CAPÍTULO 24.
LET'S SING THIS CLIL LESSON: INTEGRATING LANGUAGE, CONTENT, MUSIC AND VIDEO

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1.   INTRODUCTION

The aim of the article is twofold: to present a proposal to learn Social Science content through English and songs, and to test the academic results using this proposal along with students' opinions. In this approach, traditional English songs have been used as a reference and their melodies have been used to present new concepts, vocabulary and structures. This experience has been tested in a 4th-grade class of a trilingual school and results revealed that students' opinions were positive about the practice and that it resulted in effective learning.

The main purpose of this study is to assess an approach that aims at facilitating learning by merging music, video, gestures and content in a foreign language and to prove that it can be beneficial in terms of learning outcomes and motivation.   Besides, using songs means that students will unconsciously develop their phonological awareness and that long-term memorization will be promoted while enjoying the experience.

We need to find more efficient ways to teach and learn foreign languages and this is one of the major reasons why attention is being paid to content and language integrated learning (CLIL). CLIL is considered to be an alternative path to conventional EFL and it is believed to be a way to transcend the perceived weaknesses of traditional foreign language teaching (Heras & Lasagabaster, 2005). The term CLIL describes any activity which uses language as a tool in the study of new contents or a subject. (Coyle et al. 2010). Or, according to Marsh "a generic umbrella term which would encompass any activity in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and the subject have a joint curricular role" (2002, p.58). Thus, CLIL is used as a tool for learning different multidisciplinary languages, and as a tool for teaching content.

Many studies have demonstrated that school children benefit from using foreign languages to learn different subjects. Students learn through an integrated curriculum of languages and non-linguistic fields and because of the skills, resources, and strategies

used they will develop their communicative competence efficiently. It has been demonstrated that this practice optimizes and facilitates learning. (Angulo et al., 2013)

Learning through a foreign language has been proven encouraging to promote learning, but music has also been reported as a compelling tool to boost memorization. According to Alcaraz and Gómez (2009), music is an important tool for creating a proper environment that will encourage learning in the classroom, since research has found that it has a powerful effect on our emotions. In addition, "thanks to the catchy and familiar element of music, plus the standard pronunciation by native speakers in the lyrics, music is a powerful tool to improve the ability to listen, speak, read and write when studying a foreign language." (Linh et al.,2020). Various studies have proved that music contributes to learners' academic achievement, motivation and that it stimulates creativity. Music helps one to learn more, and more effectively and that the learner benefits by enhancing key developmental goals such as self-esteem and creativity.

"Words always have some kind of "tune," if only the non-musical one provided by the prosody of spoken language" (Serafine et al., 1983, p. 192). There is evidence that adding music boosts memorization. Puxnell-Webb and Speelman argue that "Phenomenological evidence that a song can be a powerful memory tool has been demonstrated in a wide range of circumstances" (2008, p. 927). This may be explained by the fact that songs are more repetitive than other oral materials, such as conversations or speeches. (Purnell-Webb & Speelman, 2008). Even as Samson and Zator suggested, songs can be a powerful memory tool because music uses different coding mechanisms and music is stored in another part of the brain, making it easier to retrieve information when the tune is heard again. (as quoted in Konantz, 2012). According to Jäncke (2008), music activates the entire limbic system by participating in emotional processing and memory control.

In the intervention, not only the music is important, because gestures, visuals and movements included in the video with the song support the students in grasping the contents. "Gestures are movements of the hands, head, arms and body that convey a message through action. A gesture is a part of know communication in which body actions communicate particular meanings. As such, gestures become a powerful tool of communication." (Kamlasi et al., 2019). We should not forget that gestures play an essential role in the English foreign language classroom, they have a very important role in the EFL classroom. "Gestures can help the teacher to make the talking atmosphere

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active. Gestures can help students understand main points more quickly" (Kamlasi et al., 2019).

The following section presents the objectives, the methodology and steps followed.

2. INTERVENTION

The objectives of the intervention are the following:

- To develop a set of songs that work on the contents of different teaching units of Social Science.
- To test the validity of the proposal by measuring the academic results.
- To gather information about students' opinions about the approach and measure the degree of acceptance of the practice.

2.1. Context used to verify the proposal

The objectives required a school that would allow us to test the proposal in a real context. Therefore, before any of the steps mentioned, contact was established with a teacher at a trilingual school in Biscay who was willing to use the songs designed with the students in her class.

The school where the study was carried out has more than 2,000 students aged 2 to 18 years and it adopts the immersion program in Basque. Students study English from age 4, but English as a vehicular language is introduced optionally from the 3rd grade of primary education. English is used to teach Social Science, and it continues as an optional vehicular language for that subject in the subsequent courses.

The songs were introduced in two different classes of fourth grade which involved a total of 55 students.

2.2. Description of the creative process

This section describes the steps followed during the process.

1. The Social Science book has been analyzed to define the most relevant contents along with the key vocabulary and structures.
2. Traditional English songs and nursery rhymes have been considered and evaluated in an attempt to find the most suitable melodies for the contents.
3. New songs have been created to merge the contents and the melodies of the previous steps.

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4. A video has been produced for each song. The video incorporates gestures, pop-up images and different techniques to promote understanding as well as subtitles.

5. The videos have been made accessible to students on the YouTube platform.

6. Specific exercises have been designed to evaluate students' performance.

7. A questionnaire has been designed for students to evaluate the usefulness of the proposal.

8. The songs have been used in the classroom with the students.

9. The exercises designed have been used in the classroom to assess learning using the songs.

10. Data has been collected and analyzed.

11. The questionnaire has been presented to students.

12. The results of the questionnaire about the students' opinions as well as their unstructured oral feedback have been analyzed.

2.3. The process of creating songs

The basis of the proposal is the content in the fourth-grade social science book for CLIL. To choose the key contents a comprehensive analysis was carried out and two new songs were created from each unit with the contents particularly relevant to the topic. Additionally, the presentation and the layout of the book with definitions, descriptions, lists, short explanations facilitated the creation of the songs and helped to create more appropriate and accessible songs for the students.

The following table contains information about the four units of the proposal, the contents and the parts that have been worked through the new songs.

Table I

Units and contents worked through the songs

Unit	Contents	Contents in the songs
UNIT 2. Weather		
	• What is the earth's atmosphere?	• What is the earth's atmosphere?
	• Where do clouds come from?	• What is weather?
	• What is weather?	

	• How do we measure weather elements?	
	• What is a weather forecast?	
	• Are climate and weather the same?	
	• What climates are in Spain?	
Unit 4. Living in Spain	• How do we study population?	• Why does population change?
	• Why does population change?	• What is the economy?
	• How many provinces are there in Spain?	
	• What are municipal services?	
	• What is the economy?	
	• What are the main industries in Spain?	
	• Which sector does tourism belong to?	
UNIT 5. Prehistory in Spain	• Who was the Child of Gran Dolina?	• How did people protect towns?
	• How did palaeolithic people live	• What is a megalith?

• Why did people become sedentary?

• What did Neolithic people invent?

• When did people learn to use metals?

• How did people find metals?

• How did people protect towns?

• What did people invent in the Metal Age?

• What is a megalith?

UNIT 6. Ancient History in Spain

• Who lived in the Iberian Peninsula?	•Who lived in the Iberian Peninsula?
	•Where does our alphabet come from?
•Where does our alphabet come from?	
• Who founded Emporion?	
• Who founded Cartago Nova?	
•Where was Rome?	
•What were the provinces of Hispania?	
• How was life in Hispania?	

After selecting the contents, the next step was to find an appropriate melody that might fit the contents to create a song and a set of resources to help understand and memorize the contents. The melodies for the songs were borrowed from the English traditional songs or nursery rhymes which typically incorporate a pleasant rhythmic pattern of repetitive phrases that are easy to repeat and remember for students. Students must undergo oral language over and over again, to develop their phonological consciousness, and rhymes and songs offer a perfect means of doing so. Furthermore, these kinds of songs have a sticky, cyclic, repetitive rhythm that will entertain students while playing a natural role in information memorization. Songs with a considerable proportion of repeated phrases and words can be used for several didactic purposes since words will appear regularly and that promotes learning.

A video was also designed to allow students to play it on demand and at home if required. The song was presented to students using the video, where gestures and pop-up images were used to support comprehension. Some of them required the student to perform some kind of physical. Incorporating physical movement and miming while watching the song is also a means of promoting memorization of knowledge and participation. Additionally, lyrics were also introduced to the video not only because some students might benefit from reading the text but also because by doing so students are working on spelling and reading.

As a final product, there are eight songs to complement the book. Two songs per unit. The songs are listed in the table below.

Table II

Songs and hyperlinks to the videos

Title of the song and hyperlink
1.   What is weather?
2.   What is the surface?
3.   Why Does Population Change?
4.   What is the economy?
5.   What is a megalith?

6.   How did people protect towns?

7.   Who lived on the Iberian Peninsula?

8.   Where does our alphabet come from?

2.4. Designed activities to verify the utility of the proposal

Once the songs and videos were ready to be used with the students we prepared a set of activities to assess the proposal. The objective of these tests was to measure understanding, and, for that reason, students were not asked to develop any productive task about the information like providing definitions or giving explanations. Through songs, we aimed at a better understanding of what they were listening to and watching and we wanted to test if they were able to identify vocabulary and concepts in the songs. Asking students to produce and elaborate their answers may have distracted the study from the goal. Therefore, what is mostly required in these assessment exercises is the association of concepts with images, names, or definitions, or the selection of the most appropriate word of a set of words given to fill up the gaps of the text. A total of eight activities was designed and carried out which was similar to that in Figure 1.

Figure I

Sample of the exercises used for assessing

1. **Put the number of each layer of the atmosphere in the photo.**

   1. Mesosphere

   2. Troposphere

   3. Stratosphere

   4. Thermosphere

2. **Match the weather element with the action it makes.**

   Wind   •   • Warms or cools and make the clouds

   Temperature •   • Is the heat from sun

   Clouds   •   • Cause the rain and block the heat

   Precipitations •   • Fall from the clouds

Students were assessed individually for each unit after many days of using the song in the classroom and a questionnaire was also designed to be presented to students to evaluate the proposal after using the whole set of songs.

2.5. Contents and objectives

The book used in this experiment is divided into six different topics and each topic deals with different contents, vocabulary, and grammar. The second, fourth, fifth, and sixth units have been selected to be worked with songs. The following table describes the units, their content, vocabulary, and grammar that have been worked on with the songs.

Table III

Objectives, vocabulary, and grammar of the contents of each topic

		Language objectives	
Content objectives	Vocabulary		Grammar

Unit 2. Weather	• Be able to describe the Earth's atmosphere • Be able to understand weather phenomena	air pollution, atmosphere, element, humidity, mesosphere, ozone layer, stratosphere, troposphere	Present simple
Unit 4. Living in Spain	• Be able to talk about about the population and understanding why the population changes • Describe the economy and its three main sectors	Birth rate, death rate, decrease, emigration, farming, forestry, immigration, increase, mining, raw materials, population	Present tense
Unit 5. Prehistory in Spain	• Learn how people spread and needed protection • Understand the importance of megalithic monuments	chief, cromlech, dolmen, megalith, metal, menhir, traders	Present simple Simple past

| Unit 6. Ancient History in Spain | • Study of the civilizations that lived in the Iberian Peninsula during ancient history

• Origin of the alphabet | alphabet, ancient, bronze, bust, celts, civilization, east, farmer, Iberians, iron, north, southeast, traders, walled, warrior | Simple past |

The next section describes the results obtained in the evaluation.

3. RESULTS

In this section, we present our results following the hypotheses of our study. First of all, the general results of the tests are examined; then, we deal with students' perceptions.
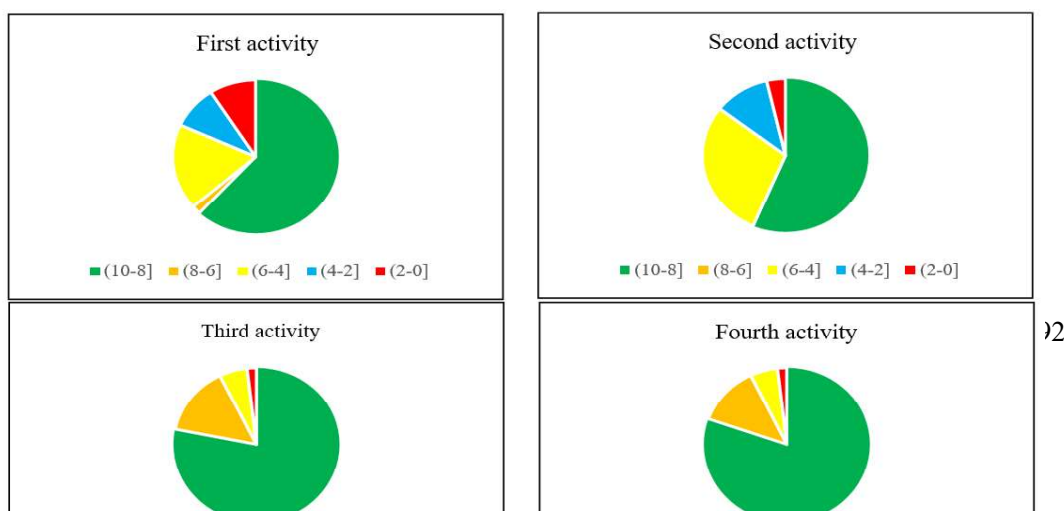
3.1. Evaluation results

Our first hypothesis was that students will obtain positive results and that they will retain information in the songs. Results show that in two of the activities nearly three-quarters of the students scored above eight points out of ten and in the other two more than 50% of the students scored above eight. In one of the tests, 83% of the students scored above 8.

In two out of the four of the texts only one person has got a mark of 2 or below 2 and in another one only two students got the lowest mark. There will always be students with different learning styles or difficulties, but our conclusion is these results are encouraging.

Figure II

Evaluation results

First activity
■ (10-8] ■ (8-6] ■ (6-4] ■ (4-2] ■ (2-0]

Second activity
■ (10-8] ■ (8-6] ■ (6-4] ■ (4-2] ■ (2-0]

Third activity

Fourth activity

Therefore, it can be said that the results of the study through the proposal are positive and that the songs can be an appropriate and effective way to learn and memorize content and that they could be useful as a complementary and different approach to CLIL.

Table IV

Evaluation results

Grade interval	# students Ex. 1	# students Ex. 2	# students Ex. 3	# students Ex. 4
(10-8]	34	31	43	45
(8-6]	1	0	8	7
(6-4]	10	16	3	3
(4-2]	5	6	0	0
(2-0]	5	2	1	1

3.2. Opinion questionnarie

Our second hypothesis was that the students will enjoy the experience. Some interesting findings are worth mentioning. To sum up, very positive results were received, and most of the students (87%) said that they liked the songs and would like to learn through songs again in the future. In addition, they were also asked about the usefulness of the songs, and the majority (89%) answered that they have found it helpful or very helpful. An identical percentage of students agreed that songs have helped them work on the contents of the book, as well as to understand (89%) and memorize the information (89%).

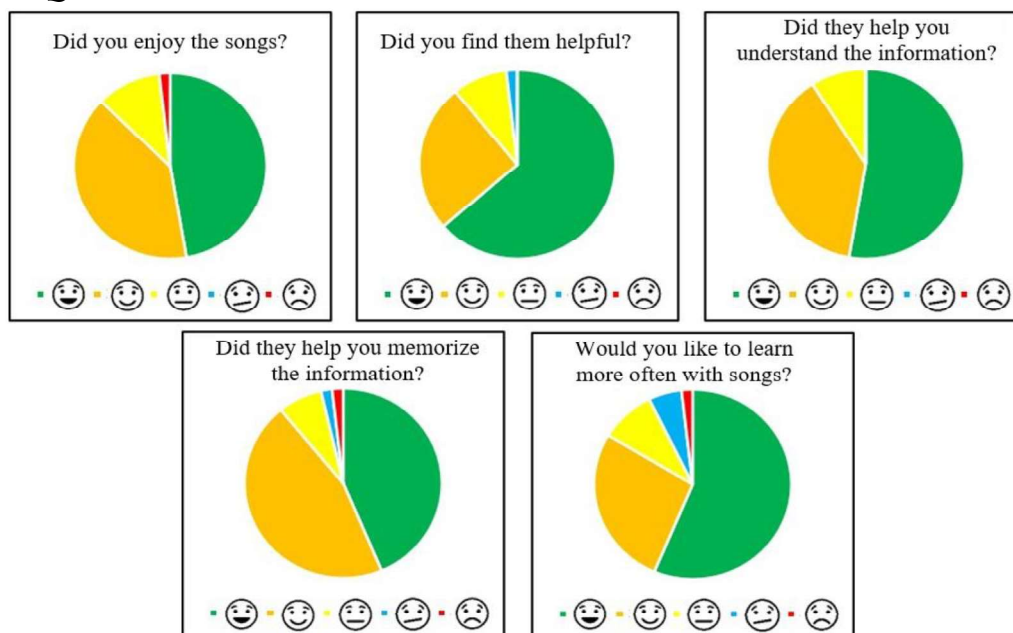**Figure III**

Questionnaire results

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Table IV

Evaluation results

	1.Question	2. Question	3. Question	4. Question	5. Question
☹	1	0	0	1	1
😕	0	1	0	1	3
😐	6	5	5	4	5
🙂	22	14	21	25	15
😃	26	35	29	24	31

4. DISCUSSION

This section analyses some difficulties that we had to overcome. Firstly, concerning content selection, it must be remarked that choosing content requires an in-depth analysis and serious reflection. Since it will, in most cases, be impossible to convey the entire content through songs we must select and adapt the most relevant concepts and vocabulary. Determining the key information to work with students through songs and what will be left out is a major and final decision.

The relevance of the melody should also be acknowledged, since not every melody is suitable for the creation of these types of songs. Because of the final didactic objective of the song, one type of melody or one type of rhythm might be more beneficial than others. Therefore, checking and choosing which one is appropriate and then trying to merge it with the information we want to transmit is another challenge. Repetitive melodies and lyrics play an important role since the repetition of the information boosts memorization. The more you listen to the song, the more likely it is that the student will remember the information in them but with a catchy melody, the number of repetitions might decrease. In addition, the fact that the most important information is accompanied by gestures and images also promotes the memorization of the information. Moreover, gestures allow students to relate each word or set of words to a movement or gesture, which will help them understand. Thus, it can be said that repeating the content of songs and using gestures or movements plays a key role in the comprehension and learning process.

It should also be mentioned that not all the songs developed in the study have been tested in the classroom with the students because of the limitations to access to the classroom which unfortunately affects the results of the study. On the other hand, the songs might have been improved with the collaboration of a professional musician or expert on the field, and that, in that sense significant improvement could be done. However, results seem to demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach.

5. CONCLUSIONS

After assessing the proposal in practice, some conclusions can be drawn. The study is limited to a few songs and a concrete collection of concepts and vocabulary words, but the results suggest that the integration of music and CLIL can lead to positive academic results and increased motivation. Results confirmed that most of the students benefit from the experience, learned the contents and, what is more, they enjoyed the experience.

The teacher's and students' participation has played a key role in the experiment since they have all collaborated actively. The fact that the proposal has been proven in a school context, based on a current textbook and with real students lends validity to the experiment.

It has been demonstrated that the contents of a book can be presented to students using songs in a more supportive style and that music, foreign language, mime, and visuals can be merged with contents to promote understanding with optimal results.

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