

Oskars Kalpaks Liepaja Secondary School No. 15

**Using Latvian folk song melodies in the vocabulary acquisition  
process in foreign language lessons**

Scientific research

Foreign linguistics

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# Abstract

**Scientific research theme: „Using Latvian folk song melodies in vocabulary acquisition process in foreign language lessons”**

Scientific research has following **research questions**:

1. Why folk songs are still popular nowadays?
2. Is it possible to integrate folk songs, in the foreign language learning content/process?
3. How can learning vocabulary become more effective?

**The goal of the research is: to describe the effectiveness of using Latvian folk songs in the vocabulary acquisition process in foreign language lessons (the English language).**

In order to achieve the aim **following objectives were set**:

1. to gather information about Latvian folk song melodies and find out opportunities of using them in vocabulary learning process in foreign language lesson;
2. to carry out a survey;
3. to do an experiment in order to find the effectiveness of learning vocabulary through Latvian folk song melodies;
4. to draw relevant conclusions.

Study contains following **scientific research methods**:

1. **Theoretical research methods**: theoretical analysis of relevant literature;
2. **Empirical research methods**: data gathering methods: case study; data processing and analysis methods; experiment.

**Theoretical part of the research** contains findings about an important part of Latvian cultural heritage: folk songs and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

**Empirical part of the research** contains case study and experiment.

**The main results of the research**: basing on the theoretical study and empirical research, it can be concluded that students learn foreign language vocabulary better through singing new vocabulary as the lyrics with the folk song`s melody than repeating them without singing. In order to implement Content and Language Integrated Learning in the foreign language process, development of the non-language subject and the language are important.

**The research contains**: introduction, 4 chapters and 2 subchapters. Research has 10 main findings and recommendations. Study contains 1 figure, 8 tables and 19 sources of scientific literature.

**Keywords**: CLIL, emotions, folk songs, learning, memory, students, vocabulary.

**Research contains**: 25 pages.

## Anotācija

**Zinātniski pētnieciskā darba temats: „Latviešu tautasdziesmu pielietošana vārdu krājuma apgūvē svešvalodas stundās”.**

Zinātniski pētnieciskajam darbam ir izvirzīti šādi **pētāmie jautājumi:**

1. Kāpēc latviešu tautasdziesmas nezaudē savu popularitāti?
2. Vai ir iespējams integrēt latviešu tautas kultūras mantojumu, piemēram, tautasdziesmas, svešvalodu mācību saturā?
3. Kā vārdu mācīšanās process var kļūt vēl efektīvāks?

**Darba mērķis – izpētīt latviešu tautas kultūras mantojuma-tautasdziesmu pielietojamības iespēju vārdu krājuma apgūvei svešvalodas apgūves stundās.**

Mērķa sasniegšanai tika izvirzīti šādi **darba uzdevumi:**

1. Apkopot informācijas avotus par latviešu tautasdziesmu melodijām un veidu, kā tās pielietot svešvalodu valodas apgūves procesā;
2. Veikt skolēnu anketēšanu;
3. Veikt eksperimentu, lai uzzinātu latviešu tautasdziesmu melodiju pielietošanas efektivitāti vārdu krājuma apgūvē svešvalodā;
4. Veikt secinājumus.

Pētījumā pielietotās **zinātniski pētnieciskās metodes** bija:

1. **teorētiskās izpētes metodes** – literatūras analīze;
2. **empīriskās izpētes metodes:** datu ieguves metodes – skolēnu aptaujas; datu apstrādes un analīzes metodes – (iegūto datu grupēšana un apstrāde) un pētījuma metode-eksperiments.

**Teorētiskajā daļā** tiek analizētas tautasdziesmas, mācību satura integrētā apguve.

**Pētījuma praktiskajā daļā** ir veikta skolēnu anketēšanas rezultātu analīze un eksperiments.

**Galvenie pētījuma rezultāti:** Pētījuma rezultātā tika secināts, ka skolēni svešvalodas stundā veiksmīgāk apgūst jaunos vārdus tos izdziedot latviešu tautasdziesmu melodijās.

**Darba struktūra:** pētījumam sastāv no ievada, 4 nodaļām un 2 apakšnodaļām. Pētījumā izvirzīti 10 secinājumi un izstrādāti 3 priekšlikumi. Darbā ievietotas 8 tabulas un 1 attēls. Veikta 19 literatūras un informācijas avotu analīze.

**Atslēgas vārdi:** atmiņa, CLIL, emocijas, mācīšanās, skolēni, tautasdziesmas, vārdu krājums.

**Darba apjoms:** 25 lappuses.

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## Introduction

The present research focuses on the opportunities to use Latvian folk songs in the language learning process. Folk songs activate emotions what is essential in the process of memorizing information. Memorizing occurs through making neural connections in our brain stronger, which is one of the most important theoretical findings of the research.

Another finding is the fact that the wisdom locked in the folk songs is understood differently by everyone and over the years people find new nuances in their favourite folk songs. The topicality of the research can be highlighted by the fact that folk songs have both: historical content and cultural context, therefore a lot of opportunities for curricular connections can be found.

Learning vocabulary, which is an important part of the language learning process, is going to be highlighted within the present research as well. Present research focuses on the necessity of activating long-term memory as very often students remember the new words only for one lesson. Therefore it is essential to implement new and creative methods in teaching vocabulary. Nevertheless, students' motivation is an important factor as well.

**The theme of the research** is: “Using Latvian folk song melodies in the vocabulary acquisition process in foreign language lessons”.

**The hypothesis of the research is:** Learning vocabulary through Latvian folk song melodies can promote more successful vocabulary obtaining process.

**The subject of the research** is: vocabulary acquisition.

**The object of the research** is: learning vocabulary through Latvian folk song melodies.

Thus **the goal of the research** is: to describe the effectiveness of using Latvian folk songs in the vocabulary acquisition process in the foreign language lessons (the English language).

**The objectives** of the research are:

1. to gather information about Latvian folk song melodies and the opportunities of using them in the vocabulary obtaining process;
2. to carry out the survey;
3. to do the experiment in order to find the effectiveness of learning vocabulary through Latvian folk song melodies;
4. to draw relevant conclusions.

**The research questions** are:

1. Why folk songs are still popular nowadays?
2. Is it possible to integrate folk songs, in the foreign language learning content/process?
3. How can learning vocabulary become more effective?

**The research was carried out** from September 2016 to January 2017.

Study contains following **scientific research methods**:

1. Theoretical research methods: the analysis of the relevant literature;
2. Empirical research methods: data gathering methods: survey; data processing and analysis methods; experiment.

Content and Language Integrated Learning in the foreign language process has been emphasized in the research as well, highlighting the importance of acquisition of the non-language subject (e.g. Latvian cultural heritage) and the foreign language. The topicality of the research is emphasized in the first step of the empirical part of the research: the survey, where students demonstrated the lack of knowledge about folk songs. It was unexpectedly that 7 respondents from 83 could not mention any Latvian folk song. The most popular folk songs mentioned in the research were “Kur tu teci, gailīti mans” (Where are You Rushing to, My Rooster), “Pūt vējiņi!” (Blow, wind, blow), “Aijā žūžū, lāču bērni” (Lullaby (Hushaby, hushaby, bear cubs)) and “Seši mazi bundzenieki” (Six little drummers).

The results of the empirical part of the research show that information is better stored in short-term memory and new vocabulary is more effectively obtained through singing new words in the folk song`s melody than repeating the same new words without singing.

A methodological material to promote obtaining new vocabulary: a video (see appendix No.1) has been created within the research. And the foreign language teachers and the head of methodological committee of Liepāja have already been introduced with the research and the new methodological material. This video can be used as a learning tool in the lessons of the English language and different learning tools can be made including other new words and the melodies of other folk songs.

# 1. Latvian folk songs: an important part of Latvian cultural heritage

“A folk song is a song that originates in traditional popular culture” (Oxford dictionary). “The oldest written documentations of Latvian folk songs are dated in 1584 and 1632 and the first collections of Latvian folk songs were published in 1807. It is believed that “Latvians have managed to preserve their tradition of *Dainas*, mostly because they were passed on from generation to generation” (Latvian folk songs).

Latvian folk songs lyrics have double row of the text, which adds an emotional accent. The melodies of folk songs are considered expressive and emotionally rich (Tomsons, T., 1983, 22pp.).

“Collecting and publishing folk songs became an essential activity during the period of “National Awakening”. Writer and editor Krišjānis Barons (1835-1923) summarized the most complete anthology of Latvian folk songs. Between 1895 and 1915 he published six volumes and eight books containing 217 996 folk song texts. Nowadays the collection has grown to approximately 1.2 million texts and more than 30 000 different melodies” (Latvian folk songs). There are different topics reflected in folk songs: the beauty of nature, beliefs, personality, daily life, rituals, traditions etc. “The Latvians call themselves a nation of singers and folk-song tradition is the main symbol used for the nation's self-identification” (Latvian folk songs). We get acquainted with folk songs from the first lullabies and we are proud of the nationwide Latvian Song and Dance Festival, which occurs every five years, for one week. It must be admitted that the Festival is included on the UNESCO Oral History and Non-material Cultural Heritage List.

Folk songs have passed through centuries and are still alive? They run through our lives and over the years bring a new understanding about the wisdom locked in them. No doubt, there are particular folk songs which are very well-known and often kept in memory. Nevertheless, “no song is universally loved or universally hated” (Cunningham, Downie & Bainbridge, 2005, 476pp.).

A folk song is a composition significantly different from any other tune and sound. Tune and sound as well as the lyrics fill the folk songs with emotions. And exactly emotions are essential for memorizing information. Firstly, incoming information “is stored in short-term memory for up to thirty seconds. Information is prioritized with emotional data receiving the highest priority” (Governor, D., 2011, 15pp.). “Emotions make neural connections stronger and multiple neural connections are important for activation of long-term memory and this is a way how to enhance learning. And, of course, the more often neural connections are energized, the more intense the memory is. It must be admitted that memory can be activated through music” (Governor, D., 2011, 16-18pp.). .

“Music aids memory because the beat, melody and harmony serve as “carriers” for the semantic content. This is why it is easier to recall the words to a song than a conversation” (Jensen,

2000, p.73). However, if the tunes become too repetitive, the “earworms” can be expected. “Earworm” is a literal translation of the German *Ohrwurm*, meaning a song that gets stuck in your head” (Cunningham, Downie & Bainbridge, 2005, 475pp.).

It can be concluded that Latvian folk songs passed on from generation to generation have become the way of the nation's self-identification. Lyrics and melody of the folk song are equally important and they cannot be separated

Folk songs activate emotions, which are essential for memorizing information, through making neural connections stronger. Thus the long-term memory has been activated and this is a way how to enhance learning.

Therefore the author of the present research decided to find folk songs that have “got stuck in the heads” (if any) of the target population in order to research if it is possible to use the melodies of the well-known folk-songs to activate a long-term memory and promote a learning process in the Empirical part of the research.

## 2. Content and Language Integrated Learning: using Latvian folk songs in the foreign language lessons

“The acronym CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) started to become the most widely used term for this kind of provision during the 1990s. CLIL is the platform for an innovative methodological approach of far broader scope than language teaching. Accordingly, it advocates stress how it seeks to develop proficiency in both the non-language subject and the language in which this is taught, attaching the same importance to each. This implies a more integrated approach to both teaching and learning, requiring that teachers should devote special thought not just to how languages should be taught, but to the educational process in general” (EURYDICE, 2006, 7pp.). An institutional network for gathering, monitoring, processing and circulating reliable and readily comparable information on education systems and policies throughout Europe: EURYDICE has highlighted: “The organization of CLIL type provision in foreign target languages makes demands that go well beyond those associated with traditional language teaching. It requires the use of human resources (specialist teachers) and suitable teaching materials to a significantly greater extent than conventional school language teaching”.

The author of the present research is willing to emphasize the possibility to integrate the Latvian cultural heritage, e.g. folk songs, in the foreign language learning content. There are different versions of the tune and multiple sets of lyrics of the folk songs. They are “wonderful vehicles for teaching historical content and cultural context and important for their musical and pedagogical value. These are melodies that have stood the test of time and are still being sung hundreds of years after their debut. Folk songs are often catchy, highly *singable*, and easy to learn, but these musical gems are more than just attractive songs; they are packed with musical content and opportunities for curricular connections” (Folk Songs for Learning Culture).

The possibility of using Latvian folk songs, particularly their melodies, can be highlighted by the fact that there are the neurological links between language and music. It is proven that people remember music in the same way as they remember speech. Music activates more parts of the brain than language does, on both the right and left sides of the brain. So if you remember something to a tune, you are more likely to recall the information than if you just read it or hear it spoken (Jungers, Jusczyk, Palmer, 2001, 526-545pp.).

To sum up, in order to implement Content and Language Integrated Learning in the foreign language process, the development of the non-language subject and the foreign language are important. Neurological links between language and music, different versions of the tune and multiple sets of lyrics of the folk songs can ensure the possibility to integrate the Latvian cultural heritage, e.g., folk songs, in the foreign language learning content.

### **3. The importance of vocabulary acquisition in the foreign language learning process**

“It seems almost impossible to overstate the power of words; they literally have changed and will continue to change the course of world history. Perhaps the greatest tools we can give students for succeeding, not only in their education but more generally in life, is a large, rich vocabulary and the skills for using those words. Our ability to function in today’s complex social and economic world is mightily affected by our language skills and word knowledge” (Pikulski, J., Templeton, S., 2004, 1pp.). “Vocabulary is central of language teaching and learning. It means that by mastering vocabulary, of course with grammar, the learners will produce so many sentences easily either in spoken or written one. They can also communicate with other people fluently and express their opinion or ideas conveniently” (Burhayani, E., 2013, 69pp.). “Vocabulary can be mastered by the students if in the teaching process the teacher implements creative method in teaching vocabulary that attracts students’ interest and give fun. One of the methods is through songs” (Burhayani, E., 2013, 69pp.). However, if there are different ways and methods how to obtain new vocabulary, the assessment of vocabulary can be done only through assessing communicative competence, which “includes judging students’ ability to perform more open-ended, holistic and “real-world” tasks within their normal learning environment”(Read, J., 2000, 5pp). The question is: how can learning vocabulary become more effective? Unfortunately, “most of English teachers use traditional vocabulary teaching techniques and vocabulary items are learnt through translation technique, so they are forgotten in a short time” (Mohammadzadeh, B., Özen, B., 2012, 59pp.). However, it must be admitted that students’ motivation is one of the important factors in the foreign language learning process as well (Mohammadzadeh, B., Özen, B., 2012, 59pp.).

Scott Thornbury (2002) has highlighted two ways to learn new words: when meaning is explained first, then form or form is demonstrated first then meaning. In the process of obtaining the new vocabulary, the long-term memory gains importance. He points out that the short term memory is limited but, the capacity of the long term memory is huge and its duration can last for a person`s lifetime. To obtain vocabulary successfully exactly long-term memory should be activated. And it must be admitted that the biggest problem in the process of learning vocabulary is remembering the new words for only one lesson and forgetting them by the next (Thornbury, S., 2002, 24pp.). Thornbury also emphasizes several principles to be followed in order to activate the long-term memory: repetition, retrieval, spacing, pacing, cognitive depth, personal organizing, imaging, motivation and attention/arousal (Thornbury, S., 2002, 24-25pp.).

The author of the present research can conclude that obtaining new words is essential in the foreign language learning process. However, it is difficult to activate long-term memory as very often students remember the new words only for one lesson.

## 4. The Empirical part

There were two parts in the Empirical part of the research: case study and experiment. 83 respondents (16-19 year-old students from the research-based school) were questioned within the case study. Case study was carried out in September, 2016. There were two groups in the experimental part of the research. Each group consisted of 14 students and there were both genders in each group. The age of students participated in the experiment was 16-18. Experiment was carried out from the 21<sup>st</sup> till the 25<sup>th</sup> of November in the research-based school. “The experiment involves making a change in the value of one variable—called the independent variable—and observing the effect of that change on another variable—called the dependent variable” (Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K., 2000., 211pp.).

### 4.1 The case study

The main aim of the case study was to find out if students would like to have folk song melodies included in the foreign language learning process and which Latvian folk songs and their melodies are the most popular amongst respondents.

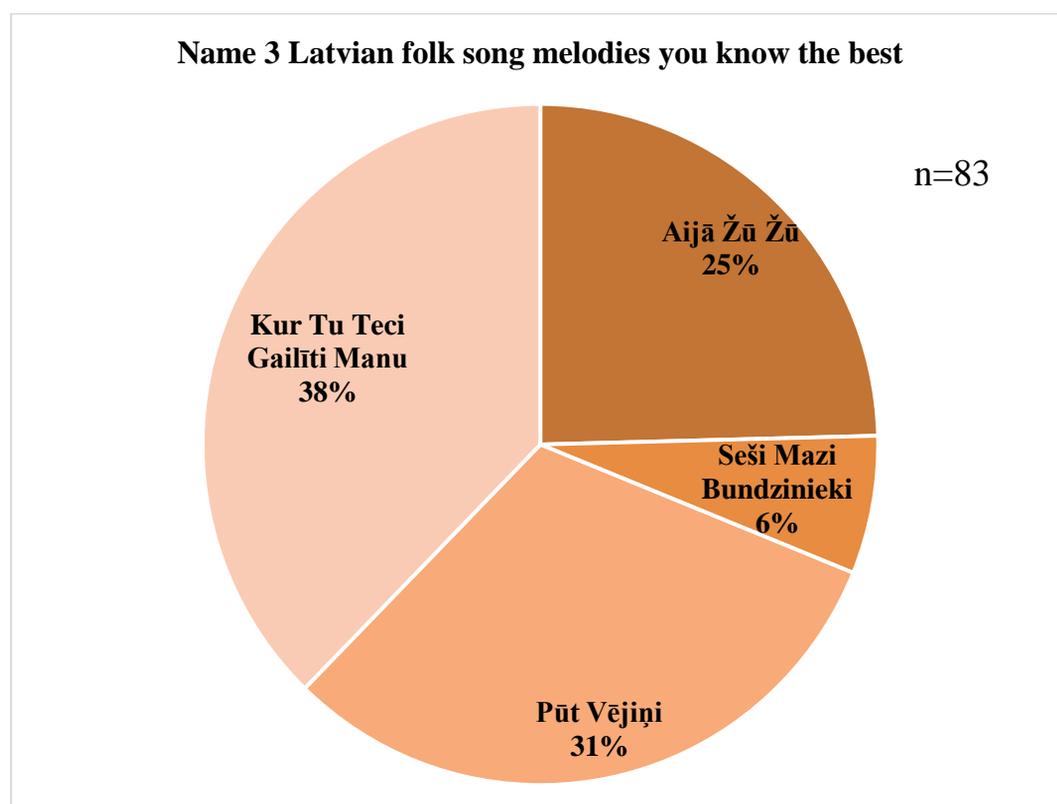
Within the case study the questionnaire (see appendix No.2) was piloted. The first question was: *Would you be interested to include folk song melodies in foreign language learning process?* Slightly more than in the half of the cases (52,2%) respondents admitted that they would be interested to have folk song melodies included in the foreign language learning process while 45,8 % of respondents would not like to use them.

The author can conclude that there is significant portion of respondents willing to use folk song melodies in the language learning process.

The second question of the questionnaire was: *Name 3 Latvian folk song melodies you know the best?*

For the author of the present research it was unexpectedly that 7 respondents could not mention any Latvian folk song; 16 respondents mentioned only one; 15 respondents named 2 and 45 respondents could mention 3 folk songs. The most popular folk song was “Kur Tu tecī gailīti mans” (Where are You Rushing to, My Rooster) (38% respondents have mentioned this folk song); the second popular was “Pūt, vējiņi!” (Blow, wind, blow) (31% respondents have mentioned this folk song), the third was lullaby “Aijā žūžū, lāču bērni” (Lullaby (Hushaby, hushaby, bear cubs)) and the fourth was “Seši mazi bundzeniēki” (Six little drummers) (see figure No.1).

Figure No.1. Latvian folk song melodies students know the best.



The data gathered in the case study emphasize that students' understanding about folk songs should be raised and it could be done through integration of the Latvian cultural heritage, e.g. folk songs in other subjects, e.g. the English language.

#### **4.2 The experiment: learning vocabulary through Latvian folk songs**

The aim of the experiment was to prove if learning vocabulary through Latvian folk song melodies can promote more successful vocabulary obtaining process than just repeating the words pronouncing them without singing. There were 2 steps in the experiment: testing short-term memory and testing long-term memory.

##### **The procedure of the experiment**

Vocabulary learning activity: using the new vocabulary (personality adjectives) as the lyrics (see appendix No.3) and the folk song's "Seši mazi bundzenieki" (Six little drummers) melody was implemented within the experiment. It must be admitted that vocabulary learning activity like this can be used for different age groups. However, the present research is focused on the vocabulary acquisition in secondary school, as knowing vocabulary is essential in the Centralized Exam of the English language.

As the topic of the lesson of the English language was "Personality" when the research was being carried out, the author decided to find the most appropriate melody of the folk song from the

most popular ones highlighted in the case study (see subchapter 4.1.) to use in the experiment. The author considered that the most appropriate for this topic is the melody of the folk song “Seši mazi bundzenieki” (Six little drummers) as it is a folk song about six different personalities who have a lot in common and at the same time they are different people. The other three most popular folk songs could be linked with different topics as well, e.g. “Kur tu teci gailīti mans” (Where are You Rushing to, My Rooster) could be linked with the topic: daily routines, “Pūt, vējiņi!” (Blow, wind, blow) could be linked with the topic: landscapes (see appendix No.1), “Aijā žūžū lāču bērni” (Lullaby (Hushaby, hushaby, bear cubs)) could be linked with the topic: family members or other topics according to teacher`s or students` choice.

The author chose the research method experiment because she was willing to measure the difference (if there is any) of students` growth in vocabulary obtaining if they learn new vocabulary through singing or if they just repeat the words without singing. Therefore there were two groups (“A” and “B”) of language learners, which were formed on the voluntary bases. All students participating in the experiment were from grade 11, research-based school. There were 14 students in each group. Group “A” students were learning new vocabulary through singing while group “B” were learning the same new words through repeating them without singing. Both groups had quite similar level of the competence in the English language subject. However, the group “A” had slightly higher average grade (from September 1<sup>st</sup> till November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016) (according to the e-register) – “7.57” than the group “B” – “7.03”.

After finding folk song melody and the necessary vocabulary two tests within the experiment were done: testing short-term memory and testing the long-term memory.

### **Testing the short-term memory**

Both groups in the very start of the experiment were introduced with all 34 personality adjectives (see appendix No.3). The meaning of the words was presented through translation. It must be admitted that each student`s proficiency in the English language was different. There were students who already knew particular words. However, the vast majority of the words was not well known and was not used in students` lexis (as students admitted).

The length of the first part of the experiment (testing students` short time memory) was one week. Three times a week group “A” gathered together to sing the new vocabulary (personality adjectives) as the lyrics and the folk song`s “Seši mazi bundzenieki” (Six little drummers) melody (see the video of singing in appendix No.4). While the other group gathered together 3 times just to repeat the words without singing.

After that both groups had the same vocabulary test (see appendix No.5). They had to translate the 34 personality adjectives from the Latvian language into the English language.

The test results of the group “A” are shown in the table No.1. The names of the students have been coded (from A1 to A14) as well as the gender (male-1, female-2). The average grade in the English language (from September 1<sup>st</sup> till November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016) (according to the e-register) is provided in the table as well. The average grade of the team “A” in the term is “7.57” while they gained in average 26 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 76.5 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test.

*Table No.1 The “short-memory test” results of group “A”(n=14)*

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Average grade</i>	<i>Points gained in the test and percentage</i>	<i>Gender</i>
A1	9.4	34 (100%)	2
A2	7.5	30 (88.2)	2
A3	6.67	32 (94.1%)	2
A4	7.5	33 (97.06%)	2
A5	7.25	32 (94.1%)	2
A6	8.5	28 (82.35%)	2
A7	8.8	32 (94.1%)	2
A8	9.5	17 (50%)	1
A9	5	6 (17.64%)	1
A10	7.25	33(97.06%)	2
A11	8.5	27 (79.41%)	2
A12	7.4	20 (58.8%)	2
A13	5.67	10 (29.41%)	1
A14	7	30 (88.2%)	2
<i>Average</i>	<i>7,57</i>	<i>26 (76.5%)</i>	

The test results of the group “B” are shown in the table No.2. The names of the students have been coded (from B1 to B14) as well as the gender (male-1, female-2). The average grade in the English language (from September 1<sup>st</sup> till November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016) (according to the e-register) is provided in the table as well. The average grade of the team “B” in the term is “7.03” while they gained in average 9.71 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 28.56 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test.

Table No.2 The results of group “B”(n=14)

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Average grade</i>	<i>Points gained in the test and percentage</i>	<i>Gender</i>
B1	3	3 (8.82%)	2
B2	9.6	17 (50 %)	2
B3	8	14 (41.18%)	1
B4	10	20 (58.82%)	1
B5	6.25	8 (23.53%)	2
B6	6.1	4 (11.76%)	1
B7	9	11 (32.36%)	1
B8	7.3	5 (14.7%)	1
B9	4,5	10 (29.41%)	2
B10	9	11(32.36%)	2
B11	7.33	13 (38.23%)	1
B12	5.67	3 (8.82%)	1
B13	7	10 (29.41%)	2
B14	5.67	7 (20.59%)	1
<i>Average</i>	<i>7.03</i>	<i>9,71 (28.56%)</i>	

The results of the first part of the experiment- testing students short-term memory show that group “A” gained in average 26 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 76.5 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test. While group “B” gained in average 9.71 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 28.56 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test. Thus the group “A” have shown better results in the short-memory test (the difference is 47.94%). Being aware of the fact that group “B” have slightly worse average grade in the English language (from September 1<sup>st</sup> till November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016) (according to the e-register) it is still very remarkable difference. It can be concluded that information is better stored in short-term memory and new vocabulary is more effectively obtained through singing new words in the folk song`s melody than repeating the same new words without singing.

Also the author was willing to compare the results of both genders. There were 3 boys in the group “A”. Table No.3 shows their results. Their average grade in the term is “6,72” and they gained in average 11 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 32.35 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test.

Table No.3 The results of boys from group “A”(n=3)

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Average grade</i>	<i>Points gained in the test and percentage</i>	<i>Gender</i>
A8	9,5	17 (50%)	1
A9	5	6 (17.64%)	1
A13	5.67	10 (29.41%)	1
<i>Average</i>	<i>6.72</i>	<i>11 (32.35%)</i>	

There were 11 girls in the group “A”. Table No.4 shows their results. Their average grade in the term is “7.79” and they gained in average 30.1 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 88.53 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test, which is remarkably high result.

*Table No.4 The results of girls from group “A”(n=11)*

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Average grade</i>	<i>Points gained in the test and percentage</i>	<i>Gender</i>
A1	9.4	34 (100%)	2
A2	7.5	30 (88.2)	2
A3	6.67	32 (94.1%)	2
A4	7.5	33 (97.06%)	2
A5	7.25	32 (94.1%)	2
A6	8.5	28 (82.35%)	2
A7	8.8	32 (94.1%)	2
A10	7.25	33(97.06%)	2
A11	8.5	27 (79.41%)	2
A12	7.4	20 (58.8%)	2
A14	7	30 (88.2%)	2
<i>Average</i>	<i>7.79</i>	<i>30.1 (88.53%)</i>	

There were 8 boys in the group “B”. Table No.5 shows their results. Their average grade in the term is “7.38” and they gained in average 9.62 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 28.29 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test.

*Table No.5The results of boys from group “B” (n=8)*

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Average grade</i>	<i>Points gained in the test</i>	<i>Gender</i>
B3	8	14 (41.18%)	1
B4	10	20 (58.82%)	1
B6	6.1	4 (11.76%)	1
B7	9	11 (11.76%)	1
B8	7.3	5 (14.7%)	1
B11	7.33	13 (38.23%)	1
B12	5.67	3 (8.82%)	1
B14	5.67	7 (20.59%)	1
<i>Average</i>	<i>7.38</i>	<i>9.62 (28.29%)</i>	

There were 6 girls in the group “B”. Table No.6 shows their results. Their average grade in the term is “6.56” and they gained in average 9. 83 points (from 34) and they have obtained in average 28.91 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test.

*Table No.6 The results of girls from group “B”(n=6)*

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Average grade</i>	<i>Points gained in the test and percentage</i>	<i>Gender</i>
B1	3	3 (8.82%)	2
B2	9.6	17 (50 %)	2
B5	6.25	8 (23.53%)	2
B9	4,5	10 (29.41%)	2
B10	9	11(32.36%)	2
B13	7	10 (29.41%)	2
<i>Average</i>	<i>6.56</i>	<i>9.83 (28.91%)</i>	

It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between boys` and girls` results from group “A”: boys gained in average 11 points (from 34) (obtained in average 32.35 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test) and girls gained in average 30.1 points (from 34) (obtained in average 88.53 % of the words provided in the vocabulary test). While boys and girls from group “B” almost did not have any difference in the result of short-term memory test.

### **Testing long-term memory**

Considering the fact that assessment of vocabulary can only be done through assessing communicative competence, the long-term memory assessment was carried out. The author of the present research was willing to highlight the necessity to obtain the personality adjectives as this topic has been included in the Centralized Exam in the English language. E.g., the first task of the speaking part of the Centralized Exam in the English language includes the topic: personality and task instructions are: “You have to answer 5 questions about the topic. You have 3-5 minutes for 5 questions. Say as much as you can”. The questions included in this paper are:” *Describe your three best qualities.; What qualities help you to communicate with others?*” etc. (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2011) or the Centralized Exam in the English language of the year 2014 includes the questions: *How would you describe your character?; What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? etc.* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2014).

Therefore the author of the research asked the students of both groups to do the first task of the Centralized Exam in the English language. This was the way how to check if students long-term memory has been activated, and therefore the second part of the experiment was done in 30th

January; more than two months after the short-term memory test. Students had to answer the following questions:

1. *How would you describe yourself?* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2016).
2. *What character traits do you especially value in people? Why?* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2016).
3. *Describe your three best qualities.* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2011).
4. *What qualities help you to communicate with others?* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2011).
5. *What habits do you find irritating? Why?* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2016).

Students had to fulfill all the requirements of the task and do the peer assessment and self-assessment. They used the assessment guidelines for the assessor of the speaking part of the exam grade 12. (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2016).

It must be admitted that vocabulary, grammar, fluency and pronunciation are evaluated for the whole performance. The assessment scale was from 0-4 points:

4 points- has a good command of a wide range of vocabulary. Can express him / herself, provide clear descriptions, opinions and arguments.

3 points - has sufficient vocabulary to express him / herself and provide arguments.

2 points - has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions.

1 point - has limited vocabulary. Uses basic phrases.

0 - not enough to evaluate. (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2016).

The results of the group “A” are shown in table No.7

*Table No.7 Peer assessment and self-assessment of group “A” students*

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Peer assessment</i>	<i>Self-assessment</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Points in the vocabulary test and percentage</i>
A1	4	4	2	34 (100%)
A2	4	4	2	30 (88.2)
A3	3	3	2	32 (94.1%)
A4	4	3	2	33 (97.06%)
A5	3	4	2	32 (94.1%)
A6	3	3	2	28 (82.35%)
A7	3	3	2	32 (94.1%)
A8	4	3	1	17 (50%)

A9	2	3	1	6 (17.64%)
A10	3	3	2	33(97.06%)
A11	3	2	2	27 (79.41%)
A12	3	3	2	20 (58.8%)
A13	2	2	1	10 (29.41%)
A14	4	3	2	30 (88.2%)
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.21</i> <i>(80.25</i> <i>%)</i>	<i>3.07</i> <i>(76.75%)</i>		<i>26 (76.5%)</i>

The results of group “B” are shown in table No. 8.

*Table No.8 Peer assessment and self-assessment of group “A” students*

<i>Respondent`s code</i>	<i>Peer assessment</i>	<i>Self-assessment</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Points in the short-term vocabulary test and percentage</i>
B1	2	1	2	3 (8.82%)
B2	3	2	2	17 (50 %)
B3	2	1	1	14 (41.18%)
B4	3	1	1	20 (58.82%)
B5	3	2	2	8 (23.53%)
B6	2	2	1	4 (11.76%)
B7	3	4	1	11 (32.36%)
B8	2	2	1	5 (14.7%)
B9	2	1	2	10 (29.41%)
B10	3	2	2	11(32.36%)
B11	2	2	1	13 (38.23%)
B12	1	2	1	3 (8.82%)
B13	3	3	2	10 (29.41%)
B14	3	2	1	7 (20.59%)
<i>Average</i>	<i>2.42 (60.5)</i>	<i>1.92 (48%)</i>		<i>9,71 (28.56%)</i>

Both groups have shown better results in peer assessment rather than self-assessment. Group “A” had 3.21(80.25%) points in peer assessment and 3.07 (76.75%) in self-assessment. It must be admitted that they had 76.5% in average in obtaining new words in short-memory test. While group “B” had 2.42 (60,5%) points in peer assessment and 3.07 (48%) in self-assessment. It must be admitted that they had 28.56% in average in obtaining new words in short-memory test. Even if students had not shown their knowledge of vocabulary in the specific vocabulary test, they demonstrated it when communicative competence is being assessed. However, group “A” had significantly better results in the second test of the experiment. And it can be concluded that long-term memory has been activated as well through singing new words in the folk song`s melody than repeating the same new words without singing.

## Conclusions

1. Latvian folk songs have been passed on from generation to generation through centuries. They have become the way of nation's self-identification. Lyrics and melody of the folk song are equally important and they cannot be separated.
2. Folk songs activate emotions, which are essential for memorizing information, through making neural connections stronger. Thus the long-term memory has been activated and this is a way how to enhance learning.
3. In order to implement Content and Language Integrated Learning in the foreign language process, the development of the non-language subject and the language are important.
4. Neurological links between language and music, different versions of the tune and multiple sets of lyrics of the folk songs can ensure the possibility to integrate the Latvian cultural heritage, e.g., folk songs, in the foreign language learning content.
5. Obtaining new words is essential in the foreign language process. However, it is difficult to activate long-term memory as very often students remember the new words only for one lesson. Therefore more effective learning strategies gain importance.
6. Students' understanding about folk songs should be raised and it could be done through integration of the Latvian cultural heritage, e.g. folk songs in the other subjects, e.g. the English language.
7. It can be concluded that information is better stored in short-term memory and new vocabulary is more effectively obtained through singing new words in the folk song's melody than repeating the same new words without singing.
8. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between boys' and girls' results in the short-memory test from group "A". While boys and girls from group "B" almost did not have any difference.
9. Even if students do not show their knowledge of vocabulary in the specific vocabulary test, they can demonstrate it when communicative competence is being assessed.
10. The long-term memory has been activated as well through singing new words in the folk song's melody than repeating the same new words without singing. So the hypotheses of the research: Learning vocabulary through Latvian folk song melodies can promote more successful vocabulary obtaining process, has been proven.

## **Recommendations**

1. Students` understanding about folk songs should be raised and it could be done through CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach: integrating the Latvian cultural heritage, e.g. folk songs in the other subjects, e.g. the English language. The elements of Latvian cultural heritage can be integrated in other subjects as well.
2. The emotional attachment of students to the learning content is essential in order to activate long-term memory. Positive emotional background can be activated within different learning activities.
3. It is necessary to motivate and encourage students to sing Latvian folk songs as well as to learn foreign language (see the methodological material in appendix No.1).

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## **APPENDIXES**

Landscapes video:

<https://youtu.be/KNy1j-tEiqM>

Hello, respondent. My name is Džūlija Lote Lapka and I am eleventh grade student. This year I'm writing a Research paper with a theme "The use of Latvian folk song melodies in the foreign language learning process". To fulfill my work, I wish to ask you some questions. Questionnaires will stay anonymous and data will be used in my only Research Paper.

1. Would you be interested to include folk song melodies in foreign language learning process?

Yes  No

2. Name 3 Latvian folk song melodies you know the best.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!

### **34 personality adjectives**

Absent-minded, ambitious, analytical, arrogant, articulate, balanced, bright, clever, competitive, creative, dedicated, determined, dreamy, driven, eccentric, energetic, enthusiastic, fearless, idealistic, logical, meticulous, modest, obsessive, reclusive, relaxed, reserved, self-confident, sensible, sensitive, serious, shy, single-minded, thoughtful, witty

Personality video:

[https://youtu.be/uC8SINe\\_4DE](https://youtu.be/uC8SINe_4DE)

**Test**

Please translate the words:

Izkļaidīgs -

Mērķtiecīgs -

Analītisks -

Augstprātīgs -

Skaidri formulēt (domas, vārdus) -

Nosvērts -

Inteliģents -

Gudrs -

Konkurējošs -

Radošs -

Veltīts (darbam, mērķim) -

Apņēmīgs -

Sapņains -

Pilnībā pievērsts kaut kam -

Savāds, neparasts -

Enerģisks -

Sajūsmināts -

Bezbailīgs -

Ideālistisks -

Loģisks -

Sīkumains -

Pieticīgs -

Apsēsts (ar kaut ko) -

Vientuļš -

Atslābis, mierīgs -

Rezervēts, atturīgs -

Pašpārliecināts -

Prātīgs -

Jūtīgs -

Nopietns -

Kautrīgs -

Pievērsts tikai vienam mērķim -

Domīgs -

Asprātīgs -

## Apliecinājums

Es, Dzūlija Lote Lapka, ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka  
(vārds, uzvārds)

zinātniski pētnieciskais darbs

using Latvian folk song melodies in the  
vocabulary acquisition process in  
foreign language lessons

ir izstrādāts patstāvīgi, nav bijis publicēts pilnā apjomā.

Darba autors (-e)

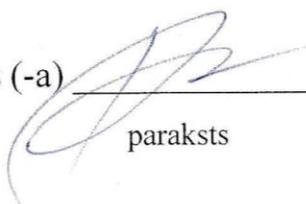


paraksts

Dzūlija Lote Lapka

vārds, uzvārds

Darba vadītājs (-a)



paraksts

Maija Ročinska

vārds, uzvārds

Datums: 10.02.2017