and 17.6% said "no, it is too difficult" (see Graph 30).

23. Consiglieresti ai tuoi amici la metodologia CLIL?
51 risposte

- Solo se a loro piace l'inglese
- Sì, è utile e rende le lezioni meno noiose
- No, è troppo difficile

25,5%
17,6%
56,9%

Graph 30: Part 5: Comparison between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons Question 23: Would you recommend the CLIL methodology to your friends?

Question 24 asked the students how they would improve the CLIL methodology to make it more motivating and engaging. They answered that they would like to use more videos and interactive games and activities, as well as using iPads and computers more often. In addition, they said they would like the teacher to talk less and give them more opportunities to actively participate during the lessons (see Graph 31 and Table 32).

24. Cosa miglioreresti per rendere la metodologia CLIL ancora più motivante e coinvolgente?

Meno TTT 6% | Usare più spesso l'Ipad 18% | Attività più coinvolgenti 22% | Attività più pratiche 6% | Guardare più video 6% | Nulla, mi piace così 21% | Più lavori di gruppo 17%

Graph 31: Part 5: Comparison between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons, Question 24: What would you improve to make the CLIL methodology more motivating and engaging?

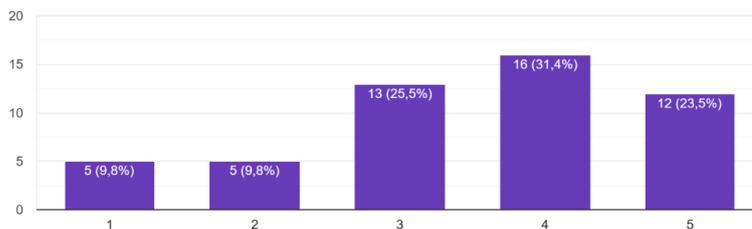| Categoria		Citazioni
Miglioramenti CLIL	Coinvolgimento e interazione	"la prof dovrebbe parlare meno." "fare più attività in gruppo." "essere più coinvolgenti."

		"farci interagire di più e fare più giochetti." "fare delle sfide." "fare lezioni più coinvolgenti." "la prof dovrebbe parlare un po' meno." "più intrattenimento." "esercizi più divertenti." "più dialogo e coinvolgimento attraverso giochi e attività in lingua inglese."
	Tecnologia	"usare più spesso l'iPad." "andare più volte in aula iPad." "usare più spesso l'aula iPad."
	Varietà di attività	"guardare dei documentari riguardanti l'argomento trattato." "cambiare argomenti e modo di fare le attività." "fare attività più pratiche." "più lavori di gruppo." "più video o attività dove si coinvolgono tutti." "più lavori di gruppo." "tradurre e riassumere, e fare più verifiche scritte." "attività più pratiche." "più giochi." "più attività pratiche." "fare dei giochi." "giochi." "guardare video."
	Varietà di argomenti	"argomenti diversi, simili a quelli che si fanno in italiano." "cambiare argomenti e modo di fare le attività."
	Lingua	"non userei termini così complessi, e magari ogni tanto farei anche 1h di geografia in italiano." "parlare bene dell'argomento in italiano e poi approfondire meglio in inglese." "più vocabolario." "alla fine vorrei parlare bene di questi argomenti in inglese."

		"la complessità della lingua." "meno parole nuove ma non dico nessuna."
	Apprezzamento	"niente, mi piace così." "a me piace così." "niente, a me piace così." "niente, è bello così."

Table 32: Content Analysis, Question 24

The final question in the questionnaire was a Likert scale asking for an overall rating of how students felt during CLIL lessons, on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 gained 9.8% of the answers, 2 gained 9.8% of the answers, 3 gained 25.5% of the answers, 4 gained 31.4% of the answers and 5 gained 23.5% of the answers (see Graph 33). The average rating was 3.49 (see Graph 34).

Graph 33: Part 5: Comparison between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons, Question 25: Overall, how do you feel during CLIL lessons?

Graph 34: Part 5: Comparison between CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons, Question 25 average rating

3.7.2 Classroom observations

A daily observation of classroom activities was kept during the internship, which proved to be a useful documentation tool (see Figure 4). It shows the type of lessons, how they were organised and conducted. In several cases, activities began with communicative exercises, such as brainstorming, which were used to encourage students to share their prior knowledge and start collective reflection. This approach encourages class engagement, making learning more active and motivating.

Alongside these more dynamic moments, there were also traditional lectures, which were necessary to introduce the new content and to guide students' understanding of texts. On these occasions, the booklet, created by the teachers, was the essential reference point, often accompanied by exercises, listening activities or open-ended questions. These elements made the lectures more interactive and participatory for students.

A recurring feature of the teaching approach in this experience was the constant alternation between individual and group work. This approach enabled students to develop their personal skills as well as their ability to collaborate and interact with their classmates. Several group works were organised, during which the class was divided into small groups of four students each. Within each group, each student had a specific role to encourage responsibility and active engagement from all members. These roles could involve researching information, taking care of the graphics or preparing the final presentation. This division of tasks encouraged balanced participation, enabling everyone to contribute and actively participate. At the end of the group activities, each group presented the results of their work to the class. This sharing session provided a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, to improve communication skills and receive feedback from the classmates and teachers. Moreover, these activities were carried out in the iPad classroom. Using technology made the work more interactive and creative. The integration of group learning and digital tools made learning more dynamic, collaborative and motivating for all students.

The classroom observations proved to be not only a means of recording daily activities, but also a tool to reflect on teaching practices. These observations emphasised the importance of a variety of teaching methods that combine frontal lectures with engaging strategies to support more meaningful learning.

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

The fourth chapter discusses the data presented in the previous chapter with the aim of answering the two research questions and it compares the findings with the existing literature to confirm or refute the results. The first paragraph analyses the results relating to RQ1, examining how the CLIL methodology affects students' motivation to learn English and the non-linguistic subject. The second paragraph discusses the data relating to RQ2, examining how students' emotions affect learning during CLIL.

4.1 CLIL effects on motivation

The data relating to the first research question (namely, Does teaching a non-linguistic discipline through CLIL methodology increase students' motivation towards the English language and the subject itself?) reveal some notable findings.

4.1.1 Motivation towards the English language

Overall, results show that motivation towards the English language is growing significantly. Conversely, motivation towards non-linguistic subjects is also increasing, but to a lesser extent.

Students demonstrate a positive increase of motivation towards English. They are highly motivated, and they have a strong sense of competence when they use the English language. These results can be understood since all the students attend the enhanced English curriculum, which includes three hours of language teaching, two hours of enhanced English language and two hours of CLIL, for a total of seven hours of English language per week. Indeed, their level of English is good, as it was observed during the internship hours. So, extended exposure to the English language (seven hours per week

for three years, instead of three hours per week) produces significant results. These data confirm the idea that enhancing input and providing more opportunities for language practice has a positive impact on both students' performance and motivation, as students become more confident (Balboni, 2020). Moreover, during the internship, it was also possible to observe several classes, including one first-year class (the only one in the entire school) that does not follow the enhanced English curriculum. They study a second foreign language, namely Spanish. They attend three hours of English, two hours of CLIL and two hours of Spanish. Differences in the English language level were observed between the two types of class. In the class that studies Spanish, in fact, the level of English is slightly lower and the English learning proceeds more slowly. This shows that increased exposure to the English language has benefits in terms of both language skills, emotional and motivational factors. When students have more opportunities to practise English, they become more confident with their abilities, develop greater self-assurance and approach their studies with a more positive attitude (Balboni, 2020). This confidence and these positive emotions are a determining factor because they motivate students and engage them more actively.

Another factor that can increase motivation is effective teaching practices and strategies. Group activities, which are fun and interactive, are perceived as particularly motivating. A significant example is an activity carried out on 21 March 2025 (see Figure 4) as a revision in view of the test. It was a team game similar to the game of the goose. The class was divided into three groups. The table with the questions and a timer bomb were projected on the board. Each group took turns. Then they chose a square, they read the instructions, and they had one minute to try to answer. When the minute was finished, the bomb exploded. The activity was received with enthusiasm, and it was subsequently adopted as a reward at the end of each teaching unit. Although it was primarily based on extrinsic motivation, this activity increased the students' participation and attention. The following day, during the test, some students even recognised that some of the questions were similar to those that had appeared in the game the day before. Playful moments are an excellent way to increase student motivation, which is a fundamental aspect that should be maintained active throughout the whole learning process (Balboni, 2020). Games create a positive and stimulating atmosphere that encourages participation and interest

among the students, making learning more natural and spontaneous. Furthermore, during these activities, students can learn and revise content without fully realising it. This is because their attention is focused on the game's dynamics, the challenge with their classmates and the desire to win. This shift in focus allows students to practise and consolidate their knowledge indirectly, transforming a potentially challenging activity into an enjoyable and motivating experience (Caon, 2022). Therefore, games are an effective learning strategy that increases motivation and engagement. All of this is consistent with studies that emphasises the essential role of the emotional dimension and pleasure in maintaining motivation and promoting spontaneous and long-lasting learning (Caon, 2022).

The majority of the students said that their motivation towards English had not changed. This data can be interpreted by considering the timetable of the lessons. In fact, often, enhanced English lessons and CLIL lessons follow one another, so students can perceive less difference between the two subjects, even though the content is different. Alternatively, the fact that they spend so many hours studying English means that their motivation remains consistently high, which is why most participants said that their motivation to learn English has remained unchanged. It is positive that only 11.8% (see Graph 8) of the students reported a decrease in motivation. This suggests that, although the CLIL approach did not lead to a great increase in motivation, it did not bring a decrease either. Therefore, the level of motivation remains stable. This seems to derive also from the solid linguistic foundations that these students acquired in primary school. Several students attended international schools, so they feel confident in dealing with both subjects as they are both taught in English, and they are used to studying in English. This enables students to engage with the content more naturally, without viewing the language barrier as a limiting factor. This explains also why students report similar levels of motivation in both subjects: they do not have to focus exclusively on the language comprehension, but they can focus on the subject content. Furthermore, this confidence encourages self-esteem and consolidates a positive attitude towards the learning process (Mettewie et al., 2024). In this case, motivation stems not only from the enjoyment experienced during the lessons, but also from being aware of having the appropriate tool and skills to handle it successfully.

Another key aspect that emerged from the analysis was the importance of the teacher's role. Students wrote that the curricular English teacher is more friendly and funnier. This shows that students prefer teachers who smile, who show empathy and who are open to dialogue, but who are also capable of enforcing rules, rather than teachers who are too strict and distant. The teacher's attitude plays a fundamental role at this stage of development, as students come from primary school where teachers often act as a kind of maternal figure. For this reason, in the passage to lower secondary school, they experience a delicate change: they seek more autonomy, but, at the same time, they still need to feel welcomed and reassured. Therefore, the attitude of the teacher is a key motivational factor (Balboni, 2013) since teachers can make the lesson more enjoyable and engaging. This enjoyment, which translates into higher levels of motivation, can also be seen when comparing CLIL lessons with curricular English lessons (see Graph 27 and Table 28). Students prefer the latter for two main reasons (see Table 28): they like the curricular language teacher, and they perceive the lesson as less difficult, since they already know the grammatical structures. Therefore, they participate in the lesson in a more relaxed way. Thus, students prefer curricular English because they interact more with the teacher, have more fun and consequently they feel more confident and motivated. So, the teacher's attitude is closely linked to the motivation and emotions that students experience during lessons. It is important to highlight that a smiling teacher does not necessarily mean a permissive teacher. On the contrary, a teacher who can combine firmness with openness to dialogue is able to gain the trust and respect of the students. This attitude facilitates communication, reduces conflict and creates a more peaceful classroom environment that encourages participation and motivation. By presenting themselves as friendly and authoritative, teachers can create a supportive learning environment in which students feel encouraged to actively participate and take risks without fear of judgement. The balance between these two features is one of the most effective strategies to foster motivation and engagement in language learning (Balboni, 2013). Furthermore, teachers who can show empathy and positivity become a role model for their students. On the contrary, a teacher who is too strict or irritable may generate anxiety and demotivation. Sometimes they may even cause students to reject the subject they teach if the teachers lack passion when transmitting the content. Passionate teachers inspire motivated

students because motivation is contagious (Bier, 2018). Therefore, if the teacher is motivated, the students will be too. Conversely, if the teacher is not motivated and only does their job to receive a salary, students also tend not to feel motivated to learn (Balboni, 2013). Once again, teachers play a fundamental role in motivating students and influencing their emotional experience during the learning process.

To sum up, the discussion of data relating to RQ1 confirms the importance of increased language exposure, playful and interactive activities, and the fundamental role of teachers in order to enhance students' motivation. However, in order to fully respond to RQ1, the questionnaire questions concerning the non-linguistic subject must be discussed.

4.1.2 Motivation towards the non-linguistic discipline (Geography)

Regarding the non-linguistic subject taught in English through the CLIL methodology, namely Geography, the data reveal a more complex situation. Appreciation for the subject is less uniform: some students find the lessons stimulating, while other struggle to engage with the content. This seems to depend on various factors, including individual language proficiency, personal relationship with the English language, and interest towards Geography. Once again, language emerges as a filter that can either facilitate or hinder the learning process in non-linguistic subjects (Balboni, 2020).

One positive aspect is the perception of competence: most students feel able to understand geographical content. This positive perception is linked to the fact that lessons are conducted in English, a subject in which students generally have more confidence. So, even if students do not show uniform appreciation for the subject, many still perceive themselves as capable of dealing with it, probably thanks to their familiarity with the English language. This connection with the English language fosters greater self-confidence when dealing with geographical content. This means that language becomes a real source of motivation (Balboni, 2013). Indeed, when they were asked if CLIL lessons helped them to understand Geography better (see Graph 21), 33.3% replied quite a lot, confirming that the language acts as a stimulus and support for the students.

Classroom observation revealed significant differences in the type of content and strategies adopted. Geography has a predominantly political and economic focus, which is perceived as being more distant from the traditional Geography. In addition, lectures tend to reduce engagement. Conversely, participation increases when students can participate by connecting the content to their own experiences. In fact, during the internship, these differences in how students responded to two types of CLIL lessons were observed (see Image 4). Despite following the same methodological structure, two lessons led to different levels of engagement: one lesson was on environmental problems, and one lesson explained Germany. Both lessons were frontal and structured in the same way: first, the text was read, and the difficult words were explained; then the students did some exercises and, finally, the teacher provided further explanations. However, the students' reactions were different. During the lesson about Germany, the students were much more engaged, probably because the structure and the content were more similar to a normal Geography lesson. Many students had visited Germany before, so they talked about the places they had seen, the weather they had found, and the features they had noticed. In contrast, during the lesson on environmental problems, the students appeared more distracted and less engaged. However, their interest was reactivated thanks to a group activity carried out at the end of the teachers' explanation.

First, the teacher wrote the words environmental problems on the board. Each student went to the board to write some words that came to their mind when they looked at those words. This activity not only stimulated vocabulary production, but also made each student feel involved, promoting a climate of active participation and increased motivation. Afterwards, the teacher explained the task that the students had to do. The students were then divided into groups of four, chosen by the teachers. Each group was assigned an environmental problem. Each student had a specific task: one student had to take care of the graphics, one had to find more information on the topic, one had to summarise the information, and one had to present the work to the class. This activity is usually carried out at the end of each CLIL module. The groups and roles change each time to give everyone the opportunity to try out different roles and work with different people. In this way they promote individual autonomy and ability to collaborate with others. During the activity, the students feel personally involved since they want to make

a good impression, and, therefore, they participate actively. In addition, this activity was carried out in the iPad classroom, a new and stimulating environment that students liked.

Furthermore, to make the work more dynamic, the use of technology has helped to create an innovative and stimulating learning environment, which students particularly appreciate. Therefore, it is not surprising that when students were asked some suggestions to make CLIL more motivating and engaging (see Table 32), participants responded that they would like to do more group activities and use the iPad classroom more often. This result highlights how collaborative and technological aspects are key factors in stimulating motivation, interest, and active participation during the CLIL programme. Therefore, traditional classroom activities create limited engagement, while collaborative and group activities enriched by the use of technological devices have been shown to stimulate interest, motivation and participation (Caon, 2022).

The current study shows strong similarities with Coonan's results (Coonan, 2012): in both cases, most of the students expressed a positive attitude and attributed an added value to CLIL. The data are consistent in different contexts (Veneto for the present study, Friuli-Venezia Giulia for Coonan's study), this confirms that CLIL is not only a tool to enhance language skills, but also a methodology that can stimulate motivation and engagement.

For example, most participants in the study conducted by Coonan (2012) expressed a positive attitude towards CLIL, motivated by interest, perceived success, linguistic improvement, and the future usefulness of the acquired skills. However, a minority expressed difficulties, mainly related to the comprehension and the limited mastery of the foreign language. Nevertheless, more than half of the students said they would like to continue with this methodology, recognising its educational and enriching value (Coonan, 2012). Thus, the fact that students expressed a desire to continue with the CLIL methodology, despite the required effort, shows that they perceive this methodology as stimulating and rewarding. CLIL is, therefore, not only a means of developing language skills, but also a formative experience on an emotional and motivational level. Both the current study and previous research converge on the same point: CLIL is an effective approach to improve foreign language skills, and a motivator that makes the school experience more engaging and meaningful.

In conclusion, the collected data shows that the CLIL methodology contributes to increase students' motivation towards the English language and, to a lesser extent, towards Geography, the non-linguistic subject. Although students continue to prefer the curricular English lessons, mainly due to the greater popularity of the teacher and the perception of less difficulty, students recognise the real added value of CLIL: more engaging activities and innovative and collaborative working methods. CLIL is, therefore, not only a tool to enhance language skills, but also to provide a motivational and educational increase, making the study of a non-linguistic subject more engaging, stimulating and meaningful.

4.2 The impact of emotions during CLIL lessons

Emotions play a fundamental role in the learning process, particularly in CLIL contexts. In general, they influence learning in a positive way; however, there are some situations in which they can generate anxiety, insecurity or a fear of making mistakes.

The analysed data confirms that emotions play a fundamental role in learning in general, and, therefore, also during CLIL lessons. Emotions influence motivation and learning. A peaceful classroom environment and some positive emotions can improve learning and can store the information in long-term memory (Resnik & Dewaele, 2020). Conversely, negative emotions can hinder learning by activating Krashen's affective filter. This prevents learning from becoming lasting and effective. For this reason, CLIL lessons should present students with activities that stimulate positive emotions and create optimal learning conditions (Resnik & Dewaele, 2020).

4.2.1 Emotions experienced during CLIL lessons

In recent years emotions have been a major focus, with a great emphasis on positive psychology and on the importance of positive emotions during the learning process (Richards, 2020). Positive emotions facilitate effective learning: calm and relaxed students can participate actively, process information better and store it in their long-term

memory. Conversely, negative emotions such as anxiety, stress, or shame can cause students to block, reducing the quality of their learning process and limiting memorisation to short-term memory. This demonstrates that emotions can promote or hinder learning; they can engage and motivate or demotivate and block students. This finding is consistent with positive psychology studies, which emphasise the importance of cultivating positive emotions to promote engagement, effort and deep learning (Richards, 2020).

Starting with the emotions experienced during CLIL lessons, the results confirm the importance of the emotional factor in learning. The majority of the students experienced positive emotions such as calmness, confidence, enjoyment and engagement. Only a small number of students reported feelings of frustration, which are usually associated with misunderstanding. These results highlight how emotions directly influence learning, and they confirm the central role of the affective factor in CLIL lessons (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). As highlighted by Krashen in his comprehensible input theory (Balboni, 2020), when students receive a linguistic input that is too complex, the affective filter is activated. This can produce anxiety, frustration or insecurity, hinder comprehension and reduce learning ability. Conversely, a positive and comforting atmosphere promotes motivation, attention, and active participation. When students feel confident, engaged and motivated, they can follow the lesson more easily, understand the content better and use the English language more effectively.

The link between emotional well-being and more effective learning also emerges from the responses (see Graph 16) comparing CLIL lessons with curricular English lessons. The majority of the students said they felt equally comfortable using English during both CLIL lessons and curricular English lessons. This data confirms that students predominantly have positive perceptions and suggests that familiarity with the language is an important emotional factor that supports learning. Linguistic confidence helps to reduce anxiety and frustration, thereby increasing the willingness to actively participate and to experiment with the language (Beal, 2025).

4.2.2 Anxiety and fear of making errors

This paragraph explores the theme of anxiety. It should be remembered that anxiety is not always a negative emotion: positive anxiety is the feeling that provides the drive necessary to do something, such as preparing for an exam or a test. In moderate amounts, anxiety can, therefore, be motivating and encourage participation. However, when it is excessive, anxiety can become debilitating, compromising the quality of life in schools and in broader contexts. In this case it requires the intervention of specialists.

Most students said (see Graph 14) they rarely feel anxious during Geography lessons, but a significant number (25.5%) said that they sometimes feel anxious. Among those who experienced anxiety, the main cause (see Table 15) is the fear of making mistakes in English, primarily due to the fear of receiving harsh or judgmental corrections, which makes them feel embarrassed. As a result, many students avoid actively participating during the lesson for the fear of making mistakes. This result highlights the crucial role that teachers' attitude plays in creating a safe and motivating environment (Wu & Kamarul Kabilan, 2025). Teachers must be perceived as reliable role models, with whom students can interact without feeling judged, because only in a peaceful atmosphere of trust and mutual respect long-lasting learning can take place (Alrabai, 2022).

To better understand how emotions impact students' learning during CLIL lessons, it is important to consider how much they perceive the fear of making mistakes and how frustrated they feel when they do not understand or when they make mistakes. In fact, Questions 11 and 12 (see Graphs 17 and 18) explore these issues in depth.

The answers to Question 11 (see Graph 17) show that the perception of error varies depending on individual sensitivity and personality. Teachers should, therefore, intervene to make it clear to the students that "to be wrong is human", as the proverb said. In fact, students learn new things by making mistakes. Above all, everyone makes mistakes; it is normal. Errors are an inevitable part of the learning process, and even native speakers make mistakes. Furthermore, mistakes help teachers to better understand what students have not understood, and, successively, reexplain concepts before moving on and creating

deeper gaps. In fact, in 1960 Corder established error analysis which studies errors that students make to determine the source of the error (Corder, 1982) with the aim of improving teaching. Therefore, mistakes are useful for teachers because they help them understand their students' needs better. For this reason, teachers should correct mistakes naturally, without highlighting them in an excessive way. In fact, especially at this adolescent stage (11-13 years old), it is important to recognise the progress and maintain high motivation, ensuring that the fear of making mistakes does not hinder learning. At this age, moreover, every comment is often taken personally and can cause shame, especially among more sensitive students. If students feel ashamed, they may stop participating during the lessons, and without participation, they cannot learn effectively. For this reason, mistakes should be accepted by the students and considered an integral part of their educational process. Therefore, teachers have to correct them without making the students feel embarrassed (Alrabai, 2022).

In Question 12, the focus is on frustration related to not understanding the content (see Graph 18). Similar to Question 11, most of the students (29.4%) said they sometimes feel frustrated. This highlights how not understanding certain concepts immediately can generate tension or insecurity influencing attitude and participation in class. This result is consistent with the findings of Question 8 (see Graph 12 and Table 13), where 27.5% of the students said they feel frustrated when they do not understand something. This evidence confirms again the central role of the affective factor in CLIL learning. It is linked to Krashen's comprehensible input theory, according to which frustration and anxiety increase the affective filter, hindering the ability to assimilate content and to use the language effectively (Balboni, 2020). The results of these last two questions are confirmed in Question 19 (see Graph 25 and Table 26), in which 62.8% of respondents said that making mistakes in oral production worries them the most, while 45.1% said that not understanding the explanations worries them the most. Therefore, when students activate their affective filter, they experience fear and anxiety, and they stop. This decreases their motivation, resulting in less active participation and reduced learning.

These findings can also be observed in two other studies that confirm the importance of emotions during the learning process. The study conducted by researcher Sarah Beal

(2025) analysed how emergent plurilingual students experience emotions during social interactions in a bilingual French English classroom (Beal, 2025). The study involved three seven-years old children: two monolingual French speakers and one bilingual child (Beal, 2025). The results showed that games, various activities, the use of technology and teacher support foster positive emotions (Beal, 2025). Peer support is also important; collaborative interactions make students feel good, while language difficulties or lack of autonomy can lead to fear, frustration, and anxiety (Beal, 2025). Bilingual students found it easier to use strategies to overcome obstacles, while those students with fewer linguistic resources felt excluded (Beal, 2025). Negative emotions reduce participation and attention (Beal, 2025). Therefore, emotional involvement depends on the context and is not a fixed characteristic. To encourage positive emotions, it is important for teachers to value all students' languages, encourage collaborative work, and help children develop metalinguistic strategies to overcome difficulties (Beal, 2025).

Kralova et al. (2025) conducted a similar study that investigated emotions experienced by lower secondary students during English language lesson in Austria, Japan and Slovakia. The study involved 361 students aged between 10 and 14 (Kralova et al., 2025). The study aimed to identify activities that cause positive or negative emotions, distinguish between these emotions, and compare the similarities and differences between the three cultural contexts (Kralova et al., 2025). The results showed that positive emotions prevail, pleasure and engagement, during communicative and cooperative activities such as dialogues, group work, and games (Kralova et al., 2025). The most frequent negative emotions were anxiety and boredom, which were linked to tests, oral presentations, and lectures. According to teachers and observers, a variety of activities and interaction with peers stimulate positive emotions, whereas tests and repetitive tasks generate anxiety and demotivation. The study confirms the crucial role of teachers in determining students' emotional experience (Kralova et al., 2025). Therefore, as in this present study, the results show that playful and cooperative activities promote positive emotions, while repetitive tasks and assessments generate anxiety and demotivation. This confirms the central role of the teachers in students' emotional experience.

Therefore, both positive and negative emotions play a central role in the learning path, including learning through the CLIL methodology. A calm, welcoming and supportive classroom environment, in which the teacher gives clear input, encourages participation and shows that mistakes are normal, helps to reduce anxiety and frustration, boost engagement and enable students to learn more effectively (Alrabai, 2022).

4.2.3 Overall feedback

Finally, the last question in the questionnaire asked students to provide an overall assessment of their experience of CLIL lessons. The average score on the Likert scale is 3.49. This is consistent with the results of previous questions. Most students feel calm, confident and motivated during lessons, while only a minority experiences frustration or anxiety, primarily due to the fear of making errors. Nevertheless, this is still a positive result, suggesting a good level of satisfaction and well-being, while also indicating areas for improvement.

Analysis of data reveals that emotions have a significant impact on student learning in CLIL lessons. Most students associate these lessons with positive emotions such as calmness, enjoyment and motivation: all elements that promote concentration and effective content acquisition. However, negative emotions such as anxiety and frustration are also present, mainly related to the fear of making mistakes or not understanding the content.

The role of the teacher is confirmed as crucial: an encouraging, empathetic and non-judgmental attitude reduces anxiety, lowers the affective filter and stimulates active participation. On the contrary, severe corrections or overly complex input can generate insecurity in students.

It should be emphasised that the classroom is a complex and dynamic system in which the teacher cannot control every variable (Balboni & Coonan, 2014). However, they can work on developing their own sensitivity, empathy and emotional intelligence. In this

way, it is possible to create a favourable classroom environment in which positive emotions prevail and become a resource for learning.

To sum up, emotions have a profound influence on the CLIL experience. Positive emotions support motivation and learning; while negative emotions, if not managed properly, can compromise teaching effectiveness. For this reason, creating a climate of trust and providing accessible input are essential elements to fully realise the potential of CLIL. Therefore, the answer to the second research question of how emotions affect students' learning during CLIL is that emotions influence learning in a predominantly positive way. Most students have a positive perception of CLIL lessons, experiencing emotions such as calmness, enjoyment and engagement, with an overall rating of 3.49/5. However, there are some difficulties which can increase the affective filter. In general, so, emotions have a favourable effect on learning, but it is important for teachers to know how to manage uncomfortable situations and to transform negative emotions into opportunities for growth and learning (Alrabai, 2022).

The two research questions, thus, highlight the interrelated and complementary nature of motivation and emotions. Firstly, CLIL is confirmed as a methodology that can increase students' motivation, particularly regarding the English language, by providing an authentic and functional context in which to use the language (RQ1). Secondly, the effectiveness of CLIL is closely tied to emotional management: a positive, peaceful and welcoming atmosphere realises CLIL' s motivational potential, whereas unmanaged negative emotions such as anxiety or frustration can diminish its benefits (RQ2). Therefore, it can be concluded that CLIL is not only a content and language integrated learning method, but also an educational experience in which motivation and emotions intertwine to determine the quality and depth of learning.

CONCLUSION

Motivation and emotions play a crucial role in the learning process. A learning path characterised by a lack of motivation and negative emotions is unlikely to be effective. Conversely, when students are motivated and experience positive emotions, learning becomes more meaningful and long-lasting. Students participate actively, feel more engaged, and demonstrate an interest in the proposed activities. This is possible because the classroom environment is perceived as peaceful and welcoming, and it is free from negative emotions that could hinder participation. While anxiety, fear and frustration may arise, it is the teacher's responsibility to recognise and address these feelings with the students, transforming them into opportunities to grow and to learn. In fact, maintaining a good balance between positive and negative emotions is important for effective learning, since fostering positive emotions and regulating negative ones helps the learning process (Kralova et al, 2025).

The study results confirmed the effectiveness of CLIL in terms of motivation and emotion. Regarding the first research question about the CLIL effects on motivation, the results demonstrate that teaching a non-linguistic subject using the CLIL methodology significantly enhances motivation towards the English language. Students perceive themselves as competent and participate with interest in collaborative and playful activities. They also recognise how tools such as games, group activity and technology make learning more stimulating and engaging. Motivation towards the non-linguistic subject, however, grows at a more moderate level: not all students appreciate the content, but group activity, digital tools and varied activities are essential to stimulate interest, participation and understanding of concepts. Although many students still prefer curricular English lessons, primarily due to the relationship with the teacher and the perception that curricular English is less challenging, the CLIL methodology is nevertheless recognised as an effective teaching method.

Regarding the second research question about the impact of emotions during CLIL lessons, it is evident that emotions significantly affect the learning process. Most students associate CLIL lessons with positive emotions, such as calmness, interest, enjoyment and

motivation. These emotions promote concentration, active participation and long-lasting memory. In these cases, therefore, emotions have a positive impact on learning, facilitating and supporting students' learning. However, negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration and fear of making mistakes are also present, often due to the fear of making mistakes or the difficulty of understanding the content. These emotional states activate the affective filter, which can hinder participation and have a negative impact on learning.

In this context, the role of the teacher becomes very important. An empathetic and encouraging teacher who accepts mistakes without judgement helps create an atmosphere of trust and calm, reducing students' insecurities and stimulating motivation. The teacher becomes a facilitator of emotions as well as a transmitter of content, mediating between linguistic difficulties and cognitive challenges to promote effective and lasting learning (Balboni, 2020).

A comparison with the existing literature confirms these results. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Coonan (2012), Beal (2025) and Kralova et al. (2025), have highlighted that the CLIL methodology not only enhances language skills, but also increases motivation, improves participation, and makes the school experience more engaging. These studies suggest that positive emotions and active, collaborative methodologies promote deeper learning, whereas difficulties related to language or rigid contexts can generate insecurity and reduce the quality of the learning experience.

Despite the positive results, this study has potential limitations. From a methodological perspective, for example, no interviews were conducted to investigate in-depth why students are more motivated to study curricular English rather than Geography. Furthermore, the questionnaires were administered anonymously and online, which ensured greater freedom and sincerity in the responses but prevented comparison between the three classes. Therefore, it was not possible to analyse whether and to what extent the responses varied according to class and to the age.

Another limitation is that the class which studies Spanish as a second foreign language was not included in the study. Although this group was observed during the internship,

they did not participate in the questionnaire, and they are, therefore, not part of the sample. This meant that a direct comparison could not be made with the students of the enhanced English curriculum, which could have provided significant insights into differences of motivation and attitude between the two groups.

Nevertheless, the results and the limitations of this study open interesting perspectives for possible future research. Firstly, there was no significant increase in motivation towards Geography; this could be linked to the age of the students and their language level. They mainly possess Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), while Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which is necessary to fully understand more complex content, develops from more advanced language levels (B1). Conducting a similar study in a bilingual school or with older students would, therefore, be interesting as it would allow us to see whether greater language proficiency increases motivation towards non-linguistic subjects.

Another possible future area of study is to compare the enhanced English classes with the class that studies Spanish as a second foreign language. Although this class was observed during the internship, it did not participate in the questionnaire and was, therefore, not included in the sample. So, future studies could explore differences in motivation, engagement, and perception between students following an enhanced English programme and those studying two foreign languages. It should also be noted that, at the time of observation, this class was a first-year class, who have now become a second-year class. This allows the researcher to do a longitudinal study to verify how their motivation evolves over three years of lower secondary school, and whether students develop a stronger preference for English or Spanish. In addition, it would be interesting to study the effectiveness of the two curricula to see whether following the enhanced English programme or studying two foreign languages simultaneously is more advantageous in terms of language skills, motivation, and participation in learning activities.

Finally, further research could examine the impact of teachers' personalities and attitudes on their relationships with students and on the effectiveness of learning and CLIL methodology. It would be interesting to understand whether teachers' friendliness,

empathy, and communication style influence motivation and learning differently across the three years of lower secondary school, and how these dynamics evolve over time.

The study, thus, confirms that the CLIL methodology is an effective teaching approach that increases motivation towards the English language, and to a lesser extent, towards the non-linguistic subject. Students actively participate in collaborative and playful activities, recognising the value of such innovative teaching methods. Moreover, emotions play a fundamental role in the learning process. While most students experience positive emotions, such as calmness, interest, and motivation, which promote attention and long-term memory, negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration and the fear of making mistakes are also present. These negative emotions can hinder learning if teachers do not intervene in a proper way. This underlines the importance of a teacher's empathetic and encouraging attitude. In fact, Albert Einstein once said,

> I have never taught my students anything. I have only tried to provide the best possible learning environment (Albert Einstein).

Therefore, successful learning depends on the conditions of the classroom environment.

The present study also suggests future possible research. It would be interesting to analyse bilingual contexts or classes with different language paths, evaluate how motivation evolves over time and explore the role of the teacher's personality and style in the effectiveness of CLIL.

In conclusion, CLIL has been shown to be effective in improving language skills and in creating a positive, motivating and lasting learning environment. The results also demonstrated that positive emotions affect students' learning in a positive way, promoting students' success and engagement. However, there are also some negative emotions that can hinder learning. Therefore, the future challenge will be to optimise the potential of CLIL, thereby minimising the impact of negative emotions and reinforcing the positive ones.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Questo questionario è anonimo e ha lo scopo di raccogliere informazioni sulla tua esperienza con il

CLIL (Geography). Non ci sono risposte giuste o sbagliate, rispondi in modo sincero.

CLASSE_____DATA_____

- Maschio
- Femmina

Parte 1: Motivazione verso l'inglese (lingua straniera - LS)

1. Ti piace studiare l'inglese?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

2. Ti senti bravo/a in inglese?

- Sì, molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

3. Quanto ti piace fare attività in inglese (es. giochi, letture, conversazioni)?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

4. Grazie alle lezioni CLIL, il tuo interesse per l'inglese è:

- Aumentato

- Rimasto lo stesso

- Diminuito

Parte 2: Motivazione verso la geografia (disciplina non linguistica)

5. Ti piace studiare geografia?

- Molto

- Abbastanza

- Poco

- Per niente

6. Ti senti bravo/a in geografia?

- Sì, molto

- Abbastanza

- Poco

- Per niente

7. Le lezioni CLIL hanno reso lo studio della geografia più interessante?

- Sì

- Abbastanza

- Poco

- Per niente

Parte 3: Emozioni durante le lezioni CLIL

8. Durante le lezioni di Geography, come ti senti generalmente? (Max 3 risposte)

- Motivato/a e interessato/a

- Tranquillo/a e sicuro/a

- Divertito/a e coinvolto/a

- Ansioso/a e preoccupato/a

- Frustrato/a quando non capisco

- Altro: _____

9. Durante le lezioni di Geography, ti senti ansioso/a?

- Mai
- Raramente
- A volte
- Spesso
- Sempre

Se ti senti ansioso/a, qual è il motivo/i motivi principale/i della tua ansia? (Max 3 risposte)

- Ho paura di sbagliare a parlare in inglese
- Non capisco le spiegazioni in inglese
- Non mi sento sicuro
- Non sono bravo/a in geografia
- Altro: _____

10. Durante le lezioni di Geography, ti senti più a tuo agio nell'usare l'inglese rispetto alle

lezioni di lingua inglese?

- Si, molto di più
- Sì, un po' di più
- No, mi sento uguale
- No, mi sento meno a mio agio

11. Ti preoccupi di fare errori quando parli in inglese?

- Mai
- Raramente
- A volte
- Spesso
- Sempre

12. Ti senti frustrato/a quando non capisci qualcosa in inglese durante la lezione?

- Mai
- Raramente
- A volte
- Spesso
- Sempre

13. Pensi che il fatto di usare l'inglese per studiare geografia ti aiuti a sentirti più sicuro/a con la

lingua?

- Sì, perché il focus è più sul contenuto che sulla grammatica
- Sì, perché facciamo attività stimolanti e pratiche
- No, mi sento ugualmente insicuro/a
- No, mi sento ancora più insicuro/a

Parte 4: Percezione dell'efficacia del CLIL

14. Le lezioni CLIL ti aiutano a migliorare il tuo inglese?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

15. Le lezioni CLIL ti aiutano a capire meglio la geografia?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

16. Preferisci studiare geografia in inglese o in italiano?

- Preferisco in inglese

- Non ho preferenze

- Preferisco in italiano

17. Ti piacerebbe fare lezioni CLIL anche in altre materie?

- Sì

- Forse

- No

Se sì, in quali altre materie? _____

18. Vorresti continuare a studiare altre materie in inglese anche in futuro?

- Sì

- Forse

- No

19. Cosa ti preoccupa di più nello studiare materie in inglese? (Max 2 risposte)

- Non capire le spiegazioni

- Fare errori quando parlo

- Non riuscire a fare le attività

- Niente mi preoccupa

Parte 5: Confronto con l'inglese curricolare e potenziato

20. Ti senti più motivato/a nelle lezioni CLIL o nelle lezioni di inglese curricolare?

- Più motivato/a nel CLIL

- Più motivato/a nelle lezioni di lingua inglese

- Motivato/a in modo uguale in entrambe

- Poco motivato/a in entrambe

Perché? _____

21. Ti senti più sicuro/a in inglese durante le lezioni CLIL o nelle di inglese curricolare?

- Più sicuro/a nel CLIL

- Più sicuro/a nelle lezioni di lingua inglese

- Sicuro/a in modo uguale in entrambe

- Insicuro/a in entrambe

22. Le lezioni CLIL sono più difficili delle lezioni di inglese curricolare?

- Molto più difficili

- Un po' più difficili

- Della stessa difficoltà

- Più facili

23. Consiglieresti ai tuoi amici la metodologia CLIL?

- Solo se a loro piace l'inglese

- Sì, è utile e rende le lezioni meno noiose

- No, è troppo difficile

24. Cosa miglioreresti per rendere la metodologia CLIL ancora più motivante e coinvolgente?

_____

25. Complessivamente, come ti senti durante le lezioni CLIL?

1	2	3	4	5
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Grazie per aver completato il questionario!