

# Learning History and English through Drama and the CLIL Approach

## El aprendizaje de historia e inglés a través del teatro en clase y el enfoque CLIL

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### Abstract

This research investigates if studying historical content through an innovative approach may show better results than traditional methods in terms of learning history. In this case study, the researcher tried to convey the differences in learning about the Industrial Revolution using a traditionally textbook-based methodology versus a Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereafter CLIL) approach that included drama and music. The target students assessed are two Y4 ESO groups of Spanish students in a public bilingual setting who learnt the topic through English language during the first term of the course. The students were assessed using a true/false test to determine the effect of pre and post implementation tests. All data was collected and analysed following a quantitative methodology. The researcher's null hypothesis was that there would not be difference between the two methodologies. The results of the study reject the null hypothesis and suggest that, for some topics, teaching history using drama and music could be even more effective than a textbook-based methodology. This study is part of a further research already in progress in this field for a reliable statistical analysis.

### Keywords:

history, CLIL, drama, bilingual, industrial revolution.

### Resumen

Este estudio investiga si el aprendizaje de contenidos históricos mediante un enfoque innovador puede mostrar mejores resultados que los métodos de enseñanza tradicionales. En este estudio, la investigadora ha tratado de transmitir las diferencias en el aprendizaje del tema 'La revolución industrial' utilizando una metodología tradicional basada en el libro de texto, frente a una metodología más activa que incluye el teatro y la música. El centro del estudio son dos grupos de alumnos de Sección Bilingüe en inglés que estudiaron el tema durante el primer trimestre del curso 2010-2011. Se obtuvieron los resultados de los alumnos mediante una prueba de verdadero / falso para determinar el efecto de las pruebas de implementación anterior y posterior al estudio. Todos los datos fueron recogidos y analizados con una metodología cuantitativa. La hipótesis inicial de la investigadora fue que no habría una sustancial diferencia entre las dos metodologías. De acuerdo con los resultados de este estudio se rechaza la hipótesis inicial y se sugiere que, para ciertos temas, la enseñanza de la historia utilizando el teatro y la música puede ser más eficaz que la metodología basada exclusivamente en el libro de texto. Este estudio es parte de una investigación en curso en este campo para un análisis estadístico fiable.

### Palabras clave:

historia, AICLE, teatro, bilingüe, revolución industrial.

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## 1. Background

The research took place at a public Secondary School located in a small town in Eastern Madrid. At the time, the school enrolled 682 students and a staff of 81 teachers. It offered the Spanish National Curriculum for Secondary Education for students over 18 years old. Secondary students had the option to get their degree in Secondary Education within an English-Spanish bilingual program. The average ratio was 25 students per group. The year course started in September and finished in June. Most of the students in the school (about 93%) were of Spanish origin, with Spanish as a mother tongue. The remaining 7% consisted of students belonging to immigrant families, about 5% from Eastern Europe (mainly Romania and Poland) and 2% from Latin American countries (mainly Ecuador and Peru). Approximately 30.66% of the students' parents had university degrees, 40.86% had middle education and 27.63% had just primary education. Most of the students belonged to families of 3 to 6 members of a socio-economic background ranging from low-middle to middle class. The researcher of this study was the teacher of History for the target students.

## 2. Aims of the Study

This project was originated by the discussions among English and History teachers about how the teaching of a subject through English affected the acquisition of both: content and language, when using a CLIL approach versus the traditional lecture. The board of education in Spain is concerned about research to be done on the effectiveness of an innovative content and language approach in bilingual schools (Dobson, Pérez Murillo & Johnstone 2010). Teaching the Industrial Revolution using drama would allow blending an important part of the History syllabus and the learning of English language through an innovative approach. The key question for the research was: What happens to Spanish students' learning of history lessons, as measured by a content-centred test, when they are taught using the CLIL approach with drama activities versus a traditional textbook-based instruction?

There was a double motivation for carrying out this research: the challenge to apply a quantitative method and the development of a professionally cooperative project in the field of history. The researcher sought the collaboration of the English Teaching Assistant (hereafter ETA), who helped students with all formal aspects referring to the language –script writing, pronunciation, intonation, accuracy- and a co-worker: the English teacher. Thus, another goal was met: the exchange of ideas with others through teaching was much more than just discussing experiences. The Industrial Revolution is a part of the contents included in the syllabus of Y4ESO during the first term of the course. Students practise dynamic and enga-

ging activities while they learn about social and economic living conditions in Europe over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This enhances their interest in the study of history and motivates them to suggest other drama activities that would help their learning in the future. The research was presented in school to the headteacher and the Board of Education. The headteacher was enthusiastic about a new methodology to be implemented to improve teaching and learning. The results of this study may help to ease teachers' caution that students might miss contents when they study history through a CLIL approach and use drama. It also backs up the bilingual programme and reassures parents that the efforts that the school and the community are making are worth.

### 3. Theoretical framework: CLIL and the Industrial Revolution

The educational model to be part of the rationale of this project was CLIL. It is a pedagogical approach that advocates the integration of contents and a foreign language in the classroom as a key element in a more general strategy towards bilingualism (Dafouz & Guerrini, 2009). It is considered an innovative and successful paradigm introduced in 1994 by professors David Marsh (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) and Fred Genessee (McGill University, Canada). The scaffolding of the approach is based in the psychopedagogical and constructivist view of learning. CLIL focuses attention on the learning of English and contents in a meaningful way. Although there are interesting studies about the success of CLIL teaching, little research has been done about teaching history with English as a medium of instruction in Spain (Fernández, García & Del Pozo, 2009). Bloom's Taxonomy stated that there was more than one type of learning, identified in three educational domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor). Dalton-Puffer goes a step beyond and remarks that there is a zone of convergence between content (e.g. history) and language pedagogies through cognitive discourse functions (CDFs) that contribute to create knowledge in the classroom (Dalton-Puffer, 2013). All this is linked to the rationale for the teaching of content and language together, based on three main dimensions: a socio-cultural dimension, an educational curricular dimension and a psycholinguistic and language acquisition dimension (Pérez-Vidal, 2001). Including drama and music in the teaching of the Industrial Revolution was a strategy aimed to enhance the procedural scaffolding for teachers who seek to incorporate new instructional approaches. It may be considered that the CLIL approach contributes largely to enhance the interest of this study.

Blending this research project and the history syllabus was a matter of concern. The Industrial Revolution as the content and the CLIL approach seemed the perfect scenario for developing a meaningful teaching history with drama embedded. Several databases were consulted to provide relevant articles to the study, together with a quantitative method of analysis. The inter-

pretation of statistical data provided, in social terms, “a cultural artifact in order to determine the character of local society that affects the local forms of appearance of global processes and the restrictions to their impact on local society” (Markovic, 2010, p.2010). The Cambridge Centre for History and Economics studied child labour and the English textile industry during the revolution (Galbi, 1994); this information was used as part of the input in the history lessons during the study. Child and women’s labour played an important role in the Industrial Revolution, not only in the textile industry but also in mines. Factory owners employed children in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution because they would make profitable experienced adult factory workers in the future. It was only when the cotton industry fostered the development of a labour market that adult factory workers became more productive and child labour was legally regulated.

The data collection included surveys of water mill owners in England and Scotland gathered in four periods (1788-1816-1819 and 1835) showing that the percentage of child labour decreased dramatically. Galbi points out that this “indicated the extent of the difference between traditional work (child labour) and factory work” (Galbi, 1994, p.26). The sample used in the article is truly representative since the mill owners and factory owners played an important role in the development of the Industrial Revolution in England and elsewhere. First, it analyzes a survey of factory managers and how they considered child labour as an important training for factory work in the future. It also collects data on migrants’ labour showing that salaries were higher for experienced young workers than for inexperienced migrants. Thus, child labour shaped the size and characteristics of the pool of future adult factory workers. Large cotton factories located in towns decreased the amount of child labour as the local labour market fostered adult factory workers. In the last stage, the article emphasizes the importance of division of labour in factories to reduce child labour until 1833, when the Factory Act regulated it. Dickens wrote his novel *Oliver Twist* shortly after the Factory Act was published, in 1837 “to show the system’s treatment of an innocent child born and raised in the workhouse system” (British Library, 2016). The focus on the textile industry presented some general statements on child labour that would not apply to child labour in mines or in iron factories, where conditions were much worse. Another important aspect of the Industrial Revolution was the economic impact and the need for a fiscal reform according to two economists of the time in England: Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Hartwell analyzed the national income and taxation in the late eighteenth century and its incidence in manufacturing and agriculture (Hartwell, 1981). He used British statistics to show the effects of taxation and the expenditures of the government. Both child labour and taxation were unpopular, and they decreased throughout the nineteenth century as a consequence of the social and labour movements.

The effectiveness of introducing drama in teaching has been a focus of study for many researchers. It fosters motivation as “a technique that may help to enhance the students’ interest in the area” (Izquierdo, 2010. p.31). It provides students with the unique opportunity to spend a day in the past (Wilson & Woodhouse, 1990). During the research, drama

and music proved to be the perfect means to incorporate meaningful content to history and ESL acquisition. Drama helps developing understanding of human relationships and that, in the context of the Industrial Revolution, meant an ideal tool for instruction (O’Gara, 2008, p.158). However, drama or even docudrama should not be necessarily seen as a substitute but a complement to history instruction (D’Sa, 2005).

Providing students with meaningful material they can manipulate or take part on is one of the objectives of the CLIL model. Students feel a sense of empowerment when facing acting and the teacher becomes more a facilitator than a conductor. They find it fun and easy to step on the shoes of historical characters that for them are no longer “strange aliens but people like them with whom we share a common humanity. Drama allows children to experience the past symbolically through an imagined situation usually created by the teacher” (Vass, 2008, p.14). They learn how to move from conflict to resolution in their own play; “drama helps one find the blood of things, the human element. A history text will supply information and we can easily evaluate the retention of that information by testing” (Yaffe, 1989, p.31).

Other objectives are met by using drama as a teaching tool: integrating communication skills and teaching literature. Dickens himself became a successful public performer of his own stories in which he blended literature with literacy (Park, 2001). The slang used in the story is a way of meeting students in their own turf. Teaching history can be an ideal method to teach literacy: history is a literacy subject since it combines three different aspects: the scientific aspect in the systematic research; the poetic/imaginative aspect, in the reconstruction of past events and lives; and the literary/artistic aspect in the communication of historical understanding (Evans as cited in Turner-Bisset, 2001, p.27). The key of the success is in the CLIL approach: the integration of different skills using history, music and drama.

## 4. Description of the study

### 4.1. Research Methodology

The original null hypothesis (Ho) was that there would not be difference between the two groups further than which may be attributed to chance (Ravid, 2005). However, results concluded that teaching history and English language through the CLIL approach and a methodology based on drama and music showed significantly better scores than just teaching the topic through a traditional textbook-based instruction. Even taking into consideration the limitations of this study, data analysis concluded that the null hypothesis was rejected.

The target individuals participating in the study were two groups of students from the same Y4 ESO cohort. The experimental group consisted of 15 students and the control group, with no intervention, of other 15 students. The students in the cohort study were 97% Spanish and 3% of them Romanian, evenly distributed between the two groups. All of them studied Primary education in Spain within an English-Spanish bilingual programme. In both groups, the students took pre and posttests as scheduled (Figure 1).

Sessions	Group 1	Group 2
Presentation of the project to the Board of Education. Parents' permission slips		
Class Session 1	Pretest and initial input on the Industrial Revolution	
Class Session 2	Non-intervention	Intervention
Class Session 3		
Class Session 4		
Class Session 5	Posttest and students' self-assessment for their portfolio (Appendix B)	
Teacher-researcher tasks	Assessment of the language and history contents	
	Data analysis	
	Project Outcomes	
	Researcher writes final report	

Figure 1 - Shedule of the Project

A true/false test was designed for the study (Appendix A). One of the limitations of history inquiry is the interpretation of events. A multiple choice test could have been confusing to students and not very accurate for this research. A true/false test does not allow for open-ended thinking and self expression, but it is appropriate for the purpose of this research.

A quasi-experimental design was conducted (Figure 2) in which both groups 1 and 2 did the true/false pretest and posttest. A true experimental design could be done in future studies with the participation of other history teachers from the same or other schools in the study.

Quasi-Experimental Research Design		
Group 1 $O_1$	--	$O_2$
Group 2 $O_1$	X	$O_2$

Figure 2 - Quasi-Experimental Research Design

## 4.2. Resources and activities

Teacher material: schedule, History textbook –that included primary sources in the unit about the Industrial Revolution, very appropriate for the study- (Eleanitz Project, 2010) and handouts with relevant extracts from *Oliver Twist* to prepare dramatization, pre and post-tests, and drama set (the script, the classroom and the students' costumes). The music CD and the CD player were provided by the Music department in school.

Students' material: students from the control group (group 1) used their History textbook throughout all the process. Students from the experimental group (group 2) used their History textbook together with a non abridged classical reader of *Oliver Twist* to prepare dramatization (Figure 3). Dickens traced an accurate picture of Victorian England that matches the image of child labour as a sign of cruelty, poverty and the relaxation of the middle classes that turned a blind eye to the suffering of the working class (Dickens, 2008). The students from the experimental group got immediately engaged by the story and excited to perform a selection of their choice for their classmates. *Oliver Twist* reading assignment was done as part of their homework. Recorded music was added as part of the production to create atmosphere, to suggest the location of the action (19th century in a working-class suburb in London) and to underscore dramatic moments (e.g. Oliver caught by the police).

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Group 1 – control group	Group 2 – experimental group
Lecture on the Industrial Revolution (following the textbook)	
Reading comprehension activities on the Industrial Revolution (textbook)	Individual work: Handout reading relevant extracts from <i>Oliver Twist</i> to prepare dramatization
Exercises from the textbook	Group work: dramatizing events (children labour in Victorian times). Music playing during performance: <i>The Lucky Hand</i> op.18 by Schönberg
Students reflect on their experience in their Portfolio	

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Figura 3. Differentiation in control and experimental groups.

### 4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Once the raw data was gathered and the pre and posttest graded, the data was entered for control and experimental groups into a spreadsheet (Ravid, 2005). Measures of central tendency were calculated for each of the four sets of scores: mean, median, mode, standard deviation and variance (Table 1).

The mean provided information about the center of the distribution. The data was expected to be clustered in a close range. However, the mean in the control group showed a lower score than the experimental group in the pretest. The same range of difference is shown in the mean in both groups in the posttest. The measures that characterize the initial data were calculated: median, mode, standard deviation and variance in both groups. The standard deviation shows the spread of the data around the mean. While there is a slight difference in range of scores in the control group, in the experimental group the scores are more spread. The extreme scores in the experimental group are present in both the pre and the posttest. This implies a large spread set of scores that can be seen in the variance (the mean of the squared deviation is around the mean) and the mode: the distribution of students around the mean. This shows that there is a wider variation of students around extremes: scores 4 and score 12.

The difference between the pretest and posttest scores in both groups gave two arrays of data that were used for the t test. A two-tailed t test was conducted for independent samples to measure the percentage of significance chance, since the starting point of the research was a null hypothesis. Although this is considered a conservative test, it also reduces the chance of error.



	CONTROLGROUP			EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			
	PRETEST	POSTTEST	CHANGE	PRETEST	POSTTEST	CHANGE	
student1	9	11	2	student1	7	9	2
student2	9	10	1	student2	6	8	2
student3	10	10	0	student3	6	11	5
student4	8	10	2	student4	12	12	0
student5	5	7	2	student5	4	11	7
student6	4	5	1	student6	11	13	2
student7	6	6	0	student7	9	5	-4
student8	3	5	2	student8	9	13	4
student9	5	6	1	student9	4	9	5
student10	6	6	0	student10	4	11	7
student11	7	8	1	student11	10	11	1
student12	7	8	1	student12	8	9	1
student13	6	7	1	student13	6	14	8
student14	7	8	1	student14	9	11	2
student15	6	8	2	student15	6	8	2
<b>mean</b>	6.53	<b>7.67</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>mean</b>	7.0	<b>10.33</b>	<b>2.93</b>
<b>median</b>	6	8		<b>median</b>	7	11	
<b>mode</b>	6	8		<b>mode</b>	6	11	
<b>stdeviation</b>	1.92	1.91		<b>stdeviation</b>	2.56	2.35	
<b>variance</b>	3.70	3.67		<b>variance</b>	6.54	5.52	

Table 1 - Scores in control and experimental groups.

#### 4.4. Results

The result of the t test gave a p value of 0.0459 (Table 2). The outcomes rejected the initial null hypothesis and suggested that the experiment had an effect in the experimental group. In the control group, all students improved slightly: 1-2 points over 15 and yet the results of three of them remained the same (students 3, 7 and 10): no improvement at all. In the experimental group, four students improved considerably (students 5, 9, 10 and 13). They were engaged students, open to different learning suggestions and were directly involved in the dramatiza-

tion. One student remained the same with a high score in both pre and posttest (student 4): he is a very independent student and was not interested in the play. Student 7 performed considerably worse in the posttest. He tends to be absent minded and probably got confused by the amount of information.

p	level of significance
0.04595	4.595

Table 2. t Test

Originally, none of the students were motivated to participate in the research so triangulation was added to the research (Hubbard & Power, 2003): history, music and dramatization. This contributed to engage students interested in Music who also played instruments. Both groups of students were invited to visit a music performance at El Prado museum in Madrid and their attitude changed. They started to collaborate more in their learning. The experimental group enjoyed the performance in the classroom with the music and they mentioned it so in their self-assessment portfolio.

## 5. Limitations and Implications for Teaching and Research

The educational setting where the research took place is a public bilingual school in Madrid. The introduction of bilingual programmes in public schools in the 1990s was a step forward in the improvement of education, not only in the acquisition of ESL, but also in the learning of content subjects at the same time. This setting was considered the optimal location for the implementation of an innovative methodology in the teaching of content and language using a CLIL model. Including drama and music in the teaching of the Industrial Revolution was a strategy aimed to enhance the procedural scaffolding for teachers who seek to incorporate new instructional approaches to their lessons (Linares, Morton & Whittaker, 2012).

The assessment for learning was an important aspect of the study. All in all, "assessment is at the heart of successful pedagogy" (Linares, 2015, p.68). It covered the following learning objectives: to motivate students to learn about the Industrial Revolution, to engage with the problem of child labour in the 19th century, to be aware of the power of drama in the history lessons and to cooperate with mates (students and teachers). The success criteria included the activities that students were asked to do throughout the intervention: to read about the processes that took to the Industrial Revolution in the history textbook, to share thoughts about

the implications of the Revolution, to read *Oliver Twist* as homework assignment, to select the extracts for dramatization, to share preferences about scenes with mates, to prepare dramatization with the ETA and the English teacher –script, costumes, rehearsing-, and to reflect on the outcomes. The history teacher, the English teacher and the ETA created the rubrics to assess all the intervention. The rubrics comprised both language and history items. Finally, students recorded their thoughts about the activities developed during the intervention in their self-assessment portfolio.

A true experimental study would have been more accurate than a quasi experimental one; however, it was not feasible to do it with a random sampling due to school organization. The second limitation was the initial apathy of students to learning about the Industrial Revolution. This made implementation to be re-scheduled and collaboration on behalf of the students more difficult. A record was kept on all the process in a log with impressions on students' reactions, their performing and the changes to be made in the lessons. Considering the starting point of the two groups, the scores in the experimental group in the pretest (mean = 7.40) were already better than the control group (mean 6.53). This resulted in a considerable difference in the variance: 3.70 in the control group and 6.54 in the experimental group. Hence, students in the experimental group ranged from very good scores to a few students with very low scores. The parameters in the control group showed more coherence: there were not so many differences among students' performing. Thus, the results should be considered sensibly, they do not determine that one methodology is better than other. One single experiment is not determining but quantitative methodology of data analysis is definitely an effective tool for the assessment of some skills developed in teaching instruction.

The outcomes of this research are not conclusive, but they throw light over the effectiveness of some innovative practices in teaching. As far as other teachers of history in school were concerned, the results of this experiment meant that students did not miss historical contents when they were taught through a CLIL approach. One single intervention is not relevant to infer that innovative methods are better than traditional ones. However, the outcomes of this intervention and the benefits of the CLIL model will be taken into consideration in future teaching plans.

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## Appendix A – Pre and Posttest on the Industrial Revolution

Read the statements. Say if they are true or false by ticking the boxes:

	True	False
1. The Industrial Revolution set up after the French Revolution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Prior to industrialization people lived in cities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The population explosion provided factory labour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The new industry was dominated by selling and servicing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The earliest benefit of innovation was seen by the textile industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The Industrial Revolution is linked to the Rural Revolution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The Industrial Revolution created an urban middle class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The Industrial Revolution saw an increase in primary production.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The most important development was machinery replacing people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The steam engine was invented by Cartwright.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The area of Britain that grew most was Wales.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The winners of the Revolution were the working classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Some writers and journalists wrote on the social impact of the Industrial Revolution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Life expectancy for the average person before industrialization was longer than today's.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The enclosure system forced people to move to towns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Appendix B: Self-Assessment Portfolio**

Name .....

Class ..... Date .....

	<b>Student Comment</b>	<b>Which piece(s) of work in or outside the classroom show evidence of this?</b>
Something that demonstrates my skills		
Something that made me think in a new way		
Something I found difficult or challenging		
Something I might do differently another time		
Something I really enjoyed		
Something I missed		