Master's Degree programme

in Language Science

Final Thesis

Learning Italian L2 at the museum:
a CLIL workshop
for Marco Polo and Turandot students
in Venice

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I dedicate this dissertation to my father Fabio, who was the biggest inspiration in my life.

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to discuss the potential of museums and, in particular, of the museum objects, as resources to promote the development of Italian L2 (ItaL2) students' oral skills in the context of the Marco Polo and Turandot projects as delivered by the School of International Education of the University Ca' Foscari of Venice.

In museums students have the opportunity to get in touch with objects exhibited in the collections which promote conversations and interaction that might be difficult in the classroom, overcoming the shyness of speaking in front of the entire language class (Leinhardt, Crowley and Knutson, 2002).

From a careful analysis of the literature, it emerges that Chinese students in the Marco Polo and Turandot projects encounter difficulties in improving their language skills and, in particular, their oral skills in Italian L2.

The oral ability deserves more attention since it is a fundamental requisite for the Marco Polo and Turandot students as they are going to use Italian to learn the specific contents of the subjects of their university curriculum and to master the language during the exams. Thus, this study focused on the experience of the Marco Polo and Turandot students during an ItaL2 workshop at Ca' Rezzonico, the Museum of the 18th century Venice.

This workshop was delivered in February 2020 as part of an Italian Culture module and was designed by integrating the CLIL methodology and the principles at the basis of museum pedagogy in order to create language activities aimed at improving Chinese students' oral skills in Italian L2.

Data were collected through the researcher's observation, students' qualitative questionnaires, and the teacher's written interview.

The intention to conduct this research arose from the recognition of the urgent need of Chinese students to achieve the objectives set by the agreement signed by the Italian Republic and the People's Republic of China which established that the students of Marco Polo and Turandot projects have to reach either the B1 or B2 level in Italian by the end of the language course in Italy.

In particular, the study aimed to answer the following research questions:

      a) *How does the museum experience influence the affective dimension of students?*

      b) *Do the museum objects promote students' oral skills in Italian L2?*

Introduction

According to on-official statistics, a great number of Chinese students of Marco Polo and Turandot project decided to leave their university studies after only a year and the majority of them declare that the main reason that persuades them to give up their dream of studying in Italy is related to their difficulties in language learning (Rastelli, 2011: 92). Thanks to the Marco Polo Turandot project, many Italian "atenei" welcome every year from 2005 thousands of Chinese undergraduate students who decide to come to Italy to study at the university.

Much of the current literature on Marco Polo and Turandot project pays particular attention to the issues that students encounter during their experience in Italy and one of their major obstacles is the achievement of the intermediate level in Italian (B1 and B2 level) and an the development of an adequate communicative competence that guarantees the success of their academic studies and this topic is further explored in Chapter 1.

For this reason, we have thought to give the students of Marco Polo and Turandot of Venice the chance of using their oral abilities in a non-formal context, after having recognised the limitations of class-based learning.

From the analysis of the benefits of museum learning, which declares museums as adequate place for language learning, as it is further explored in Chapter 2, and the advantages of CLIL approach, which guarantees an integrated learning of language and content, as it is analysed in Chapter 3, we decided to design a workshop as part of an Italian Culture module and was designed by integrating the CLIL methodology and the principles at the basis of museum learning.

Our research is described in Chapter 4 and it is based on two founding pillars, our research questions, which led us both in planning the workshop and in the analysis, which is expounded in Chapter 5.

The discussion of the results and le final reflections are illustrated in Chapter 6.

1. The Marco Polo and Turandot project

1.1. The history of the Marco Polo and Turandot project

The Marco Polo project was promoted and designed by the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, for promoting the integration of Chinese students in the Italian Universities and Academies.

The Marco Polo Turandot project was born as an intergovernmental agreement established respectively in 2005 and 2009 between the Italian government and the Chinese government and it represents one of the most important international initiatives organized by Italy with the aim of promoting the Italian university system in the world.

This agreement has been designed to promote the access to Italian university courses and to the Higher Education for Art, Music and Dance (AFAM) institutions by Chinese students.

Thanks to the "Accordo sui visti di studio tra la Repubblica Popolare Cinese e la Repubblica Italiana" signed on 2 October 2006 between Italy and China, Chinese students can obtain an Italian entry visa and be prepared in Italy for the enrolment at Italian university courses.

This agreement allows Chinese undergraduate students who do not speak Italian to come to Italy on condition that they attend an Italian language course in preparation for their studies at the university. These language courses are generally organized by the universities or by the Higher Education for Art, Music and Dance (AFAM) institutions and they have to follow certain directives issued by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR).

These language courses are an integral part of the Marco Polo and Turandot project and they are designed for the special purpose of preparing the Chinese students to obtain the Italian B1 level language certificate, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) attending a language course for 10 or 11 months with 80 or 100 hours of lessons per week (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, 2019: 2). Indeed, as stated by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) "higher education institutions are obliged to test the linguistic ability of students for access to courses" and "each institution must organise a test of proficiency

in the Italian language, obligatory for all Laurea degree and Laurea Magistrale a ciclo unico (single-cycle) degree courses", so, the language certificate is a fundamental requirement to enrol at the Italian University (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, 2019).

The Marco Polo project is an important initiative which has been implemented thanks to the close cooperation between Italian and Chinese institutions who shared a common objective, that is the international cooperation for educational and working purposes.

The Italian institutions that have worked in synergy over the last years for the promotion and implementation of this project are, on one side, the high authorities of the Italian Republic such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and the Ministry of the Interior and, on the other hand, the Italian universities and the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI).

Every year, the universities decide whether they will take part or not in the project, they set the number of Chinese students that they are willing to welcome in their "atenei" and then, they communicate the data and the information about the services that they are going to make available to CRUI and MIUR (Ambroso, 2011: 20).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has played an important role from the very beginning and it has permitted the pragmatic realization of the project since it has dealt with the visa policy. Indeed, on the basis of the Bilateral Agreement concluded with the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China signed on 4 July 2004 about the recognition of University qualifications, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation examines the regularity of the pre-enrolment requests of the students and releases student visas for studying in Italy even if they have not any knowledge of Italian on the condition that they are going to attend a preparatory Italian language course organized by the university (Ambroso, 2011: 20).

The Ministry of Education, University and Research in collaboration with the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI), after having established the enrolment procedures for the admission of international students to university courses in Italy, set by mutual consent the parameters that should be observed by all the Italian higher education institutes concerning not only the university curriculum but also the application and accommodation procedures.

1.2. The development of the project

The data that describe the trend of the presence of Chinese students in the Italian "atenei" from the beginning of the Marco Polo Turandot project up until today are absolutely encouraging and display gratifying and successful results.

In the last years, the Marco Polo and Turandot project has reached very important goals, but the most important outcome is the fact that this partnership between Italy and China continues to improve.

According to the data collect by MIUR, in 2005 only 32 Italian universities took part in the Marco Polo project but in the last decades the number of Italian universities which welcome Chinese students has greatly increased and today about 70% of the Italian universities and about 66% of the Higher Education for Art, Music and Dance (AFAM) institutions take part in the Marco Polo and Turandot project.

This data should not only be a source of pride for Italy, given that Italian Universities have the chance to make their academic excellences known, but also the presence of a great number of international students in the country is an opportunity of cultural and even economic growth.

Uni-Italia Association[1] esteemed that in 2018 about 662.100 students decided to leave China to continue their studies abroad (while only about 519.400 of them returned to their country at the end of their experience) and many of them decided to turn to intergovernmental projects such as the Marco Polo and Turandot project because they represent the main opportunity for Chinese students to study in Italy (Uni-Italia, 2019, pg 4).

According to the statistical data collected by UESCO and published in 2019 regarding the research "Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students", in 2018 around 69.563

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[1] The Uni-Italia Association is an Italia institution promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Ministry of Interior and it works closely with Italian diplomatic offices abroad where Centres of promotion and orientation to study in Italy are located in. It promotes the Italian higher education programs in several countries (in particular in China, India, Indonesia, Iran and Vietnam) and encourages the mobility of foreign students and researchers towards Italian universities. The Association assists foreign students who wish to study in Italy with their first enquiries and helps them when they arrive in Italy for the length of their studying experience. It has also the aim of facilitating the integration of the foreign students into the new social, academic and cultural environment (Uni-italia, 2020).

international students decided to study in Italy and 14.530 of them were Chinese students which represents 14,89 % of them.

% of Chinese students in Italy in the a.y. 2018

14,89%

■ International students   ■ Chinese students

Source: http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow
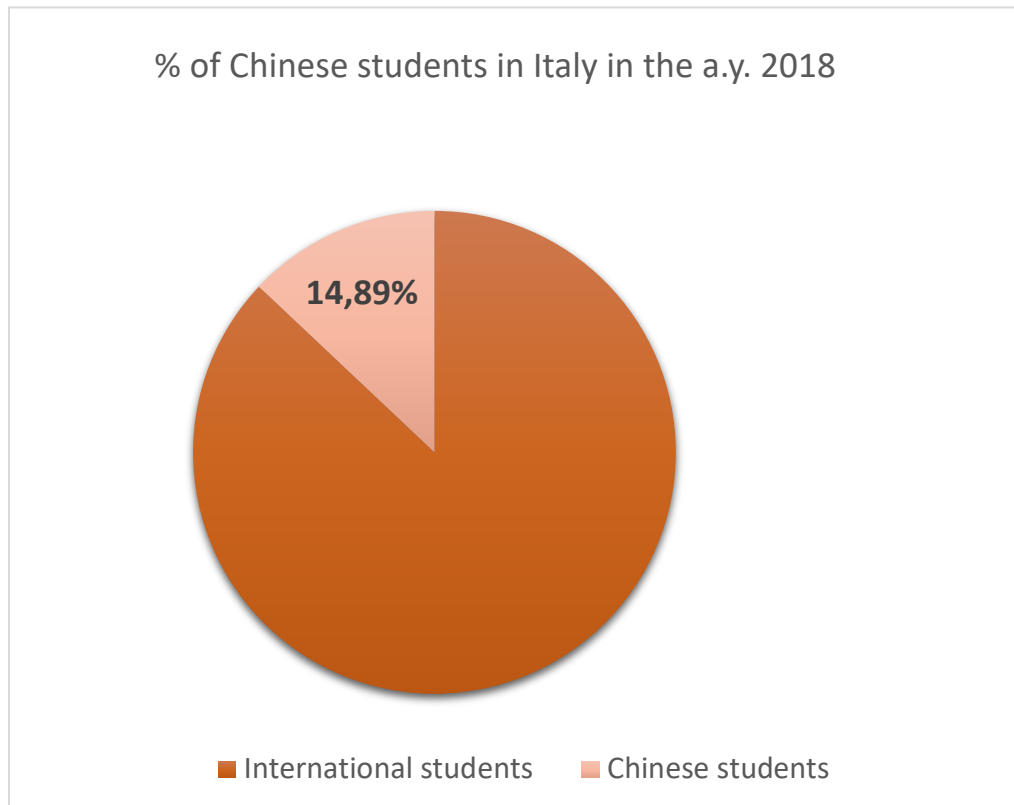
So, as we can see from the ranking of the destinations chosen by Chinese students for studying abroad published by Uni-Italia Association, Italy is placed fourth in the European ranking and eleventh in the word raking (Uni-Italia, 2019: 5).

	Country	International students	Chinese students	% Chinese students / International students
1	United States	984898	321625	32,66%
2	Australia	381202	128498	33,71%
3	United Kingdom	435734	96543	22,16%
4	Japan	164338	79375	48,30%
5	Canada	209979	66161	31,51%
6	South Korea	70796	44163	62,38%
7	Germany	258873	27765	10,73%
8	France	258380	24788	9,59%
9	New Zealand	52678	17646	33,50%
10	Malesia	122823	15957	12,99%
11	**Italy**	**97563**	**14531**	**14,89%**

Source: Database Uni-Italia, 2019

The number of students enroled in the Marco Polo and Turandot project has fluctuated over the past years and Uni-Italia Association registered the first drop between the a.y. 2014/2015 and the a.y. 2016/2017 because of the growth of the number of places available in the Chinese Universities.

The number of Chinese students in Italy gradually increased and in the a.y. 2019/2020 Italy viewed an unexpected growth since about 2.200 students were enroled in the Italian university thanks to the increased availability of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees courses held in English.

In the a.y. 2005/2006, the year of the launch of the Marco Polo project, only 766 Chinese students took part in the project.

However, today, according to the data on the pre-enroled students, this number has seen an increase of 288% since about 2.970 Chinese students are currently pre-enroled in the projects for the a.y. 2020/2021.

The general trend of the pre-registrations of Chinese students of the Marco Polo and Turandot projects from the a.y. 2008/2009 to 2020/2021

Legend: Marco Polo (n.students) — Turandot (n.students)
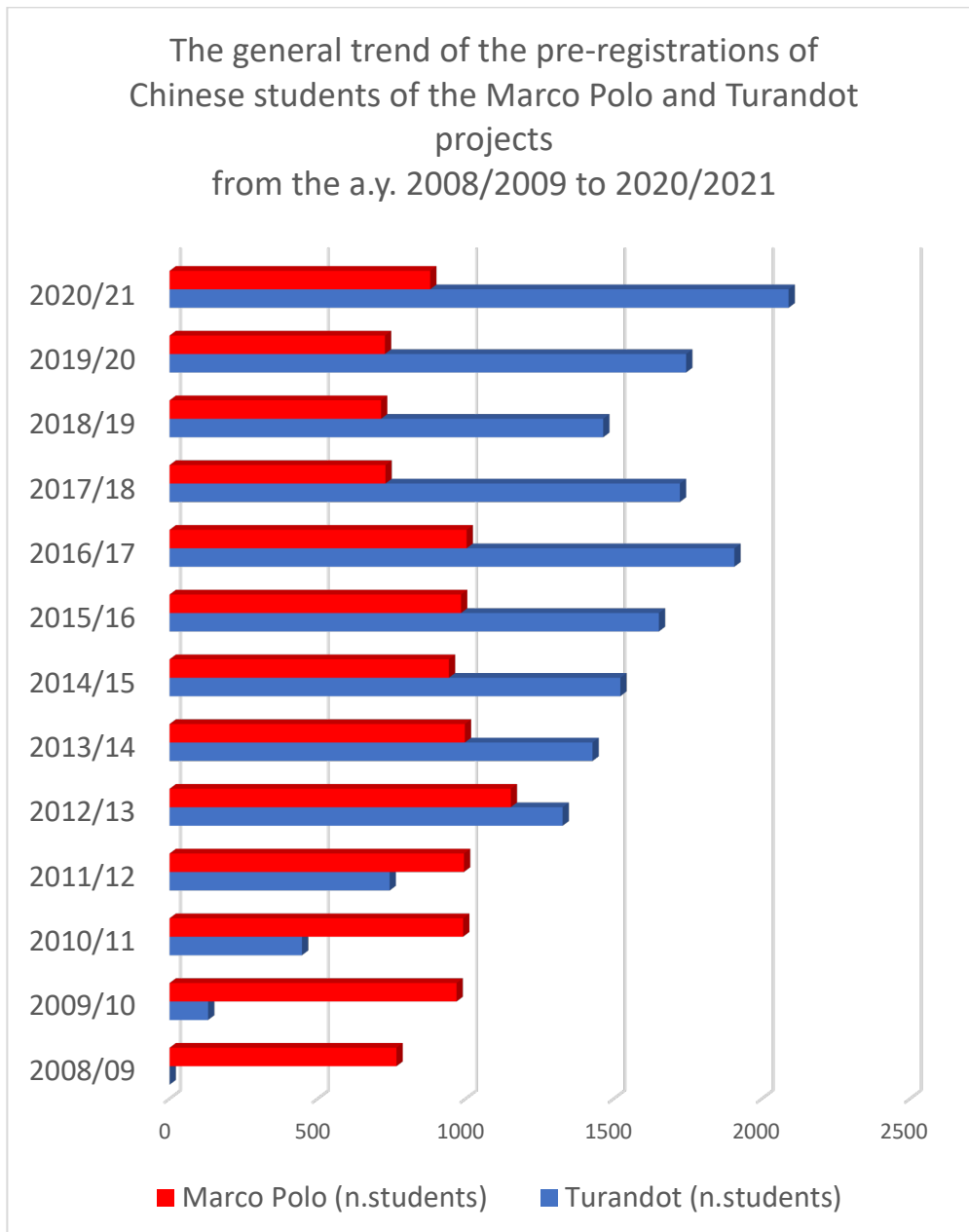
Source: Database Uni-Italia, 2019

During the Fifth Conference, which took place on 10th December 2019 in Rome, Uni-Italia Association reported interesting motivations behind the choice of Chinese students who wish to come to Italy and the reasons do not concern only issues about the well-known Italian excellence in the artistic and musical disciplines, but also for the exponential growth in the interest towards visual arts, musical, dance, drama and design sectors that has been recorded in China in recent times in particular after the rising request of professional figures expert in the creative and artistic branch (Uni-Italia, 2019: 12).

More specifically, the growth of the Turandot project in Italy can also be explained by the presence of few educational institutions in China, which are very often not enough developed to train competitive artists on a world scale (Uni-Italia, 2019: 12).
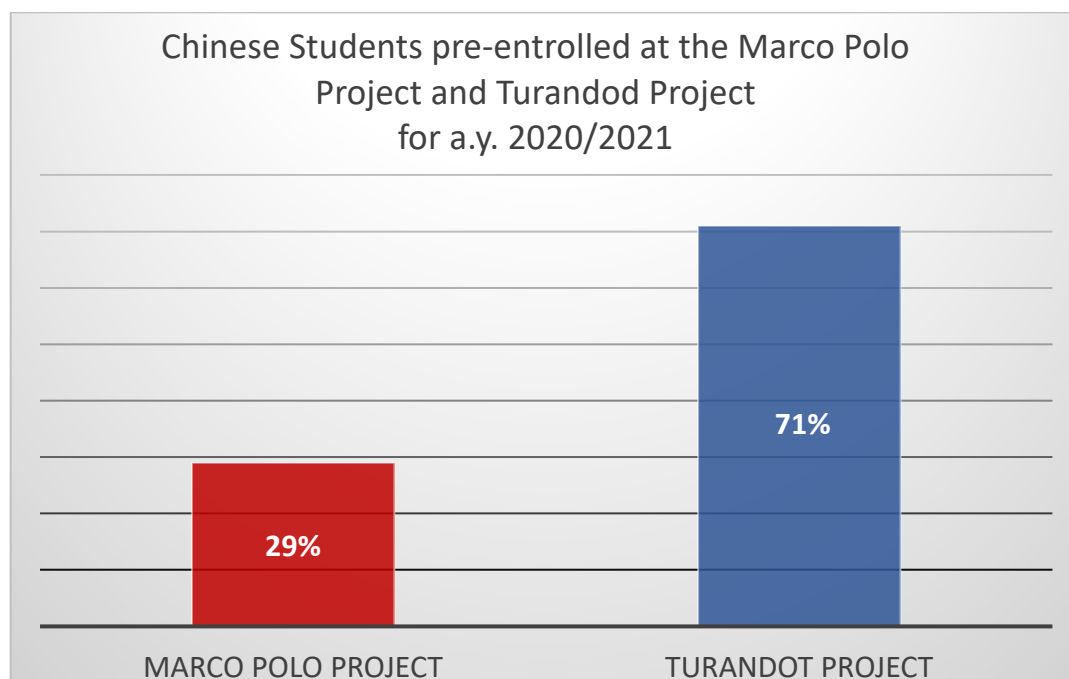
Source: Database Uni-Italia, 2019.

1.3. The admission requirements for Marco Polo and Turandot project

The Chinese students who wish to be admitted to an Italian university course have to follow an established procedure and it begins in China with the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), commonly known as Gaokao (高考) which literally means "high exam". The Chinese educational policy regarding the admission into higher education institution is known as "the Gaokao Examination Policy" and it was launched in 1952 by the People's Republic of China. In late 1977 it ordered the insertion of a national exam in order to "test students' mastery of the subjects taught in high school" (Bai, Chi, and Qian, 2014: 634).

Each year in June, Chinese high school students sit the "high exam" which is divided into two parts: the first part tests the students' preparation and knowledge in three compulsory subjects that are Chinese, Math and a foreign language (mainly English) for a total of 450 points while the second part is a comprehensive subject test depending on three subjects

chosen by the students on the basis of their future interest and studies for a total of 300 points (Muthanna and Sang, 2015: 2).

The score of the test is extremely important for the students because the results of this examination determines the admission to university courses or the exclusion from them. Indeed, the admission to universities is extremely competitive and it is based on meritocracy even if it has been deeply criticized for the cruel competition that the Gaokao creates among students and also because it encourages Chinese students to sacrifice their social life and hobbies in order to dedicate themselves to the preparation for the Gaokao (Muthanna and Sang, 2015: 3). Indeed, the Chinese higher educational system has a pyramidal structure and at the top of this system there are the universities with the highest degree of prestige which aspire to create the future manager class and politicians and, therefore, these institutions set higher admission standards and require higher scores for the admission (Uni-Italia, 2018: 22).

Below these prestigious universities there is a subset made of nine universities, well-known as "C9 League " and sometimes called the "Chinese Ivy League" that was founded in 2009 and modelled on the American Ivy League. It is an official alliance of nine among the most renowned and oldest Chinese universities and they are Tsinghua University, Peking University, Harbin Institute of Technology, University of Science and Technology of China, Fudan University, Zhejiang University, Nanjing University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Xi'an Jiaotong University (Yang and Xie, 2015: 68). The "C9 League" schools offer a high level of preparation for the students who likely will find a respectable job in their desired areas of interest and so, the "C9 League" commits their students to world-class excellence, as well (Nofri, 2015).

The students, instead, who graduate from the universities and institutions which occupy the lower rankings of the university system, unfortunately, can not yearn for prominent work positions (Nofri, 2015).

The Chinese students can enrol in Italian universities and consequently take part in Marco Polo and Turandot projects only if they have passed the Gaokao with a score of at least 400/750, in line with what has been established by the diplomatic missions of Italy in China (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, 2019: 2).

There are also other prerequisites that are fundamental, and they do not concern only administrative matters: the first is the admission to an Italian degree course, the second asks the student to prove the financial means for covering the living expenses in Italy and the last requirement is the language proficiency (Ambroso, 2011: 23). For this reason, the

Italian Universities for Foreigners and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China set some guidelines which establish as the minimum pre-requirements, firstly, the A2[2] language level in Italian for the admission to the project on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Levels and, secondly, the achievement, at the end of the Italian language course attended in Italy, of a language certificate test that will evaluate whether the student has achieved the B1 or B2 language level[3] in Italian (Ambroso, 2011: 24).

Indeed, Italian will be more than essential for the Chinese students who adhere to Marco Polo and Turandot project because Italian will not be only the "survival language" in the country where they have decided to live for a few years, but also the vehicular language for studying the specific contents of the subjects of their university curriculum (Bonvino, 2011).

1.4. The aim of the Marco Polo and Turandot project

The Marco Polo and Turandot project represent a benchmark for the international cooperation, and it is so worthy because it promotes cultural and educational purposes in order to take advantages of studying abroad experience in preparation for becoming qualified worker and, perhaps, part of the manager class of workers in China who will make deals with Italian business partners.

During the opening speech at the Conference organized by Uni-Italia Association in 2018, the Italian Ambassador Ettore Francesco Sequi pronounced praiseworthy words about the fundamental objective that Italy intended to pursue concerning the Marco Polo and

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[2] "Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need". (Common European Framework Reference, 2019)

[3] "B2: Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

B1: Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans". (Common European Framework Reference, 2019)

Turandot project (Uni-Italia, 2018: 2). Sequi affirmed that Italy is a welcoming country where ideas, academic and cultural exchanges, scientific and technological cooperation, and, above all, students are well-received (Uni-Italia, 2018: 2).

From the Chinese point of view, Chinese government wishes to offer their students the opportunity to develop their skills and competence in an international environment in order to become the future citizens, workers and professionals who will be able of creating international partnerships or interacting with different countries in the world with a special purpose of creating commercial and economical bonds aimed to expand the economy of China (Vedovelli, 2011: 2).

This is the reason why Chinese government decided to invest on educational programs aimed at the learning of both the contents of the academic areas of specialization and of the language and cultures of different countries.

For achieving these objectives, it was considered fundamental for students to have experience of living abroad before starting work and this chance has been promoted by an agreement signed by the Italian government on the recognition of foreign academic qualification and degrees (Ambroso, 2011: 21). Indeed, Marco Polo and Turandot project encourages Chinese students not only to enhance the knowledge on a specific area, but it offers them the chance to discover the Italian culture through its history, costumes and traditions, through their immersion in the Italian higher education system in order to get in touch with the hope that they could observe and learn the features that will be, maybe, useful for a future mediation between China and Italy.

From the Italian point of view, as Vedovelli (2011) explained, the main goal of the Marco Polo project is the development and the promotion of the Italian educational system in the world. The Marco Polo project was seen as an advantageous program because it contributed to the creation of the first model of action shared between the universities with the aim to make the Italian university system a point of reference for the other countries in the world (Vedovelli, 2011: 3).

This intergovernmental agreement between the highest levels of the Italian and Chinese authorities is so important because it was the first time that universities had been involved in an international agreement about educational and cultural cooperation and growth (Vedovelli, 2011: 4).

One of the challenges that Italian universities had to take on was the organization and the consequent implementation of the language courses meant to prepare the Chinese students (and we have to mention the fact that the majority of them came in Italy with a

low level of Italian or worse, without having ever learned Italian) for the language certification and for their future studies at the university as well (Vedovelli, 2011: 4). Therefore, to overcome this issue, the Italian Universities for Foreigners took on the responsibility of defining the organization of the preparatory teaching program in preparation for the language certification exam and in relation to the areas of interest and the subjects studied in the university curriculum chosen by the student (Vedovelli, 2011: 4).

Moreover, the "Marco Polo project" was not conceived as a "common" a project of exchange between international students, but the project establishes a meticulous plan of hospitality for the Chinese students and every year Italy welcomes the Chinese students considering them as ordinary students.

1.5. The issues of the Marco Polo and Turandot project

The success of the Marco Polo project is the result of the collaboration of China and Italy and the institutions in charge of the planning and the implementation of such project, but the process of development hasn't been easy and they had to face difficulties and to make efforts in order to pursue the best outcome of the project.

At the very beginning of the project, one of the first issues that the Italian universities had to deal with was the low number of the Chinese students that took part in the program and there was a significant difference between the expected numbers and the numbers of students that came to Italy (Vedovelli, 2011: 4). Some explanations to this phenomenon which prevented the initial achievement of the Marco Polo project were the restrictive immigration laws in Italy, the requisites for the enrolment in the universities and the Italian bureaucracy which slowed the administrative matters (Vedovelli, 2011: 4).

However, the greatest difficulty that the Italian universities had to face was the planning of the preliminary language course since many universities had little specific experience about both the acquisition and the teaching of Italian as an L2 and they tried to manage this problem placing the students of the Marco Polo who had no knowledge of Italian in their language centres without planning a specific course for them (Vedovelli, 2011: 5). Indeed, the universities quickly realized that they need to overcome this initial disorientation and employ all their energy and experience in the Italian teaching in

organizing a language course based on the linguistic needs of the students and, above all, in coherence with their university curriculum (Vedovelli, 2011: 6).

These initial difficulties, however, stimulated positive effects for the launch of the project since the universities understood the real issues that they had to face and then a group of experts in research and in Italian and Chinese teaching started working in synergy to organize well-structured course for the students (Vedovelli, 2011: 6).

Moreover, the intuitions in charge of setting of the guidelines that would regulate the project established the language requisites consistent with the CEFR language levels, but they took the distance between the language levels lightly.

Indeed, the guidelines establish that the students at the end of the language course have to reach either the B1 or B2 level but, there is a remarkable difference of language proficiency between the B1 and B2 language level.

As the CEFR language levels state, the B levels describe the language proficiency of the "independent user" but if we read carefully the indicators which define the descriptions of the competences of the B1 level and B2 level, we can notice that the competences of the B1 level allow the non-native speaker to manage the language only in the everyday academic life (for example, he can asks logistic information or understand communication about timetable and lessons) but he is not able to access the specific contents of the subjects of his curriculum in oral or written form, but these competences are provided for the B2 level (Council of Europe, 2020)

The B2 level is certainly the level that guarantees the success of the studies since the indicators emphasize the ability of arguing in the written and oral production, which is a fundamental ability for studying at the university.

Moreover, there are also two significant abilities which are not mentioned in the guidelines, but they are worthy of note and they are the social interaction and the linguistic awareness. These abilities are important for the speaker because they allow him to correct himself during the communication, adjusting the mistakes avoiding misunderstandings and to check his "output" planning the message using the necessary means (Celentin and Frisan, 2019: 297)

Objectively, B2 level is a desirable level of competence for a student who is going to study at the university, but it is ambitious for pre-enroled non-native speaker students who, sometimes, begin studying Italian in their country only a few months before the beginning their studies in Italy.

Furthermore, the workload that the Chinese students are expected to do in the language course is sometimes too hard for their language level and the expected results are in most cases too ambitious since it is very hard for a beginner who studies an L1 which is very different from his L2 wouldn't be able to reach in a few months the B2 level in the communicative competence and, maybe, he would have difficulties in reaching even just the B1 level (Bonvino, 2011: 35).

However, there is one last matter that is worthy of being analysed and it concerns the integration of the students in their academic curriculum after the months dedicated to the studying of the Italian during the language course. In general, students do not have many problems with the final test at the end of their language course since it is generally based on the vocabulary, grammatical and pragmatic aspects of the language that students have encountered during the lessons and they can pass the exam with an appropriate training.

All these considerations should awaken a meticulous revision of the guidelines of the Marco Polo project because they sometimes imposed unnatural conditions which could prevent the process of acquisition of the language, or worst, discourage the students because, as Rastelli (2011) noticed, it seems that the writers of guidelines did not take account of the fact that the students involved in this project are adults and the brain of an adult can not assimilate and acquire all the notions and concepts that they set up during a language course of only few month.

But the real question is slightly more complex, and it is whether the Chinese students will able to attend an academic curriculum completely held in Italian after only less than a year of Italian language course (Bonvino, 2011: 35).

1.6. Problems and learning needs of Chinese students

As it has been previously mentioned, one of the issues that the institutions involved in the organization of Marco Polo and Turandot project have to face for the successful outcome of the program is the difficulty that Chinese students have in Italian learning before starting their university studies in Italy.

The universities and in particular the teachers who are in charge of managing the Italian courses are aware that planning a language course requires always much time, efforts and resources, moreover, the teachers have to take into account that many factors intervene before and during the course and they have a great impact on the outcome.

Some of these factors can be considered from the very beginning of the organization of the course since they are imposed by higher institutions such as the general guidelines of the program which determine the objectives of the course or the language level that students have to reach by the end of the language course in Italy, while other factors are changeable and unpredictable and they depend on the features and needs of students who take part in the project.

These factors are absolutely important, and a good language teacher should design the language course adapting and modelling the objectives of the course to the needs and the features of his students.

There is a thorough image that perfectly represents the amount of work behind the organization of a language course which is described by Mike Long (2014): he compares language teachers to physicians who, first of all, conduct an "individual diagnosis" which is the equivalent of an analysis of the students' needs and then, they prescribe a "course of treatment", that is the creation of the language course, designed specifically for their "patients", or rather, the students attending the course (Long, 2014: 10).

It is acknowledged that it is not easy for an Italian teacher to design an ItaL2 course for Chinese students, but, on the other side, even Chinese students often face both language and cultural difficulties during the ItaL2 course which sometimes slow down their language learning, or worst, discourage them going on studying and this is the reason why the ItaL2 teaching should keep in consideration the expectations and the different approaches that Chinese students have towards language learning.

The importance of education in China features highly in the Confucian tradition and this is the reason why education in Chinese culture is perceived as important "not only for personal improvement but also for societal development" (Wang, 2006).

Students are expected to "respect the teachers' authority" because they are considered a model both of knowledge and morality and so, students obey them just as they do their parents and there is a beautiful saying in Chinese that displays the strong relationship between students and teacher: "If someone taught you as a teacher for one day, you should respect him as your father for the rest of your life" (Wang, 2006).

In China the teaching of a foreign language is very traditional, and it is generally based on the grammar translation method and on the audio-lingual method, so students are used to learn a foreign language carrying out translations of texts, memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary but they do not give enough attention to oral skills (Consalvo, 2012: 40).

Chinese students are commonly used to a frontal teaching where the teacher stands at the front of the class imparting his deep knowledge to the students (Huang, 2004).

The frontal teaching method is also used frequently in Italy, in particular in the traditional school setting, but extensive researches on this issue proved that this teaching method is not the best method for promoting language learning since it avoids every possibility of interaction between students during the language class and it prevents the development of the students' oral skills in the foreign language.

The difficulties of the students concern not only the difference between the cultures but also the distance from their mother tongue (or L1) to Italian (ItaL2), and so, Italian teachers of the Marco Polo and Turandot project should understand before or at the very beginning of the course what are the learning styles of the typical Chinese tradition in order to choose both the best strategies and the suitable teaching methods and propose them during the course.

Chinese students are also at a disadvantage for the cognitive and relational habits which delay the acquisition of the language, such as the difference between the mental representation of the L2 that they have to build in their brain in comparison with the mental representation of their mother tongue (Rastelli, 2011: 89). It is very common during the initial phases of the language course that students could be in difficulties both inside and outside the class and sometimes they are perceived as passive rote learners, but this is the result of a cultural incomprehension between students and Italian teachers and it depends on different factors such as an inadequate teaching method (Consalvo, 2012: 43).

From the research conducted by Lania and Mastrocesare (2018: 106), it emerges that many Marco Polo and Turandot students do not complete their studies in Italy because of language difficulties: they do not succeed in applying the language skills they have learned during the language course to everyday life, they prefer speaking Chinese with their peers and they have a considerable difficulty in understanding and speaking Italian outside the language class (Lania and Mastrocesare, 2018: 108).

A possible solution to this serious problem could be the creation of awareness in Chinese students about the importance of the development of the oral skills and teach them that during their future university studies in Italy they have not only to improve their receptive abilities, but they have to enhance their productive abilities that are generally neglected or developed very little during language courses.

1.7. From Italbase to Italstudio: the pathway to achieve academic success

Italstudio, which is defined as "lingua dello studio" by Luise (2014: 17), is both the teaching tool and the object of learning.

The issue about this specific language variety and the difficulties which arise from its comprehension emerged in Italy between the 1960s and 1970s from a reflection on the matter about language learning and teaching and it was supported by the new ideas exposed in the "Dieci tesi per una educazione linguistica democratica" by GISCEL published in 1975 (Balboni, 2009: 93-94).

More specifically, a great point of reflection was provided by Bernstein, who analyzed the causes of scholastic failure of children who belonged to working class. He underlined that working-class children mainly used a "restricted code" and, therefore, they had difficulties in achieving scholastic success while middle-class children, who were exposed to an "elaborated code", had fewer difficulties in learning (Bernstein, 2003: 107).

The issue about the knowledge of "lingua dello studio" which was fundamental for learning has become urgent in these last years, in particular, when Italian school has turned into a plurilingual school (Luise, 2014: 17).

The presence of foreign students who do not speak Italian as mother tongue (ItaL1) in Italian classrooms has brought a deep awareness of the difference between the two varieties of Italian, that are Italbase and Italstudio.

While Italbase is the language that speaker acquires through social conversations with native speakers, Italstudio is the formal and academic language studied at school (Grassi and Bulmahn Barker, 2010: 79) which native speakers generally learn in about 12 years. Italstudio is a theoretical language, both oral and written, that relates to distant facts in space and time and it is used by the teachers when they explain in class or it is used to write books and materials that students are supposed to study.

It is a complex language in terms of content, grammar, semantics and structures since it requires the acquisition of a more complex and specialized vocabulary of particular content areas tending to replace common words with their more formal counterparts, the ability to use and interpret a more sophisticated syntax in oral and written modes (D'Annunzio, 2015; Cummins, 2000).

It is a more formal and abstract language and requires a strict logic-grammatical architecture of the sentence which is similar to the style of prose (Luise, 2014: 22).

The distinction between Italstudio and Italbase is a significative matter for students, especially for non-native speakers students who decide to go to the university in Italy because, firstly, they need to acquire this specialized language as soon as possible since it is a fundamental requirement to carry out literacy-related tasks and activities and to gain academic success and qualifications and, secondly, because their academic language proficiency will be constantly accessed both through examinations and tests.

Therefore, a significative consideration that should be raised is the fact that Italstudio is a type of language that is not designated to a scholar or to a specialist, but it is used by a student to build up his learning. This is the reason why it is important that teachers should aware that Italstudio is also a tool which not only conveys specific terms and complex concepts, but it should be a comprehensive tool for students who are in a linguistic and communicative asymmetric condition, as Amoruso and Paternostro (2015: 22) explained, because students have to develop at the same time both contents and cognitive competence. Indeed, Italstudio should teach students linguistic and conceptual techniques aimed at facilitating the learning of technic and scientific notions and developing cognitive and communicative skills (Menegaldo, 2011).

2. Language learning in the museum

2.1. What is out-of-school learning?

In this paragraph, we will give a definition of out-of-school learning by considering a brief history of this concept and as well as its benefits and opportunities that it can provide.

Learning out-of-class has been advocated from the European Union in the last decades for its positive effects on learners' scholastic outcomes (European Commission, 2012: 16).

However, before deeply analysing the definition of learning outside the classroom and how it can be implemented, a reflection about the meaning of "learning" is worthy.

Learning turns out to be a challenging term to define because it is described as the mere acquisition of new knowledge, but, examining this concept more in depth, it consolidates the whole learner's personal identity since it constitutes the "acquisition of skills, the development of judgement and the formation of attitudes and values" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 34).

Learning is the most simple and natural activity that a human being could do since we start learning from the very beginning of our life without even realizing it.

Children begin learning using emotions, feelings and their body as well, and receiving information and stimuli from the surrounding environment, but gradually they start using the intellect to handle more complex information and to develop cognitive skills and consequently people learn to new and more adequate strategies of learning.

Learning does not always mean the acquisition of new concepts or content, but it is a process of relating past experiences to the present, connecting what happens in the present to what has happened in the past (Falk and Dierking, 2000: 61; Silverman, 1995).

Falk and Dierking (2000) give a beautiful explanation of the mechanisms of learning and they affirm that:

> "Learning is a dialogue between the individual and his or her social/cultural and physical environment. Learning is a contextually driven effort to make meaning in order to survive and prosper in the world" (Falk and Dierking, 2000: 136)

From a more scientific point of view, learning depends on the work of the brain, which does not merely absorb new information, but it processes it in a determinate way, as Gallagher explains, making the information meaningful, or better, putting the new content from an unfamiliar to a familiar context, which is the product of personal experience that occurs every day (Gallagher, 1992: 120), and, for this reason, learning is personal product related to the situation in which it occurs.

Considering the fact that learning begins when we start to explore the surrounding environment where we live, many researchers and scholars agree that organizing an educational program or teaching in a natural setting outside the classroom is a good occasion to enhance learning. Indeed, Bialystok (1981: 24) demonstrated that the most efficient situation for language learning occurs outside the classroom in a natural setting where language is not considered as a school subject, but it is used for communication.

The terms "formal learning", "non-formal learning" and "informal learning" have raised a number of debates in the last twenty years in order to try to understand not only the nature of the learning process itself but also to provide a clear definition of these concepts. The concept of "non-formal education" was used for the first time in the '70s by Coombs and Ahmed (1974) when they carried out their study aimed to research practical guidelines that would be useful to overcome the "global educational crisis" in formal education system and to fulfil the desire of promoting more and more non-formal education programs oriented towards rural development (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974: 4). Coombs and Ahmed had the conviction that education could no longer be considered as "a time-bound and place-bound process" limited to school settings or measured by years of exposure, and so, they concluded that education could be equated with learning, "regardless of where, how or when the learning occurs" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974: 8).

They distinguished between three models of education which are informal education, formal education and non-formal education. Coombs & Ahmed (1974: 8) associate formal education to school or other organized institution where learning is organized in a hierarchical structure while informal education is depicted as a lifelong process whereby people acquire their knowledge and skills from daily experience and exposure to the environment within they often spend time. While informal education is unorganized and unsystematic, non-formal education is an organized educational activity which is, however, carried on outside the formal framework of education.

The distinction between formal, informal and non-formal learning was much debated in the literature in the last two decades since clear definitions of these typologies of education were hard to establish.

At the beginning of the 1990s, researchers realized that the most of education research examined features of the formal education but there was a substantial lack of educational research on education in informal environment.

Indeed, Gerber et al. (2001) explain that out-of-school activities are important in the development of learners' knowledge and social skills and, moreover, they have profound effects on students' cognitive and affective aspects but, on the other side, that it is not easy for researchers to acquire information on these informal activities since researchers have difficulties in monitoring such heterogeneous subjects, the types of activities and the learning environment and every learning situations during their daily routine (Gerber, 2001: 569). Gerber argues that it is necessary to analyse the features of informal learning because young learners spend about 85% of their time outside the classroom and it has been proved that the types and frequencies of activities in which learners are engaged during this time impact on their scholastic achievements and on their functioning in society (Gerber, 2001: 569).

However, Gerber et al. (2001) make a distinction between formal learning, which is compulsory and "acquired in the classroom within a systematic educational setting", and informal learning, which take place outside the classroom. According to Gerber et al. (2001), informal learning occurs in institutions for example museums or zoos, in organizations or in everyday situations or, more specifically, they define informal learning as "the sum of activities that comprise the time individuals are not in the formal classroom in the presence of a teacher" (Gerber, 2001: 570).

As we can notice, Gerber et al. don't distinguish from informal learning and non-formal learning and so, these two terms seem to be two overlapping models of education since they both happen out of school, but they are very different.

Gilbert and Priest (1997) give and important contribution to literature, since their research has displayed how formal learning could be implemented also in out-of-class activities, in particular, during museum visits (Gilbert and Priest, 1997: 750).

At this point, the distinction between formal and informal learning couldn't be considered by means of the setting of the leaning and more precise definitions of these models were needed. In order to solve this problem, Eshach illustrates the features of the dimension of out-of-school learning giving a clear and precise distinction between informal learning

and formal learning taking into account the frequency to which learners attend the setting where the learning occurs (Eshach, 2007: 174).

Formal	Non-formal	Informal
Usually at school	At institution out of school	Everywhere
May be repressive	Usually supportive	Supportive
Structured	Structured	Unstructured
Usually prearranged	Usually prearranged	Spontaneous
Motivation is typically more extrinsic	Motivation may be extrinsic but it is typically more intrinsic	Motivation is mainly intrinsic
Compulsory	Usually voluntary	Voluntary
Teacher-led	May be guided or teacher-led	Usually learner-led
Learning is evaluated	Learning is usually not evaluated	Learning is not evaluated
Sequential	Typically non-sequential	Non-sequential

Source: Eshach, 2007: 174.

From a careful analysis of Eshach's table, we can notice how these three types of learning are distinguished taking into account not only the physical environment in which learning occurs but other aspects, for example learner's motivation and interest, social context, the organization of the learning and assessment as well (Paraskeva-Hadjichambi et al, 2020: 214).

Moreover, some features are in common between the models since, for example, in non-formal learning contexts learning can be evaluated and it is even compulsory for all learners, as it generally happens in informal learning (Lord, 2020: 142). In his view, informal learning occurs spontaneously in situations that happen in people's day-to-day routine, thus, the activities are unstructured and the learning is open, more intrinsically motivated and individually lead since it is considered as a "free-choice" learning (Eshach, 2007: 173; Paraskeva-Hadjichambi et al, 2020: 214).

Non-formal learning, instead, occurs in situation, institutions and organizations which are beyond the sphere of formal and informal education, in an planned but at the same time adaptable manner and, thus, the learner's motivation arises from the learner himself (Eshach, 2007: 173; Paraskeva-Hadjichambi et al, 2020: 214).

Moreover, another important distinction is based on the frequency at which places are visited by the learners during their learning. Indeed, informal learning generally occurs in places where people live their daily routine, such as homes, streets, parks and at school during the break times as well, while non-formal learning occurs occasionally when people visit places such as museums, zoos, planetariums (Eshach, 2007: 173).

Indeed, the places which are suitable for organizing a non-formal education are institutions, organizations or situations that are between informal and formal contexts, but, as opposed to informal learning, these experiences are prepared to some extent: people usually participate in structured activities in those institutions, especially if the experience is in the framework of school (Eshach, 2007: 174).

After a long discussion, the European Union set the official definitions for these typologies of learning (European Commission 2012):

> "Formal learning means learning which takes place in an organised and structured environment, specifically dedicated to learning, and typically leads to the award of a qualification, usually in the form of a certificate or a diploma; it includes systems of general education, initial vocational training and higher education".

> "Non-formal learning means learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student- teacher relationships); it may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers; very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT [i.e. Information and Communication Technologies] skills, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources1), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target group or the general public".

> "Informal learning means learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective; examples of learning outcomes acquired through informal learning are skills acquired through life and work experiences, project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work, languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country, ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and through activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child)".

2.1.1. Benefits and implications out-of-school learning

In view of the growing opportunities available to support non-formal learning, in this paragraph we will explore what some of these opportunities are, how they are implemented, the kinds of learning benefits they provide in terms of social interaction as well as a second language education.

In the last century, research has focused on classroom-based learning and scholars have developed methods, created material and trained language teachers in how to exploit the classroom as a source of opportunities for authentic communication, but, at the same time, many limitations of class-based learning have been always acknowledged.

Research displayed that the opportunities available in classroom for improving student's language skills were quite restricted since learners generally have few opportunities to use language because of time limitation, unfavourable class-size and inadequate teaching materials (Richards, 2015: 5). Thus, as Richards (idem: 5) argues, it is now acknowledged that successful second language learning is defined by two important dimensions: what happens inside the classroom and what happens out-of-school since the activities which occur outside the classroom have a great impact on learners' school achievement (see paragraph 2.1.).

Accordingly, while in the past the classroom was seen as a testbed where people should be prepared for out-of-school use of the target language, today it has been proved that out-of-class activities provide many opportunities for learners to extend their proficiency in their second language since such non-formal experiences produce more enjoyable and positive long-lasting memories (Falk, 1983: 141).

One of the greatest peculiarities of out-of-school learning is the fact that it can be implemented in many situations and this is the reason why the analysis of its mechanisms in new fields is a true challenge for research.

If ten or twenty years old non-formal or informal contexts were identified considering the places that were regularly frequented by learners beyond formal contexts, today, technology has developed new virtual places that are frequented by people since they can meet and establish social relations.

Indeed, the use of the Internet and the spread of social networks have facilitated the use of language in out-of-class contexts and it has provided more interactive and multimodal opportunities for authentic language use than the resources that are available in the

classroom because learners can interact using the target language that they are learning with people in almost every part of the world (Richards, 2015: 6).

These new opportunities are, moreover, easily available to young people since they need only a smartphone or a computer and an Internet connection: they can download Apps or enter a chat room or enter a game site and play video games to interact with other language learners or with native speakers in real time (Richards, 2015: 6).

These out-of-class learning activities provide a number of features which promote a positive development of learners' skills.

First of all, learners set up such out-of-class activities for the purpose of language learning or practice it, but, very soon they shift their focus away from language learning to the content of the activity once they are engaged in it (Reinders and Benson, 2017: 8).

Although these activities do not directly promote the development of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, they are however extremely positive for enhancing the learner's language proficiency.

Indeed, out-of-school activities provide more motivation and affective support to learners than the activities that occur in classroom because they lower learners' anxiety and help students to gain greater linguistic self-confidence (Reinders and Benson, 2017: 10; Edwards and Roger, 2015: 16).

Such out-of-class learning opportunities generally provide opportunities for an effective communicative interaction in meaningful contexts and for meaningful purposes which offer comprehensible input and promote learners' output involving students in interactional processes which support their development of second language skills (see paragraph 3.2.).

While class-based learning often makes use of limited types of discourse such as teacher-talk, written texts and videos, learners in out-of-school activities can be more easily exposed to authentic input, for example, during a face-to-face conversation with native speakers or entering a chat room, or, moreover, they can encounter multimodal input for example playing video games, since, very often players encounter different kinds of texts such as dialogues between game characters and subtitles delivered in different languages.

In conclusion, we can affirm that out-of-schools activities offer a wider range of advantages for second language acquisition than the opportunities that are generally available in the classroom since learners have the chance to develop pragmatic competence and improve their level of fluency and, moreover, out-of-school learning

promotes lifelong learning, which was promoted by UNESCO and then, enhanced by a number of European policies.

2.2. Museums' educational role

If you think of museums as detached "temples of culture" where contents are transmitted through dusty labels or explained by the boring voice of a guide, nothing could be more wrong.

In recent years, the role of museums has changed radically since museums have reinvented themselves through a process of development and renewal which allowed them to add new value to their traditional roles through the implementation of creative programs.

In this way, museums and galleries have proved to be the ideal places for education for all people, regardless of their educational background and age, where children and adults can learn with motivation and without feeling that they are being taught.

Museums have embraced and implemented all of these innovative principles and more without forgetting that they have the responsibility to pass down the traditional values of their culture, the knowledge of the past respecting the ethical issues of the society and create awareness on them through learning.

Moreover, museums have an important social function, as it is written in the ICOM Strategic plan 2016-2022 (2016), they have a deep effect on the local identity not only because they represent a place of discussion and exchange but also because they "contribute to the reputation and standing of a city or country" (ICOM, 2016: 5).

Indeed, museums have found new strategies and methods of communicating with their audience and these innovations seem to have a positive impact on people's lives, and on their academic or professional development.

In this sense, they provide an excellent opportunity for lifelong development which is promoted by European educational institution (Demel, 2005: 18).

Even though museums have renewed and redefined their objectives in the last decades, their function as educational institution has never changed maintaining a long-lasting collaboration with UNESCO.

2.3. Learning at the museum

Museums and galleries, indeed, have an unimaginable potential since they offer opportunities to people for increasing their knowledge and experience and, moreover, they promote and enable lifelong learning and enjoyment.

It is not easy to understand the methodology that people generally use for learning during a museum visit and the reasons are quite clear, because, first of all, the amount of time that visitors spend in museum is not so long to be easily monitored and the modality of the visit changes frequently since visitors can visit the museum in small groups or individually.

The development of the educational role of museum in Italy has been supported through projects and funds offered by banking foundations, which are essential partners for cultural promotions, or provided by European organizations such as the Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO), which foster museums' cultural and educational projects (Europa.eu, 2018; Museo in.forma, 2014).

Hooper-Greenhill argues that it is not easy to describes the characteristics of learning in museum because it can't be compared to the education that occurs in schools or in other formal contexts since the learning experience in museums is conditioned by entertainment and, this is the reason why she uses the term "edutainment" to conceptualise the features of the learning experience within a museum (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 33).

The term "edutainment" could sound quite unusual since it brings together the concept of "education" and "entertainment", while, by implication, they are at the exact opposite and, moreover, the idea of education is rarely associated to the idea of amusement and the bond between these two so different factors is generally more easy to realize in a non-formal contexts such as in museums than at schools or in other formal contexts.

Indeed, entertainment, in this context, is considerate as an efficient educational strategy which promotes and enhances education since "edutainment" allows museum to turn into an "unorthodox classroom" where cultural contents can be taught in a stimulating way and where there is a special attention to how learning can be facilitated during a pleasant and useful experience for visitors.

More specifically, the enjoyable experience in a museum setting represents also an efficient method for language learning where students have the opportunity of expanding their language skills beyond the confines of the conventional classroom.

Nevertheless, this issue has arisen a dispute among the academic community (see paragraph 2.4.) because some of the researchers considered "edutainment" as an opportunity for learning (Gardner, 2011; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Rennie and McClafferty, 1996) while others criticize it (Shortland, 1987; Rennie and McClafferty, 1996; Ansbacher, 1998; Griffin and Symington, 1997)

Furthermore, the importance of pleasure in learning and in language learning is strongly supported by Balboni (2008), who argues that the paradigm "duty-need-pleasure" sustains the motivation of pursuing learning, in particular, foreign language learning, so, enjoyment and pleasure not only can be considerate as an integral part of learning but it is recognised that learners learn better if they are motivated through pleasure.

Indeed, in museums visitors can encounter stimuli from objects or from the surrounding environment which can raise positive (or negative) feelings and promote learning outcomes.

2.4. Theories and implications of museum's learning

Having recognized the educational role of museum, researchers begun to examine novel or situated teaching models in order to delineate the best approach for promoting learning and also language learning.

As it has been proved, it is also fundamental to choose and implement an effective learning model during the museum visit because, on one hand it helps visitors to notice the input that museums offer, and, on the other hand, it encourages and enhances the development of visitors' skills and this aspect is extremely relevant for this research.

Hooper-Greenhill (2007: 4) clarifies that learning in museums and galleries is very different from the learning that generally occurs at schools or in other sites where formal learning occurs, since museums are places that are rich of inputs and they arouse curiosity or inspire new ideas in visitors. Hooper-Greenhill describes museum learning in this way:

> "Museum-based learning is physical, bodily engaged: movement is inevitable, and the nature, pace and range of this bodily movement influences the style of learning different view of a specific matter; they have no formal systems of assessment and no prescribed timetables for learning.

Learning in museums is potentially more open-ended, more individually directed, more unpredictable and more susceptible to multiple diverse responses than in sites of formal education, where what is taught is directed by externally established standards.

This is a dynamic moment in museum and gallery education, at a time of rapid social and cultural change, when many of the old signposts for thought and action have been removed, and social and cultural landscapes are being remapped and rearranged" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 4-5).

From this accurate and brilliant definition, museums are depicted as places where visitors can engage their entire bodies for learning: they use their senses, feelings and creativity in a holistic, immersive and amusing experience. Therefore, visitors not only have the chance of living new experiences but also, they have to opportunity of learning through these experiences, and so, this is the evidence that museums, galleries and other cultural organizations are precious resources and, moreover, they offer an object-based experience and visitors can develop their skills through experimental learning.

The relevance of the experimental learning has been theorized by David Kolb, who, gathering the theories of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, developed his model of experimental learning based on the idea that experience influences the entire learning process, which was seen as:

"The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming the experience " (Kolb, 2014: 49)

Experimental leaning is seen as an extremely useful method to promote the development of visitors' skills and knowledge since it incorporates concrete experience with more abstract concepts (Kolb, 2014: 4).

Moreover, following this model, visitors at the museum have the opportunity to use their emotions and creativity playing a prominent and active role during the visit and so, this process guarantees visitors a greater gratification in participating actively in the visit since they realize that they are able to learn as they would live a real-world situation.

More specifically, Hooper-Greenhill (1994: 49) argues that there are different learning approaches that could be applied during a museum visit and they can generally be gathered into two groups: simple models of communication and complex models of

communication. Simple models of communication are based on behaviourist theories of learning where visitors play a passive role since they receive cultural content during the visit through the display of the exhibitions and through museum objects, while, complex models of communication are based on the idea that the visitor plays a central role during the museum experience. Moreover, in complex models of communication the visitor has the possibility to construct meaning drawing on his knowledge and experience and to express himself (Clarke, 2013: 49-50). Furthermore, these particular social spaces heighten very often a sense of conviviality which promotes meaningful communication among visitors, since, as Golding states (2009: 166), "aural and tactile encounters seem to open the participants to deeper emotional engagement" and so, all these factors prove that museums are the institutional structure which offer not only useful changes for speaking but also for promoting natural language acquisition and consequently enrich speaking skills.

In the literature about non-formal learning, Falk and Dierking (2016) display one of the major models which, as Clarke describes, it has served as a basis of the theoretical framework of learning in museums (Clarke, 2013: 50).

Falk and Dierking made a relevant contribution to literature on museum learning since they decided to try to understand museums from the perspective of visitors and so, they developed a "framework for making sense of both the common strands and the unique complexities of the museum experience, the similarities and differences among museums and among visitors" that they called the Interactive Experience Model (Falk and Dierking, 2016). According to this multidimensional approach, the experience that visitors live at the museum is influenced by three main contexts: the personal context, the social context and the physical context, which are defined as "the windows through which we can view the visitors' perspective" (Falk and Dierking, 2016).

Although Falk and Dierking's model is recognized as a benchmark of museum learning, it lacks of a fundamental aspect, as Eshach (2007) argues.

Eshach (2007: 181) quotes a research conducted by Lucas (2000) where he explains how the experience at the museum for students does not begin with the visit itself but it should be included in a program with specific aims planned and designed by the school teacher, so, learning is not only limited to the visit at the museum but it starts previously in class. Eshach (2007: 182), indeed, referring to the scientific modalities of learning, which is based on the learner's previous knowledge, acknowledges that there is the need to manage another crucial factor that influences learning itself during the museum visit, that is

novelty. He displays Orion's (1993) opinion about the importance of students' preparation in class before the museum visit in support of his thesis:

> ''Students should be prepared for the field trip. The more familiar they are with their assignment (cognitive preparation), with the area of the field trip (geographical preparation) and the kind of event in which they will participate (psychological preparation), the more productive the field trip will be for them'' (Orion, 1993: 326).

Eshach argues that novelty, or the unknown or unfamiliar content, impacts significantly on students during their experience at the museum because it conditions both their cognitive and affective learning outcomes. In this sense, it is very important that teachers monitor their students' behaviour and knowledge before the museum experience because, if the topics treated during the visit are too difficult or unknown to them, they might develop anxiety and, consequentially, this prevents the good outcome of the museum experience. This is the reason why teachers should prepare previously the ground for their students' learning during his lessons in class before the visit.

In conclusion, many models of museum's learning have been described and analysed in depth highlighting their pros and cons, but, what teachers should remember when they decide to organize a museum visit is, quoting Eshach (2007: 181), "a good model cannot ignore the before and after visit activities".

2.5. Benefits and challenges of language learning in museum

Learning in museums and art galleries is a positive, holistic and immersive experience which promotes and enhances the development of important cognitive skills and conveys important cultural content. The peculiarity of museums or other cultural institutions is the fact that the entire environment, its features and the objects that they display stimulate the visitors' curiosity and their desire to know. More specifically, museums environment with its objects can generate a sense of enthusiasm and enhance learners' motivation to learn which is generally neglected in classroom.

As Hooper-Greenhill argues, museums deserve to be more highly celebrated and promoted since they not only offer effective learning experiences that positively influence the visitors' leaning process but they also allow the integration of learners' mind,

emotions and body in a so special way that only few other institutions for learning can do (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 14).

Even Gardner has an extremely positive consideration of the benefits that museums can offer to visitors since, as he sustains, museums have retained "the potential to engage students, to teach them, to stimulate their understanding, and, most important, to help them assume responsibility for their own future learning (Gardner, 2011: 217).

Moreover, museum is the perfect place where education is in a close relationship with entertainment and this combination has a positive and advantageous outcome in leaning as it has been proved by research in this field (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 33; Rennie and McClafferty, 1996: 55) where the dimension of entertainment is seen as more successful than the educational one. Indeed, learning at the museum is more satisfying than learning in classroom because, first of all, learning becomes a holistic process with successful results which impact on the visitors' cultural and professional development (Demel, 2005: 20) and, moreover, it offers to the learner a comprehensible input (see paragraph 3.2.).

In classroom the input is generally produced by the teacher through his oral explanation, reading a text or observing pictures which try to imitate or describe the reality and, although the teacher tries to provide a comprehensible input for their students, the concept remains abstract and sometimes difficult to understand.

At the museum, instead, students can observe museum objects and learn through them since they are "realia" and so, the concept these objects convey becomes easier to understand since it is real and tangible.

Krashen considered realia as requirements for an optimal comprehensible input since they provide a non-linguistic mean and offer an important support in second language acquisition as well (Krashen, 1982: 66).

Hooper-Greenhill (1994: 148) adds that museums offer another relevant benefit that is the possibility of the implementation of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences which is successful at increasing the communicative potential of museums.

Indeed, the traditional (and outdated) school system assumes that students learn in the same way and more often a universal and standardized measure are used to test their learning and, moreover, the educational system uses improper modalities to promote learning.

As Gardner (2011: 13) amply demonstrated, students learn in different ways and those students who exhibit the traditional or scholastic style of leaning is a minority, so teachers

should intervene in order to provide learners suitable and adequate modalities for acquiring knowledge but, unfortunately, it is not always possible because classroom offers limited resources.

Nevertheless, the resources lacking in classroom can be supplied by museums, in particular during a well-planned visit where students are involved in a space and where they can put on practice what they have previously learned from the theory or they can learn from the context itself. During the visit, the student can move within this space acting as an explorer pushed by his curiosity and his need to share his emotions, hypotheses, discoveries or details that no others have noticed with his peers because, according to Rennie and McClafferty (1996), visitors in museums are involved with spatial and kinaesthetic experience.

This is also a perfect occasion for developing the learners' linguistic intelligence which involves the ability to learn a language and to use it to accomplish an objective.

This aspect is extremely positive for developing the student's language abilities, in particular the oral skills since he has not only the mere opportunity to establish a relationship with his peers expressing his thoughts and sharing his ideas but he has the occasion to learn himself, to test his own limits and, maybe, to discover new abilities that he ignored before. This type of experience stimulates the logic of visitors because they make hypothesis or make in relation some aspects of the language or contents that it is unlikely possible in classroom.

As regards the development of language abilities, it is also an effective moment for developing the receptive skills listening the explanation of the museum guide. Every student is generally used to listen to the teacher-talk in classroom during the lesson, even if he is not very engaged while, during a museum visit students are not "forced" to listen to their teacher but very often they are interested in knowing something more about the topic which could be so interesting to push students to ask questions or make hypotheses and starting an interaction.

Another aspect that researchers have widely studied is the quality of the of talk produced by visitors during the museum visits.

Indeed, in a recent doctoral study of adult ESOL in an art museum by Gill (2007), she examines the nature of conversational interaction between adult English learners during art museum visits. Gill argues that during museum visits learners are engaged in an authentic communication; the reduction of student interlocutors and the lowering of the

student-teacher ratios increase the amount of talk and develop the learners' communicative competence (Clarke, 2013: 36; Mehan, 1979: 5).

Moreover, Gill noticed that when students are in a museum setting, they produce more lexically dense and more grammatical complex utterances. Gill's studies highlight the benefits of the social interaction outside the language classroom; she depicts museums as adequate spaces within which conversational interaction in the target language occurs and, moreover, she demonstrates that a non-formal context promotes a natural language learning.

Although the advantageous benefits that museum learning could offer, a number of researchers advanced some doubt and issues dealing with this kind of learning experience. The first issue examines the effectiveness of the bond between education and entertainment and Shortland (1987: 213) expressed a criticism against this learning modality since he believes that education loses his potential when it is joined to entertainment because this latter factor makes education seem not be worth taking seriously.

Rennie and McClafferty (1996) agree with Shortland stating that education and entertainment can't coexist because people in such situation give priority to entertainment over education (Rennie and McClafferty, 1996: 85).

More precisely, Ansbacher (1998) and Griffin and Symington (1997) reflect on the outcomes of museum learning and how very often they don't reflect the teachers' initial expectations.

In conclusion, it is acknowledged that learning in a non-formal context, in particular at the museum, is not always successful because it is influenced by so many factors that sometimes they can't be monitored.

However, these educational experiences have the great potential to facilitate students' learning, especially language learning because on one hand, they foster learners' motivation, curiosity and will to discover more and, on the other hand, museum objects, details and their history give learners the possibility to test their language outcomes without fearing of being judged or evaluated for their performance.

In other words, museums are effective laboratories within students can put into play their acquired abilities and develop others, and all these things are possible because "museums and galleries have proved to be exciting socio-cultural laboratories for education, communication, cultural exchange and social reintegration" (Demel, 2005: 20).

3. CLIL between the classroom and the museum

3.1. What is CLIL and why talking about it in the context of Italian L2

The issue of language learning has gradually gained importance in Europe since the establishment of the European Union and, as stated by the European Commission, multilingualism, or better, the promotion of linguistic diversity, has always been a fundamental aspect of European identity.

From the 1950s, the discussion on economic unity included also an avant-garde European language policy which recognized the necessity to create a "plurilingual entity" in Europe and it was clear that the educational systems would need to make efforts to provide language education for young generations (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010: 42).

From the 1970s onwards, important European organizations such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission listed language-learning objectives and issued many directives, laws and reforms to promote language teaching and learning outside the traditional school systems and to increase language awareness in the European Union.

Properly in this context, several initiatives have been launched by the European Council in order to "explore alternative paths in languages education" and also European funds were invested in research projects which led to the development of new educational solutions to enhance plurilingual competence among all European citizens (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010: 43).

One of the first pieces of legislation regarding the promotion of innovative language teaching methods is the Resolution of the European Council of 1995 which refers to "the teaching of classes in a foreign language for disciplines other than languages, providing bilingual teaching" (Council Resolution, 1995: 3).

Moreover, in the same year, the European Commission states in the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) that:

> "Everyone, irrespective of training and education routes chosen, [should] be able to acquire and keep up their ability to communicate in at least two [European] Community languages in addition to their mother tongue" (European Commission, 1995: 47).

The diversity of languages, the need for communication and the increase of contact between countries increased the need for communicative skills in a second or third language and this is the reason why the European Union encouraged to create all EU citizens proficient in three European languages, thus, innovative language learning methods which would improve the quality of language education were needed.

From the idea of creating a multilingual Europe, CLIL featured in a series of declarations (European Commission, 1995, 2003) where it was described as "a major contribution to make to the Union's language learning goals" (European Commission, 2003: 8) and, from this moment, CLIL became the main approach in European bilingual education.

According to Marsh (2012), indeed, "the European launch of CLIL" was driven by both political and educational purposes.

The political cause was based on the desire to promote mobility across the European Union which required "higher levels of language competence" while the educational driver, which was influenced by bilingual initiatives such as the early immersion experiments conducted in Canada, was designed to "adapt existing language teaching approaches so as to provide a wide range of students with higher levels of competence" (Marsh, 2012: 1).

In the last decades, CLIL has received considerable attention all around European countries and its implementation has become the cornerstone of language education change since it has transformed the traditional foreign language teaching into an innovative, challenging and attractive approach.

Today, it is not easy to provide a straightforward definition of CLIL since this methodology is based on multifaceted perspectives and it is found at all levels of education from primary through to adult and higher education.

During the European Centre for Modern Languages Workshop in Graz, Marsh (2005) and his team members described CLIL as a generic "umbrella" term which refers to "diverse methodologies which lead to dual-focused education where attention is given both to topic and language of instruction" (Marsh, 2005: 5).

Coyle (2007) in his academic article defined CLIL as an "integrated approach where both language and content are conceptualized on a continuum without an implied preference for either" (Coyle, 2007: 545).

However, going beyond these essential definitions of this approach, what is the meaning for "CLIL"?

The acronym CLIL stands for "Content and Language Integrated Learning" and it indicates the teaching and learning of curricular content through the medium of a foreign language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011: 183) and it fully embraces the theory that foreign or second languages are best learned by focussing on the content which is transmitted through language rather than its form and structure.

CLIL is an approach based on language acquisition rather than on enforced learning where students use and learn the target language in a more meaningful and authentic context because they use the target language as a vehicle for learning the subject matter and as an instrument to convey meaning and, consequently, they develop more easily their fluency in speaking (San Isidro, 2018).

> "CLIL is the platform for an innovative methodological approach of far broader scope than language teaching. Accordingly, its advocates stress how it seeks to develop proficiency in both the non-language subject and the language in which this is taught, attaching the same importance to each. Furthermore, achieving this twofold aim calls for the development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language. This implies a more integrated approach to both teaching and learning, requiring that teachers should devote special thought not just to how languages should be taught, but to the educational process in general (Eurydice, 2006: 7)

As it is highlighted in Eurydice, the main feature of CLIL consists in the integration of teaching and learning of both language and curricular content which have equal attention during the entire learning process since the language is integrated into the broad curriculum. As mentioned in Eurydice (2006: 22), in addition to the official aims associated with the general concept of CLIL, there are further objectives that the European countries wish to reach through the implementation of CLIL:

- preparing pupils for life in a more internationalised society and offering them better job prospects on the labour market (socio-economic objectives);
- conveying to pupils' values of tolerance and respect vis-à-vis other cultures, through use of the CLIL target language (socio-cultural objectives);
- enabling pupils to develop:
  - language skills which emphasise effective communication, motivating pupils to learn

- languages by using them for real practical purposes (linguistic objectives);
- subject-related knowledge and learning ability, stimulating the assimilation of subject matter by means of a different and innovative approach (educational objectives).

3.2. Planning for CLIL: at school and at the museum

CLIL offers a new teaching and learning environment and so teachers who intend to work through this kind of educational program should be prepared to face a new challenge. While the definition of "bilingual education" highlights the educational dimension of an educational system which uses two vehicular languages without focussing the attention on the methodology of the educational approach, CLIL guarantees a double and integrated learning: the language is taught through the content and the content is learned through the language (Coonan, 2009: 23).

The research conducted in the '80s on the French immersion programs in Canada (Swain, 1985) displayed that "immerging" students in a context where the second or the foreign language is spoken do not automatically help them to develop their linguistic competence in their second language (L2) or foreign language (FL).

Swain (1985: 252) argues that the efforts put into language teaching in traditional immersion education and bilingual education programs aimed at the development of the learners' oral skills, were not always reflected in the results achieved and so, it has been proved that new and more efficient methodological and educational strategies are required to enhance the learners' language competence.

The success of CLIL, indeed, lies in its theoretical framework. Indeed, in a CLIL classroom language is improved in real-life situation which increase learners' motivation and, thus, they are motivated to acquire language to communicate.

CLIL has been carefully studied in order to create a suitable approach which could reach the ambitious goals set by the European Union which encourage European citizens to become proficient in at least two other European languages in addition to their mother tongue (European Commission, 1995: 47).

As the research conducted in French immersion programs in Canada has displayed, second language acquisition is not automatic, and this is the reason why CLIL has been developed to supply what missed such language immersion programs.

CLIL is so peculiar because it joins two of the main factors which promote the language acquisition process that are the comprehensible input and the comprehensible output.

The concept of the comprehensible input is one of the pillars at the base of Krashen's Comprehension Hypothesis Model of L2 Learning and it explains how people acquire spoken fluency "not by practicing talking but by understanding input, by listening and reading" (Krashen, 1982: 60) that is by understanding a message or by receiving a comprehensible input. This concept is significative in planning and then in the implementation of a CLIL curriculum because it arouses the awareness of the mechanisms whereby people both learn subject content and acquire the second or foreign language.

Balboni (2008) explains that when a person receives a comprehensible input, he receives what Bruner calls "Language Acquisition Support System" which operates activating the Language Acquisition Device (LAD)[4] and so, the acquisition is realized. (Balboni, 2008: 34). However, the acquisition is not independent because it occurs only if some conditions are fully realized and the first of these factors which allows the comprehension of the input contains the structure $i + 1$.

> "The input hypothesis makes the following claim: a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i to stage $i + 1$ is that the acquirer understand input that contains $i + 1$, where "understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message.
>
> We acquire, in other words, only when we understand language that contains structure that is "a little beyond" where we are now. How is this possible? How can we understand language that contains structures that we have not yet acquired?
>
> The answer to this apparent paradox is that we use more than our linguistic competence to help us understand. We also use context, our knowledge of the world, our extra-linguistic information to help us understand language directed at us" (Krashen, 1982: 21).

Balboni (2008: 34) defines the order $i + 1$ as the Krashen's application of Vygotskij's "zone of proximal development" which is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential

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[4] The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) was theorized by Chomsky to explain how people learn a language.

development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

Krashen, moreover, claims that teaching methods which depend on comprehensible input, such as the Natural Approach are superior and, consequently, he considers immersion programs successful since they provide the learner with large quantities of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982: 30).

As regards the role of output, Krashen (1982: 61) does not give much importance to it since he considers an output as the result of acquired competence of which the input is directly responsible.

Instead, the relevance of comprehensible output has been pointed out by Swain (1985: 236), who was involved in a number of immersion programs in Canada for English native-speaker children who learned French as a second language.

In these programs, children were exposed to a rich source of comprehensible input since they received the major part of their education through the second language.

However, from the analysis of the children's proficiency level revealed that many learners had problems in speaking and writing the target language (Swain and Lapkin, 1995: 372).

Drawing on Krashen's comprehensible input theory, Swain (1985: 252) affirms that, although comprehensible input is essential in language acquisition, it is not sufficient for the mastery of a language. She argues that language acquisition occurs when the speaker, attempting to communicate, fails to do so and then he tries to adjust his output to make it more comprehensible to his conversational partner and, in other words, language learning occurs when the speaker produces the target language (both in written and oral form).

> "It was a suggested, however, that these sorts of exchanges, although a prerequisite to acquisition, are not themselves the source of acquisition derived from comprehensible input. Rather they are the source of acquisition derived from comprehensible output: output that extends the linguistic repertoire of the learner as he or she attempts to create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired. Comprehensible output, it was argued, is a necessary mechanism of acquisition independent of the role of comprehensible input. Its role is, at minimum, to provide opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use, to test out hypotheses about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it" (Swain, 1985: 252).

In her Output Hypothesis Swain claims that the learner's production is essential to language acquisition since it forces him to notice the gaps in his competence and so, it makes the learner aware of his mistakes and helps him to internalize the new structures (Piske and Young-Scholten, 2008: 266). Indeed, as Swain argues, when the learner produces the output, he processes the language more deeply because he makes a greater mental effort rather than being exposed to input.

More specifically, Swain explains that output is so important because it facilitates L2 or FL acquisition since it promotes noticing, enhances fluency, facilitates the generation of hypothesis and allows the learners to reflect on the form of the language.

Furthermore, research findings indicate that the implementation of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in a language class are insufficient and so, it is necessary to promote the interaction between learners in order to "push learners beyond communicatively effective language towards target like second language ability" (Doughty and Williams, 1998: 2).

In light of this theoretical background, it is evident that CLIL has been designed for the necessity to create a new teaching methodology which could, on one hand, create a language program in line with the European aspirations to educate their citizens to a plurilingual context and, on the other hand, foster awareness of community languages (European Commission, 1995: 41).

More specifically, CLIL intends to build a bridge between the traditional foreign language learning, which mainly focuses on theory and a more communicative approach, which is generally focused on practice. Indeed, CLIL tends to amplify the conditions of education and to reach new expressive possibilities which strengthen both linguistic competence and subject knowledge and it can be implemented in an authentic setting (Serragiotto, 2014: 55).

This methodology is so unique and successful because it offers to learners more opportunities beyond the traditional curriculum because it asks learners to carry out a "double" cognitive effort learning new content through a new language that leads to the "strengthening of the intellectual and analytical abilities of the learner to make meaning and to process content more deeply" (Menegale, 2017: 18). Indeed, during a CLIL lesson, students use the foreign language they study as an instrument of learning other school subjects such as Maths, History or Geography and at the same time they develop their language skills in a fast and well-established way.

One of the most remarkable aspects that emerges from CLIL principles pointed out by Savignon (2004) is her reflection on the relevance of learning a foreign language using it as it occurs in a natural situation where language is "a tool for communication" which the speaker needs to become competent to interact with someone "in terms of genre, style and correctness".

Recent developments in the field of language teaching have aroused interest in the resources that museums can offer and how a museum could allow the integration of school-subjects' contents and the teaching of foreign language in a natural setting. More specifically, Coyle (2010: 85) argues that learners can develop their communicative skills in an authentic setting promoting meaningful interaction between peers and teacher using a vehicular language and the best place where people have the possibility to develop social interaction satisfying their learning needs is the museum.

A growing body of literature has examined the educational potential of museums, in particular, as museum is a suitable place for developing visitors' foreign language skills, but, there is a general lack of research in analyzing the specific benefits which this non-formal context offer to develop the visitors' productive abilities and, more precisely, the oral skills.

The best way to carry out such analysis is to consider the theoretical framework which describes the CLIL methodology and to point out the potentials which could be suitable for the increase of museum visitors' oral skills. As Meyer (2010: 12) argues, despite the evident potential of CLIL, there are limited methodological resources and practical guidance which enables teachers to plan a CLIL curriculum and one of the most known frameworks is the 4Cs-Framework developed by Coyle (2010: 127).

This theoretical and methodological foundation for planning CLIL is built on four principles, namely: content, cognition, communication and culture.

Although the well demonstrated efficacy of Coyle's 4Cs Framework, Meyer (2010: 12) claimed that some "unresolved issues in CLIL classrooms" had emerged from Dalton-Puffer's studies where she displayed how the productive language skills, in particular oral skill, was not enhanced in many CLIL classrooms.

Meyer explained that CLIL does not automatically lead to successful teaching and learning and teachers need tools and templates to help them plan their CLIL lessons.

From the attempt to create a new paradigm of teaching and learning which could integrate the limitations emerged from the 4C Framework, Meyer developed a new model which was based on the same principles of Coyle's framework, that is the CLIL-Pyramid.

The CLIL-Pyramid has been defined by Meyer as "a systematical, tried and tested sequence for planning CLIL units and materials, starting with topic selection and ending with a review of key content and language elements that we have come to call the CLIL workout" (Meyer, 2010: 23).
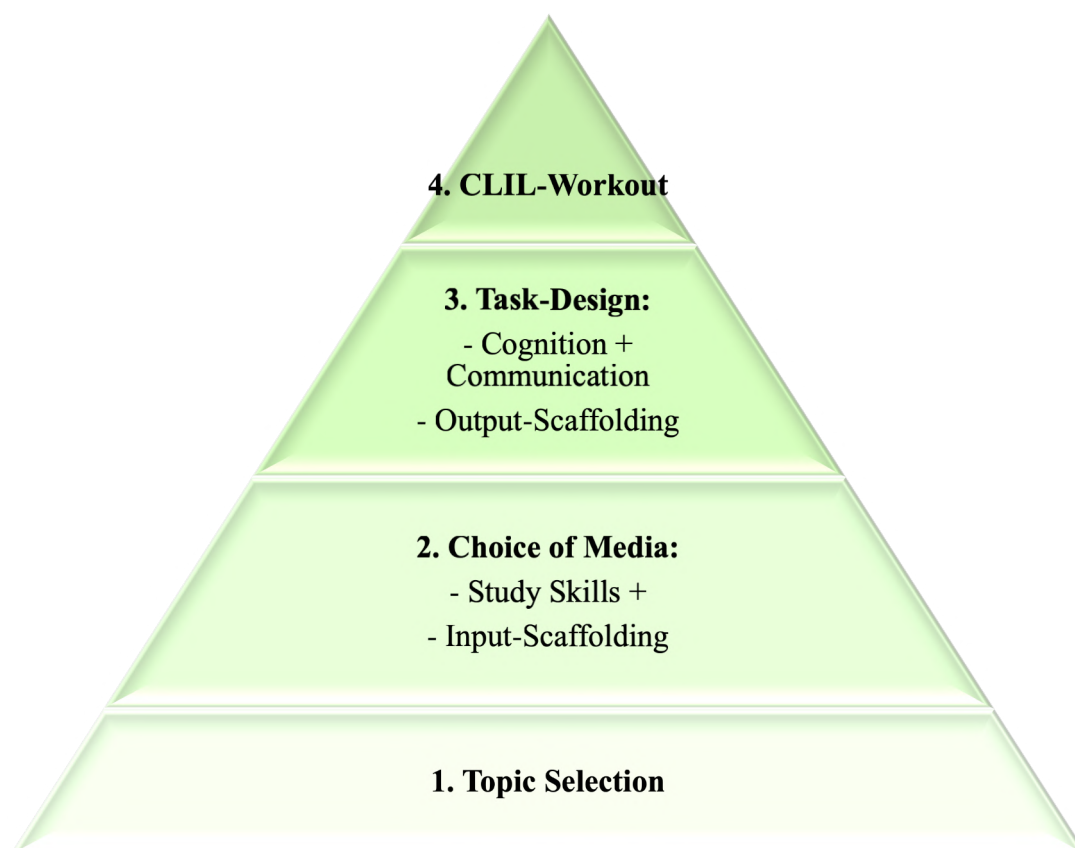
Source: Working with the CLIL-Pyramid. Meyer, 2010: The CLIL Pyramid.

The CLIL Pyramid model is worthy of attention because it offers the possibility to integrate the benefits of this kind of planning to the benefits of museum, in particular, as regards the development of learners' oral skills, since it is the focus of this study research, but, this purpose can be achieved through a careful planning and an analysis in order to obtain the best outcome.

After a careful planning of the content and the specific needs that students are going to be developed, according to CLIL Pyramid, the learners are expected to be exposed to multimodal input which activates various language skills since accommodate different learning styles.

In museums students get in touch with many multimodal and multisensorial objects, the artworks, and these special kind of "visual texts" offer students a number of inputs, since students can touch, smell and move closer to them. Indeed, the objects of art collection, the information that is written on the labels, the sounds, smells and the surrounding environment that visitors encounter during the museum visit are absolutely important because they are all inputs which contribute to foster the learner's language and content learning.

More precisely, Meyer recognized multimodal input in L2 as a resource for learners to develop their study skills and as an opportunity because it respects the individual needs of learners' learning styles and their multiple intelligences which are described by Gardner.

However, it is well known that L2 acquisition depends on input, as hypnotized by Krashen but, very often students need ample support by their language teachers to activate their cognitive processes and turn the input received into intake, and so, they need scaffolding. The language teacher can sustain a student in his cognitive and linguistic progression through teaching strategies based on scaffolding, a term used to describe the opportunity offered by the teacher to sustain the student to develop his language skills and as the student learns and become autonomous in learning, this "scaffold" is gradually reduced until it is removed (Meyer, 2010: 15). This technique is absolutely useful during the museum visit when the teacher realizes that his students have conceptual or language difficulties, maybe, in adding a comment, asking a question to the guide of the museum or, more simply, speaking to a peer. In this case, the teacher generally helps his student evoking the knowledge that he should already know and so the student has the chance to enhance his metacognition. Furthermore, scaffolding is an extremely useful strategy because it allows the transition from *Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills* (BICS) to *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP), that is the competence concerning cognitive and linguistic abilities that are required for studying such as hypnotizing, interpreting, comparing, judging.

However, scaffolding is so important and should be promoted during a CLIL lesson because, not only it allows students to understand the content and language of input (input-scaffolding) but it also supports the students' language production (pushed output) by "providing phrases, subject-specific vocabulary and collocations needed to complete assignments" (Meyer, 2010: 15). Indeed, the CLIL-Pyramid gives much importance even to output, since Meyer shares Swain's ideas about the benefits on the L2 that output can

offer to learners because "learners need to be pushed to make use of their resources; […] they need to reflect on their output and consider ways of modifying it to enhance comprehension, appropriateness and accuracy" (Swain, 1993: 160).

Nevertheless, after having recognized the importance of output production, there is still an issue since, as Dalton-Puffer (2007) studies display, students in CLIL classrooms rarely participate during the lessons because they are not topic experts, but they have the chance to participate in a didactic discourse whose whole goal is to develop their topic knowledge rather than presuppose it (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 294). This is the reason why, once again, the museum could be considered a perfect setting to promote foreign language learning activities, which convey cultural contents with the specific aim to promote the interaction among students without the stress of evaluation. Indeed, even Long agrees on the effectiveness of conversation in the language learning context since interaction «connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways» (Long, 1996: 451-452).

In conclusion, the implementation of the CLIL methodology at the museum leads to the achievement of many CLIL objectives.

Thanks to this learning methodology, it is possible to gain good results training students to master form and content of the language; it employs a major authenticity in the process of language learning which consequently develops the students' oral skills and, finally, it provides the possibility of "learning by doing" (Calvello, 2017: 70).

3.3. Benefits of CLIL for the development of students' oral skills

In this paragraph, we are going to focus on the benefits that a CLIL program can provide for the development of the students' oral skills. Indeed, the development of oral skills is seen as the main objective to reach in a foreign language course.

A learner who studies a foreign language is not only supposed to be able to speak fluently but also the success in his learning is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language (Nunan, 1999), but, at the same time, speaking is one of the most complex skills to develop in a foreign or second language class.

As Coyle (2010) affirms, learners can enhance more easily their oral skills if their language learning is organized in a communicative approach, which is based on language learning theories that require a focus on form as well as on meaning and one of the best

approaches which joins those factors is CLIL (Coyle, 2010: 84). Thus, oral skills can be positively enhanced through a CLIL program since, on one hand, it promotes a "real communication" allowing for natural and more authentic use of the target language (Dalton-Puffer, 2007), and, on the other hand it stimulates the learners' active participation in class (Coonan, 2012: 167).

As regards the authenticity of learning, Dalton-Puffer (2007) explains that the materials and contents that are used in CLIL classrooms are more authentic than are those used in the traditional language classrooms because they are concerned with the content of subjects related to real life and so, all these factors promote interaction aimed at a real exchange of information between learners (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 278).

According to Coonan (2012), the development of learner's oral skills is possible only if learners participate actively during the lessons and an efficient way to promote learners' participation is promoting their oral interaction (Coonan, 2012: 167) and, this is the reason why oral interaction between students has been at the centre of the many researchers. Indeed, the interaction has a great potential in language learning because it provides more opportunities for students to use the target language and, thus, they can expand and automatize it. Moreover, when learners are involved in a conversation, they notice the "gaps" in their competence while they communicate with an interlocutor (Coonan, 2012: 172) and this is useful to have the control on their output (see paragraph 3.2.).

If we compare a traditional teacher-centred classroom and a CLIL classroom, we can notice that in the former situation there are some factors which prevent the development of the oral skills, while in the latter the learning environment and activities promote and enhance the oral skills.

First of all, the structure of the turn-taking in a traditional teacher-centred classroom is generally organized in a three-part sequence of interaction, that is Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequence, as Mehan (1979: 72) and Sinclair (1975: 55) explain, or, according to Sinclair, Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF). In this tripartite structure, the role of the of the coordinator of the interaction is the teacher who initiates the interaction (I) and stimulates the student with questions which generally already knows the answer; after the student's response (R), the teacher offers some forms of evaluation (E) or feedback (F) to the student (Nanna, 2017: 58).

This model of interaction, however, has raised some limits: first of all, the teacher has authority over conversational space, he manages and control the whole interaction and

guides the entire learning, secondly, this kind of communication can limit the social engagement and, thus, students may appear not very creative and not involved in the learning process (Nanna, 2017: 58).

Another limit of the IRE model is the lack of the experiential dimension of learning. As Coonan argues, experiential dimension of learning is extremely important for developing language competence since on one hand, the learner uses the language for learning, and, on the other hand, this dimension allows the realization of Bloom's Taxonomy since it engages cognitive processes (Coonan, 2012: 173).

In a CLIL classroom, instead, the experimental dimension of learning it as the base of learning since learners can manipulate content and competence and acquired them through the interaction between peers carrying out group activities (Coonan, 2012: 173).

In a CLIL setting, teachers can organize interactive activities adopting a cooperative learning approach that plays a prominent role in language learning since it provides a supportive scaffolding to learners to overcome their difficulties in learning enhancing their oral abilities (see paragraph 3.3) (Coonan, 2012: 173).

The adoption of cooperative learning influences the quality of students' because they are engaged in activities where they have to negotiate the meaning of the message and, thus, plan their output, developing their dialogic competence in the foreign language (Coonan, 2012: 174).

4. The study

4.1. Introduction

The present research focused on the experience of the Marco Polo and Turandot students during an Italian L2 workshop at Ca' Rezzonico (Museum of XVIII Century Venice) in Venice.

This research aimed to analyse the influence that museum exercises on the affective dimension of Marco Polo and Turandot students and, more specifically, we intended to investigate whether the museum objects can enhance and promote the development of Italian L2 (ItaL2) students' oral production.

After the identification of the nature of the problem linked to the students involved in the Marco Polo and Turandot project, we decided to intervene planning a workshop which could join the benefits of CLIL methodology and the museum learning.

Thus, the implementation of a CLIL workshop at the museum as part of an Italian culture module in the Italian course joining the Italian cultural content and the authentic language use would develop the Chinese students' oral skills in Italian L2.

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the difficulties that Marco Polo and Turandot students encounter in improving their language skills and, in particular, their oral skills in Italian L2.

The intention to conduct this research arose from the recognition of the urgent need for the Marco Polo and Turandot students to achieve the objectives set by the agreement signed by the Italian Republic and the People's Republic of China which established that the students involved in the project have to reach either the B1 or B2 level in Italian by the end of the language course in Italy.

Furthermore, as research displays, many Marco Polo and Turandot students do not complete their studies in Italy because of language difficulties: they do not succeed in applying the language skills they have learned during the language course to everyday life, and they have a considerable difficulty in understanding and speaking Italian outside the language class (Lania and Mastrocesare, 2018: 108).

As regards our choice to implement the workshop in a non-formal context, we started from the assumption that research displayed that traditional in-class learning provides limited opportunities for improving learners' language skills while non-formal learning

provides a wider range of advantages for second language acquisition (Richards, 2015: 5). We decided to create our workshop in a museum environment because our aim was, on one hand, to provide students cultural content such as the history and art of Venice during the XVIII century and, on the other hand, to engage students in an authentic communication in order to expand their language skills.

Our choice to plan this workshop implementing the CLIL methodology was guided from the analysis of CLIL theoretical framework which guarantees the teaching and learning of curricular content through the medium of a foreign language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011: 183).

Besides the advantage of CLIL related to language acquisition in a more meaningful and authentic context, CLIL can lay the foundations for the organization of the knowledge of the various disciplines and, above all, it can enhance the Italstudio skills. Indeed, during a CLIL lesson students have the possibility not only to converse about non-language content, sharing their personal experiences or thoughts but also, they improve their productive abilities in a more safeguarded context rather than in crowded university classes (Bonvino, 2011: 38).

After having meditated on the benefits of museum learning and the number possibilities that museum could provide to enhance the oral production learners of Italian L2, we decided to design our activities starting from the artworks displayed at the museum.

We had two main assumptions that guided us in this research, and we based our research questions on them (see paragraph 4.2.). Our first assumption was that the museum visit would offer a wider range of advantages for second language acquisition than the opportunities that are generally available in the classroom since learners have the chance to develop communicative competence since they are involved in interactional communications which support their development of second language skills (see paragraph 3.2.). Our second assumption, instead, was that the museum visit would offer many opportunities to engage learner in meaningful context and we were interested in investigating on whether the artworks would be as starting points for talking about the learners' experiences or for opening discussions on further topics.

4.2. Research Questions

The driving questions of the study are:

a) *How does the museum experience influence the affective dimension of students?*

The primary aim of the study was to explore whether the museum objects and the museum environment could influence positively or negatively the students' affective dimension and support or discourage the students' oral production in Italian L2.

Our assumption was that museum would have many affective benefits which could impact positively on students' involvement during the museum visit and we were interested in investigating on whether and how these affective factors contribute to foster their language and content learning and, thus, to enhance the students' oral production.

b) *Do the museum objects promote students' oral skills in Italian L2?*

The second research question attempt to understand if the objects displayed in the museum would provide opportunities for an effective communicative interaction in meaningful contexts and for meaningful purposes.

4.3. Context: the Marco Polo and Turandot students in Venice

The Italian language program for Marco Polo and Turandot students in Venice is offered since 2015 by the Ca' Foscari School for International Education (SIE), which is a school dedicated to the organization of programs for international students.

The program[5] aims at providing Chinese students with an Italian L2 course based on a pragmatic approach focussed on the use of language in real communication.

The Italian course lasts 11 months with 15/20 hours of lessons per week which are organized in lectures, language practice and tutorial support for students (Unive.it, 2020).

The Italian language course, thus, is made of in-class lessons, where students can focus on academic Italian (Italstudio) (see paragraph 1.7.) for studying specific subject areas at

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[5] The current information was provided by the Ca' Foscari School for International Education (CFSIE).

Italian universities and workshops and Italian civilizations labs aimed at strengthening students' specific communicative and language skills (Unive.it, 2020).

At the end of the Italian course, students have to sit a final exam in order to obtain a language certification from the SIE (see paragraph 1.4.) and then, they will also be able to take the official Italian language certification CILS (Certificate of Italian as a Foreign Language) and to reach an intermediate level (either B1 or B2 level) in order to enrol in a Bachelor's or Master's Degree course in Italy (see paragraph 1.1).

In the academic year 2019/2020, 59 Chinese students took part in the Marco Polo and Turandot project in Venice at the Ca' Foscari School for International Education.

We don't know exactly the educational and professional background of the students, but we know that the majority of them pre-enrolled in a degree program at the Higher Education for Art, Music and Dance (AFAM) institutions.

The Marco Polo students' greatest issue is their difficulty in reaching the intermediate level in Italian and the cause is, first of all, the fact that their language level on their arrival in Italy is very low and the B2 language proficiency level is very challenging to obtain after only a few months of a language course (see paragraph 1.5.).

Moreover, Chinese students generally have difficulties in developing their productive skills (both oral and written production) and a possible reason could be the fact that the groups of students that attend the Italian course are mainly monolingual and they share the same mother tongue, that is Chinese, and, thus, this factor minimizes their use of Italian in the relations among students.

4.4. Research methodology

The present research was conducted following a qualitative approach since it is an effective method of exploring dynamic phenomena in complex situations (Dörnyei, 2007: 40). The qualitative research design involved data collection procedures that resulted primarily in open-ended, non- numerical data analysed by non-statistical methods.

This research focused on the planning and evaluation of a specific educational action that would enhance the oral skills of Marco Polo and Turandot students through the implementation of an Italian L2 workshop at the museum based on the CLIL methodology.

For this reason, we decided to conduct this research adopting the action research parameters.

Burns (2009) defines action research as an approach which focuses on "issues and questions related to immediate practice and application. It involves exploring and discovering more about a specific issue which has significance for a teacher in relation to his or her own classroom and students" (Burns, 2009: 114).

Action research is a flexible and open-ended approach which allows the researcher-practitioner, or the teacher to inquiry in the best way selecting the methods and different techniques required as needed and changing them as new insights emerge in the research (Burns, 2009: 114).

Indeed, action research is increasingly being used in many educational researches since it provides a solution to practical issues and, more precisely, it allows the teacher-researcher to reflect, analyze, improve, and evaluate a particular issue which would emerge from this teaching.

We decided to adopt Lewin's model of actions research who described action research as "a cyclical process of four iterative stages of reflecting, planning, acting and observing" (Lewin, 1948 quoted in Ivankova, 2015: 48).
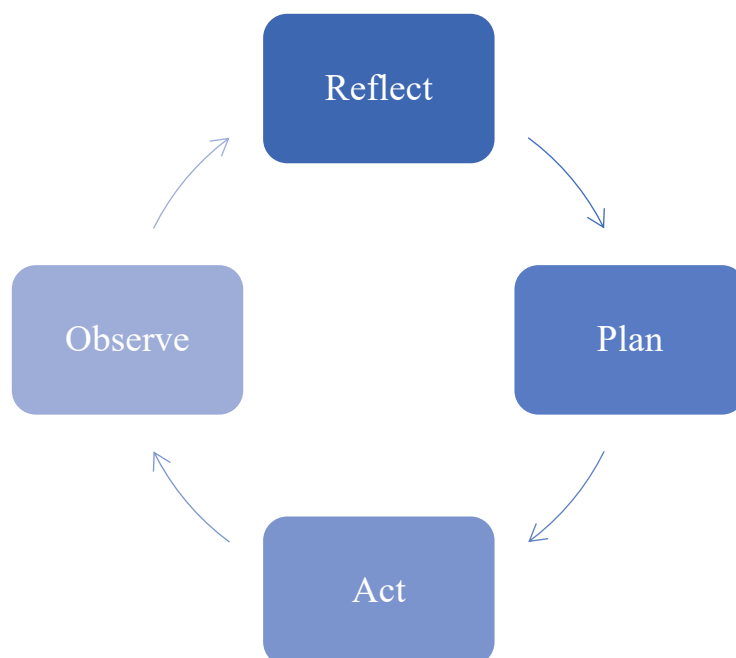
Basic Four-Stage Action Research Model. Source: Ivankova, 2015: 38 (based on Lewin, 1948)

In his model the cycle begins when the researcher-practitioner encounters a problem that requires a solution and then, he reflects on the situation trying to analyse more in depth the problem and some potential solutions. On the basis of his findings, the researcher develops and carry out a plan and, finally, he or she observes the results that the action brings.In conclusion, the researcher evaluates the outcomes of the plan and reflects on possible improvements and the entire process should be repeated until the issue is completely resolved (Lewin, 1994 quoted in Ivankova, 2015: 38)

We decided to adopt action research in our study because this methodology would give us the chance to examine in a pragmatic way an issue which was already definite by the literature review. Thus, we could have answered our research questions planning and implementing an intervention plan and, eventually, observing the effect of our action.

We began our study with the identification of a problem related to the students of the Marco Polo and Turandot project, that is their difficulties in Italian learning and then, we collected and interpreted information from the literary review in order to have a clear overview of this this issue.

After this phase of investigation, we worked on the planning and implementation of an "action", the museum workshop, aimed at addressing or resolve the abovementioned issue and, eventually, we tested, monitored and evaluated the intervention through the collection and interpretation of the data. The action research focuses on the observation and reflection made by the researcher-practitioner at the end of his/her research because his/her reflections could be the grounds on which he/she could build another cyclical process changing some aspects or features of his/her intervention plan on the bases of the result obtained. In this research, however, it was not possible to proceed with further cyclical processes and we stopped after the first cyclical process.

4.5. The CLIL workshop at Ca' Rezzonico

This workshop was delivered on 12th February 2020 at Ca' Rezzonico, Museum of XVIII Century Venice as part of a module of Italian Civilization and Culture within the Macro Polo and Turandot projects at Ca' Foscari University of Venice[6]. It was designed by integrating the CLIL methodology and the principles at the basis of museum pedagogy in

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[6] The Italian courses were taught by Prof. Fabiana Fazzi.

order to create language activities aimed at improving Chinese students' oral skills in Italian L2.

As regards museum pedagogy, we are aware of the difficulty to give a unique definition which delineates the whole concept since years of debates in academic context highlighted the complexity of the issue and the many facets of museum pedagogy.

In this research we refer to the definition given by Fazzi (2019: 40), who explains that museum pedagogy is the discipline, which analyses the "problems related to the teaching processes planned and implemented in the museum settings and with the use of objects and exhibitions, and which aims at promoting and supporting the learning processes underpinning the formation of knowledges and competences that can be evaluated".

We decided to create a workshop at Ca' Rezzonico because it is an art museum and it hosts works of art, frescos, paintings, everyday objects and furniture which display the splendour of Venice during the XVIII century.

This workshop had both language objectives and content objectives which were set in agreement with the Italian teacher.

- LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

  Students will able to:
    – use the past tenses for describing events that occurred in the past, in particular, the Italian tense "imperfetto";
    – describe images using adjectives and other subject-specific linguistic structures ("nel quadro c'è, nel quadro ci sono");
    – use words and vocabulary in Italian related to everyday situations and parts of the house.

- CONTENT OBJECTIVES:

  Students will able to:
    – recognize elements of the history of the Republic of Venice;
    – identify elements of history of art in the XVIII century in Venice;
    – describe some aspects of Italian culture.

4.5.1. The activities

The workshop is made of 4 main activities, which are divided into items.

- o ATTIVITÀ 1 – SALA DEI PASTELLI
- o ATTIVITÀ 2 – PORTEGO
- o ATTIVITÀ 3 – SALA PIETRO LONGHI
- o ATTIVITÀ 4 – MONDO NUOVO

The activities were created following the concept of neurological bimodality, which states that effective second language acquisition requires the employment of the perceptual modalities associated with each cerebral hemisphere and, thus, they establish the directionality of their relative involvements at different stages in the formation of a cognitive product (Danesi, 1988: 13; Balboni, 2007: 32; Goldberg and Costa, 1981: 155).

Neurological Bimodality

Left-Hemisphere Functions	*Right-Hemisphere Functions*
most language functions	comprehension of metaphor and prosodic features
verbal memory	visual memory
intellectual activity	intuitive activity
convergent thought	divergent thought
abstraction	concretization
analysis	synthesis

Source: Danesi, 1988: 17.

Indeed, according to neurological findings by Goldberg and Costa (1981), the right hemisphere of the brain seems to have a more appropriate anatomical structure that allows the learner to process new information efficiently, so it activates at the very beginning of the activity. The left hemisphere, on the other hand, has a sequential neuronal structure, and thus, it is structured in such a way to elaborate the new information logically.

Every activity begun stimulating the students' attention starting from a global observation of the work of art, which activates the students' right-hemisphere of the brain, then, it helped students to conduct a more specific analysis of a cultural aspect or a reflection on a grammatical structure, which activate the left-hemispheres of the brain, while, at the end of the activity, students were expected to give their oral contribution or to share their thoughts.

Since the students who took part in the workshop were divided into two groups (*Gruppo Verde*, which was composed of A2 students while *Gruppo Blu*, which gathered A2+/B1 students), we created different activities on the basis of the language level of the students (see Appendix A).

The activities were designed and planned to help student to follow the museum tour and, more specifically, to provide them with a useful scaffolding for their language learning and, moreover, their language production, since it was the aim of the whole workshop.

Indeed, students are guided during the activities and they are provided with the language structures that are useful or required to carry out the activity due to their language level (A2/B1).

We decided to create our activities using pedagogical strategies which could satisfy our target which was engaging students with the museum objects in order to push them to produce language. This is the reason why we decided to use questions in our activities since they can be used "to move from simple recall, through convergent divergent and judgmental thinking to a synthesis of the intellectual process as a whole" (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, quoted in Fazzi, 2019: 56). More specifically, we used memory questions, which were useful to recall the name of objects, convergent questions, which focused on details or aimed at reinforcing what learners have already known or understand and judgmental questions, which allow the students to express their personal opinion and to add comments or thoughts. As Fazzi (2019) argues, using questions can help students to develop their thinking skills through cognitive processes which go "from the concrete to the abstract, and from recalling what is already known, interpreting it through new evidence to construct new knowledge" (Fazzi, 2019: 55).

To plan and create the activities, we draw inspiration from the online teaching recourses provided from famous museums such as the Guggenheim[7], the Smithsonian National

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[7] https://www.guggenheim.org/teaching-materials/

Portrait Gallery[8], the Metropolitan Museum of Art[9], the MoMA[10] and the Getty Museum[11] and from activities created for other museum workshops.

Our challenge was to design and create activities which would provide the students opportunities for learning content and producing language. Indeed, the museum workshop aimed at promoting language learning and content learning as well, especially, some significative aspects of the history of Venice and the most significant features of Venetian art of the XVIII century, and this is the reason why we found appropriate to employ a CLIL methodology in this workshop. We decided to create the activity providing the students the language structures which were required for carrying out the activities and Activity 2.6. is an example.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

<u>ATTIVITÀ 2 – PORTEGO</u>

6. Guarda le altre sculture che sono nel Portego. Quali altre emozioni sono rappresentate nelle altre sculture? Scegli una scultura e descrivi quale emozione rappresenta.

    Ho scelto la scultura (*nome*) _____

    e l'emozione che rappresenta è _____

    perché _____

</div>

In this activity, the students had to recall the name of the emotion that the artworks expresses and then, they had to add a brief motivation of their choices, so, they would carry out this activity without difficulty for their language level and it would encourage them to speak. Moreover, the activities were designed in a progressive order of difficulty and autonomy, so, they gradually required more and more cognitive effort, but the students' production would be scaffold by the useful structures provided by the activities.

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[8] https://npg.si.edu/teachers/classroom-resources
[9] https://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/lesson-plans
[10] https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/
[11] https://www.getty.edu/education/

During the whole museum tour, the teacher and the buddy interacted with the students providing further information about works of art or asking their questions and support them with the use of the language or scaffold their oral production.

Another important objective of the workshop was to create a pleasant atmosphere for students in order to lower their anxiety and fear of being judged.

The aim of Activity 3.1. was to raise the curiosity and to foster student's participation to the activities proposed during the whole visit.

ATTIVITÀ 3 - SALA PIETRO LONGHI

1. In questa sala ci sono molti dipinti del pittore Pietro Longhi.

Guarda attentamente. Cosa rappresentano questi dipinti?

        a) la bellezza della natura

        b) la vita quotidiana

        c) la guerra e le battaglie

This activity could be considered as a type of elicitation activity which has the important function to activate the existing knowledge of the students and to help them to create expectations and contextualise the leaning. This activity asked students to observe the pictures of the Venetian painter Pietro Longhi and to choose the topic represented among the ones provided. The task of the activity was very simple since students were not expected to produce language, but they had to put a tick next to the option that best applies to them.

2. Le persone raffigurate sono

a) persone nobili e ricche e lo capisco perché _____

b) persone comuni e lo capisco perché _____

3. Gli oggetti/animali/persone che riconosco nei dipinti

sono: _____

These activities asked students to produce some language, but they required a low level of language proficiency. Indeed, students had to list some adjectives that described the physical aspect of the figures or the objects, animals and people that were pictured in the paintings.

The activities were very simple because one of the purposes of these activities was to guarantee that students would be able to carry it out without difficulty. In this way, the activities would raise students' satisfaction and the assurance in their own qualities and they helped to encourage them to produce language without fear and anxiety.

4. Quali emozioni provi guardando questi dipinti?

- calma, perché _____

- rabbia, perché _____

- gioia o felicità, perché _____

- tristezza, perché _____

- divertimento, perché _____

- noia, perché _____

This activity required a more complicated effort since students had to produce brief sentences and, moreover, they had to speak about abstract concepts. Indeed, students were encouraged not only to improve their knowledge about the History of Art (rudiments concerns the painter and his works or the history of the Ca' Rezzonico palace) and get more information about the ideas that motivate the painter to realise this kind of artworks,

but they were also encouraged to share their ideas, feelings, emotions and personal experiences choosing the emotion that better expressed their mood and giving a brief motivation of their choice.

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5. Scegli un dipinto. Immagina di essere un personaggio del dipinto.

    Titolo del dipinto _____

Nel dipinto, io sono _____

e indosso _____

Sono in _____

e sono in compagnia di _____

Posso vedere _____

Posso sentire il suono/rumore di _____

Posso sentire il profumo/odore di _____

The objective of this activity was for students to create a real or imaginary autobiography, thus, students had to identify themselves with the Venetian people that Pietro Longhi represented in his paintings and they were guided during their task by a production schedule. This task was consistent with the language objectives set by the teacher, prof. Fabiana Fazzi, during the Italian course for Marco Polo and Turandot (see paragraph 4.4.). Indeed, the teacher prepared the students to describe an image or describe themselves before the museum visit, so, they were expected to be able to carry out this activity easily and to be able to do this activity orally. Moreover, this typology of activity intended to stimulate the students' imagination and entertainment since this latter factor is significative in language learning and in a museum environment (see paragraph 2.3). According to Balboni, talking about themselves is one of the most pleasant things for people, but, more specifically, the greatest pleasure is achieved when talking about an imaginary himself (Balboni, 2008: 136). In this way, the learners are so absorbed in giving voice to their alter ego that they focus away their attention on the form of the language and they arouse their interest in the content (Balboni, 2008: 136).

4.6. Participants

The participants in this study included: a) the Marco Polo and Turandot students, b) Marco Polo and Turandot students' buddies, c) the Italian course teacher, and d) the researcher-practitioner.

Marco Polo and Turandot students are Chinese students who are pre-enroled in either Bachelor's or Master's Degree courses at the university in Venice.

The majority of them are pre-enrolled in the *Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice* or in the *Conservatorio "Benedetto Marcello"* and so they have a solid background knowledge in the art fields, while a minority of them is pre-enrolled in the Ca' Foscari University, IUAV or in the Istituto Europeo di Design (IED) in Venice.

The whole group of students involved in this workshop was divided into two groups: *Gruppo Verde*, which gathered students studying Italian at an A2 level, and *Gruppo Blu*, which included students studying Italian at a B1 level.

Marco Polo and Turandot students were accompanied by two Master's degree students who would help them during the activities organized by the Marco Polo and Turandot project.

4.7. Research instruments

Four data collection instruments were used: i) students' pre-visit questionnaires, ii) students' post-visit questionnaires, iii) the researcher's Data Observation Sheet, and iv) the teacher's written interview. The three types of instruments ensured the possibility of triangulation the perspectives of the different participants.

We decided to employ two questionnaires as research instruments (Students' pre-visit questionnaires and Students post-visit questionnaires, see Appendixes C) in order to analyse the students' opinion of learning at the museum before and after the experience since we assumed that the workshop would have impacted positively or negatively on the students.

Moreover, we considered the great potential of questionnaire to collect a good amount of information about a group of people in little time (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010: 6) and, moreover, they provide a "picture" of the current situation.

Indeed, we asked students to fill in the pre-visit questionnaires at Ca' Rezzonico before the beginning of the museum workshop and we had a limited amount of time to conduct the entire workshop.

However, the questionnaires have some limitations which could invalidate or limit the results of the research, especially, when a questionnaire is administered in languages that the respondents are learning, and this was the case of this research (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010: 6).

As regards the teacher's written interview, it was conducted to give the teacher the opportunity to explain and expand on events which occurred not only at the museum but also before and after the museum visit in the classroom.

We decided to create a semi-structured interview because Dörnyei argues that a semi-guided interview is a good research instrument in a qualitative research.

As he says: "although there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format is open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an explanatory manner" (Dörnyei, 2007: 136).

4.7.1. Students' pre-visit questionnaires

The questionnaire was in Italian and consisted of both open and closed questions divided into two sections (See Appendix C.1.).

The questionnaire was used to explore the students' language level, the strategies that they usually adopt to improve their speaking ability and their initial attitude about the potential of the museum as a place for improving their oral skills.

The questionnaire consisted of 8 questions and divided into two parts.

In the first part, students were asked personal information such as gender (Question A.1.) and when they started to learn Italian (Question A.2.), while the second part is focused on the students' opinions about learning Italian at the museum.

The first four questions (Question 1., Question 2., Question 3. and Question 4.) intended to introduce students the topic of the oral dimension of the language asking them what their ideas about language learning was and to reflect on the strategies that they used to learn Italian.

These "ice breaking questions" aimed, moreover, to guide the respondents to the most important questions (Question 5 and Question 6) which intended to understand their expectations and opinions about learning Italian during a workshop at the museum. Students' pre-visit questionnaires were administered in paper format and students filled in them before the museum visit.

4.7.2. Student's post-visit questionnaires

The questionnaire was delivered through Google Forms due to the closure of Ca' Foscari university during the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

The questionnaire was written in Italian and it consisted of 11 open and closed questions divided into two sections (See Appendix C.2.).

The questionnaire aimed at exploring the students' opinion about how the experience at the museum influenced their affective dimension (Research Question 1) and whether the artworks encouraged them to speak Italian L2 (Research question 2).

In the first part, students were asked to indicate their group (Question 1), their personal information such as gender (Question 2) and for how many years they had been learning Italian (Question 3).

The second part aimed at understanding their opinions about the workshop at the museum. The first few questions investigated the students' general opinion about both the activity conducted during the workshop (Question 1 and Question 2), the atmosphere that they found in the museum (Question 3).

After these general questions, students were expected to give a clear description of their experience at the museum, moreover, in relation to their opportunities that they had to improve their oral production.

They were asked to describe the feelings they had during their oral interventions (Question 4), to delineate briefly the difference between speaking in classroom and at the museum (Question 5), whether they believed that the experience was useful to improve their oral skills (Question 6), whether they had used specific strategies or input from the museum objects to support their oral production (Question 7) and, in conclusion, whether the objects displayed in the museum pushed them to share their emotions with their peers (Question 8).

The final three questions (Question 9, Question 10 and Question 11), allowed the students to say what they found easy and difficult during the workshop and what they learnt.

4.7.3. The teacher's written interview

The teacher's written interview was a semi-structured interview made of 12 questions (See Appendix B).

The use of open-ended questions enabled more varied and in-depth responses and allowed the teacher to express her views. Moreover, her contribution made possible for our research to exam in depth the scenario of the two groups (*Gruppo Verde* and *Gruppo Blu*) of Marco Polo and Turandot students in Venice during the academic year 2019/2020.

The interview was designed following the direction set by Dörnyei (2007: 136).

The first part (Question 1) aimed at delineating the educational and formative background of the students involved in the workshop.

Question 3 focused on the interviewee's opinion about the students' involvement during the workshop in order to make a comparison between the students' attitude at the museum and during the in-class lessons.

Question 4 intended to analyse more in depth the effect that students' involvement had on their oral production, because the aim of this research was to understand whether the museum experience would encourage the students to speak in Italian.

Question 5, instead, aimed at identifying the students' difficulties which emerged during the workshop.

Question 6 investigated the activities that most promoted the oral interaction between students, while Question 7 intended to examine the activities that most stimulated the students' interest.

Question 2, Question 8, Question 9, Question 10 and Question 11 aimed at exploring how the teacher prepared the students before the museum visit and what aspects, works of art or environmental input the students encountered during the museum visit, and more precisely, whether students showed a particular interest towards historical or cultural aspect to discuss in class and these questions were important in order to have a clearer view of students' experience at the museum.

The final closing question, Question 12, allows the interviewee to have the final say and to add further information which was not asked during the interview.

4.7.4. Data Observation Sheet

The Data Observation Sheet allowed the researcher to observe students during the visit without interacting and directly participating in the event.

The Data Observation Sheet was adopted from the instrument used in Fazzi and Meneghetti (cds)[12] in order to collect more detailed data that would analyse the subjects involved in this study more in depth.

The Data Observation Sheet was divided into two parts. The first part was dedicated to the collection of the information about the group such as student's level of Italian, the professional and educational background of the students, age, disabilities, and the dynamics of the group. The second part was intended to collect the researcher's observations, reflections and hypotheses on the students' affective reactions to the museum visit (Research question 2). The researcher took note of students' attitudes towards the museum objects, their comments and the strategies used by the students to communicate or to carry out the activities during the museum.

To simplify the data collection, the researcher used a table to analyse how students used museum objects during the activities.

The table was divided into two sections: the first regarded the linguistic dimension, which focused on the influence of museum objects on the students' oral production, while the second part was dedicated to the record of the affective dimension, which investigated the students' attitude during the museum visit.

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[12] Fazzi, F., Meneghetti, C. (cds), "Migrating" the classroom: Museums as sites of innovative L2 and intercultural pedagogy, Atti del Convegno DILLE 2019, SAIL, Venezia: Ca' Foscari Edizioni

5. Analysis

5.1. Methodology of data analysis

Dörnyei argues that qualitative research is generally iterative, in other words, the researcher uses a non-linear pattern moving back and forth between data collection since data analysis and interpretation depending on the results that emerge from the study (Dörnyei, 2007: 243).

Indeed, we decided to create the teacher's interview on the basis of the results gathered from the observation of the experience at the museum and after the analysis of the student's pre-visit and post-visit questionnaires since we were interested in examining in depth some aspects regarding the preparation of students before and after the museum experience.

The first step in data analysis was to transcribe the initial raw qualitative data collected through the Data Observation Sheet (see Appendix D), to code the data collected by students' questionnaires (see Appendix C) through Microsoft Excel and to translate and transcribe in a textual format the teacher's interview (see Appendix B).

One of the issues that emerged in the analysis of the results was to avoid saturation, the collection of data that didn't add new information which could confuse the researcher in defining what was relevant and what falls outside the scope of the research (Dörnyei, 2007: 244).

After having gathered all the data collected in textual format, the researcher decided to highlight the insightful practices that emerged from the analysis of the contents which could give account to our research questions.

In order to report the quotations from students' questionnaires, we created a specific code. We use G.B. referring to students of *Gruppo Blu* and G.V. referring to students of *Gruppo Verde*. Furthermore, we decided to use different enumerations to organize the questionnaires because it was not possible to associate the questionnaires to the students, so we assigned the alphabetic order to the pre-visit questionnaires and the numerical order to the post-visit questionnaires.

5.2. Analysis of students' pre-visit questionnaires

In this section, we will present the analysis of the data collect through the pre-visit questionnaires (see paragraph 4.7.2.). We will analyse the results collected from *Gruppo Blu* and then the results collected from *Gruppo Verde* because the two groups had different level in Italian (see paragraph 4.6.).
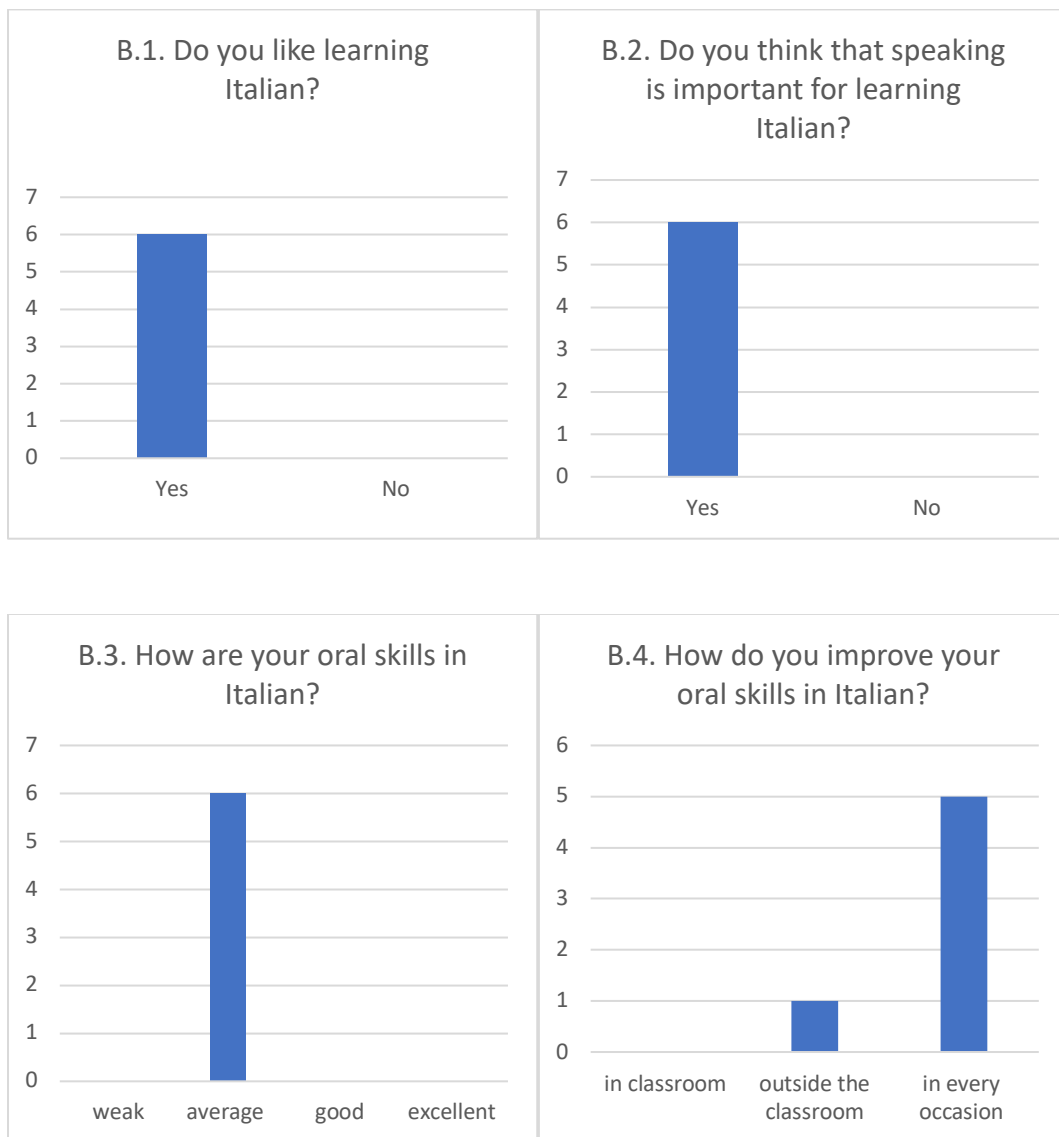
a) *Gruppo Blu*

The group was composed by six students and all of them were females.

From the analysis of the students' pre-visit questionnaires, it emerged that the majority of the students had studied Italian for less than a year (Question A.2.).
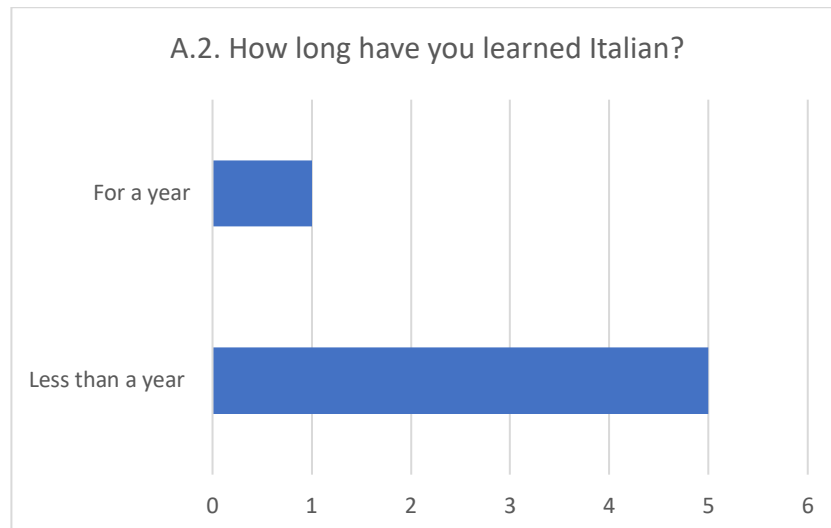
All the respondents found that learning Italian was both a pleasant activity (Question B.1.) and, moreover, they were aware of the importance of trying to speak not only in the classroom during the Italian lessons but to take advantage of every out-of-school occasion to develop their linguistic abilities, and, in particular, their oral skills (Question B.2.).

B.1. Do you like learning Italian?

	Yes	No
7		
6	██	
5	██	
4	██	
3	██	
2	██	
1	██	
0		

B.2. Do you think that speaking is important for learning Italian?

	Yes	No
7		
6	██	
5	██	
4	██	
3	██	
2	██	
1	██	
0		

B.3. How are your oral skills in Italian?

weak — average — good — excellent (average = 6)

B.4. How do you improve your oral skills in Italian?

in classroom — outside the classroom (1) — in every occasion (5)

All of them considered their language level average (Question B.3.) and the majority of them declared that they would speak in Italian whenever possible (Question B.4.) Questions B.5. and B.6. were open-ended questions which enabled more varied and in-depth responses which allowed the students to express their expectations and opinions about learning Italian during the museum workshop.
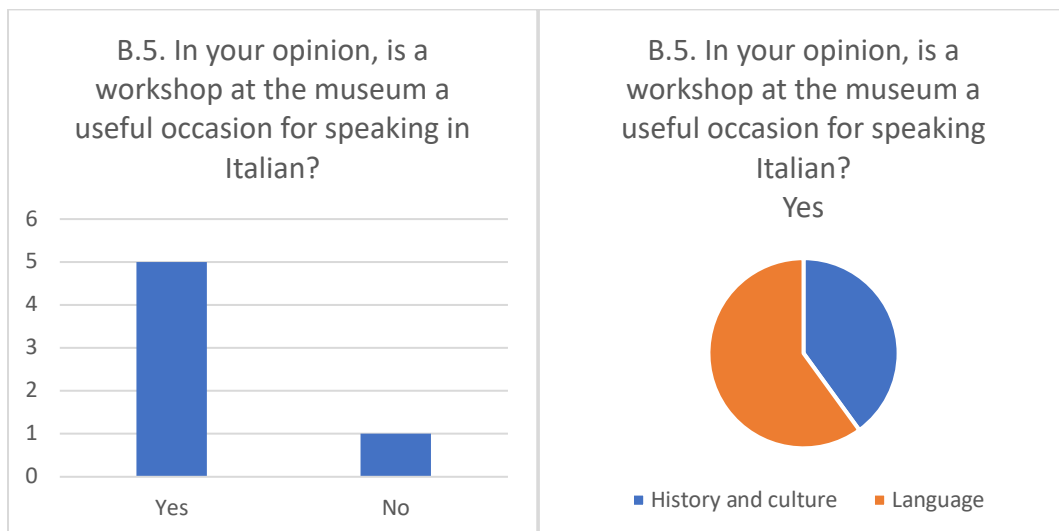
This question (Question B.5.) asked the students to motivate their answer so, we can analyse more in depth the students' idea about the museum visit.

The museum visit was seen by the five of the students as a good occasion for improving both their language, in particular their receptive skills, and as a useful chance for learning more about history and culture (Question B.5.). More precisely, they had clear expectations about practicing or learning the language during the museum visit since they said that they hoped to have the chance to speak with people within the museum and to improve their oral comprehension skills following a guided tour in Italian.

Student G.B.a: *"Si, perché posso parlare con guida, e posso conoscere di più sulla storia"*.

Student G.B.b: *"No, perché io se ascolto sempre a guida e conosco la cultura italiana, non parlo"*.
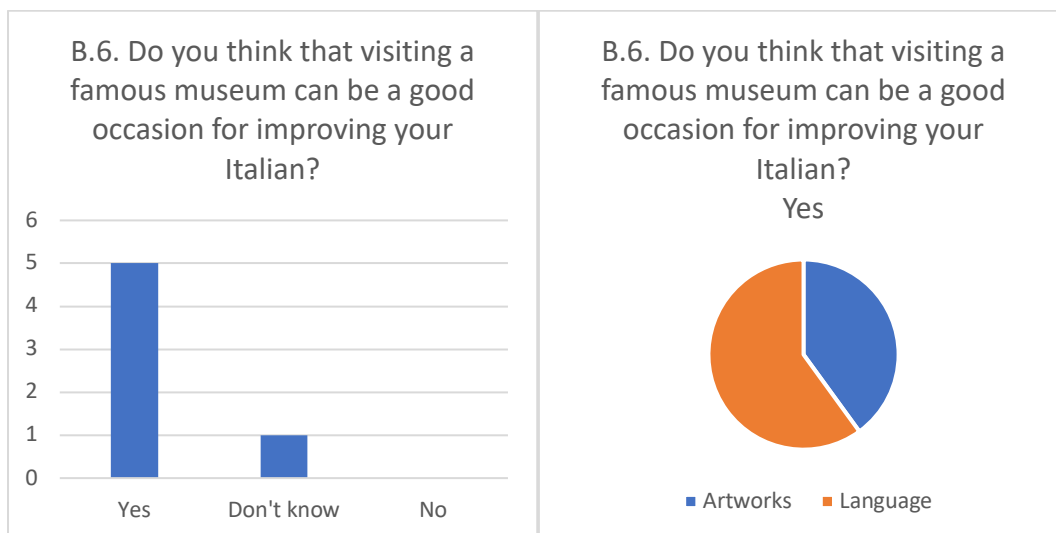
Student G.B.c: *"Si, perché ascolto gli altri spiegare quindi studio italiano"*.

Student G.B.d: *"Si, perché ascoltare le guide richiede devo avere buon ascolto"*.

Student G.B.e: *"Si, perché è molto importante per studiare la cultura italiano e posso capire di più italiano"*.

Student G.B.f: *"Si, perché questo museo è molto famoso"*.

However, another positive aspect emerged from the students' answers. This question (Question B.6.) asked the students to motivate their answer, so, they declared that the museum workshop was not only a perfect occasion for language learning, but it was also a good chance for learning about history, new words and cultural contents.

B.6. Do you think that visiting a famous museum can be a good occasion for improving your Italian?

B.6. Do you think that visiting a famous museum can be a good occasion for improving your Italian?
Yes

Student G.B.a: *"Si, perché posso imparare a memoria molte parole nuove"*.

Student G.B.b: *"Si, perché posso conoscere la cultura italiana e imparare molte parole nuove"*.

Student G.B.c: *"Si, perché studio la cultura italiana"*.

Student G.B.d: *"Si, perché le spiegazioni nel museo sono tutte in italiano, se vorrei comprensione devo imparare italiano bene"*.

Student G.B.f: *"Si, perché posso visitare molte opere d'arte per farmi conoscere storia d'italiano"*.

Student G.B.e: *"Non lo so, infatti forse il museo più famoso c'è le cose più storice, posso capire e ammirare di più"*.

a) *Gruppo Verde*

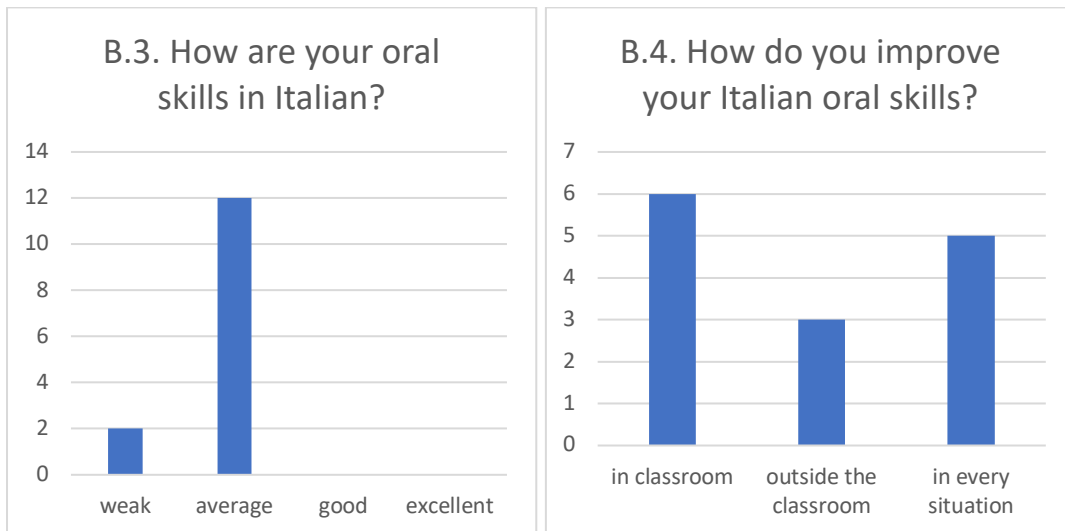The group was composed by fourteen students, eight makes and six females.

From the analysis of the students' pre-visit questionnaires, it emerged that the majority of students had studied Italian for less than a year (Question A.2.).
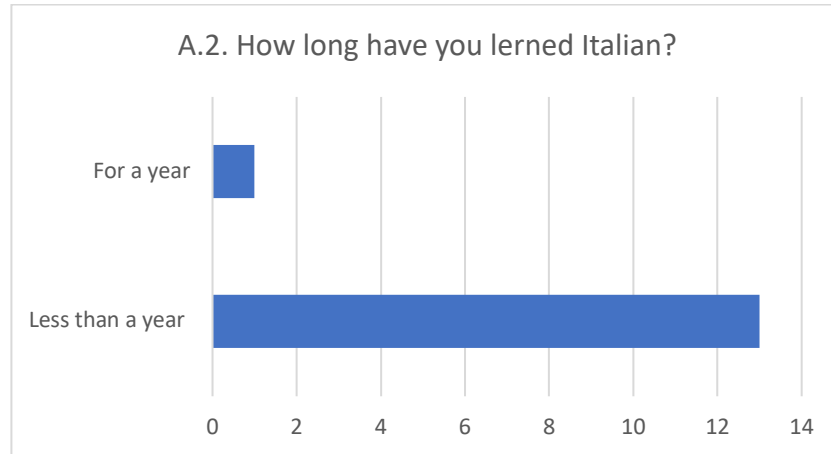
As regards the students' opinion about learning Italian, eleven students found that learning Italian was both a pleasant activity (Question B.1.) and all of them were aware of the importance of trying to speak as much as possible to improve their oral skills (Question B.2.).
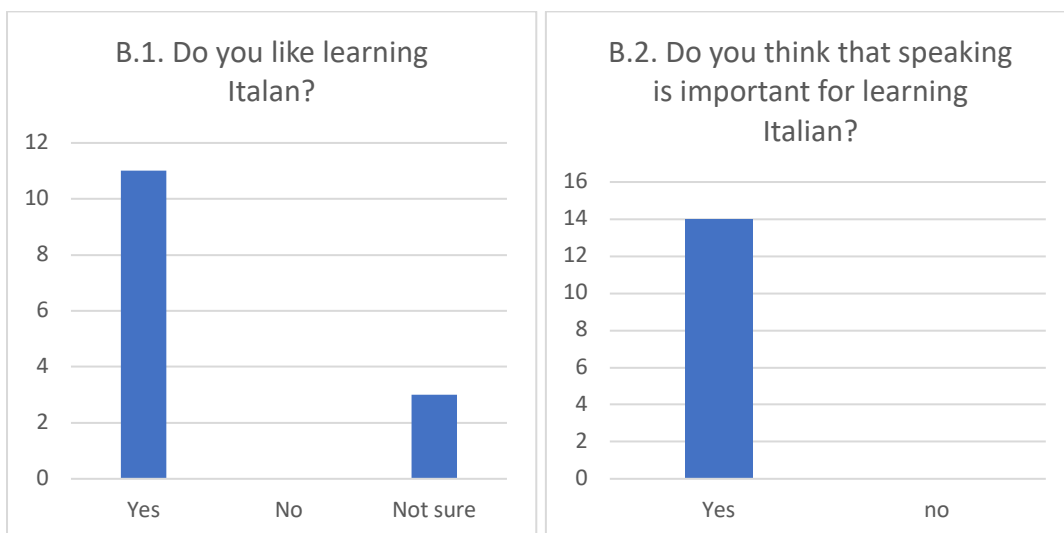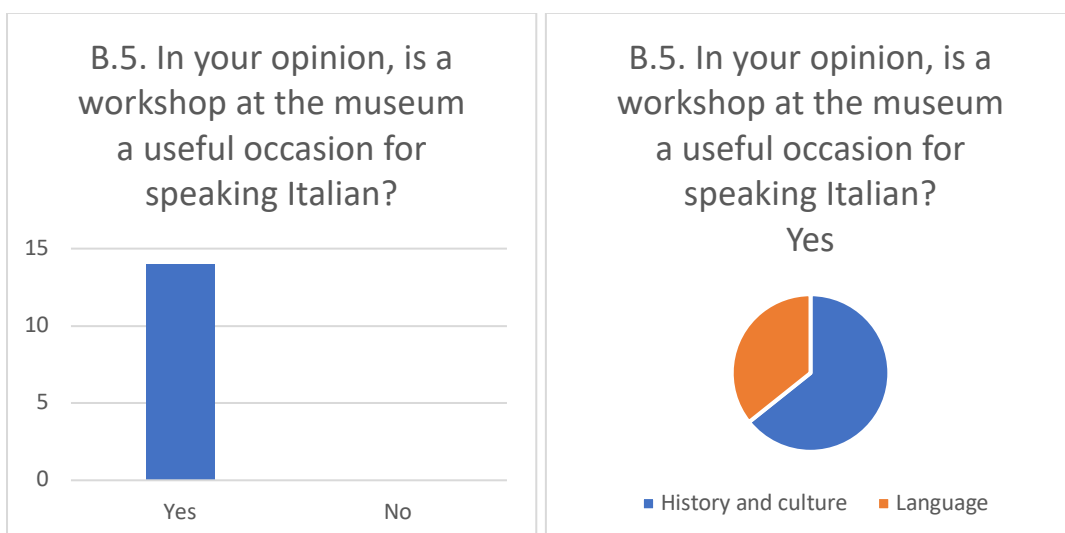

Twelve students to fourteen considered their language level average, while two of them considered their level weak (Question B.3.).

B.3. How are your oral skills in Italian?

	weak	average	good	excellent
	2	12		

B.4. How do you improve your Italian oral skills?

	in classroom	outside the classroom	in every situation
	6	3	5

Question B.4., indeed, shows where students usually learn Italian: six students declared that they would practice Italian only in the classroom, so in a formal context, three students explained that they would practice Italian outside the classroom watching tv, listening to music, speaking with friends or reading in the library, while five students said that they would practice Italian in every possible situation.

Questions B.5. and B.6. were open-ended questions which enabled more varied and in-depth responses which allowed the students to express their expectations and opinions about learning Italian during the museum workshop.

B.5. In your opinion, is a workshop at the museum a useful occasion for speaking Italian?

	Yes	No
	14	

B.5. In your opinion, is a workshop at the museum a useful occasion for speaking Italian? Yes

■ History and culture   ■ Language

The whole group of students considered the museum visit as a good occasion for improving their language skills and some of them were also driven by personal interest towards Italian history, culture, and art. Others said that they believed the museum

workshop would help them improve their language skills in the context of their future academic studies (Question B.5.).

Student G.V.b: *"Si, perché chiedere informazioni sulla storia dei manufatti"*.

Student G.V.c: *"Si, perché posso parlare agli italiani"*

Student G.V.d: *"Si, perché posso saperne di più e vedere di più bisogno di sapere molto sull'italiano"*.

Student G.V.e: *"Si, perché io posso studiare più quando parlo lingua italiana"*.

Student G.V.g: *"Si, perché io conosco troppo famoso persone, studio tanti parole sul l'arte storico"*

Student G.V.h: *"Si, perché posso vedere la mostra e possiamo parlare la senza del museo"*.

Student G.V.i: *"Si, perché io conosco il più italiano storico per me"*.

As regards the fact that students would have visited a famous museum, thirteen students declared that the museum workshop was not only a perfect occasion for language learning, but it was also a good chance for learning cultural contents, while a student disagreed (Question B.6.).
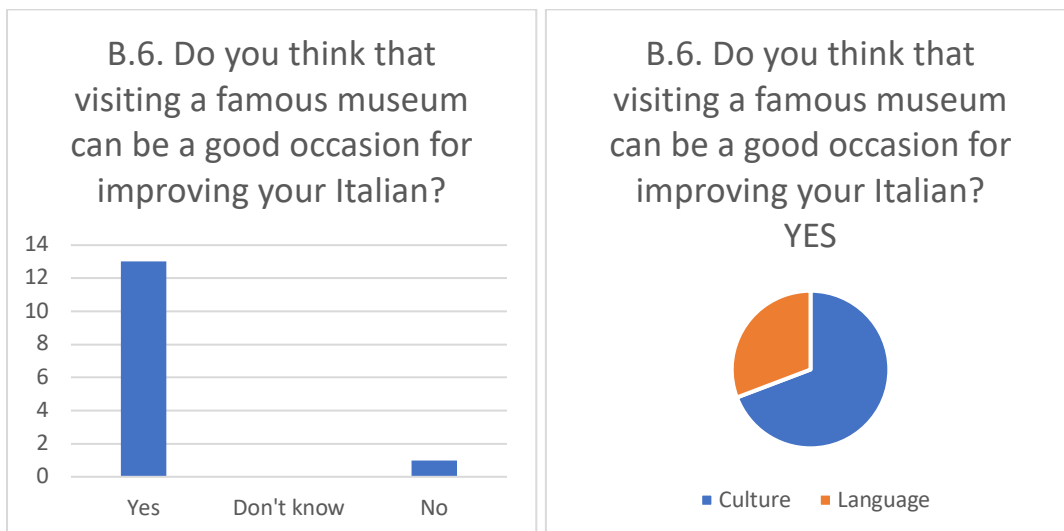
Student G.V.b: *"Si, perché leggere l'introduzione delle reliquie culturali"*.

Student G.V.d: *"Si, perché posso sapere di più e vedere di più"*.

Student G.V.f: *"Si, perché mi può far conoscere di più sull'Italia"*.

Student G.V.g: *"Si, perché io studio pittura. Io voglio studiare molto storico l'arte"*.

Student G.V.h: *"Si, perché possiamo visitare più molto capolavoro e meravigliosa arte al museo"*.

Student G.V.j: "*Si, perché chiachieriamo con le persone e l'insegnante"*.

Student G.V.k: *"Si, perché studio molta cultura di Italiana"*.

Student G.V.m: *"Si, perché posso studiare molto cultura di Italia e questo occasione è più possibile"*.

Student G.V.n: *"Si, perché posso sapere la cultura sull'Italia"*.

Student G.V.i: "*No, perché posso solo aumentare la mia conoscenza di italiano"*.

5.3. Analysis of students' post-visit questionnaires

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 emergency, only five online questionnaires were collected by the researcher-practitioner, three from the *Gruppo Verde* and two from *Gruppo Blu* (Question A.1).
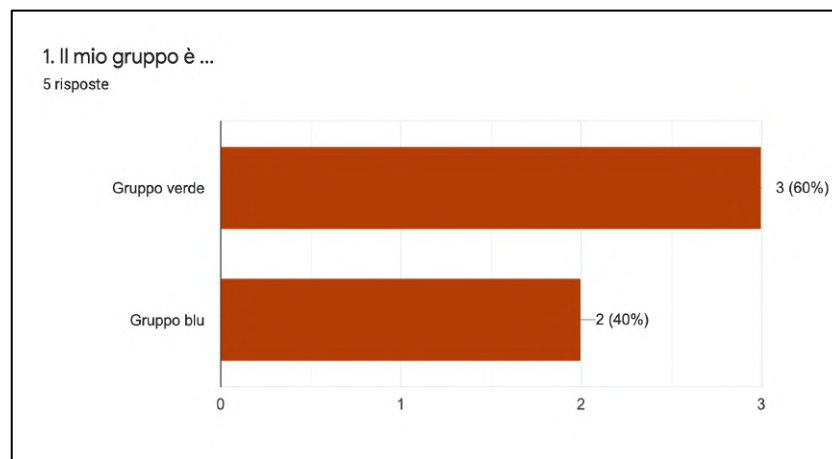
The analysis shows that students perceived the museum visit as a positive experience since more than half of the students found that the atmosphere at the museum was positive and pleasant (Question 3.). This was a multiple-choice question and students could express more that one option.
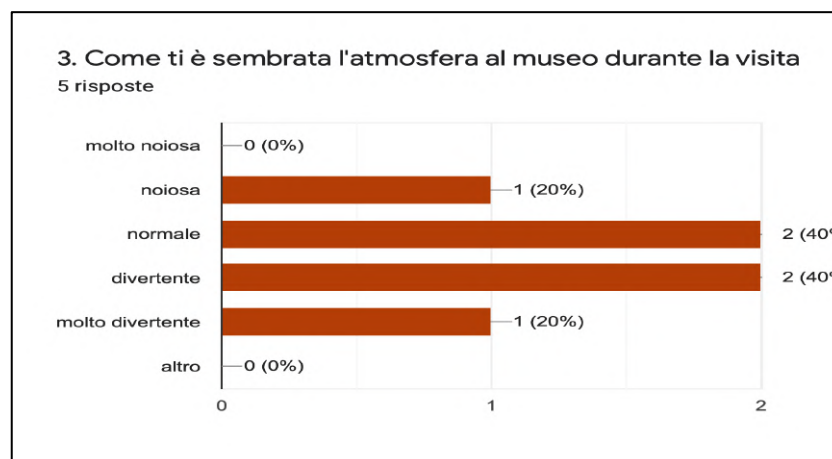
They declared that the atmosphere was generally pleasant because they enjoyed visiting the museum:

Student G.B.1: *"È molto meraviglioso e mi piace visitare museo molto"*.

Student G.B.3: *"Ho visto molte opere meravigliose e ho conosciuto di più sull'italia"*.

Student G.V.4: *"Perché mi piace visitare il museo"*.

However, one student said that it found the workshop boring because he was not very fond of art:

Student: G.V.2: *"Perché non mi piace visitare la pittura"*.

The positive museum atmosphere has contributed to create students' positive attitude towards speaking in front of their peers. The students declared that they felt calm and happy while they were speaking in Italian (Question 4). The 40% of them declared that felt other emotions which were not specified in the question. The question however gave a positive result since none felt anxious.
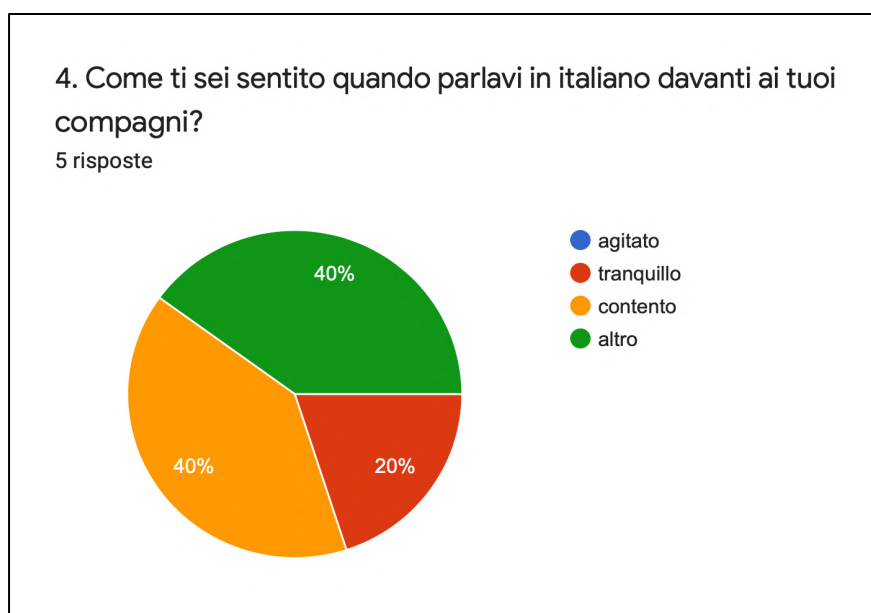
The workshop at the museum was a useful occasion for speaking Italian and three students to five agreed (Question 6.).

6. Il laboratorio linguistico al museo è stata un'occasione utile per parlare italiano?

5 risposte

si	3 (60%)
non lo so	2 (40%)
no	0 (0%)
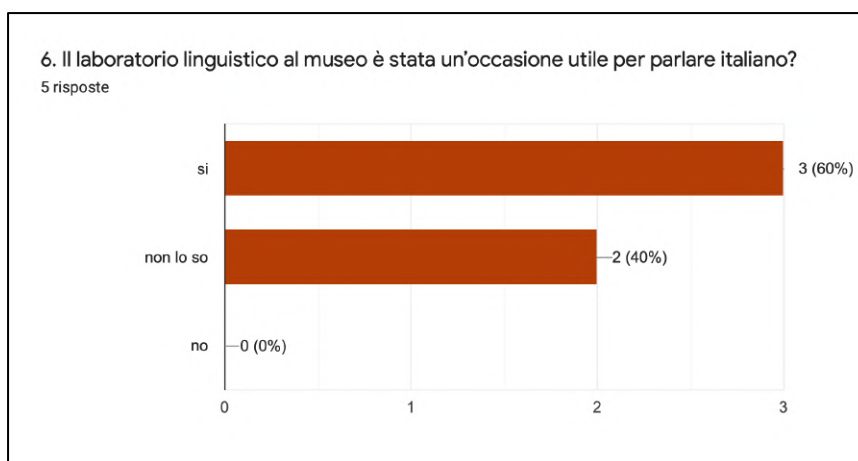
As regards the differences between speaking in the classroom and at the museum (Question 5), students recognised that being exposed in a non-formal context where a specific vocabulary or knowledge is required could arouse difficulties in understanding, but, on the other hand, the fact that they were exposed to many inputs could be positive for improving learning.

> Student G.B.1: *"Parole. Per esempio, al museo, volevo chiedere sulla pittura e storia del questo periodo. Ma non posso parlare delle queste parole, è difficile esprimere me stessa...forse ho bisogno conosco più parole sul tema"*.

> Student G.V.2: "Io non conosco molta pittura, ma voglio conoscere sul vivo dell'italiano".

> Student G.B:3: "Possiamo parlare delle opere che vediamo".

> Student G.V.4: *"Capisco più velocemente"*.

On the basis that museums provide learners suitable and adequate resources that generally classrooms lack (see paragraph 2.5.), we asked students about the strategies that they used to ask for further information about works of art that drew their attention or to overcome their difficulties in communication.

Students declared (Question 7.) that either asked their teacher for clarification or asked the buddy to translate in Chinese or, and this is the interesting aspect, by using a non-verbal strategy as pointing at the object.
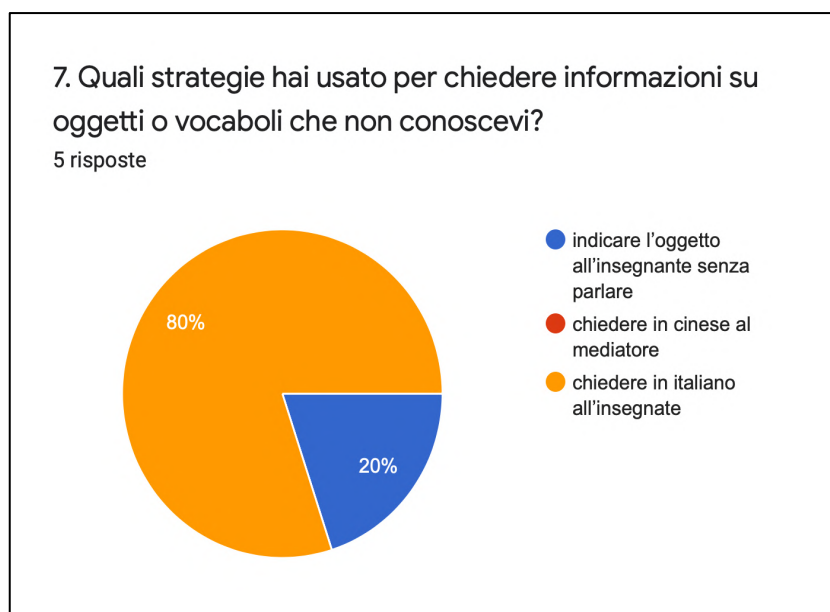
Moreover, the objects displayed in the museum pushed students to share their emotions and ideas (Question 8), and the explained their answers as follows:

Student G.B.1: *"Perché è molto interessante e necessario visitare"*.

Student G.V.2: *"Perché non conosco molto qualcosa sul museo e non lo so come esprimo"*.

Student G.B.3: *"Le opera l'arte diverse possono ricordarmi di più"*.

Student G.V.4: *"Perché ogni opera d'arte ha la sua storia"*.

This experience at the museum highlighted also students' difficulties (Question 9) and a common obstacle was the knowledge of the specific content related to the history.

Student G.B.1: *"Non ho capito la storia"*.

Student G.V.2: *"Io non conosco la storia sul museo"*.

Student G.B.3: *"Nome dell'autore e dell'opera d'arte. ho solo conosciuto parte"*.

Student G.V.4: *"Ci sono molte parole che non capisco"*.

Student G.V.5: *"Un po non capito"*

Students, on the other hand, declared that they had fun during the museum visit and they found easy learning something new about the museum and its artworks (Question 1 and Question 10).

(Q 1) Student G.B.3: *"È interessante vedere il museo. quindi è divertente imparare."*

(Q 10) Student G.B.3: *"Mi piace di più ascoltare l'insegnante quando ci parla della storia italiana"*

The museum visit was intended to teach both language and cultural contents (Question 11) and students declared that they learned new lexicon and some historical events about the history and culture of the Republic of Venice since they had the possibility to observe wonderful works of art and to learn about the Italian culture and history.

Student G.B.1: *"Come Ca' è una casa di qualcuno, la differenza della nobiltà e plebleo, bellezza dell'arte, ok"*.

Student G.V.2: *"Ho imparato delle parole nuove"*.

Student G.B.3: *"Ho imparato alcune storie sull'Italia e ho conosciuto di più sull'Italia".*

Student G.V.4: *"Ho imparato storia di Venezia".*

Student G.V.5: *"Parole nuove"*

5.4. Analysis of teachers' written interview

This paragraph is devoted to the analysis of the data collect through the teacher written interview (see paragraph 4.7.3.).
We analysed the data identifying the main topics that emerged from the interview in order to analyse in detail the data collect.

Students' background
The teacher illustrated the background of the students involved in the workshop (Question 1 and Question 2). She explained that the majority of the Marco Polo and Turandot students was pre-enrolled in the *Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice*, in the *Conservatorio "Benedetto Marcello",* and so the majority had an artistic background (see paragraph 4.6).

Students' preparation before and after the museum visit
The teacher illustrated the modalities that she used to prepare the students in class before and after the museum visit. She planned a few in-class lessons where she illustrated both the language and content that would be useful for students to carry out the activities during the museum workshop and, moreover, to activate their expectancy grammar and to raise their motivation and interest before the visit.
As regards the language, she taught the student to use the Italian "Imperfetto" for talking about events that occurred in the past, to describe a picture and to talk about everyday situations (see paragraph 4.5).

Teacher: *"Questa lezione serviva a fornirgli il lessico e le strutture linguistiche necessarie per affrontare il laboratorio linguistico a Ca'Rezzonico e per prepararli dal punto di vista del contenuto e per attivare la loro expectancy grammar e per motivarli, incuriosirli ed interessarli".*

As regards the content, she talked about some aspects of the history of Venice and the most significant features of Venetian art during the XVIII century. They analysed some paintings by Canaletto and Longhi, two of the most famous Venetian painters in the XVIII century, whose works of art were displayed in the collection of Ca' Rezzonico.

As regards the activities organized after the workshop (Question 8 and Question 9), the teacher explained that she analysed in deep the activity regarding Pietro Longhi. She asked students (*Gruppo Verde* and *Gruppo Blu*) to create a table where they had to write what they remembered from the workshop and what they appreciated from the museum visit. She focused on the fresco by Giambattista Tiepolo and she created a cloze activity, a text with blank spaces and a word-box with the missing words that students had encountered during the workshop, such as "affresco" and "rappresentare" and this was a good occasion to guide a reflection on some language constructions "è stato dipinto da" or "mi piace, perché" and "non mi piace perché" which were included in the activities.

The second part of this activity engaged students more creatively: the task was to reinvent the fresco by Giambattista Tiepolo through a drawing and the aim of the activity was to enhance students' empathy towards the work of art.

According to the teacher, students of *Gruppo Verde* really appreciated this activity while students of Gruppo Blu were less involved.

To conclude, the teacher asked students to write a post on Instagram about Pietro Longhi which aimed at developing students' writing production.

Students' amusement and affective factors

As regards her opinion about the students' involvement during the workshop (Question 3), she noticed that students of *Gruppo Verde* were as engaged during the in-class lessons as they were during the museum visit since they all had an artistic background, while students of *Gruppo Blu* were less involved. She reported that the students of *Gruppo Verde* asked many questions about works of art that were not included in the museum tour.

Teacher: "[the students of *Gruppo Verde*] *loro erano molto coinvolti in classe e lo erano certamente ancora di più al museo perché la maggior parte di loro avevano un background artistico quindi erano tutti artisti o erano interessati all'arte quindi hanno fatto tantissime domande anche su opere d'arte che non facevano parte del percorso e c'era molto coinvolgimento"*.

She noticed that the students of *Gruppo Blu* had a positive reaction towards the museum since they were astonished by the objects displayed at the museum but, at the same time, the same student that would participate during the in-class lessons participated also during the workshop, so, in conclusion she did not notice any particular difference in the degree of involvement.

Oral interaction

As regards the effect that students' involvement had on their oral production (Question 4), the teacher explained that students of *Gruppo Verde* produced more language during the museum visit than students of *Gruppo Blu*.

Students of *Gruppo Verde* had some difficulties in communicating in Italian but they showed a greater interest which pushed them to speak and to ask information about works of arts, in particular about a painting by Tiziano.

Teacher: "*anche se dal punto di vista linguistico ogni tanto la comunicazione era difficoltosa però c'era una volontà incredibile da parte loro nel conoscere e nell'avere informazioni riguardo a quelle opere d'arte in particolare c'era un disegno di Tiziano che li aveva veramente interessati moltissimo"*.

The teacher argued that students had difficulties (Question 5) in talking about complex artistic content which required a specific and specialistic vocabulary.

Teacher: "*Le difficoltà sono state legate prima di tutto alla non conoscenza di questo lessico specialistico nonostante abbiamo creato attività che potessero supportare la comprensione degli studenti [...], nel momento in cui le loro domande erano più complesse e le risposte avevano bisogno di un lessico più complesso è lì che c'è stata la maggiore difficoltà"*.

Moreover, another difficulty that emerged during the visit was linked to the explanation of the fresco by Giambattista Tiepolo.

According to the teacher. students had difficulties in understanding the description of the iconology used by Tiepolo since it represented the typical European iconology of the XVIII century.

From the teacher's point of view, the Activity 3 in the "Pietro Longhi room" promoted interaction among the students (Question 6) because of the subject of its paintings, that is everyday life scenes in which characters trigger curiosity and amusement, (Question 7) stimulating the students' interest.

> Teacher: *"L'interazione orale è stata per lo più in cinese nel momento in cui lavoravano. Per quanto riguarda l'interazione tra me e loro devo dire che tutte le attività sono risultate molto curiose e li hanno stimolati a farmi domande in italiano però non tra di loro che è del tutto normale perché il coinvolgimento affettivo nel momento in cui c'è già una lingua condivisa che in questo caso è la lingua madre degli studenti è difficile che questo coinvolgimento venga espresso in italiano perché le mie emozioni se voglio le voglio comunicare nella mia lingua".*

The students of *Gruppo Verde* were able to create some short dialogues in Italian since they identified themselves with the characters that most captured their attention.

As regards their oral interaction, students spoke in Chinese when working in groups, which was justifiable since the affective involvement pushed students to use their mother tongue to express their feeling and emotions, while, on the other side, they asked many questions in Italian to their teacher about the works of art displayed at the museum.

As for *Gruppo Blu*, the teacher said that the activity that created the most difficulties for the students of *Gruppo Blu* was the item 3 of Activity 1 in "Sala dei Pastelli", which asked students to reflect on an Italian proverb. This is because, students had difficulties in understanding the meaning of the proverb while the activity that mainly involved the students, in particular the students of *Gruppo Verde*, was the Activity 1 in the "Sala dei Pastelli" since students were very interested in the portraits by Rosalba Carriera and, furthermore, the painting by Tiziano, which was not included in the workshop.

Historical and cultural aspects

During the museum visit, the students asked the teacher many questions and curiosity about historical and cultural aspects which the teacher decided to further explain in class during some lessons after the visit.

The teacher explained that a curious feature of the palace of Ca' Rezzonico prompted a long discussion both during the museum tour and in classroom (Question 10). The attention of some students of *Gruppo Verde* was captured by the fact that the floor of the palace trembled, and they wanted to know the cause of this factor. The teacher explained at the museum that the cause was linked to the stratification of Venice and she tried to give further explanation using a drawing and then, she analysed in depth this topic in class.

> Teacher: *"La cosa che li ha colpiti è il fatto che il pavimento di Ca' Rezzonico oscillasse. Visto che loro volevano capire il motivo per cui oscillasse ho fatto prima un disegno al museo con un foglio e una penna e ho fatto vedere loro come Venezia sia costruita su pali di legno e su diversi strati, poi in classe ho preso l'immagine della stratificazione della costruzione/fondazione di Venezia da un libro e abbiamo approfondito quello".*

The students of *Gruppo Blu* were interested in the history of the Republic of Venice, thus, on their requests, the teacher dedicated a few lessons to the government of Venice, and she illustrated some features of the Doge's Palace and the specific lexicon related to history and politics such as "eleggere", "tolleranza" and "giustizia".

Moreover, the analysis on the Venetian painter Rosalba Carriera, whose artworks were displayed in the "Sala dei Pastelli" opened a discussion on the role of women in the XVIII century.

> Teacher: *"Ho approfondito la storia di Rosalba Carriera perché il gruppo era interessato a problemi come [..] questioni di genere con loro [students of Gruppo Blu] ho affrontato il discorso di Rosalba Carriera come donna che nonostante il periodo era riuscita ad avere successo e hanno riflettuto sulla posizione della donna in quel tempo soprattutto perché nel Gruppo Blu c'erano soprattutto donne [...]. Il gruppo blu ha dimostrato interesse alla storia di Venezia alla storia dell'organo di governo della Repubblica partendo da quello che avevamo visto a*

Ca'Rezzonico (impegando 2 lezioni) abbiamo fatto anche una serie di vocaboli molto più specifici legati alla storia e alla politica "eleggere, tolleranza, giustizia".

The teacher explained, moreover, that she resorted to the paintings by Pietro Longhi to explain some cultural aspects of Venice such as the masks that are typical during the Carnival in Venice. Indeed, Pietro Longhi depicted some figures in his paintings wearing masks and thus, the teacher used the images of those painting to illustrate the traditional masks of the Carnival of Venice.

Teacher: *"Ho utilizzato quello che avevamo fatto a Ca' Rezzonico per aiutarli a capire altri aspetti culturali di Venezia come per esempio il Carnevale. Nei quadri di Longhi avevano visto delle maschere e io ho ripreso quelle immagini per andare a vedere alcune maschere veneziane".*

5.5. Analysis of Data Observation Sheet

a) *Gruppo Blu*: the group was composed of six Marco Polo and Turandot students at A2+/B1 level. level.

The museum visit began outside the museum when the teacher explained briefly the structure of the palace and the function of its main entrance which opens on the Grand Canal.

Interaction with objects

During the museum tour, the objects and the artworks displayed in the museum (in particular the characters represented in the paintings) were used by students as instruments to access the meaning of words and concepts that student had difficulties to express. For example, students would point at objects or figures on paintings or mimed the actions represented in the fresco by Tiepolo when they did not know the Italian word. The attention of a students was drawn on the multitude of objects that were displayed in the museum which were not included in the workshop. In particular, they were intrigued by some porcelain cups that were displayed in the glass showcase in the "Sala dell'allegoria nuziale" and so, they asked the teacher information about the material and

the use of those objects. Moreover, some students noticed a table decorated with a mosaic which represented a scene taken from Aesop's Fables and thus, they wanted to know not only more about the object but also about the history related to it.

Oral interaction

Students had some difficulties in carrying out the activities proposed in the workshop but, at the same time they used some strategies to communicate.

We can find an example of the students' use of these strategies in the "Sala dell'allegoria nuziale" where students were asked to guess what event would represent the fresco by Tiepolo and to list the objects that they could see.

Although their language difficulties, all students succeeded in doing the activity applying some strategies.

Students resorted to strategies to access and to use the lexicon required for carrying out the activities such as using their smartphones or asking the teacher or to the buddy for the meaning of the words both in Italian and in Chinese and, more precisely:

- they asked the teacher in Italian using a simple structure, such as "cosa luce?";
- they used their smartphone to check the meaning of a word through a translation App;
- they asked the buddies in Chinese for the name of the objects, for further explanation, or for the spelling of a word;
- a student resorted to English to express a concept that she could not say in Italian ("war" instead of "guerra").

However, when students had difficulties in expressing themselves verbally, they either pointed at the object or element in the work of art that represented the concept that they wanted to express or they mimed it.

Students interacted with one another in Chinese and some members of the group tried to help their peer when they were in difficult with the language. For example, it happened that one of the girls explained to her peers in Chinese what she had understood listening to the teacher's explanation in Italian

A final aspect that should be pointed out it the strategy that students used to keep in mind the new words that they encountered during the visit.

Students used the objects or painting to recall the vocabulary that they learned previously, as it happened observing the fresco by Tiepolo, and students would repeat many times the words that they did not know, such as "Lombardia", "affresco".

Students' amusement and affective factors

During the whole visit, students seemed pleasantly engaged in the activities planned for the workshop: they kept asking questions about the artworks, they smiled and, moreover, they were interested in learning more about the history and the cultural aspects that the group encountered during the visit.

In the "Sala dell'allegoria nuziale" the whole group was involved in the activities and students smiled and showed their interest observing the works of art that were in the room, especially, the *Nuptial allegory*, painted by Giambattista Tiepolo on the ceiling of the room.

In the "Sala dei pastelli" there were many portraits by Rosalba Carriera and students seemed to be intrigued by the artworks in the room since they moved close to them and around the room and when the teacher proposed Activity 1 of the workshop students showed signs of enthusiasm. They used expressions such as "ah, sì" to show their involvement, maybe, because they had difficulties in adding some comments. This situation created a pleasant atmosphere and students had fun and showed interest during the entire activity.

The activity that most arose students' interest was Activity 3, which was organized in "Sala Pietro Longhi" since they tried to speak in Italian without fear of making mistakes and, furthermore, they used the appropriate lexicon.

Although students appeared interested during the whole museum tour, some of them were sometimes distracted by the use of smartphones and it seemed that they gradually lost their attention and involvement in the workshop activities.

Historical and cultural aspects

The activities carried out at the museum and the objects encountered during the visit were important starting points for discussions between students and the teacher on many cultural aspects or reflections on the language. Indeed, the students asked the teacher the meaning of some words and their use in the sentence, more specifically, the difference between "uomo" and "bambino", "serio" and "severo", the meaning of "carino" and its use in a physical description, the synonyms and the contraries of some Italian words.

As regards the cultural aspects, a comparison between Italy and China emerged talking about the roles of monks (Activity 1.3) and the modality of writing the labels which describe the portraits and, thus, a student explained that in China the labels at the museum usually report the name of the artist before the name of the artwork.

The teacher used the painting "La polenta" by Pietro Longhi as starting point to talk about a traditional food of the Venetian culture, that is the *polenta* since it was depicted in the painting. The students' communication in Italian was often sustained by the help of the buddy who helped the students translating the Italian words in Chinese.

b) *Gruppo Verde*: the group was composed of fourteen Marco Polo and Turandot students at A2 level.

Students' amusement and affective factors

The museum visit started in the "Salone da ballo" where students appeared astonished by the beauty of the room.
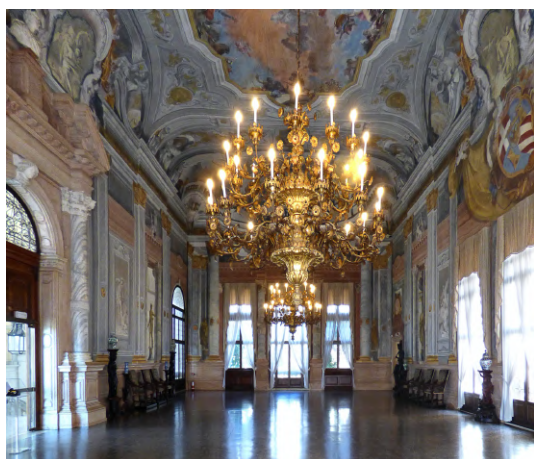

Figure 1: Salone da ballo. Retrieved from https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ca%27_Rezzonico#/media/File:Salone_da_ballo.jpg

During this first "ice breaking" activity, students payed attention to the explanation of their teacher about the history of the palace and they participated spontaneously in the discussion. Some of them seemed very interested in learning and wanted to express their contribution so much, that they resorted to English to explain a concept that they could not say in Italian.

More specifically, a student said that he was glad to learn about the artworks and about the fresco by Tiepolo because he had studied the pictorial techniques of frescos. The same student explained in Italian to his peers the technique used to paint by Canaletto to realize his paintings.

In the "Sala dei pastelli" the teacher proposed the Activity 1 of the workshop and students showed their enthusiasm and they started to carry out the activities in small groups: they interacted in Chinese with each other to prepare their oral production in Italian which was required by the activities of the workshop.

In the "Sala Pietro Longhi", the teacher gave the instructions for Activity 3 and students appeared amused while they carried out the activities since they added cheerful comments about the artworks.

Figure 2. Il Rinoceronte, Pietro Longhi, 1751. Retrieved from https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/il-rinoceronte-pietro-longhi/WwHPqEppbJ_baQ

A student used his imagination to carry out Activity 3.5.: he had to create a real or an imaginary autobiography identifying himself with a character that Pietro Longhi represented in his paintings. He identified himself with the rhinoceros, which was represented in one of the paintings and he carried out the activity correctly and without anxiety and so, the activity became a game.

Interaction with objects

The artworks were used to help students to recall the Italian words that they remembered and so, they listed the objects and figures that they knew.

Figure 3. Allegoria nuziale. Giambattista Tiepolo. Retrieved from https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/allegoria-nuziale-giambattista-tiepolo/9gE5U8Xa72tzEA?hl=it

In the "Sala dell'allegoria nuziale" students were intrigued by the fresco by Tiepolo and by the objects displayed in the room.

In the "Sala dei pasteli", a student was intrigued by the damask which covered the walls of the room and by an object depicted in the painting, a fur coat, and although he had difficulties in speaking in Italian, he asked for information about the material which was used to realize the damask and the reason why it was used to cover the walls and he tried to use some strategies to support to his speech because he did not know the names of the objects that he wanted to talk about.

Some students noticed that the floor of the palace trembled, and they wanted to know the cause of this factor, so, their teacher explained briefly the cause.

Figure 4. Canal Grande da Palazzo Balbi a Rialto,.1722. Canaletto. Retrieved from https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ca%27_Rezzonico#/media/File:Ca'_Rezzonico_-_Canal_Grande_da_Palazzo_Balbi_a_Rialto_C.1722_-_Canaletto.jpg

Moving from a room to another, some students stopped in front of a painting by Canaletto, that was not included in the workshop, and asked the teacher questions about the pictorial techniques. Moreover, a student explained to his peers the technique used to paint. In this occasion, a student shared his personal experience when he made a comparison between the paintings that were displayed in the museum and the paintings that he saw in Florence.

In the "Sala Pietro Longhi", students were intrigued by the objects represented in the paintings and they asked the buddy to translate the name of the object from Chinese to Italian.

The artworks were used as a starting point for beginning a discussion in Italian with their teacher without anxiety and without fear of making mistakes.

Oral interaction

As regards their oral production, students demonstrated some difficulties in speaking Italian, but they succeeded in communicating using some strategies.

They asked the buddy the translation from Chinese to Italian of the objects and the figures that they saw, or they used their smartphones to check the translation, while some of them interacted very much in Italian with their teacher.

The majority of the students had difficulties in reading the labels of the portraits so, their teacher helped them to read the labels while, they did not have difficulties in describing the figures.

They asked the buddy or the teacher the name of the object using simple structures, such as "Come si dice questo?" and pointing at the object or miming the meaning.

We noticed that when the students encountered an unknown word, they would repeat it many times in order to remember the sound easily.

Historical and cultural aspects

The museum tour and the objects encountered in the rooms of the museum arose students' interest and curiosity and students, often, asked the teacher explanations about the artworks and their artists or clarification about the use of the language.

After the activity in "Sala dei pastelli", students were intrigued by the the Venetian painter Rosalba Carriera, whose portraits were displayed in the room and they asked many questions about the painter and her artworks.

Some students, moreover, noticed that the floor of the palace trembled, and they wanted to know the cause of this factor, so, their teacher explained briefly the stratification of Venice through a drawing, so they were intrigued also by environmental inputs.

As regards the use of the language, some students asked the teacher clarifications about the use of "odore" and "profumo" and "rumore" and "suono" and he pointed at his mouth or nose to indicate the concept that he wanted

6. Discussion

6.1. Research results

In this chapter, we will discuss the data analysed in chapter 5. In the first paragraph (6.1.1) we will answer to our first research question "*how does the museum experience influence the affective dimension of students?*" while, in the second paragraph (6.1.2) we will answer to our second research question "*do the museum objects promote students' oral skills in Italian L2?*".

We will discuss our research questions highlighting the main themes that emerged from the analysis of the data collected.

6.1.1 Research Question 1: students' affective dimension

During the museum visit, students were both interested and engaged as they smiled, moved close to the artworks and around the room showing signs of enthusiasm and involvement and they asked many questions despite some language difficulties.

Although some students were sometimes distracted by the use of smartphones, they appeared interested from the very beginning of the tour when they appeared astonished by the beauty of Ca' Rezzonico palace and its objects and artworks displayed in its rooms. The teacher herself was pleasantly surprised by the students' involvement in the activities, especially the students of *Gruppo Verde*, and she noticed how their interest and curiosity pushed them to express themselves, their passions and enthusiasm in learning and, consequently, to speak in Italian asking many questions during the visit.

Moreover, the students showed explicitly their personal interest and their motivation in taking part in the activities with enthusiasm and this is comprehensible if we consider the students' background, since, as we have previously explained, the majority of the Marco Polo and Turandot students was pre-enrolled in the *Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice*, in the *Conservatorio "Benedetto Marcello",* and so had a solid artistic background.

It was evident that students' interest was enhanced by connecting new learning with their personal interests, background knowledge and, thus, the museum visit was a positive experience for Marco Polo and Turandot students.

In support to this, we allude to the intervention of a student of *Gruppo Verde*, who told the teacher that he was glad to learn about the paintings that were displayed in the museum and, more specifically, about the fresco *Allegoria nuziale* by Giambattista Tiepolo because he had studied the pictorial techniques of frescos. The same very student then shared with his peers his knowledge about the pictorial techniques used by Canaletto in *Canal Grande da Palazzo Balbi a Rialto* to realize his paintings.

As Hirsch and Silverman (2017) argue, museum visitors are motivated to learn more about topics that have personal relevance and utility. Indeed, they explained that it is visitors' interests that impel them to explore exhibits which results in deep engagement in learning because "they may rekindle memories, embellish previous knowledge and extend understanding in idiosyncratic, personal ways" (idem, 2017).

Hirsch and Silverman (2017) explain how interest in a topic raises feeling and value-related characteristics, such as enjoyment and involvement because, as they state, when people attribute positive values and feeling to an activity, they are likely to pursue it vigorously.

Indeed, the students in our study museum participated spontaneously in the discussion at the museum, speaking in Italian, and some of them wanted to express their contribution so much, that they resorted to English to explain a concept that they could not say in Italian.

Moreover, museum, being a non-formal context, offers visitors the opportunity to learn and in a more creative way promote enjoyment and pleasure in learning.

The students gave evidence of enjoyment during the workshop, for example, in the "Sala Pietro Longhi", where students were asked to use their imagination to create a real or imaginary autobiography identifying themselves with one of the figures that the Venetian painter Pietro Longhi represented in his paintings.

In this circumstance, a student of *Gruppo Verde*, after a little time of reflection on the task, asked to carry out his activity in front of his peers and he seemed to be very cheerful and motivated, thus, this factor contributed to create a pleasant atmosphere among all the students, who were interested in listening what their colleague would say.

He explained that he identified himself with the rhinoceros, which Pietro Longhi represented in his famous painting *Il Rinoceronte*, 1751, and he described his physical aspect imagining what the animal of the painting could see or hear and he carried out the activity without frustration and anxiety.

The performance of this student had also a positive effect on the other students of the group since the majority of them expressed cheerful comments and showed a greater involvement and participation than in the previous activities.

This is one of the best examples which display how an activity aimed at language learning can be turned into a joyful occasion for learning and the outcome of the students' performance proved how enjoyment fosters language production and, consequently, language learning (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016: 216).

An explanation of the benefits of language learning in museum is given by Paris (1997), who argues that the museum environment raises in visitors the willingness to accept challenges that rarely would be accepted in a formal context. Paris explains that the museum is an effective in promoting many motivational processes, which are at the basis of learning, such as feelings of pride, efficacy and accomplishment (Paris, 1997: 24).

Another significant factor which intervenes in this context is the enjoyment generated by the museum experience and, in particular, by the game-like atmosphere which non-formal contexts often provide.

Sylva, Bruner, and Genova (1976, quoted in Paris, 2002), argue that in amusing activities the risk of failure lowers as does the learner's frustration and anxiety providing the useful conditions for learning and enhancing one's knowledge, and language learning.

In conclusion, we can affirm that the museum experience influenced positively the affective dimension of students who were willing to speak in Italian, without fear of making mistakes, thanks to their involvement in the experience and interest in the topics.

6.1.2. Research Question 2: student's oral skills

a) Interaction with objects

It is acknowledged that what makes the museum a unique place which promotes learning is the fact that it offers multiple ways of interacting with the objects that are displayed in its rooms: visitors can get in touch with many multimodal and multisensorial objects but they can also move around the rooms, discovering the environment and analysing the artworks closer.

During the museum visit, we observed how the students were intrigued by many objects and we can affirm that such authentic and first handed experience at the museum stimulated their curiosity since they appeared interested in learning and asked their

teacher many questions about the history of the palace, the famous Venetian painters, whose artworks were displayed in the museum and other museum objects.

The students interacted with the objects during the whole museum visit: when students encountered an artwork that drew their attention, they would examine it closer, trying to make hypotheses through speaking to each other in their mother tongue and then, they would ask the teacher for clarification about the usage or the characteristics of the objects by also pointing at a figure in the paintings or miming the actions represented when they did not know the Italian word.

Thus, we noticed that students interacted with the objects in two different ways: at first they were intrigued by the objects that stimulated their curiosity and interest and then they used the museum objects as instruments to access the meaning of words and concepts that they had difficulties to express in Italian.

As Borun (2002: 245) argues, objects have a prominent role in our learning process because we acquire knowledge through observation, imitation or through the interaction with skilled people, but she pointed out that we also acquire knowledge through the interaction with objects and this was what happened during the experience at the museum. The students were intrigued by objects commonly present in day to day life, such as some porcelain cups that were displayed in the glass showcases in the "Sala dell'allegoria nuziale" and by a table decorated with a mosaic which drew their attention because of their intricate decorations.

The students were also interested in learning more about some unusual objects that are rarely used nowadays, such as the damask which covered the walls of the "Sala dei pastelli" so curiosity and interest would be raised when students encountered eccentric objects.

The museum workshop gave students the opportunity to exchange information and reactions which came directly from their interaction with the objects displayed or to make associations with their prior knowledge.

However, apart from the objects, it was the environment itself which affected students' engagement. Indeed, some students of *Gruppo Verde* noticed that the floor of the palace trembled, and they wanted to know the cause of this phenomenon, which as their teacher explained the cause which was related to the stratification of the ground of Venice.

In this context, the museum objects are useful as a starting point for examining in depth visitors' curiosities which could emerge from their questions and hypotheses. Also, the art museum can become, as Rowe says, a space where visitors interacting with objects

may generate personal sense and exhibit their cultural capital (Rowe, 2002, quoted in van Kraayenoord and Paris, 2002: 32).

This is what happened during the museum visit. More precisely, when a student was in front of a painting by Canaletto, although his difficulties in speaking in Italian, he wanted to share his personal experience and knowledge on pictorial techniques used by the painter making a comparison between the paintings that were displayed at Ca' Rezzonico and the paintings that he saw in Florence.

This is the reason why museum objects should be considered as both something to connect to visitors' prior experience for future interactions, so objects emphasize the autobiographical memories and reminiscence of the past (Falk and Dierking, 1992, quoted in van Kraayenoord and Paris 2002: 226).

We can affirm that objects elicit personal experiences, emotions, stories and past events, and the power of the emotions that emerge from "reading" the object makes the learning enjoyable.

In this way, we can imagine that when visitors look at objects they do not only observe an object made of a specific material or realized by an artist, but they also open a window through which they are able to "read" their own experience in the context of a larger history and culture.

Indeed, the direct interaction with objects promote the visual and kinesthetic learning that can be far richer and more complex than text because if texts are necessary to provide the vocabulary and concepts through which to interpret the experience, the memorable part of the experience comes from observing and manipulating objects and this can be considered as the power of the museum (Borun, 2002: 247)

In conclusion, we can say that the value of an object comes not simply from its material or from the fame of the artist that realized it, but from its ability to enlighten a part of the human experience and so. In quoting Morrissey (2002: 288) "the power of an object resides in the language it speaks and the language it provokes among viewers".

b) Oral interaction

As we have already mentioned, the students used the museum objects as tools to access the meaning of words and to communicate during the museum visit when they had difficulties to speak in Italian with the teacher and the buddy.

Our assumption was that students would have difficulty during the museum visit in communicating fluently and without strategies that would support their oral production in Italian since nearly all students had studied Italian for less than a year.

However, although students had some difficulties in speaking in Italian, they showed a greater interest in learning which pushed them to speak in Italian during the activities.

We noticed that a good number of students participated actively during the workshop activities and this would be justified by the fact that they had good expectations to practice the language. Indeed, the majority of them hoped to have the chance to improve their oral skills speaking in Italian and to develop their comprehension skills since their main objective was to reach a high language proficiency in Italian in order to achieve their future studies at the university.

The students arrived at the museum with an adequate preparation since their teacher prepared them before the visit by planning a few lessons. She illustrated both the language and content that would be useful for students to carry out the activities during the museum workshop. Such lessons aimed, moreover, to activate their expectancy grammar and to raise their motivation and interest before the visit. Thus, students were able to use the Italian "Imperfetto" for talking about events that occurred in the past, to describe a picture and to talk about everyday situations.

During the workshop, the students had also the chance to make a focus on the use of the language, since some doubts about the use of some words emerged, such as the difference between "odore" and "profumo", "rumore" and "suono", "uomo" and "bambino", "serio" and "severo", and the meaning of "carino" and how to use it in descriptions.

Coming back to our focus on students' use of the museum objects in their language production, we can affirm that students used the objects as starting point for speaking in Italian, especially with their teacher, in order to ask for clarifications or curiosity on the artworks encountered during the museum visit.

As mentioned in the literature review, the use of "realia", that is the use of authentic and tangible objects, stimulates learners' creativity allowing the learners who are endowed with kinaesthetic intelligence to take advantage of their own sensorial abilities, which foster their active approach to learning (Iasci, 2019: 120).

However, although the students had difficulties in communicating in Italian, they succeeded in doing the workshop activities using some strategies that they used to overcome their difficulties in communication. First of all, the students used the objects or

the figures represented in the paintings to recall the vocabulary that they already knew listing the object that they could see.

Moreover, we noticed that when the students encountered an unknown word, they would:

– repeat it many times in order memorize it
– use their smartphone to check the meaning of the word through translation Apps
– ask their buddies in Chinese for the spelling and the meaning of the words.

However, when the students ask questions to the teacher in Italian, they used simple sentences, or they resorted to English to express concepts that they could not say in Italian. However, we noticed that when students had difficulties in expressing themselves verbally, they either pointed at the object or element in the work of art that represented the concept that they wanted to express, or they mimed it. This is a suitable strategy because it helps the learner who has a low level of language proficiency to convey the message without using the language.

The fact that students would point at the objects in order to support their communication in Italian L2 finds an explanation in the literature. Van Lier (2004: 66) explains that language and the world are tying by a semiotic process, which is called deixis or indicational process of language and some of its most important functions are indexing, referring and naming that are generally used by the incipient language learners. Indeed, the students resorted to these strategies to access and to use the vocabulary, since, they had difficulties in talking about complex artistic content which required a specific knowledge in the field of art and history and specialistic vocabulary.

In conclusion, an important point must be clarified. We noticed that the answers provided by the students sometimes seemed to be quite superficial or not completely clear and so, we concluded that the reason was linked to the fact that this research involved respondents with limited Italian proficiency and so, they may have had difficulty in fully expressing their thoughts.

c) Historical and cultural aspects

The students declared that the museum workshop was not only a perfect occasion for language learning, but it was also a good chance for learning cultural contents, since they hoped to learn more about the history of Venice, to admire the museum's works of arts and to improve their knowledge about art and Italian culture.

From the very beginning, the students displayed a high level of intrinsic motivation, which is comprehensible if we consider the target of students involved in this museum workshop, the majority of which was pre-enroled in the *Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice* or in the *Conservatorio "Benedetto Marcello"*, thus, they are fond of history of art.

However, although the artistic background of many students, some of them had problems in comprehension of historical contents because the cultural background of these students was not enough developed to allow them to make hypotheses.

As we have previously mentioned, the students demonstrated a great involvement and interest in the activities. This fact was extremely positive since we notice the ideal condition to successfully carry out a museum workshop implementing CLIL modalities. Indeed, the idea that the students would have learned both language and content was consistent with the students' expectations which contributed to enhance their motivation. Before the visit, the teacher organized a few in-class lessons in which she illustrated the content that would be useful for students to better understand the cultural aspects of the museum workshop.

More specifically, the teacher talked about the history of Venice and the most significant features of Venetian art during the XVIII century to raise their motivation before the visit. The students appreciated the visit and the museum activities, and they used the objects encountered in the rooms of the museum as important starting points for discussions on some historical and cultural aspects.

This was very important in our research since the topics emerged during the museum workshop pushed the students to speak in Italian and to ask for further clarifications and so the teacher decided to analyse those topics during some lessons after the visit.

As regards the history, the teacher decided to dedicate a few lessons focussing on the explanation of the form of Venetian government, illustrating the powers of the Dodge and the features of his residence, the Doge's Palace and, moreover, the teacher presented the specific lexicon related to history and politics.

Some female students, instead, were intrigued by the Venetian painter Rosalba Carriera and so, their teacher decided to open a debate on the role of women in the XVIII century asking the students' ideas and making comparisons between the figure of women today and in the XVIII century.

In addition to these cultural aspects, the students were intrigued in further aspects more related to the tradition of Venetian culture.

The teacher, indeed, used the paintings that the students encountered at Ca'Rezzonico to show the Venetian traditional food, for example, the *polenta* which students noticed in one of the paintings by Pietro Longhi, which were displayed in "Sala Pietro Longhi". However, the painting depicted by Longhi were used by the teacher also to speak about one of the most famous annual festivities celebrated in Venice, and so, the teacher restored to some paintings by Longhi to illustrate the traditional costumes and traditional masks of the Carnival of Venice.

In conclusion, we can affirm that museums have the potential to connect visitors to people in other times and places, and to help the them to learn the history and culture of a country (Morrisey, 2002: 294).

We can conclude that the interaction with museum objects do not only engage the visitors in observing and describing them, but they engage also the visitor' prior knowledge which pushes them to share their ideas and to exchange their opinions.

6.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can not prove that the museum objects developed the students' oral skills in Italian L2 because we did not test their oral ability, but we can affirm that the museum experience and the museum objects offered the students many possibilities to talk in Italian both at the museum and then in class.

Indeed, the non-formal context created the effective conditions to put the students at ease, allowing them to forget they were learning and speaking without anxiety about specific contents, which would have been difficult to learn during in-class lessons.

At the museum, or in another non-formal setting, the attention of students is divided between content that they want to convey and the target language, while, in a traditional language class this distinction is not so definite since the activities are usually designed to allow the students to practicing the target language, while the contents have a secondary importance (Coonan, 2009: 32).

Moreover, the students had the chance to speak and consequently learn Italian in an authentic context interacting which each other for real purposes concentrating both on the language and on the content.

7. Limitations and further research

The implementation of the museum workshop at Ca' Rezzonico, Museum of XVIII Century Venice implicated some issues.

First of all, the students involved in this research would be about 40 Chinese students but only 20 students took part in the workshop at the museum, so we were bound to depend on the answers by a small number of respondents.

The second limitation regards the data collection, more specifically the collection of data of the students' post-visit questionnaires. Due to time constraints, we decided to ask students to fill in the pre-visit questionnaires on site before the museum visit and to ask students to fill in the post-visit questionnaires in classroom. However, it was impossible to hand out the post-visit questionnaires in paper format and they were sent through Google Forms to students after the university closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic which outburst in March 2020 in Italy. The Italian government imposed a national lockdown and ordered the closure of schools, universities and public institutions locations including museums. This is the reason why we were able to collect only five students' post-visit questionnaires.

As regards the implementation of the activities of the museum workshop, it was not possible to complete all the activities created for this workshop, in particular, Activity 2 because the "portego" where we should have carried out the activities was closed to the public due to a set-up organized by the museum and, moreover, we decided to omit Activity 4 due to time constraints.

From the final reflection on this study, we noticed some critical aspects that emerged during the research. First of all, we believe that it would be useful to repeat the experience at the museum with Marco Polo and Turandot students, maybe in different occasions and in different museums such as in a modern art museum or gallery. Indeed, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to organize other workshops even if it would be useful to collect further data in order to increase our observations and analysis.

Moreover, the workshop at Ca' Rezzonico was the first experience of non-formal learning for Marco Polo and Turandot students of the a.y. 2019/2020 and, maybe, some of them would have intervened more during the activities but, they were probably limited by shyness.

Another important aspect deals with our difficulties in analyzing the students' answers to questionnaires since sometimes the answers provided by the students seemed to be

superficial or not completely clear and so, we concluded that the reason was linked to the fact that this research involved respondents with limited Italian proficiency and so, they may have had difficulty in fully expressing their thoughts. For this reason, we believe that a mediator should be involved when students' language level is low and does not allow to delve deeper into their perceptions.

Conclusion

Non-official statistics reveal that about 80% of Chinese students involved in Marco Polo and Turandot project drops out the university after only a year and students who turn to university helpdesks declare that their main difficulty is language learning (Rastelli, 2011: 92).

From the analysis of the needs of Marco Polo and Turandot students in Venice, it emerges that very often Chinese students have a considerable difficulty in developing their productive language skills, moreover, at the end of the language course, they struggle in achieving the intermediate level in Italian (either B1 or B2 level), which is a fundamental requirement to enrol at the Italian university (see paragraph 4.3.).

Although Marco Polo students seem to be able to speak Italian in everyday situations, they still have difficulty in understanding Italian during their studies in an academic context.

Certainly, they know very well grammatical rules, structures of the language, vocabulary and they are able to converse in Italian in social contexts and this may lead them to believe that they are prepared for their university studies.

However, the problem is more complex: although these students succeed in passing the language exam, they often fail their academic exams or they perform poorly and, eventually, they leave the university (Rastelli, 2011: 92).

James Cummins (2013) explains that language has two dimensions: *Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills* (BICS)[13] which represents the basic language skills used in informal communication and *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP) which refers to "students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school" (idem: 65).

The terminology used by Cummins from the early eighties has been translated in Italian respectively as "Italbase" and "Italstudio"[14] (D'Annunzio, 2015: 91) and since this research has been conducted in Italian learning context, it seems more appropriate to use the Italian terminology.

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[13] BICS is the language needed in everyday activities such as, shopping, greeting, ordering at the restaurant, asking information. Students' main source acquiring BICS is through meaningful conversations with native speakers. It takes a speaker from three to five years to become fluent in BICS (Grassi and Bulmahn Barker, 2010: 78)

[14] Italian Language Proficiency for Academic Purposes

Nonetheless, the lessons of the preparatory Italian course of Marco Polo and Turandot projects should be ameliorated. Teachers spend enormous amount of time teaching basic linguistic competence (Italbase skills) in order to prepare students for their future linguistic realities, while, at the same time, teachers are failing to develop sufficient Italstudio skills to enable students to handle the language demands of the academic studies (Cummins, 2000: 53).

Unfortunately, students are often expected to achieve independently their fluency in Italstudio, while teachers should teach them specific learning skills during the preparatory language course and guide them to gradually move from Italbase to Italstudio, teaching them how to write an essay or how to report on a topic using the academic style.

From the discussion above, the difficulty of the challenge Marco Polo and Turandot students have to face is clear.

At the end of the language preparatory course in Italy Chinese students developed good competence in Italbase, but they are also expected to have well-developed academic language abilities, regardless the fact that they must acquire in a few months Italbase skills that Italian native speakers developed as a mother tongue.

However, there is an issue in planning the language course because students need to develop both conversational and academic proficiency and, as Elisabetta Bonvino (2011: 38) suggests, the language preparatory course for Marco Polo and Turandot students should include modules or lessons designed according to CLIL modalities.

This approach is suitable for this type of learning program since it joins meaningful academic contents to higher language proficiency.

Therefore, it puts into practice what Cummins (2000: 1) states, that is "language is meaningless outside of a human communicative and interpretive context". Indeed, this is the reason why we decided to intervene planning a workshop which could join the benefits of CLIL methodology and the museum learning. The implementation of a CLIL workshop at the museum intended to integrate the Italian cultural content and the authentic language use that would have develop the Chinese students' s oral skills in Italian L2. As regards our choice to implement the workshop in a non-formal context, we started from the assumption that research displayed that traditional in-class learning provides limited opportunities for improving learners' language skills while non-formal learning provides a wider range of advantages for second language acquisition (Richards, 2015: 5). We decided to create our workshop in a museum environment because our aim was, on one hand, to provide students cultural content such as the history and art of Venice

during the XVIII century and, on the other hand, to engage students in an authentic communication in order to expand their language skills. Our choice to plan this workshop implementing the CLIL methodology was guided from the analysis of CLIL theoretical framework which guarantees the teaching and learning of curricular content through the medium of a foreign language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011: 183).

Besides the advantage of CLIL related to language acquisition in a more meaningful and authentic context, CLIL can lay the foundations for the organization of the knowledge of the various disciplines and, above all, it can enhance the Italstudio skills and increase the learners' vocabulary. Indeed, during a CLIL lesson students have the possibility not only to converse about non-language content, sharing their personal experiences or thoughts but also, they improve their productive abilities in a more safeguarded context rather than in crowded university classes (Bonvino, 2011: 38).

After having meditated on the benefits of museum learning and the number possibilities that museum could provide to enhance the oral production learners of Italian L2, we decided to design our activities starting from the artworks displayed at the museum.

We had two main assumptions that guided us in this research, and we based our research questions on them (see paragraph 4.2.). The activities designed for the workshop had the purpose of promote students' oral skills and, to provide a supportive scaffolding to overcome the difficulties that affected their oral production.

In conclusion, we can affirm that the museum workshop had a positive influence on the students' affective dimension since they were involved in the activities and interested in the topics. Moreover, we observed the important influence that the museum objects exercised on students and how they were used as tools for support their communication, to access to meaning and vocabulary and to discover the historical and traditional aspects of the Italian culture.

Our fundamental aim was to push the students to speak as much as possible in Italian during the workshop and we were pleasantly satisfied that our activities also promoted further discussion also in the classroom. Indeed, our intention was to promote dialogue and speaking because we are aware that one of the best ways to enhance students' oral skills is by having them interact about authentic content.

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Appendixes

A) WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

LABORATORIO LINGUISTICO DI ITALIANO - LIVELLO A2

Museo del Settecento Veneziano - Ca' Rezzonico - Venezia

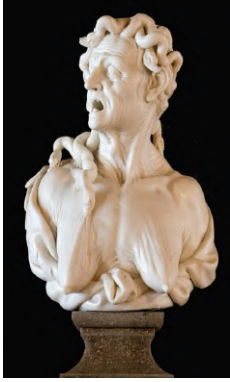#### ATTIVITÀ 1 – SALA DEI PASTELLI

1. Guardati attorno e osserva i dipinti nella sala.

    - Quanti uomini vedi? _____

    - Quante donne vedi? _____

     -Ci sono bambini?   Si   No   Se si, quanti? _____

2. Osserva le persone che sono rappresentate nei dipinti. Scegli una persona rappresentata in uno dei dipinti e scrivi un aggettivo per descrivere il suo abito e il suo carattere

    Ho scelto *(nome del dipint*o) _____

    - il suo abito è _____

    - il suo carattere è _____

3. Questi dipinti sembrano delle vere fotografie e oggi possiamo guardare questi dipinti e imparare molto sulla moda e sullo stile di vita del 1700.

    Questi ritratti ricordano i nostri e moderni *selfie*. Secondo te, una fotografia racconta il nostro carattere?

    Una fotografia racconta il nostro carattere perché...

    Una fotografia non racconta il nostro carattere perché...

ATTIVITÀ 2 – PORTEGO

1. Guarda il soggetto di questa opera. Cosa vedi? Cosa rappresenta? Discuti con il tuo gruppo riguardo il soggetto di questa opera.

In questa opera vedo

_____

Mi piace/non mi piace perché

_____

2. Scrivi nel riquadro degli aggettivi per descrivere l'aspetto fisico e degli aggettivi per descrivere il carattere di questa scultura.

<table>
<tr><td>ASPETTO FISICO
……………………
……………………
……………………
……………………
……………………
……………………
……………………</td><td>CARATTERE
……………………
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……………………
……………………</td></tr>
</table>

3. Cerca le informazioni per completare il testo. Puoi chiedere al personale del museo o cercare nelle didascalie dell'opera.

Nome dell'opera _____   Anno _____

Nome dell'artista _____   Materiale _____

4. Ora che hai scoperto il titolo di questa scultura, trova un sinonimo e un contrario del nome dell'opera.

SINONIMO: _____

CONTRARIO: _____

5. Il nome di questa scultura ti sembra adatto?

Si, perché _____

No, perché _____

6. Guarda le altre sculture che sono nel Portego. Quali altre emozioni sono rappresentate nelle altre sculture? Scegli una scultura e descrivi quale emozione rappresenta.

    Ho scelto la scultura (*nome*) _____

    e l'emozione che rappresenta è _____

    perché _____

ATTIVITÀ 3 - SALA PIETRO LONGHI

1. In questa sala ci sono molti dipinti del pittore Pietro Longhi. Guarda attentamente. Cosa rappresentano questi dipinti?

    a) la bellezza della natura

    b) la vita quotidiana

    c) la guerra e le battaglie

2. Le persone raffigurate sono

    a) persone nobili e ricche e lo capisco perché _____

    b) persone comuni e lo capisco perché _____

3. Gli oggetti/animali/persone che riconosco nei dipinti sono:

    _____

4. Quali emozioni provi guardando questi dipinti?

    o calma, perché _____

    o rabbia, perché _____

    o gioia o felicità, perché _____

    o tristezza, perché _____

    o divertimento, perché _____

    o noia, perché _____

5. Scegli un dipinto. Immagina di essere un personaggio del dipinto.

Titolo del dipinto _____

Nel dipinto, io sono _____

e indosso _____

Sono in _____

e sono in compagnia di _____

Posso vedere _____

Posso sentire il suono/rumore di _____

Posso sentire il profumo/odore di _____

ATTIVITÀ 4 – MONDO NUOVO

1. Osserva questo dipinto di Giandomenico Tiepolo, uno dei pittori veneziani più famosi del 1700. Hai a disposizione due minuti.

2. Ora che hai osservato l'affresco, crea con il tuo gruppo una lista delle cose, persone, animali che hai visto.

Nel dipinto ho visto: _____

3. Guarda di nuovo il dipinto e rispondi alle seguenti domande:

- Chi sono le persone rappresentate nel dipinto?
   Le persone rappresentate nel dipinto sono _____

- Dove si trovano le persone?
   a) in campagna
   b) vicino al mare
   c) in montagna

- Che cosa stanno facendo? _____
- Che cosa c'è di strano? _____

LABORATORIO LINGUISTICO DI ITALIANO - LIVELLO A2+/B1

Museo del Settecento Veneziano - Ca' Rezzonico - Venezia

<u>ATTIVITÀ 1 – SALA DEI PASTELLI</u>

1. Guardati attorno e osserva i dipinti nella sala.

    - Quanti uomini vedi? _____

    - Quante donne vedi? _____

    -Ci sono bambini?   Si   No   Se si, quanti? _____

2. Osserva le persone che sono rappresentate nei dipinti. Scegli una persona

    rappresentata in uno dei dipinti e scrivi un aggettivo per descrivere il suo carattere

    Ho scelto *(nome del dipinto)* _____

    - il suo carattere è _____

3. Un famoso proverbio italiano recita "*l'abito non fa il monaco*" e significa che
    l'apparenza molte volte non corrisponde alla realtà e quindi dobbiamo essere
    prudenti quando giudichiamo gli altri.
    Cosa ne pensi? Hai mai giudicato una persona e poi ti sei reso conto di aver
    sbagliato il tuo giudizio dopo aver conosciuto meglio questa persona? Raccontalo la
    tua esperienza. .

<u>ATTIVITÀ 2 – PORTEGO</u>

1. Guarda il soggetto di questa opera. Cosa vedi? Cosa rappresenta? Discuti con il tuo

    gruppo riguardo il soggetto di questa opera.

In questa opera vedo

_____

Mi piace/non mi piace perché

_____

2. Scrivi nel riquadro degli aggettivi per descrivere l'aspetto fisico e degli aggettivi per descrivere il carattere di questa scultura.

ASPETTO FISICO
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………

CARATTERE
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………
………………………

3. Cerca le informazioni per completare il testo. Puoi chiedere al personale del museo o cercare nelle didascalie dell'opera.

Nome dell'opera _____   Anno _____

Nome dell'artista _____   Materiale _____

4. Ora che hai scoperto il titolo di questa scultura, trova un sinonimo e un contrario del nome dell'opera.

SINONIMO: _____

CONTRARIO: _____

5. Il nome di questa scultura ti sembra adatto?

Si, perché _____

No, perché _____

6. Guarda le altre sculture che sono nel Portego. Quali altre emozioni sono rappresentate nelle altre sculture? Scegli una scultura e descrivi quale emozione rappresenta.

Ho scelto la scultura (*nome*) _____

e l'emozione che rappresenta è _____

perché _____

ATTIVITÀ 3 - SALA PIETRO LONGHI

1. In questa sala ci sono molti dipinti del pittore Pietro Longhi. Guarda attentamente.
   Cosa rappresentano questi dipinti?

   > a) la bellezza della natura
   >
   > b) la vita quotidiana
   >
   > c) la guerra e le battaglie

2. Le persone raffigurate sono

   c) persone nobili e ricche e lo capisco perché _____

   d) persone comuni e lo capisco perché _____

3. Gli oggetti/animali/persone che riconosco nei dipinti sono:

   _____

4. Quali emozioni provi guardando questi dipinti?
   o calma, perché _____
   o rabbia, perché _____
   o gioia o felicità, perché _____
   o tristezza, perché _____
   o divertimento, perché _____
   o noia, perché _____

5. Scegli un dipinto. Immagina di essere un personaggio del dipinto.

   Titolo del dipinto _____

   Nel dipinto, io sono _____

   e indosso _____

   Sono in _____

   e sono in compagnia di _____

   Posso vedere _____

   Posso sentire il suono/rumore di _____

   Posso sentire il profumo/odore di _____

ATTIVITÀ 4 – MONDO NUOVO

1. Osserva questo dipinto di Giandomenico Tiepolo, uno dei pittori veneziani più famosi del 1700. Hai a disposizione due minuti.

2. Ora che hai osservato l'affresco, crea con il tuo gruppo una lista delle cose, persone, animali che hai visto.

   Nel dipinto ho visto: _____

3. Guarda di nuovo il dipinto e rispondi alle seguenti domande:

   - Chi sono le persone rappresentate nel dipinto?
      Le persone rappresentate nel dipinto sono _____

   - Dove si trovano le persone?
      d) in campagna
      e) vicino al mare
      f) in montagna

   - Che cosa stanno facendo? _____
   - Che cosa c'è di strano? _____

References

L'invidia. (n.d.). Artsandculture.Google.Com. Retrieved January 30, 2020, from

https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/l-invidia/hwGYcZP831sOig?hl=it

B) INTERVIEWS

a) TEACHER'S WRITTEN INTERVIEW

1. Qual è il background formativo degli studenti?

2. In che modo ha preparato gli studenti prima del laboratorio linguistico?

3. Ha notato un diverso coinvolgimento da parte degli studenti durante le attività al museo rispetto alle attività condotte in classe?

4. Ha notato delle differenze tra gli interventi in italiano degli studenti che avvengono in classe rispetto a quelli emersi durante il laboratorio linguistico al museo?

5. Quali sono state le difficoltà degli studenti che hanno ostacolato i loro interventi in italiano?

6. Quale attività le è sembrata essere efficace per promuovere interazione in italiano tra gli studenti? Quale attività, invece, ha creato difficoltà?

7. Quale attività le è sembrata stimolare interesse negli studenti? Quale attività, invece, ha suscitato poco interesse?

8. Quali attività proposte durante il laboratorio sono state in seguito approfondite in classe? Perché?

9. Quali opere esposte al museo sono state inseguito approfondite in classe? Perché?

10. Ci sono stati oggetti, opere d'arte o input ambientali che hanno suggerito stimoli per iniziare conversazioni in classe? Quali e perché?

11. La visita al museo e il laboratorio linguistico di italiano hanno suggerito approfondimenti storico-culturali da trattare in classe? Quali?

12. C'è qualche cosa che vorrebbe aggiungere?

C) QUESTINNAIRES

1) LABORATORIO LINGUISTICO DI ITALIANO AL MUSEO - QUESTIONARIO PRIMA DELLA VISITA

Cara studentessa, caro studente,

ti chiedo gentilmente di compilare questo questionario prima di partecipare al laboratorio linguistico di italiano al museo. I dati verranno raccolti e impiegati per sviluppare uno studio sull'interazione e la produzione orale dell'italiano come lingua straniera in un contesto non formale e in particolare in un ambiente museale.

Grazie per il tuo prezioso contributo.

A. INFORMAZIONI PERSONALI

1. **Sesso**

   maschio   femmina

2. **Da quanto tempo studi italiano**

   meno di un anno   da un anno   da più di un anno

B. INTERVISTA

1. **Ti piace imparare l'italiano?**

   si   così così   no

2. **Secondo te, è importante cercare di parlare il più possibile per imparare bene l'italiano?**

   no   non so   si

3. **Come giudichi la il tuo livello di italiano quando parli?**

   scarso   nella media   buono   ottimo

4. **Come cerchi di imparare a parlare in italiano?**

   in classe durante le lezioni di italiano

   in situazioni diverse dal corso di italiano

   in ogni occasione

altro ....

5. **Secondo te, un laboratorio al museo può essere una occasione utile per parlare italiano?**

    Si, perché _____

    No, perché _____

6. **Visitare un museo famoso può essere una buona occasione per migliorare il tuo italiano?**

    Si, perché _____

    No, perché _____

2) LABORATORIO LINGUISTICO DI ITALIANO AL MUSEO - QUESTIONARIO DOPO LA VISITA

Cara studentessa, caro studente,

ti ringrazio per aver partecipato a questo laboratorio.

Ti chiedo gentilmente di compilare il seguente questionario esprimendo le tue opinioni sul laboratorio linguistico appena svolto. I dati raccolti serviranno per sviluppare uno studio sull'interazione e la produzione orale dell'italiano come lingua straniera in un contesto non formale e in particolare in un ambiente museale.

Grazie per il tuo prezioso contributo.

A. **INFORMAZIONI PERSONALI**

1. **Genere**

    maschio   femmina

2. **Da quanto tempo studi italiano**

    meno di un anno   da un anno   da più di un anno

B. **INTERVISTA**

1. **Quale attività ti è piaciuta di più?**

    _____

    Quale attività ti è piaciuta di meno?

    _____

2. **Come ti è sembrata l'atmosfera al museo durante la visita?**

    molto noiosa

    noiosa

    norma le

    divertente

    molto divertente

    Perché? _____

3. **Come ti sei sentito quando parlavi in italiano davanti ai tuoi compagni?**

   agitato

   tranquillo

   contento

   altro ....

4. **Qual è la differenza tra parlare in classe e parlare al museo?**

   In classe mi sento _____

   Al museo mi sento _____

5. **Il laboratorio linguistico al museo è stata un'occasione utile per parlare italiano?**

   no   non so   si

6. **Quali strategie hai usato per chiedere informazioni su oggetti o vocaboli che non conoscevi?**

   indicare l'o ggetto all'insegnante senza parlare

   chiedere in cinese al mediatore

   chi edere in italiano all'insegnate

7. **Le opere d'arte del museo ti hanno spinto a condividere le tue esperienze personali con i tuoi compagni?**

   Si, perché _____

   No, perché _____

8. **Cosa è stato difficile fare durante le attività?**

   _____

9. **Cosa è stato facile fare durante le attività?**

   _____

10. **Cosa hai imparato da questo laboratorio al museo?**

   _____

D) DATA OBSERVATION SHEETS

LABORATORIO LINGUISTICO DI ITALIANO AL MUSEO - SCHEDA DI OSSERVAZIONE

Museo: _____

Nome gruppo: _____

Numero studenti: _____

Attori coinvolti: _____

Informazioni gruppo:

o Informazioni generali: _____

o studiano Italiano da: _____

o lingue parlate: _____

o provenienza: _____

o livello di italiano: _____

o background formativo e professionale: _____

o età: _____

o situazioni particolari come disabilità: _____

o dinamiche del gruppo: _____

o altro: _____

ATTIVITÀ __	DESCRIZIONE/COMMENTI

Dimensione linguistica
 	
Oggetto usati come:
   strumento che facilita l'accesso al significato
   argomento di conversazione	

Dimensione affettiva
 	
Gli studenti:
Reagiscono positivamente
   sorridono o ridono,
   fanno commenti di divertimento
   mostrano segni di eccitamento o entusiasmo a partecipare
 	
Mostrano un atteggiamento attivo
   interagiscono usando gli oggetti museali come supporto
   chiedono chiarimenti
   chiedono ulteriori informazioni
   fanno domande
   iniziano l'interazione
 	
Coinvolgimento:
   il gruppo intero
   solo una parte
   tutti sono intervenuti
   sono sempre gli stessi che intervengono
   intervengono spontaneamente
   intervengono solo se chiamati
   intervengono mostrando ansia e paura di sbagliare
   l'attività è un input per estendere la conversazione
   parlano di altro non pertinente all'attività
   si concentrano su altre opere
   non si concentrano sull'attività
   sono distratti da input ambientali
   usano il cellulare per attività personali
 	
Esperienze personali
   condividono esperienze personali con il gruppo
   commentano in maniera creativa
 	
Atteggiamenti evitanti
   si nascondono
   si mettono in fondo
   non vogliono essere chiamati
   non rispondono
   non partecipano	