THE COMIC AS A DIDACTIC MATERIAL IN A CLIL TEACHING CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This didactic proposal consists of an interventional project based on the implementation of the comic as a CLIL activity developed in the subject of Natural science, in the high school "Virgen del Mar". Through the Program Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), there were integrated various learning strategies such as project-based learning, cooperative learning, and active learning. It was done with children around twelve or thirteen years old from the compulsory secondary education; during the last two weeks of my internship. The main objective was to improve the acquisition of both content and language using an entertainment activity. Data collection consisted of a survey about the comic project, carried out by twenty-six students. The results reveal that the comic is a useful instrument for the acquisition of a new language, together with an amusing form of working with the contents.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning, Interventional project, Learning strategies, Natural science, and Compulsory secondary education.

RESUMEN

Esta propuesta didáctica consiste en un proyecto de intervención focalizado en la implementación del comic como una actividad CLIL desarrollada en la asignatura de ciencias naturales, en el instituto "Virgen del Mar". A través del aprendizaje integrado de contenidos en lenguas extranjeras (CLIL), se incorporaron varias estrategias de aprendizaje como el aprendizaje basado en proyectos, el aprendizaje cooperativo, y el aprendizaje activo. Éste se llevo a cabo con estudiantes entre doce y trece años, del primer curso de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, durante las dos últimas semanas de mis prácticas externas. El principal objetivo fue mejorar la adquisición de los contenidos y del lenguaje a través de una actividad entretenida. Las recopilaciones de datos están basadas en una encuesta acerca del proyecto del cómic, realizada a veintiséis estudiantes. Los resultados muestran, que el cómic es una herramienta útil en el aprendizaje de un nuevo idioma, así como también una forma amena de trabajar los contenidos.

Palabras claves: Aprendizaje integrado de contenidos en lenguas extranjeras (CLIL), Ciencias naturales, Educación secundaria obligatoria, Estrategias de aprendizaje, y Proyecto de intervención.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Master's thesis is an approach to the implementation of the comic as a CLIL teaching strategy in the subject of Natural science. It intends to analyze the comic about a Natural science unit, in the first level of compulsory secondary education about the Earth's movements, The reason for choosing the comic as the theme for my interventional project emerged from the interest of finding a didactic strategy that encourages the students in the acquisition of the contents and the foreign language in an ordinary subject. Additionally, this learning situation was carried out in the "Virgen del Mar" high school, which is a bilingual state school that promotes the CLIL methodology in all the subjects taught.

This project would be divided into five parts. My starting point will be the introductory section in which I will provide a general overview of the objectives, the methodology, and the justification for writing this essay. Then, I will explain the theoretical framework relies on the comic; this section will include its origin and definitions, its formal elements, its application in the educational system, its use as a strategy to teach a foreign language, and as a CLIL activity. The next chapter will be my educational project in which I will develop the objectives, the methodology, the limitations, the sessions, the materials, and the context. The fourth part will be dedicated to the data analysis, in which I will compile the survey's answers; and, also, I will discuss the results. Finally, I am going to conclude this project, by recapitulating the main ideas detailed in it, and then, I will proceed to show the works cited in this academic work.

1.1. JUSTIFICATION

What I intend to prove with this Master's thesis is to apply a CLIL activity – in this case, a comic – using different methodologies. These approaches refer to project-based learning, cooperative learning, active learning, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In other words, this final social task tries to integrate the foreign language (English) with the contents of an ordinary subject such as Natural sciences, to promote the acquisition of numerous skills through a target language.

About the proposal of my learning situation, I consider that is very important to teach through the Program Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to improve students´ skills. That is to say, in terms of speaking fluently in another language and acquiring the contents at the same time, they are learning a foreign language. Furthermore, it is necessary to underline the fact that my internship high school integrates Cooperative learning as well as Project-based learning as two of their main teaching methods in Compulsory secondary education.

Thus, one of the purposes of using Project-based Learning is to promote the investigation about one topic and work in groups bearing in mind the same learning objectives. That is why; my didactic unit will aid students to learn and apply the main principles of the CLIL methodology and to enjoy the contents they are working with.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

This dissertation presents an innovative CLIL activity to teach the English language and the contents of a specific subject. The main aim of this Master's thesis is to design a learning situation using the CLIL methodology. This didactic unit will be about the Earth's movements, focusing on the first level of compulsory secondary education, through the creation of a comic which deals with the concepts of solstices, equinoxes, rotation, revolution, and eclipses. Therefore, there are other objectives that I will take into consideration, as the followings:

1) To describe the principal features of the project-based learning, the cooperative learning, and the Content and Language Integrated Learning methodologies, contrasting different approaches.
2) To identify some possible challenges using a CLIL activity.
3) To analyze the impact of using entertainment strategies in the application of the CLIL methodology on the students.
4) To design a learning situation for the Natural science subject to be implemented in one of the groups of the first level of the compulsory secondary education.
5) To understand the grammatical structures and vocabulary for writing and reading comics in a foreign language (English).

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The didactic unit was based on the use of the comics as a CLIL teaching strategy. In doing so, the students will be able to improve their communicative skills in a foreign language and to introduce another form of learning new contents of a subject, in this case, Natural sciences. Besides, they will learn to collaborate with their classmates in this social task using cooperative learning and project-based learning methodologies. Therefore, I showed to the students various videos to clarify the contents that would develop in their comic. Thus, in this section, I will discuss the principal methodologies implemented during the development of the comic activity: the CLIL methodology, project-based learning, and cooperative learning.

1.   CLIL METHODOLOGY

To begin with, it is important to define what the **_CLIL methodology_** is. It is universally acknowledged that Content and Language Integrated Learning consists of a dual approach that implies teaching not only the content of a specific subject but also the language itself, in this case, English.

This new form of teaching provides numerous benefits to the students as "it creates a rich environment" [1] for them; as it is determined from the so-called 4Cs [2] – content, communication, culture, and cognition. It is a well-known fact that the CLIL system is such a good supporter for the learners as it helps them to develop skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, or collaborative ones.

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[1] Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco. "Teacher's Guide on CLIL Methodology in Primary Schools". CLIL for Children, vol.1, 2018, http://www.clil4children.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Guide_Addressed_to_Teachers_Vol01.pdf

[2] The 4CS were created by one Scottish professor, and they are used as a model in Europe except in Spain where there are six. These four Cs are content (it refers to what we teach), cognition (it is what the students should work on in order to understand the things that they are learning), communication (it is important when we want to evaluate our pupils for communicating with us or even with their classmates), and culture (it has to do with the idea of introducing cultural aspects to learners through the language). Communication is a recurrent element because as teachers we have to communicate diverse things even though most of them are not useful for students.

It is universally acknowledged that this term was coined by David Marsh, who belongs to the team specialized in multilingualism and bilingualism fields at the University of Finland. Originally, it was associated to teach a subject in a foreign language to learners. Therefore, in the 1990s, this acronym "became the most widely used term for the integrated content and language education in Europe" (Hanesová, *CLIL in Foreign Language Education*, 10) [3]. Furthermore, it improves the level of assimilation of both contents and the foreign language, because the pupils need to produce and remember information required in their second language.

Another advantage is that the students are more engaged in a subject because they are in a real context to learn from the language. Therefore, they not only understand the contents but also the foreign language. Additionally, it presents other benefits, such as the ones mentioned below:

> "It builds intercultural knowledge and understanding, it learns about specific neighboring countries/ regions and/ or minority groups, it introduces the wider cultural context, it develops intercultural communication skills, it prepares for internationalization, specifically EU integration, it accesses international certification, (…), it deepens awareness of both mother tongue and target language, it develops plurilingual interests and attitudes, it accesses subject-specific target terminology, it provides opportunities to study content through different perspectives, it prepares for future studies and/ or working life, it enables to diversify methods and forms of classroom practice, it complements individual learning strategies, confidence". (Klimova, "CLIL and the teaching of foreign languages"2)

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[3] Pokrivčáková, S. et al. "History of CLIL". *CLIL in Foreign Language Education.* E-book, University of Nitra, 2015.

Concerning the CLIL educator figure, it is claimed that CLIL teachers can be either subject teachers, foreign language teachers (in this case, English teachers), and classroom assistants[4]. The CLIL and the subject teachers must work together to promote such a good learning environment for the students. Moreover, David March in his article "Putting CLIL into Practice" claimed that:

> "During processes of experimentation, teachers have found that CLIL is about far more than simply teaching non-language subject matter in an additional language in the same way as through the first language. CLIL is not a matter of simply changing the language of instruction. Rather, it is set of methodologies in which the dual-focused orientation of the learning of the subject and language is realized" (Marsh, "Putting CLIL into Practice" 4)

About this quote, we can remark that it is quite important to distinguish between the CLIL approach and teaching using the mother tongue, as the first one is focused on "additional language learning objectives"[5]. Taking into account this fact, it is important to remark the importance of adapting the different methodologies to the CLIL approach when we are using it in an educational environment. In relation with this statement, Marsh proposed that the CLIL system should be considered as "a general 'umbrella' term to refer to diverse methodologies which lead to dual-focused education where attention is given to both topic and language of instruction" (Hanesová, *CLIL in Foreign Language Education*, 10).

Right after explaining the theoretical background, I will expose how this approach was integrated into my learning situation (annex 7.3). The comic activity was an instrument to apply the CLIL methodology, integrating the Natural science's contents and the foreign language itself to improve the students´ knowledge about both aspects. Afterward, this social task was coordinated by the biology teacher and me, organizing the topic of the comic as well as its formal structure

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[4] This information was taken from a thesis written by Umberto Lesca.

Lesca, Umberto. *An introduction to CLIL*. 2012. British Study Center of Oxford, https://www.itis.biella.it/europa/pdf-europa/CLIL_Report.pdf.

[5] Marsh, David. " Putting CLIL Programme into Practice", n.d., https://campusdoctoradoyposgrado.ull.es/pluginfile.php/362702/mod_resource/content/1/Marsh%20-%20Putting%20CLIL%20into%20Practice.pdf

2.   PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (PBL)

It is understood by ***project-based learning*** as a methodology centered on the learners as it promotes their engagement in a topic focusing on the investigation as well as on developing certain skills – such as oral and writing communication, time management, teamwork - and critical thinking[6]. In other words, it is a pedagogical approach in which the educators create learning situations and social tasks that are challenging for the students, promoting work in groups.

Regarding this, PBL is also described as "a model that organizes learning around projects" (Thomas, *A review of research on project-based learning* 1)[7]. This didactic model presents numerous characteristics, as commented below:

1. Organized around a problem or challenge without a predetermined solution.
2. Creates a need to know of essential content and skills.
3. Students design the process for reaching a solution.
4. Requires critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication.
5. Provides the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives using a variety of resources, separate relevant from irrelevant information, and manage the information they gather.
6. Students learn to work independently and take responsibility when they are asked to make choices.
7. Students regularly reflect on what they are doing.
8. A final product – not necessarily material – is produced and is evaluated for quality.

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[6] "Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students' gains knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge." This extract has been retrieved from the educative webpage:

https://www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl#:~:text=Project%20Based%20Learning%20is%20a,question%2C%20problem%2C%20or%20challenge.

[7] Thomas, John W. *A review of research on project-based learning.* March 2000. University of California, Ph.D. http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL_Research.pdf.

9. The classroom has an atmosphere that tolerates error and change.
10. The teacher takes on the role of a facilitator rather than a leader.

(*Project Based Learning*, Goodman 4)[8].

Furthermore, this educative approach is considered an innovative strategy that makes emphasis on cooperative learning while the students are working on a final project. In addition, the learners use ICT resources as one of the main tools to compose that social task. According to recent researchers, it is asserted that PBL is not only beneficial for the students - as it has been exposed before – but also for the teachers, because of the relationship between the understanding of the PBL´s criteria and the implementation of that by teachers´ side.

Concerning its benefits, it is a model that promotes the students´ motivation and their improvements in learning skills, as well. Also, it encourages the learners to be responsible and work in groups to make decisions, along with the acquisition of the contents and the foreign language while they are solving diverse challenges. As reported by Wolk (1994), "the PBL system is an outlet for every student to experience success" [9], which means that as a consequence of the enrichment of the different abilities and skills, students can develop their academic potential. Regarding that fact, we can also affirm that this method is great support for learners in terms of understanding and applying the content to a specific project.

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[8] Goodman, Brandon. *A dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges, simultaneously developing 21st Century skills while working in small collaborative group.* 2010. Educational Psychology. MA thesis, https://www.fsmilitary.org/pdf/Project_Based_Learning.pdf

[9] Steven Wolk is a professor of Teacher Education at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. The information is retrieved from: Tamim, S.R., and Grant, M.M. "Definitions and Uses: Case Study of Teachers Implementing Project-based Learning". *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, vol.7, no. 2, 2013, pp. 1 – 31, https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1323&context=ijpbl

In this sense, my educational interventional project tried to encourage the pupils to develop their creativity and their cooperative work to compose a final task about the theory studied in class. In doing so, they improved new skills as well as their management of the ICT instruments. Moreover, it is important to be clear that this type of methodology is connected with the CLIL system because it promotes the creation of a final product in a practical form.

3.   COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative learning is described as "an instructional method in which students learn by helping each other in an educational setting. (…) set of instructional activities that require learners to work in small, heterogeneous groups". According to Dewey (1938), "individuals tend to discover knowledge and construct meaning through personal experience and peer- interactions in a supportive environment" [10].

In other words, it is quite important to be in a good environment when students are working in groups in order to acquire new content as well as to learn how to interact with other classmates to design a social task or a project. Therefore, cooperative learning is an approach focused on promoting the learners´ autonomy and motivation in their learning process.

Likewise, it is a relevant method due to the "learners have numerous opportunities to negotiate meaning by listening to each other, asking questions, exchanging ideas, discussing issues, clarifying concepts, and defending their opinions" (Alhebaishi, "Investigation of Cooperative Learning Techniques and Attitudes in Language Learning Classrooms" 2).

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[10]   Alhebaishi, Safaa M. "Investigation of Cooperative Learning Techniques and Attitudes in Language Learning Classrooms". *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, vol.8, no. 2, pp.   219   –   230, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/Investigation_of_Cooperative_Learning_Techniques_a%20(1).pdf .

In terms of organizing different groups or teams, cooperative learning distinguishes five main principles, as the ones commented below:

> *"Positive interdependence* is based on the idea that all group members should contribute together in doing the task. (…) According to Tran (2013), *promotive interaction* happens when each individual in the group facilitates and boosts the other members to achieve the group's intended goals. (…) *Individual accountability* is based on the view that each member in the group must learn the new materials required for performing the task. (…) Learners are in crucial need of *social skills* like decision-making, leadership, management, conflict management skills which can help them to positively participate in their group and cease any problems that may appear or even resembling their group in front of their teachers (…). *Group processing* measures how well the members have achieved their goals and what are the problems that they faced and which behavior should be boosted and which one to be stopped (Johnson & Johnson, 2009)" (Ali Bin-Hady, "A Suggested Technique for Cooperative Learning Implication in EFL Classroom: Mixed Methods Research" 116) [11].

Another remarkable point is related to the introduction of a task or a final project. The final social task or product is designed by the teachers, taking into account the characteristics of the students of a specific class, to propose adequate activities. In this sense, teachers design tasks in a way that the learners can communicate with each other to create a determined product. The educators support their pupils by providing them the information, the strategies, and the tools to be successful in their assignments. With regard to the effects that this methodology has on the students, we can mention a few of them.

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[11] Ali Bin-Hady, Wagdi R. "A Suggested Technique for Cooperative Learning Implication in EFL Classroom: Mixed Methods Research". *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2019, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/A-Suggested-Technique-for-Cooperative-Learning-Implication-in-EFL-Classroom.pdf.

One of its advantages is the fact that it seeks to develop "achievement, increased motivation, improved collaboration skills, improved student attitudes towards learning, and greater opportunities for teachers to assess student learning" (Alhebaishi, "Investigation of Cooperative Learning Techniques and Attitudes in Language Learning Classrooms" 221). Besides, we can associate these features with the idea that this methodology gives students a sense of autonomy and responsibility due to challenges. Another benefit would be that the cooperative or collaborative learning...

> "(…) supports learning and academic success of the students, increases keeping useful information in mind longer, helps feel satisfied while learning, improves communication skills, develops social skills, enhances self-respect, improves metacognitive thinking skills, and helps students express their ideas during discussions and be critical" (Alhebaishi, "Investigation of Cooperative Learning Techniques and Attitudes in Language Learning Classrooms" 221)

Moreover, it is also suggested that cooperative learning provides experiences to the learners, in the sense that they increase their active learning as well as various skills, as it is claimed by Kagan (1994): "CL provides students with a wide range of experiences, such as active learning opportunities, and enhances communication skills, higher-order thinking skills, and social skills, which are vital for success in today's world" (Alhebaishi, "Investigation of Cooperative Learning Techniques and Attitudes in Language Learning Classrooms" 221 – 222). Taking into consideration those features, my learning situation was focused on working on collaborative and communication skills and interpersonal skills as well.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, I will present the theoretical background which constituted the educational interventional CLIL project, such as an introduction to the comic – its definitions and its origin – the formal elements of a comic strip, the use of the comic in the educational system, how we can teach and learn a foreign language using the comic strip, and the use of comics as a CLIL teaching strategy in Natural science.

2.1. THE COMIC STRIP: DEFINITIONS & ORIGIN

2.1.1. What is a comic strip?

From the beginning of its existence, the comic strip has not been easy to define as the majority of people think, because it is misunderstood and stereotyped. A curious aspect about this fact is that "comics have not been taken as art seriously throughout most of the last 150 and those interested in years, the medium seem to feel the need to provide an apology for their interest"[12]. (Meskin, "Defining Comics" 374)

Therefore, a group of experts of different areas tried to define it taking into account the different contexts it can be involved in. Comic strips can be considered as a mass communicator instrument in numerous fields such as in education, or the entertainment world; and, it is universally acknowledged as a sequence of images and visual language.

About the language fields, it can be defined as "a series of adjacent drawn images, usually arranged horizontally, that are designed to be read as a narrative or a chronological sequence (…) Words may be introduced within or near each image, or they are dispensed with altogether"[13], covering all kinds of storytelling constituted by sequences and images[14] (Encyclopedia Britannica).

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[12] Meskin, Aaron. "Defining Comics?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol.65, no. 4, 2007, pp. 369 – 379, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4622260?origin=JSTOR-pdf&seq=1

[13] "Comic strip". Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014, https://www.britannica.com/art/comic-strip.

[14] "Styles of comics: A Short History of Comics". Microsoft Word, n.d, p.1, https://bdnf.bnf.fr/EN/fiches/2.%20Styles%20of%20Comics%20.pdf

Concerning the comic as an instrument to be "read as a narrative" (Encyclopedia Britannica), it is claimed that the comic can communicate with the readers through a kind of language because of its graphical elements which "relies on (…) to both creator and reader" (Eisner, *Comics & Sequential Art* 9). As a result of this, the reader makes an exercise interpreting its verbal skills while he or she is reading a comic[15]. Furthermore, Will Eisner coined the term "sequential art" as an "imagery of modern strip-cartoons and comic books" which "owes its shape to a wide variety of influences"[16]

Besides, it has been compared to the cartoons format, as it is found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, "a group of cartoons in narrative sequence"[17]. With the perspective of the comic strip as a combination of images and narration, we find the definition which establishes that his instrument "consists of images and texts, most often with the images in sequence." (Cohn, "Un-defining Comics" 1). In addition, in this article, it is also discussed that the comic is "an additive fusion of the text and image relationship to achieve a narrative end" (Harvey, "Un-defining Comics" 1).

Thus, taking into consideration the statement above, the comic strips have a close relationship with the narration, as it is expressed in Henry John Pratt's descriptions: "comics as narratives telling stories by a sequence of pictures with speech balloons". According to Pratt, comics have a double dimension, as they can be literal or pictorial narratives[18].

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[15] Eisner, Will. "Comics as a form of Reading". *Comics & Sequential Art*, Florida, Poorhouse Press, 1985 https://alphalight.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/will-eisner-theory-of-comics-sequential-art.pdf.

[16] Morris – Suzuki, Tessa. "The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History". The American Historical Review, vol. 111, no. 5, Dec. 2006, pp. 158 – 205, http://stanford.edu/dept/complit/cgi-bin/files/Morris%20Suzuki,%20Tessa%20Angles%20of%20vision.pdf

[17] "Comic strip". Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2021, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comic%20strip

[18] This statement belongs to a fragment of the anthology *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels: Contributions to the Theory and History of Graphic Narrative*, in which it makes reference to an article that Pratt has written in 2009, "Narratives in Comics".

Moreover, this kind of text is also a cultural medium. It is connected with education due to its pedagogical purposes with its structural elements as well as with its original communicative technique. Thus, taking into consideration this, we can claim that the comic is an autonomous literary genre[19]. Furthermore, we find that Scott McCloud has proposed a similar description of what a comic represents.

Regarding the proposal offered by McCloud, the comics are "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer".[20] For the great majority of people, this is the most accepted and well-known explanation about the comic strip. Additionally, Camilo C. Reina Rodriguez in his Ph.D. dissertation mentioned the next appreciation of Elizabeth K. Baur about this instrument: "it is a narrative form whose structure contains two systems: the language and the image"[21]. Another curious denotation is that "a comic strip is a series of drawings that tell a story, especially in a newspaper or magazine" (Collins Dictionary).

Etter, Lukas, and Rippl, Gabriele. "Intermediality, Transmediality, and Graphic Narrative". From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels: Contributions to the Theory and History of Graphic Narrative, edited by Daniel Stein and Jan-Noel Thon, Deutsche National Library, 2013, pp. 1 – 219, https://www.academia.edu/3423077/From_Comic_Strips_to_Graphic_Novels_Contributions_to_the_Theory_and_History_of_Graphic_Narrative

[19] Reina Rodríguez, Camilo C., and Valderrama Sánchez, Mónica. "El comic como herramienta didáctica para el mejoramiento de la competencia léxica del inglés en la institución educativa Miguel Antonio Caro, Jornada Nocturna". Ph.D dissertation, University Libre, Bogota, 2014.

[20] Cohn, Neil. "Un-Defining 'Comics.'" *International Journal of Comic Art*, Vol. 7 (2), October 2005, pp. 1 – 11

[21] Reina Rodríguez, Camilo C., and Valderrama Sánchez, Mónica. "El comic como herramienta didáctica para el mejoramiento de la competencia léxica del inglés en la institución educativa Miguel Antonio Caro, Jornada Nocturna". Ph.D dissertation, University Libre, Bogota, 2014, https://repository.unilibre.edu.co/handle/10901/8228.

Concerning the definition above, we can apply it to the information world, in which comics are a communicative medium to express something to the audience. Furthermore, bearing in mind McCloud and Collins Dictionary's definitions, we can establish a relationship between the comics as a sequence of images and text, with a series of drawings; creating what is known as the *visual language*. This term refers to "systems guiding individual´s drawing abilities" which allows the comic's author expresses his or her ideas on it. Therefore, the grammar used by the creator "organizes meaningful images into coherent sequences"[22]. However, the comic itself is not recognized as a visual language, but it can be included inside this concept as the strip cartoonist employs written language as well as images to tell a story.

Culturally, we can comment on the numerous ways in which the term "comic" can be used in different countries. For instance, in Spanish it can be named as "tebeo", in Italian it is known as "fumetto", "bande dessineè" in French, among others. Thus, we can appreciate how the notion of the comic can be described in multiple forms depending on the reader's conception, the theme, and the cultural context he or she is involved with.

2.1.2. Origin of the comic strip

It is often asserted that the origin of the comic strip began with the first human beings. Those first inhabitants needed to express success or an adventure, drawing it either on the ground or on the rocks. They created a simple conception of what is known as comics since there were just drawings without any kind of text. However, it is important, in the sense that the prehistoric inhabitants wanted to communicate with each other, and, for that reason, they used the drawings.

Therefore, this construction of images to narrate something developed into a more sophisticated technique as it was the case of the Egyptians. This ancient civilization used the drawing in a sequential form to illustrate a whole success like the death and the pharaohs and Gods figures, through the hieroglyphic images.

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[22] Cohn, Neil. "Visual Language Theory and the scientific study of comics. *Empirical Comics Research: Digital, Multimodal, and Cognitive Methods,* Wildfeuer, Janina, Alexander Dunst, Jochen Laubrock (Ed.), London: Routledge, 2018, pp. 305 -328, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/2018.ESiC.NC.pdf.

Afterward, in 1066, it was created the Bayeux Tapestry, a masterpiece considered sequential art on account of its representation of the Norman Conquest. Over time, with the printing invention, the structure of the sequences of images changed drastically as the frames not only contained drawings or pictures but also, texts that were along with them. Nevertheless, it was not until the 18th century when the political and social satiric appeared becoming in the predecessor of the actual comic, although there were caricatures that showed a story or a mini-narration.

An example of that literary movement would be William Hogarth, Rodolphe Töpffer[23], among other important caricaturists. As regards Töpffer, he commenced to create his caricatures using images and texts in 1830, and, as a result, he combined the sequences of images with the text[24]. A curious thing about him is that he published what would be the first comic strip, *The Adventures of Mr. Obadiah Oldbuck,* in 1837; which years later – in 1842 - was published in the United States.

Regardless, it was not until 1896, when the format that we know about the comics emerged in "Yellow Kid", a comic strip created by Richard Felton Outcault, published in the *Hearst New York American,* an American newspaper; also, one of its characters was well-known because it appeared in that newspaper in the years 1895 and 1896. Besides, it was the first time that someone introduced "speech bubbles and defined series of panels to create comic narratives"[25].

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[23]   He was a Swedish pedagogic who invented a new way of narrating stories.

This information was retrieved from: Canyssaá, Jordi. "El hombre que inventó una nueva manera decontar historias". *Lavanguardia,* late ed., 5 Nov. 2012, https://www.lavanguardia.com/libros/20121105/54354853184/el-hombre-que-invento-una-nueva-manera-de-contar-historias.html

[24] This fragment is a transcription of a Master's thesis:
Bambara, Sylvain. Aprender vocabulario a través de comics. 2012-2013. University of Sevilla, https://idus.us.es/bitstream/handle/11441/23452/TFM-Sylvain%20Bambara.pdf?sequence=1.

[25] Bellis, Mary. "The Colorful History of Comic Books and Newspaper Cartoon Strips". *ThoughtCo*, 29 Oct 2020, https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-comic-books-1991480.

In 1896, it was published "The Katzenjammer Kids" by Rudolph Dirks, which was an adaptation of the comic strip created by Wilhelm Bush, "Max and Moritz". For the great majority of scholars, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century occurred the phenomenon known as "cultural consumption" because of the increase in the socio-economic shift in the American society, caused by the modernization period. Likewise, the comic could be described in that era as "a new kind of modern art (…) and a form that (…) establish a "new universal language of art" [26](Gordon, *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture: 1890 – 1945* 4). Comic strips were also part of the society's evolution to a modern one, supporting, in that sense, the formation of Modernism in "its formal art meaning and its broader cultural denotation".

Moreover, taking into consideration the background, Judith O´Sullivan suggested that the comics are just "holding an enchanted mirror to American society" (Gordon, *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture: 1890 – 1945* 8 – 10)[27]. By 1902, the comic strip was so famous that it developed into a cultural icon; also, they were accepted by newspaper publishers due to its circulation. Then, in 1910, it was created the first comic strip in which animals appeared, "Krazy Kat", by George Herriman.

Afterward, in the 1930s –onwards, the comic started to be introduced into the market as a product like dolls or toys; also, a new type of comic was developed at that time, the comic book. It is a well-known fact that the first comic book was *Funnies on Parade*, published n 1933. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the comic book is a "bound collection of comic strips, usually in chronological sequence, typically, telling a single story or a series of different stories"[28]. The detective comics were quite important owing to the figure of the superheroes, such as Superman. The detective comics were quite important owing to the figure of the superheroes, such as Superman. From 1950 onwards, superhero stories started being on television, so comic books were not as popular as they were years before.

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[26] Gordon, Ian. *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture: 1890 – 1945.* Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998, https://comicsforum.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/ian-gordon-comic-strips-consumer-culture.pdf.

[27] Gordon, Ian. *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture: 1890 – 1945.* Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998, https://comicsforum.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/ian-gordon-comic-strips-consumer-culture.pdf.

[28] The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Comic Book", Encyclopedia *Britannica*, 2017, https://www.britannica.com/art/comic-book

Nevertheless, because of the counter-culture, the period between the 1960s and 1970s, comics started to be available for an adult readership breaking with the tradition that they were just a medium of entertaining the children. In the 1980s, the comic strips turned into a deconstruction of the conventions, creating new styles of comic literature, such as the case of the Japanese comics named Manga, whose meaning is literally "comic strip". Currently, the comic genre is still being one of the most popular in the world, because of the use of humor, its format, and entertainment.

2.2. FORMAL ELEMENTS OF A COMIC STRIP

This section will be dedicated to the explanation of various formal elements of comic strips, such as the following: the shots, the angles, the boxes, the pictograms, the frames, and the importance of the color.

1. SHOTS

These shots are the same as the ones used in the cinematographic industry, which included four main types: wide, medium, close up, and cut-in shots. In the paragraphs below is developing each of them:

1. **Wide shot:** they are used mainly on setting the mood of a scene. It is divided into three subtypes:

1.1. **The extreme wide shot (EWS):** represents "the view is so far from the subject that they are not visible".

1.2. **The very wide shot (VWS):** is focused on placing the subject into a specific context.

1.3. **The simple wide shot (WS):** is the situation that occurs when the subject is the main element in the entire frame.

2. **The mid shot (MS)** "shows some part of them in more detail while still giving an impression of the whole subject"[29].

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[29] Ravelo, Livia C. "The use of comic strips as a means of teaching history in the EFL class: Proposal of activities based on two historical comic strips adhering to the principles of CLIL". *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 6(1), 2013, 1-19, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4785/19ee92745a2685513f275cc02859c246d1c7.pdf

3. **The close-up:** is when a specific characteristic of the subject appears inside the frame. **The extreme close-up** makes emphasis on extreme details.
4. **The cut-in:** it represents the subject excepting the face.

2. ANGLES

The angles are the element that allows the readers to formulate possible hypotheses about what is going to happen inside a comic's story. The most important types of angles are the followings: **the normal angle**, **high camera angle**, **low camera angle**, **canted or slant angle, reverse angle**, **subjective camera angle** (it makes emphasis to the subject's perspective); **objective camera angle** (it is focused on the perception that a third person could see what is happening inside the story). Additionally, there is an angle which "up or down at the object that is being framed (instead of being on the same level) make up the so-called *tilt shots*. The <u>title shots</u> are more dramatic than straight-angle shots"[30] (Ravelo, "The use of comic strips as a means of teaching history in the EFL class: Proposal of activities based on two historical comic strips adhering to the principles of CLIL" 3).

3. BOXES

The box is the element in which the author explains the action that the characters will develop in that specific frame. We can situate this element, on the top side of a frame, indicating the place, the setting, and the moment the story is happening.

4. PICTOGRAMS

The pictograms are well-known, described as simple drawings which symbolize something. There are three categories inside pictograms: the symbols, and the drawings.

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[30] Ravelo, Livia C. "The use of comic strips as a means of teaching history in the EFL class: Proposal of activities based on two historical comic strips adhering to the principles of CLIL". *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 6(1), 2013, 1-19, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4785/19ee92745a2685513f275cc02859c246d1c7.pdf.

4.1. SYMBOLS

The symbols are those elements associated with ideas or concepts. It is divided into two groups: balloons, and visual metaphors.

A) BALLOONS

The balloons along with the boxes aim to indicate what a character is thinking or saying at a specific time. It also includes the dialogue between the different characters that appear in the frame, known as *speech balloons or bubbles*. Dialogues contain the individual voice, mood, and diction of each character. On the other hand, if the balloon is presented in a cloud shape means that this character is thinking something, it is also a so-called *thought bubble*. Moreover, there is another type of balloon known as the *narrative bubble* that is associated with the story's narrator, who is not necessary inside the frame.

B) VISUAL METAPHORS. ONOMATOPOEIA.

Visual metaphors are drawings that represent moods or situations. As a consequence, there are numerous conventions to express different elements, such as the lines which are used to indicate bad smells, the wind, fear, the love, among other important aspects. Thus, kinetic figures depicted visual movements through *parallel lines*, which illustrate the passing of times in the comic strips. Another relevant component is the so-called *onomatopoeia* that refers to "that sound like what they refer to and are closely associated with comics. The words can be used as pictures in the comic panels"[31]. Besides, the onomatopoeia can be connected with the visual phenomenon.

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[31] Metaphrog. How to write a comic book scene: adapting novel scenes into comic format. E-book, Scottishbooktrust.com., n.d., https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/uploads/store/mediaupload/1261/file/How%20to%20write%20a%20comic%20book%20scene.pdf

4.2. DRAWINGS

According to Gubern (1979), drawings are a compilation of iconic symbols that graphically represent the object we want to designate[32]. It is often asserted that drawings are easier to understand than words as they are images with a traditional meaning, whereas a drawing is recognized by different cultures.

5. FRAMES

It is considered the smallest narrative unit of a comic, because it depends on the type of frame that we refer to, such as Manga, superheroes, detective, etc. The frames contain the setting description as well as if one character is conversing with another character; and, also, the number of balloons that each of them has. In addition, we can mention an element related to frames, *gutters* — the spaces that existed between frames. When we work in a comic strip, we tend to use one frame, and a maximum of three or four.

6. COLOR

This is a quite relevant element in the frames´ composition, as its role is connected to the psychological behavior of the characters. Thus, we can associate it with the fact that the visual elements have a great impact on the character because it reflects his or her thoughts as well as his or her experiences along with the story.

Bearing in mind this idea, we should mention the so-called "mind style", a term coined by Roger Fowler. Fowler suggested that this term, refers to the "realisation of a narrative perspective, and it is particularly detectable in clusters of linguistic features or techniques that give an impression of an author's or a character's world view" (Mikkonen, *The Narratology of Comic Art* 119)[33].

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[32] This is a transcription of the definition that appears in Daniel F. Mozo Rincon´s thesis.

Mozo Rincón, Daniel F. *Filosofía a través del comic*. 2019. Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.MA dissertation, http://repository.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/11733/TE-23942.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

[33] Mikkonen, Kai. The Narratology of Comic Art, edited by Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith, New York, Routledge, 2017, https://helda.helsinki.fi//bitstream/handle/10138/312420/The_Narratology_of_Comic_Art.pdf?sequence 1.

2.3. THE USE OF COMICS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Nowadays, we see how the educational system attempt to use innovative didactics during the students' learning process, so that they more easily assimilate the contents of the various subjects. For that reason, in this chapter, I will explain the meaning of a didactic resource and its components and its application into the comics.

2.3.1. What is a didactic resource?

To begin with, it is quite important to describe what a didactic resource is, as it is considered a multi-meaning expression. A *didactic resource* can be defined as "the set of objects and tools which help in the teaching practice to make more profitable, meaningful and easier the learning process"[34]. Furthermore, we can refer to this term using numerous concepts such as the following: didactic resources, didactic aids, didactic means, and pedagogical supports, didactic or instructional materials; although, all the names allude to the materials used in the teaching process.

Therefore, this pedagogical technique is possibly divided into three groups depending on its use: the first group deals with the instructional materials as an instrument and resource, the second group is dedicated to the communicative and expressive resources; and, the third one is about the critical analysis of the information. These approaches can be summarized in the chart below:

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[34] Gaona J., Flavio F., and Peñaloza A., Adriana C. *The use of didactic resources applied in the communicative approach, in teaching learning process of English language*. 2011. National University of Loja, Ecuador, PH. D. dissertation, https://dspace.unl.edu.ec/jspui/bitstream/123456789/2896/1/JIMENEZ%20FLAVIO%20-%20PE%C3%91ALOZA%20ADRIANA.pdf.

USAGE	LEARNING PROCESS	TYPES OF MATERIALS AND MEDIUMS
Instrument and Resource	It includes different fields: presentations of topics, motivational activities, evaluation, etc. Development of listening skills in diverse communicative contexts.	News, books, poems, computers, Internet, among others.
Communicative and Expressive resources	Development of the specific content of the fields. Development of communicative and expressive procedures. Speaking and written activities, development of the creativity.	Development of the information about different topics. Composing poems, songs, plays… Radio programs.
Critical analysis of the information	Development of mechanisms and symbolic representations. Development of the decoding ability and information analysis. Knowledge about the mediums and their specific terms. Creation of analytical instruments.	Analysis of the mass media contents. Conducting surveys.

Source from Moreno (2004, 10)[35]

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[35]This chart is a transcription of an article written by I. Moreno Herrero. Moreno H., Isidro. "La utilización de medios y recursos didácticos en el aula". *Didáctica y Organización Escolar*, 2004, pp. 1-14. https://cmapspublic2.ihmc.us/rid=1K2WRYPDP-8HX9V-

2.3.2. The comics in the educational field

As it has been commented in the previous section, the didactic resources that include text and images can be present in the three usages, such as the comics. This pedagogical material can be used in all levels of education, but, it is more frequently used in primary levels as it is a new model based on communicative skills. Besides, communicative teaching has a great impact on all the educational stages. It is influenced by the diverse materials, teaching strategies, and the design of the curriculum, being the last aspect the one that would have more relevance from the 80s onwards.

Thus, comics can also be considered as an active learning strategy as…

> "(…) it stimulates the participation and the interaction of students in the classroom. The use of active learning strategies can contribute to the development of the ability to think and reflect about professional practice, making the learning process more meaningful. (…) active learning helps students (…) to express their ideas, which may contribute to unexpected and interesting discussions" (Da Silvia, "The comics as a teaching strategy in the learning of students in an undergraduate management program" 48).

Another remarkable point is the numerous purposes that comics present when teachers integrated them as a teaching technique. One of them is to improve their speaking skills by communicating with each other. Another purpose deals with the idea that "the comics are also used to make medieval history classes more attractive or even encourage the participation of students in disciplines with highest disapproval, such as mathematics and physics" (Da Silvia, "The comics as a teaching strategy in learning of students in an undergraduate management program" 47)[36].

13SZ/LA%20UTILIZACI%C3%93N%20DE%20MEDIOS%20Y%20RECURSOS%20DID%C3%81CT ICOS%20EN%20EL%20AULA.pdf.

[36] Da Silvia, Anielson B., et al. "The comics as teaching strategy in learning of students in an undergraduate management program". *Revista de Administração Mackenzie,* vol. 18, no. 1, May 2017, pp. 40-65, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/RAM_v18_n1_2017_04_ArtigoComics.pdf.

Furthermore, the comics can be used as a source of motivation because "the encoding and decoding processes that students experience in the creation and interpretation of comics become learning to facilitate elements because there is a need for concentration" (Da Silvia, "The comics as a teaching strategy in learning of students in an undergraduate management program" 47)[37].

Regarding its advantages, we can mention that the comics encourage the students to be motivated; also, it increases the autonomy, creativity, and freedom in the learners when they are composing a comic strip. Likewise, it develops critical ability as well as interpersonal skills. Besides," as a strategy for teaching, comics can help students to express and represent a professional situation which features the application of theoretical knowledge in the context of managerial practice" (Da Silvia, "The comics as a teaching strategy in learning of students in an undergraduate management program" 48).

On the other hand, it is also beneficial for the educators, because it helps to establish a good environment inside the class due to humor and entertaining tasks to create a great learning context. Another advantage is that comics are a good strategy to catch the students' attention[38], so as they are engaged in the subject. As it has been exposed, the comics support the students to learn the contents of the different subjects while they are composing an entertainment activity with their classmates. Additionally, it promotes the development of numerous skills through the experience of designing a project in a team.

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[37]   Da Silvia, Anielson B., et al. "The comics as teaching strategy in learning of students in an undergraduate management program". *Revista de Administração Mackenzie,* vol. 18, no. 1, May 2017, pp. 40-65, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/RAM_v18_n1_2017_04_ArtigoComics.pdf.

[38]   These ideas are a transcription of a Master's thesiswritten by Nuria Salesa Amarante. S. Amarante, Nuria. *El comic como recurso didáctico en el aula de Economía de la Empresa: un enfoque teórico-práctico para segundo de Bachillerato*. 19 Dic. 2014. International University of La Rioja, Ph. D. dissertation, https://reunir.unir.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/2972/Nuria_Salesa_Amarante.pdf?Sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

2.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH THE COMIC STRIP

In this section, I will comment on the meaning of what a foreign language is, its origin in the educational system, and its main characteristics.

2.4.1. The emergence of foreign languages in the educational system

To begin with, a foreign language can be defined as "a language not widely spoken and used by the people of a community/society/nation"[39]. Over the last decades, foreign languages have become more important inside the educational institutions because of globalization and internalization, so as the people started to master more than one language, including the mother tongue. Besides, "language studies that used to be available only to a select group of pupils are now considered to be important to all pupils"[40]; and, as a result, we focus the teaching and learning of a new language towards making it more accessible for everyone. Thus, we can determine that a foreign language is an important factor in terms of the education of both students and workers, as it promotes a positive change in the curricular formation.

Moreover, the curriculum of the foreign languages has changed considerably until the point that even though mother tongue and target language are not included in the same subjects, they need to develop "insight into the nature of languages, language learning processes, communication and culture, and also developing the ability to participate and communicate across cultures" (Fenner et al., "Mother tongue and foreign language teaching and learning – A joint project" 135).

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[39]   Allard, Danièle. "Addressing Cross-Linguistic Influence and Related Cultural Factors Using Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)". IGI Global, 2011, https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/addressing-cross-linguistic-influence-related/45061.

[40] Fenner, Anne-Brit et al. "Mother tongue and foreign language teaching and learning- A joint project". 1999, pp. 133-143, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/102830-Text%20de%20l'article-149267-1-10-20080916%20(1).pdf.

Furthermore, the development of a new model of the curriculum has several modifications regarding the teachers, as they should adequate to the new teaching strategies. Due to this situation, they start to deal with various questions such as "What is a language? What is language competence? What does developing language competence mean?" whose answers "constituted a basic understanding of the subject taught and learned" (Fenner et al., "Mother tongue and foreign language teaching and learning – A joint project" 135-136). Likewise, there is a controversial debate about the use of the mother tongue in the second language classes as it may be a "valuable support for learning either directly or indirectly"[41].

In addition to that, it is quite relevant to underline the fact the educators prepare the activities depending on the skill they are going to use in class: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Taking into consideration this, we find that there are numerous tasks for teaching a foreign language, such as the didactic stories, the comic, the oral presentations, watching a film, among others.

2.4.2. The comic as a teaching instrument for the acquisition of a target language

As it has been explained throughout this dissertation, the comic is a great teaching strategy as it promotes motivation and interest in the students, and is an accessible material for them, as well. Besides, it is a good form of introducing new terms to the learners because there is a relationship between the image and the words; also, it uses simple language that makes it easier to read the texts. Afterward, the comic prompts a didactic and amusing environment inside the classroom that leads to the introduction of the linguistic input, to be specific, the vocabulary.

Likewise, we should take into account that, the communicative context attempts to develop the students´ concentration as well as stimulates their memories. Concerning the benefits it provides to the educational field, we can point out the most important ones, such as the ones in the quote below:

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[41] Littlewood, William, and Yu, Baohua." First language and target language in the foreign language classroom". Language Teaching, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 64 -77, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/LittlewoodYu2011-Firstlanguageandtargetlanguageintheforeignlanguageclassroom.pdf.

The first one is that they usually have elements of humour. (…) The second element is that of the images as a helping device that (…) supply a good part of the meaning of what is read: the text that the reader founds comes mostly in the form of utterances and brief captions, while descriptions are made unnecessary due to the fact that the settings and characters appear before our eyes. (…) The third feature of comics is the fact that they lend themselves more to interaction. While many children like to create stories of their own, they may have difficulties when it comes to language. Nevertheless, if they are supplied with some images, they may find themselves more at ease to create, and use those images as a basis for their inventions. This is a good way of practicing with expression[42]. (Fernandez, *The Use of Comic Books in the Teaching of English as a Second Language*, 15)

Linguistically, this didactic resource is mainly focused on the speaking, listening, and writing skills; thus, the speaking skill is reflected in the dialogues, and the writing skill is portrayed with the creation of the comic itself. On the other hand, this CLIL material is also useful to work on the reading skill, because it "is a highly effective means of extending our command of the language, so it has an important place in classrooms where language learning is the central purpose"[43]. Additionally, "the interest in reading comics" is "accompanied by an interest in investigating the effect of reading comics on learners' cultural knowledge and awareness" [44].

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[42] Fernandez S., Abel. *The Use of Comic Books in the Teaching of English as a Second Language.* University of Valladolid, 2019/2020, MA thesis, https://uvadoc.uva.es/bitstream/handle/10324/45705/TFM_F_2020_71.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

[43] Alonso A., Marina. *El cómic en la clase de ELE: una propuesta didáctica*. University of Nebrija, 2012, MA thesis, https://marcoele.com/descargas/14/alonso-comic.pdf.

[44] Azam, Mona M. *Reading and Creating Comics in the Fully Online AFL Classrooms: Students 'Perception*. The American University in Cairo, 2018, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/Reading_and_Creating_Comics_in_the_Fully.pdf.

About the role of the teachers, we should highlight the fact that they need to manage various skills to use this tool correctly, as the ones commented below:

1. To know the concepts regarding the comic and its components.
2. To understand the relationship between the comic with the culture.
3. To teach how a drawing can be used to tell a story.
4. To promote critical thinking in this context, dealing with the narrative and its art, comprehension, profile, and function of the characters, narrative elements, humorous…
   (G. Reyes, *The use of comics as a resource in English as a foreign language,* 16).

Furthermore, English educators tend to teach this foreign language focusing only on the grammatical structures. Therefore, introducing the comic as an activity in the field of education can be positive for the language-learning progress of the students, because it is practical rather than theoretical.

2.5. COMICS AS A CLIL TEACHING STRATEGY IN NATURAL SCIENCES

It is asserted that the comic is a teaching strategy that addresses different topics, such as humor, adventures, science fiction, among others. Because of that, students can understand a determined subject from another perspective considering the thematic contents. For that reason, we can apply this to any subject, as in this case natural science, because it is a great way to consolidate the contents. This pedagogical resource is that students can design it individually or in groups concerning the instructions of the educator.

Besides, the students understand easily the instructions to create a comic, as they are quite simple. First, they should face the topic they are studying at that specific moment; then, they write an outline with the concrete language and concepts of the theme. Afterward, they may organize their story and the images they are going to use.

About the natural science curriculum, we could situate the creation of comics in the first criteria of the compulsory secondary education, which mainly states "to organized and create investigational projects individually or in groups by analyzing the information to present it using the specific vocabulary"[45]. Moreover, this CLIL didactic strategy is a good option to integrate in this kind of subject because it is based on the CLIL approach, which in the case of bilingual schools, supports the learners with the acquisition of the contents, and the English language, as well; as it is explained in the following quote:

> "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach where some content learning (such as a topic on global climate or a subject) is taught in an additional language (…) involves very different models. In other words, (…) depends on what educators want to achieve in a given time and place"[46]. (Losada, *The CLIL approach through ICT* 11)

In addition to this, the contents section explicitly mentions "the use of the technologies and communication for looking the information and present the results", "the creation of small team projects ", and "the development of the cooperative work to reach the objectives"[47].

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[45] Gobierno de Canarias. "Curriculum de la educación secundaria obligatoria", 2018, https://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/web/secundaria/informacion/ordenacion-curriculo/curriculos-de-la-educacion-secundaria-obligatoria-eso/.

[46] Losada F., Pablo. *The CLIL approach through ICT*. University of Oviedo, 2015, MA thesis, https://digibuo.uniovi.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10651/32614/TFM_Fern%E1nder%20Losada,%20Pablo.pdf;jsessionid=0A927C35CB587354673FE22811960B10?sequence=6

[47] Gobierno de Canarias. "Curriculum de la educación secundaria obligatoria", 2018, https://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/web/secundaria/informacion/ordenacion-curriculo/curriculos-de-la-educacion-secundaria-obligatoria-eso/.

3. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION PROJECT

In this epigraph, I will develop my experience introducing the comic as a CLIL activity in the subject of Natural science, in "Virgen del Mar" high school. This section will be exposed into seven parts: an introduction, the objectives, the methodology, the limitations, the sessions, the materials, and the class context.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The educational interventional project is based on a social task implemented in a group of compulsory secondary education, in the "Virgen del Mar" high school. Thus, we can divide this section into two main parts: the project, and the intervention.

To begin with, the project I implemented during my internships was about the creation of a CLIL activity to work on the contents of the Natural science subject as well as the foreign language (English); in this case, it dealt with the design of a comic regarding the Earth's movements, and, the concepts of solstices, equinoxes, and equinoxes.
About the interventional approach, it was focused on studying the impact on the comic in a CLIL subject in order to improve the students´ acquisition of both the contents and the language.

In doing so, I integrated this final social task into the first level of the compulsory secondary education, with children around twelve and thirteen years old, during the last two weeks of my internship as I observed how the teacher managed his class and the strategies he used to catch their attention, as well. Furthermore, at the end of that CLIL social task, I surveyed the comic activity to the students. Therefore, in the following subsections, I will develop the information of the constituents of this didactic task.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

Concerning this interventional project, it was carried out by taking into account specific objectives such as the ones I will comment on below:

- To select and contrast the information.
- To express themselves using the scientific language.
- To integrate ICT resources in the projects.
- To identify the movements of the Earth and its consequences.
- To explain different concepts (solstice, equinox, rotation, revolution, and eclipse).

3.3 METHODOLOGY

In this subheading, I will explain how the different activities, included in my learning situation, were developed during my internship period. These tasks can be divided into two groups attending their function: expository, and practical; each of them, were carried out taking into account three methodologies: the audio-lingual, the communicative, and the direct branches.

A) EXPOSITORY ACTIVITIES

The expository activities relied on the explanation of various concepts regarding the topic the students were studied at that time, which was the Earth's movement. Concretely, those terms were the revolution, the rotation, the solstices, the equinoxes, and the eclipses. In doing so, it was necessary to integrate the audio-lingual and the direct methodologies.

The *audio-lingual approach* is commonly known for being used in the teaching of foreign languages. This method remarks the importance of the speaking and listening skills, as they improve the learners´ acquisition of the target language by communicating and hearing the new language for a long time. By contrast, the *direct approach* is more focalized on the ability to express ideas or arguments using a different language from the mother tongue of each individual.

Despite both methodologies may present multiple differences in terms of advantages and disadvantages; they highlight the role of speaking to be more in touch with the learning language.

Thus, these approaches were applied through numerous explanatory videos of each concept, which it was illustrated the theory with examples and clear explanations, as well. After watching these videos, the students would ask me their doubts about what they learned those days. Another activity was the visualization of an online webpage to show the pupils diverse models of comics, for their final social task; this webpage was the molasaber´s blog[48], designed by Carlos Pazos.

B) PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

The practical activities deal with the creation of the comic, and a survey about the project the learners would design as a final social task. Thus, it was required the use of two approaches: direct and communicative. Both methods highlight the importance of speaking skills when the students are learning a new language, for that reason, we can state that they are quite similar in terms of their purpose. The ***communicative system*** is described as "an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages, emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language"[49]. Besides, this method remarks the idea of using the foreign language in any kind of context.

As a result, these principles were implemented in two different activities: the comic, and the satisfaction survey. On the one hand, the *comic* was integrated into the subject of Natural science as a CLIL activity, to improve the students´ acquisition of English as well as of the Earth's movements´ contents. On the contrary, the *satisfaction survey* was carried out to reflect on the task itself and the possible integration in other subjects. Therefore, it was done using a ***mixing methodology*** – quantitative and qualitative - due to its purpose was to collect different data, to then analyze them.

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[48]Pazos, Carlos. "Origen de la Luna". *Molasaber*, 8 March 2020, https://molasaber.org/.

[49] Azimova, S. "The Communicative Approach in English Language Teaching". Bulletin of Science and Practice, vol. 5, no.4, 2019, pp. 471-475, file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Downloads/The_Communicative_Approach_in_English_Language_Tea.pdf.

The *mixed-method* alludes to…

> " An emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or "mixing," of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry. The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than do separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. (…) The core characteristics of a well-designed mixed methods study (…) include the following: 1. Collecting and analyzing both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data. 2. Using rigorous procedures in collecting and analyzing data appropriate to each method's tradition, such as ensuring the appropriate sample size for quantitative and qualitative analysis. 3. Integrating the data during data collection, analysis, or discussion. 4. Using procedures that implement qualitative and quantitative components either concurrently or sequentially, with the same sample or with different samples "[50]. *(Creswell* & Wisdom, *Mixed Methods: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis While Studying Patient-Centered Medical Home Models* 1)

3.4 LIMITATIONS

In this section, I will be commenting on the limitations which I dealt with during the development of my internships and their possible resolutions, as well.

The **first issue** that I could observe was the gap between the different students in the theoretical sessions with the Natural science content; due to the fact, various learners have struggled with the specific terms and the grammatical structures as they were not in their mother tongue. On this account, I illustrated the theory using several YouTube videos as well as I explained the grammatical aspects they did not understand while they were working on the comic.

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[50] Creswell, John W., and Wisdom, Jennifer. *Mixed Methods: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis While Studying Patient-Centered Medical Home Models*. 2013. George Washington University and University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Ph.D. dissertation, https://pcmh.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/MixedMethods_032513comp.pdf.

The **second problem** was about the comic activity because pupils were not familiar with composing tasks like the one I proposed to them; so, I explained to them the structure and the steps they would follow to design their comic and a blog in which they could find various examples of comics.

3.5.SESSIONS

This CLIL project was carried out the two last weeks of my internship period in "Virgen del Mar" high school, in which it would be integrated new content and English grammatical structures studied by the students in the previous term. That is to say, they would be able to put into practice all the theory they had already known through the creation of a CLIL activity based on project-based learning, and cooperative work methodologies.

Thus, this final social task was implemented through five sessions, in which the students learned how to incorporate the foreign language - in this case, English - and the Natural science contents; and, the basic notions of a comic and its characteristics, as well. Taking into consideration this point, I will develop each session in the succeeding paragraphs.

In the **first session**, I commented to the scholars what the points I would be debating were, and how the class dynamic would be that day. Then, I introduced to the students the concepts of rotation, revolution, solstices, and equinoxes; therefore, I explained the basic theory about the rotation and the revolution of the Earth, and then I moved to show them a video (annex 7.1.1) to clarify what I was commenting on. After watching that video, I explained to them the notions of the solstices and equinoxes, and, at the end of the class, I resolved the learners´ doubts about what they have learned that day.

Then, in the **second session**, I started the class reviewing the concepts I have talked about the day before, using a video (annex 7.1.2.) while I was asking the students questions about the contents. Afterward, I discussed how the final project would be and the assessment as well; which dealt with the creation of a comic in pairs, about the solstices, the equinoxes, and the eclipses. Thus, they would be evaluated through a mini-presentation about their comic. Following that explanation, I showed a video about the basic notions of the comics (annex 7.1.3) to the pupils.

Regarding the **third session**, the students commenced working on the comic activity. In the first place, they looked for information about the two types of solstices – lunar and solar – the equinoxes, and the eclipses´ formation. Right after the theoretical part, each pair of learners explained how their story would be developed along with the organization of the information. Later, at the end of the lesson, I showed them a blog known as "molasaber" in which his creator, Carlos Pazos, includes numerous types of comics that can be useful to inspire scholars.

About the **fourth session**, the adolescents made a draft about their comic, using as inspiration the online resource that I showed them the previous day. Then, they started designing the final project via digital – such as Canvas, Comic Lab, and Pixton - or by handwriting. And, after a while, they revised the grammatical structures and the spelling.

Concerning the **fifth session**, it is important to mention the fact that the students commented on their comic in front of the class explaining their story's idea and why they did in that form; after finished the presentations, the learners exposed which comic they liked the most and why, and the Natural science teacher and I gave feedback to each pair of pupils. Then, at the end of the class, the teenagers did a satisfactory survey (annex 7.2) that would be part of my Master's thesis.

Right after finishing my learning situation, I realized that students communicated better with each other because of the sense of companionship as they faced the challenge of taking decisions together about the comic and its organization. Also, they improved their interpersonal, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and information management.

3.5 MATERIALS

- **Handwriting.** It is a personal style of writing done with a pen or pencil[51]. Thus, bearing in mind this definition, we can relate it with my intervention project, in which few students create their comics by handwriting using different materials such as pencils, crayons, and glitter.

- **Canvas.**[52] It is a digital platform that contains numerous images and templates to design your idea. Besides, it is composed of two versions: the first one, in which a person can design his or her canvas on his/her own; and, the second one, that promotes teamwork, where a group of people can compose something together.

- **Molasaber blog[53].** It is a blog in which his author – Carlos Pazos - discusses scientific issues using humor frames, and graphics, and short descriptions dealing with them or a mini-article.

- **YouTube.** It is an online platform in which we can visualize videos about anything. It is very useful when we want to explain specific contents or just clarify them to the students.

- **Comic Lab[54].** It is a comic creator webpage that contains numerous interactive tools. Also, it allows us to export our comics in other formats such as PDF.

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[51] "Handwriting". Cambridge Dictionary, n.d, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/handwriting

[52] *Canvas*. Canva.com, 2012, https://www.canva.com/es_419/.

[53] Pazos, Carlos. "Origen de la Luna". Mola Saber, 08 Mar. 2020, https://molasaber.org/.

[54] *ComicLab*. Webcomicbookcreator.com, 2021, http://www.webcomicbookcreator.com/comiclab/

- **Pixton[55].** It is an online webpage in which people can create comics about any topic. It is a complete tool as it has a wider range of possibilities due to its versions: the first one is dedicated to the personal level, basically for entertaining ourselves; the second version has educational purposes because it promotes specific resources to implement inside the classes; and, the last one, deal with business, which implicated more sophisticated tools.

- **Satisfaction survey[56].** It was based on six questions about the comic activity. Its main purpose was to analyze the student's literary habits and their opinions of the project, as well.

3.6. CONTEXT:

This proposal is aimed at the first-grade class of compulsory secondary education in a bilingual state high school known as "Virgen del Mar", in Santa Maria del Mar (Santa Cruz region). That educational institution is regulated by the DECRETO 83/2016, de 4 de Julio[57], which describes the structure and the standards of the curricular subjects, and grades as well: contents, learning standards, and evaluation criteria. Besides

About the geographical context, we can comment that this high school has been expanded through the years due to the population demand of having a close institution to study. Therefore, the high school provides different bilingual projects and opportunities to work on the CLIL methodology. Additionally, we can observe that most families belong to the middle class, and their children attend this high school because of the proximity as they live in areas such as Santa María del Mar, El Sobradillo, Barranco Grande, La Gallega, El Tablero, El Chorrillo, Radazul, Tabaiba, Candelaria, Taco, El Cardonal, Valleseco, Los Alisios, Añaza, [58] among other places.

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[55] *PixtonEdu*. Pixton, n.d, https://edu.pixton.com/educators/

[56] https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1VczyFE_LA8MQydf2KRjBeNqML_JPw8DIokKDFyv2tE/edit

[57] https://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/web/secundaria/informacion/ordenacion-curriculo/curriculos-de-la-educacion-secundaria-obligatoria-eso/

[58] This information is retrieved from the high school official webpage: https://colegiovirgendelmar.com/historia/

With regard to English learning, in all the levels of Compulsory Secondary Education, the learners have the opportunity to prepare for the Cambridge certificate exams such as the *KET, PET, FIRST,* and *CAE.*

3.6.1. The students

The specific class - in which this project has been carried out – has been the group of 1º ESO-B, which had 26 students in total. Their behavior was quite good as they were actively participative in the lessons as well as respectful with the teachers and with the subject of Natural science itself. In terms of their schedule, we can observe that they have three hours each week of Natural science and four hours per week of English [59]as the first foreign language.

Concerning students with special attention, we can state that no one of them had deficit attention; that is why their capacity of acquiring new content and the language was very positive, as it was a homogenous group. Besides, they were such a good class to work with because of their creativity and ideas in the comic project as well as their interest in the subject. Moreover, in the first four weeks of my internships, I could make an initial evaluation in which I observed the entire class and the environment there to be aware of the student's behavior as well as the instruments I would need once my learning situation with them was carried out.

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[59]Gobierno de Canarias. "Curriculum de la educación secundaria obligatoria", 2018, https://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/web/secundaria/informacion/ordenacion-curriculo/curriculos-de-la-educacion-secundaria-obligatoria-eso/. Accessed 17 May 2021.

4. DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

This chapter will be dedicated to the evaluation of my interventional project, and the reflection about the satisfactory survey done by the students, as well.

4.1. Interventional Project's evaluation

To begin with, the educational interventional project was carried out in the "Virgen del Mar" high school at the first level of the compulsory secondary education, concretely in group b. constituted by twenty-six students.

That final social task was developed during the last two weeks of my internship period, in which I introduced to the learners the CLIL activity that would create in pairs. Therefore, through the passing of sessions, I could observe that the pupils managed the information easily until the point to understand and retain the contents instantaneous. For instance, the students were even able to explain the theory with their own words without looking into the book or the Internet. As a result, they composed creative comics, and the most important aspect is that they learn the basic concepts in the foreign language – in this case, English- of that topic, and then they applied them to the project. In addition, in the last session, the learners filled a survey about the comic activity and its application into other CLIL subjects in that specific institution.

4.2. Survey's data interpretation

The satisfactory survey was carried out attending two main aspects: the quantities and qualitative analysis of the success of my CLIL activity in a bilingual high school. Thus, taking into account this, it consisted of six questions dedicated to making a reflection about the integration of the comic activity in a CLIL context as well as students´ literary tastes. In the following paragraphs, I will comment on each question and my interpretation of the diverse data:

1. *Gender*

The first question dealt with the students´ gender to comprehend how this specific group was composed. Thus, we can conclude that most of this specific group belonged to the female gender, as it represents 61, 5% of the class; and, the rest (38, 5%) to the boys.
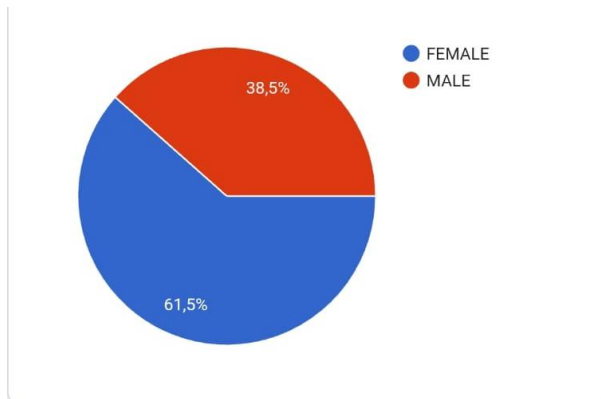

2. *What type of literary genre do you prefer?*

In the second diagram, it is illustrated different types of literary genres, which the students would choose the one they prefer, or like the most. Then, taking into consideration the results, we can appreciate how the majority of them preferred the adventure or the comic genre rather than the others.
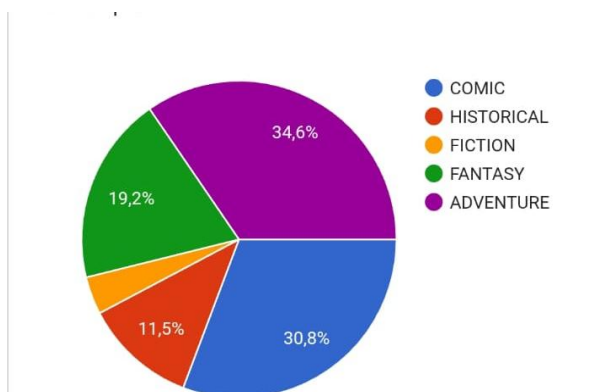
3. *Do you think comics are a good way to learn both the contents and the foreign language in Natural Sciences?*

In this third graphic, we can observe how almost the entire group of students agreed with the question that I suggested above, as there are 88, 5% of them that filled the "yes" option.
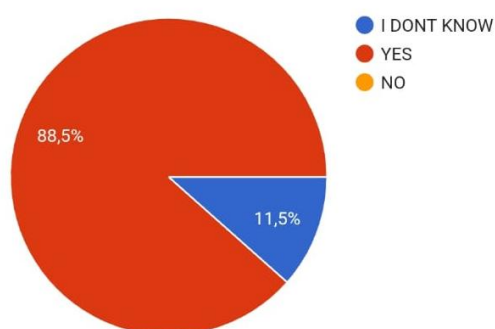

4. *In which subjects do you think the comic should be integrated as a teaching method?*

In question number four, we find that half of the pupils would like that the comic was implemented as a didactic method in the Natural science subject. Despite this, there was a 23, 1% of learners that also would enjoy this activity in all the subjects; and, the rest in subjects such as history or geography.
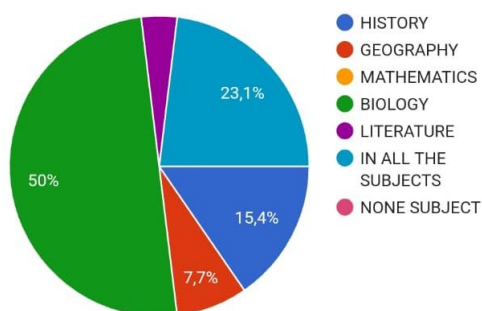
5. *Do you like the comic activity?*

Focusing on the fifth question, we can comment how practically the whole class like the comic activity, depicted with a 96, 2% of the answers. In other words, this social task had a positive effect on the students.
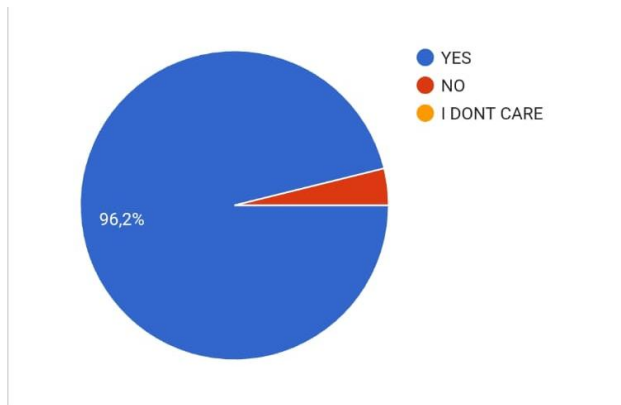
6. *What source did you use most of the time to create the comic?*

In the last diagram, we can observe that most of the students have used the canvas webpage to design their comics, although few of them created it by handwriting.
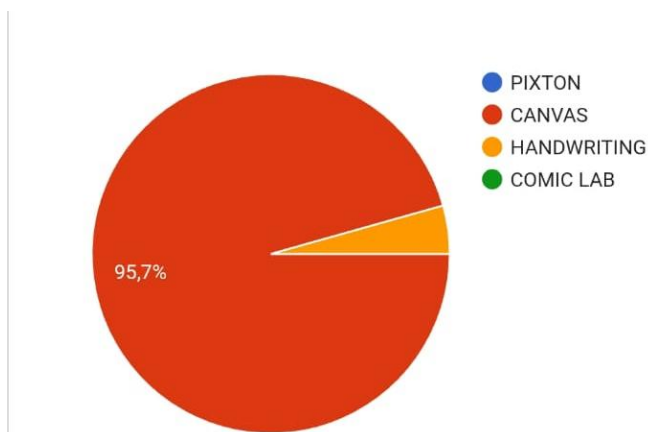
5. CONCLUSION

The current research examined the integration of innovative activities to work with a CLIL subject, in this case, Natural science. By doing so, I have concluded that the comic is a didactic technique quite useful because it helps the students not only to learn its basic notions but also to expand their knowledge about a topic of a specific subject.

Besides, it is an instrument that motivates the students to read more about issues concerning a determined field; and, as a result, they enrich their basic skills – writing, speaking, listening, and reading – because of the cooperative work, and the interpersonal development. Another remarkable point is the fact that learners found it easier to learn the natural science contents through a final social task instead of using the digital book because they needed to investigate the topic and think in groups about how they would structure their comics.

About my interventional educational project, it was a marvelous way of being engaged in the educational field, due to the possibility to teach something to the students in an amusing form. Therefore, they not only learn another learning strategy to understand better the contents but also I had the opportunity to develop my teaching skills and learned from them.

Generally speaking, it has been such a great experience implementing the comic as a technique to teach an ordinary subject using the CLIL methodology. Furthermore, it was easy to integrate this tool into this specific group of the first level of compulsory secondary education because the pupils were engaged in this final project from the beginning. Additionally, they worked with Natural sciences content while they were enjoying the process of designing a comic.

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7. ANNEXES

7.1. Explanatory videos

1. **Video about the Earth´s movements:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SzjlsuyTdk

2. **Video about the solstices and equinoxes:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBULqQuvnv0

3. **Video about the comics:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufOXBuGhVW

7.2. Satisfactory survey:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1VczyFE_LA8MQydf2KRjB-eNqML_JPw8DIokKDFyv2tE/edit#responses

7.3. Leaning situation: Earth´s movements

UNIT 9: THE EARTH´S MOVEMENTS

Session 1: Introduction to the Earth´s movements

In this session, the students will be introduced to a new unit about the Earth´s movements. They will work on concepts such as revolution, rotation, equinoxes, and solstices through three different activities.

Activity 1: Spoken interaction – introduction to a new topic. The students will be introduced to the topic of the Earth´s movements, concretely, the revolution, and the rotation.

Activity 2: Listening and Writing – watch a video (2) and take notes. The learners will show a video about a deep explanation about the revolution and the rotation.

Activity 3: Spoken interaction – introduction to another point. The adolescents will learn the main characteristics of the solstices and equinoxes.

Session 2: Review of session 1 & Explanation of the final social task

In the second session, students will be reviewing the concepts they saw in the first lesson as well as they will be introduced to the final social task they will develop through the next three classes. In doing so, they will work on the three activities described below:

Activity 1: Listening & Writing – watch a video (3) and take notes. The students will show a video that summarizes the theory they had learned in the previous lesson, while they are going to write down notes in their notebooks.

Activity 2: Spoken interaction & Writing – the teenagers will be introduced to the final project that they are going to do: they will do it in pairs, by handwriting or using online resources such as Pixton (4), comic lab (5), or canvas (6), and, also they will present their comic in front of the class.

Activity 3: Listening – detailed explanation of the comic. The learners will show a video (7) in which it is explained the main characteristics of a comic and its main parts as well.

Session 3: The comic activity

The students – in pairs – will work on their comics during the whole class.

Activity 1: Writing – use of the Internet and the digital book. The learners will look for information about the three topics they would develop in their comic activity: the solstices – solar and lunar – the equinoxes, and the eclipses.

Activity 2: Spoken interaction – teamwork. Each team will discuss how their story is going to be about and its structure.

Activity 3: Writing interaction - teamwork. After debating the structure and the story of the comic, each pair will start organizing the information in each frame of the comic according to how the story is developed.

Session 4: Teamwork

This fifth session will be about the composing of the comics by each pair of students.

Activity 1: Spoken interaction- explanation of a source. The pupils will see a model of comics as inspiration through Carlos Pazos´ webpage (8).

Activity 2: Writing – design the comic. The adolescents will start designing their comics, using one of the resources commented in the second session.

Activity 3: Writing interaction – teamwork. The learners will revise the grammatical structures and the spelling of their texts.

Session 5: Final social task – presentation and survey

This session will be dedicated to the presentations of the comics, and, also, to the satisfaction survey.

Activity 1: Spoken interaction – presentation of the final project. The students will be presenting their comics in front of the class.

Activity 2: Spoken interaction - debate. The teenagers will comment on their favorite comic and will explain why.

Activity 3: Writing – satisfactory survey (9). The learners will fill the survey about the comic activity.