Resume

This investigation is about the use of folktales as a tool to teach English to teenagers. Its scope considers the interaction of students through technology, specifically with media.

The technique is called digital storytelling. To develop a story it is recommended to use Microsoft PowerPoint, Word and Adobe Flash Player. They are easy to use throughout the combination of images, words, voices and audio.

Key Words: Folktales, Digital Storytelling
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UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
ESCUELA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

Trabajo de Investigación previo a la obtención del Título de Licenciado(a) en la Especialidad de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa.

TEMA:
“A Selection of American Folktales to Teach English through Interactive Activities for Teenagers”

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All the contents of this thesis is the exclusive responsibility of its authors

__________________                              ________________
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DEDICATIONS

Omar

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, brother, and sisters for their endless love, support and encouragement. For that reason, this bachelor and thesis is for them.

Johanna

I want to dedicate this tesina to some special people in my life. First to my loved mother Ligia, who is the most important person and who is always with me. Second, I dedicate it to my father Miguel and my sisters Maria Jose and Gaby who have supported me during my university studies.

Also, I want to dedicate this project to Douglas, Diego, and Kaylee who helped me from the distance. Finally, I dedicate it to my love Paul and my best friends who helped me whenever I needed them.
INTRODUCTION

English has become an important subject in schools. As we know, the teacher has the task of finding and improving techniques to transmit the knowledge in a productive way, and students need to feel motivated to learn. Our work is focused on the English Language Teaching Process to teenagers through the presentation of American Folktales using interactive activities. We have considered three aspects during the development of our project.

The first chapter will analyze the origin of folktales, discuss their characteristics, and name the most famous American folktales. We will explain a brief history of folktales, indicating how folktales were created; the purpose is that students understand that folktales are different kinds of stories that are taken from traditional folklore. In addition, we will emphasize the characteristics of folktales that are important in the teaching-learning process. Finally, we will talk about some of the most famous American folktales, briefly summarizing the plots and indicating where they were created.

The second chapter refers to the importance of folktales, and will explain why and how folktales are important in the teaching-learning process. After that, we will emphasize how to use folktales in the classroom; we will talk about what the teacher should do before, during and after telling the folktale, how to teach and motivate students to listen to or read the story, and finally, we will explain, with the use of an example, the process of the storytelling routine.

Finally, the third chapter refers to the importance of using ICT’s (information and communications technology - or technologies) and multimedia in the teaching-learning process, and how multimedia can be utilized in the creation of the interactive activities. They are recreated in Adobe Flash Player, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Power Point. As an example we present interactive activities based on one of the most popular American folktales, “A Gift from Saint Nicholas”.

Omar Dávila T. – Johanna Llanos C.
CHAPTER I
The History of Folktales

A folktale is a traditional narrative that has undergone changes as it has been passed orally from generation to generation, until its telling has become part of the culture of its geographical region.

Folktales are known all over the world because every town, city, and country has its own stories that form part of its culture. Professor Robert Ornstein states that "...stories have been part of all cultures from time immemorial". (qtd. in Samuel Stephany, par. 3) Accordingly, folktales have been passed from generation to generation in an oral form. They are also very interesting for people because they talk about characters like heroes and monsters that catch people's attention.

In the early years, when people saw something new or strange, they immediately told their relatives about it, then that person passed the story to another person, and that person to another; thus folktales were formed.

For that reason, we considered that the folktales are a good way to teach English to teenagers because "they have a clear structure, with a special type of beginning, middle and end structure and end". (Harmer, 29) They can tell about scenes and events where there are predictions that guide to another event. Teacher can tell either folktale from his/her country or from another one. Also, these types of stories allow students to understand the world where they live.

To introduce a folktale unit, students can talk about any story that they know about their country and share ideas about it. Once the students give their opinions and understand the folktale's meaning, the teacher can introduce a folktale from another country, in this case an American folktale. Students can predict the development of the folktale that the teacher
presents in the classroom. This way, the teacher can combine the folktales with interactive activities using Microsoft tools as Adobe Flash, Flash Player, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Power point. By doing this, the teaching-learning process becomes more dynamic and interesting.

Types of Folktales

Trickster Tales

Trickster tales are different in universal cultures because they usually have just one character; for example, the coyote and the raven in North America, the monkey in China, the caw in Australia, and the fox and the wolf in Europe. The trickster is astute at causing problems for other people, and he is not usually punished. As Professor Michael Webster states in his course index for World Mythology,

Trickster tales have different functions in various societies. Certainly the stories are told because they are funny and entertaining; but they are also in some sense sacred.Radin reports that the reaction to trickster stories “is prevailingly one of laughter tempered by awe”...

We also have different tricksters in TV programs, movies, and stories, such as Jack and the Beanstalk (story), Puss in Boots (movie), Bart Simpson, The Pink Panther, and Bugs Bunny (TV series), and Jack Sparrow in Pirates of Caribbean (movie).

Fables

Fables are fun stories that children love to hear, and they teach a moral lesson that can be put into practice. The characters that present the fables could be animals, humans, or angels (Nordquist).
Fairy Tales

These kinds of tales are magical and fantastic. They have good and bad characters, and usually an interesting hero and/or heroine. People love these kinds of tales, which include stories such as Cinderella, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, Sleeping Beauty, and many others.

Famous American Folktales

In the United States there are lots of folktales. We have chosen some of the most famous:

The Ghosts of Ringwood Manor

This folktale is placed in a house in Ringwood Manor, which was built in the 1700s. It comes from New Jersey.

The Army of the Dead Confederate Soldiers

This also has to do with ghosts. At twelve o’clock AM, a woman always woke to the sound of many footsteps passing in the street below her home. On night, she looked out and saw hundreds of dead soldiers marching by, speaking to one another.

Lincoln Death Train

This is another folktale of ghosts. It refers to Abraham Lincoln’s funeral train. This train is full of skeletons and other spirits who’d attended the funeral. It is a folktale from New York.

The Gift of Saint Nicholas
This is a sweet and happy Christmas folktale. It is about a family who became poor because of the burgomaster’s hatred. One day, however they received a great surprise: Saint Nicholas had left them a bag full of silver, and thus they became a rich family. This is a folktale from New York.

**Characteristics of folktales**

The characteristics of a folktale are its settings, characters, plot, theme and conflict, and style.

**Setting**

1. True environment: where the characters act in different situations and magic influence are usual.
2. Some of the folktales have the same places as castles, royal people, kingdoms, etc.

**Characters**

1. Human qualities demonstrated by animal characters
2. Heroes, monsters, and other interesting persons
3. Main characters encouraged by a desire

**Plot**

1. Plots of folktales are short and simple.
2. They are written in prose.
3. Endings usually give us a moral lesson.

**Theme and conflict**

Themes and conflicts are simple, but are often serious and dominant.

**Style**
1. The style of folktales captures the reality of the character.
2. Some folktales have been published with useful pictures over the years.
3. Folktales include magical or supernatural characteristics.
CHAPTER II

The importance of folktales

Folktales are very important because they show people their culture, their traditions and their personal perceptions, such as attitude, behavior, and other factors that influence the environment in which they live. The role of folktales is also important to the development of knowledge and personality within a culture. For these reasons, we believe that through interactive activities based on folktales, the teacher will be able to improve the teaching-learning process in the classroom and help students learn in a meaningful way.

Folktales are very important in the classroom for these reasons:

1. Folktales help people have a better understanding of the general conditions of people in their environment, because they are sources of elaborated perceptions, beliefs, and paradigms.
2. They demonstrate the boundaries of what is considered right and wrong.
3. They help humans to understand local lifestyles because folklore represents a true basis of a nation or a group of people.
4. They involve heritage and culture. They generally involve a series of stories about the people of a nation, and sometimes use a particular language or speech pattern that has been passed on through generations.
5. Folktales also have a direct relationship with arts and sciences. They have more specifically been the origin of various sciences, because they have widened other fields of study.
6. Folktales reinforce peoples’ pride in a certain group because they make them realize that they have something in common. These attitudes contribute to the unity and harmony of a people.
7. Finally, they are great sources of entertainment.
How to use folktales in the classroom

As an initial statement, we can confirm that using folktales in the classroom is a good way to catch students’ attention because they already have previous knowledge about folktales that have taken place in their own town, city, or country. For that reason a set of interactive activities in the classroom are created based on folktales. They help to attract students’ attention and make classes interesting, and thus more productive.

Following are some recommendations about how to use folktales appropriately.

The teacher must follow the process step-by-step in order to achieve successful teaching and learning. The teacher is the one who will explain and place the objectives, guide the tasks, and describe the process of the activities that teenagers will develop in the class. The teacher also has to create an appropriate atmosphere before telling a story.

Story-telling routine

1. First, the teacher catches the students’ attention through a warm up. This motivates the students to learn something new, and generates previous knowledge about the topic. This activity allows the students to open their minds and think about what they know of the story.

2. After that, the teacher presents the new topic through flashcards, pictures, etc, where he/she will teach unknown words that are going to be presented in the story. After the students have learned the new vocabulary, the teacher will ask the students to use the lexicon in some easy exercises, like making short sentences.

   Afterwards, the teacher will reinforce the vocabulary with extra activities such as hangman, word search, etc. Through these extra tasks students will acquire a meaningful idea of what is being taught.
**HANGMAN:** Students will have to guess a word letter by letter. If they don’t guess the correct word by the time the stick figure’s body is complete, they will lose.

**ANSWER AND PASS ON:** Each student has a piece of paper and must answer a question and pass it on; another student will answer second question and pass it on, etc. The questions can be who, where, when, or what is he/she doing.

**ASKING QUESTIONS:** This activity is productive because it looks for answers and generates more questions.

**WORD SEARCH:** In this activity, students have to think about words they have learned, and seek them in a puzzle.

These are only a few activities that the teacher can use to teach new vocabulary.

Throughout the process, the teacher will check students’ understanding, and then show the story on the screen by using scenes which can be stopped in order to ask the students to predict what is going to happen next. The teacher can use different activities such as yes/no questions, counting, etc. where students have to think and express their ideas.

**WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT:** The teacher can stop the reading or the listening and ask the students questions, requiring the students to think about what they have been listening to or reading.

**YES/NO QUESTIONS:** Through this activity the students have to think and guess the character that the teacher is thinking of. For example, the students might ask, “Is he a man?” “Yes, he is”, and so on.
COUNTING: The teacher asks students to count how many times they hear a particular word.

A PART OF A STORY: Students have a part of a story, and the teacher asks them to complete it or continue it.

1. Follow-up activities are important for students because they see that their hard work during the lessons has been leading somewhere. The teacher is the leader again. He/she will have to make a short summary and ask students to do more activities. Students are encouraged to express their own ideas.

2. As a final activity, the teacher can send homework for students to give opinions or summarize the story.

CALL (ComputerAssistedLanguageLearning)

CALL means Computer Assisted Language Learning; it is a word that is used in education to define the use of computers in the teaching-learning process.

CALL dates back in the 1960s, when computers were used with linguistic purposes, until the 1980s, when educative institutions adopted them, and individuals started to use them at home.

According to the CALL methodology, students can use technology tools to learn another language, so students and teachers can use the computer to work on the teaching-learning process. But using it effectively depends on the way that they work with the machine. NazhGundush states that “students can work individually, in pair, and groups, or as a whole class in the laboratories”. (200)
CALL programs help the students to develop the four skills of the language, reading, writing, speaking and listening. They can perform many activities using the computers. Students can use word processors programs to develop writing and reading skills. Movies and computer simulations can be used to develop oral activities, and these activities will help the students to improve their oral competences. Students can also develop their listening skill by using tapes, CDs, computer audio, and any media program that contains audio.

**Advantages of CALL**

- CALL helps the students to acquire the language more easily.
- The computer offers interactive learning to students.
- Text, sound, graphs, videos, etc., can be introduced.
- Students can use word processors to improve their skills because the programs possess spell checkers and may help correct grammar errors.
- It is easy to use and the teacher can prepare his/her material to be used in the classroom.
- Students can work in an autonomous way.
- Teachers can explain as much information as they want.

**Disadvantages of CALL**

- CALL requires the use of potentially expensive computers and software.
- Many teachers do not know how to use a computer.
- Teachers must adapt their lessons to the software.
- Teachers have to spend a lot of time creating the material.
- Students must have a previous knowledge of the use of the computer and the programs.
• Teachers cannot create all the activities they will use, because not all programs are suitable.

Example:

1. First, the teacher introduces the story through the use of a picture in a PowerPoint presentation, and encourages students to give ideas or guess the topic of the story.

   (Pict. 1)

2. After that the teacher presents the new vocabulary and the characters. Students look at the pictures of the characters and give more ideas or predictions about the story. They express their ideas.

   (Pict. 2)

3. After the predictions, students have to recognize the characters and write the correct names in the blanks.

   (Pict. 3)

4. To reinforce vocabulary, the teacher can present another activity, a word search, in which students have to find the words related to the characters of the story.
5. After that, the teacher states the topic and students predict the story. The teacher continues to present the story through the use of visual scenes where students have to read the key sentences presented in PowerPoint presentation.

6. After that, students read the story; they have to imagine and write the end of the story and share their ideas with the class.

7. Then the teacher presents another activity where students listen to the story and number the scenes in the correct order.
8. In the next activity students have to select and write the correct verb in the blank.

9. Finally, students will have to write a brief summary of the story.

Pictures 1 to 10 from (www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/britlit/jack-beanstalk.)
CHAPTER III

How to create interactive activities using multimedia programs

To motivate the students to learn a foreign language, the use of ICTs, or Information and Communications Technologies, and the media are fundamental parts of the teaching-learning process because they offer many tools. For example, the students can work on different interactive activities to develop the different skills of the language; these activities should be presented within grammatically pertinent topics.

3.1 The ICT’s

According to TeachTarget() “ICT (information and communications technology - or technologies) is a term that includes any communication device or application as: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning. ICTs are often spoken of in a particular context, such as ICTs in education, health care, or libraries. The term is somewhat more common around the world”

Nowadays, ICTs are very important in an educational context because technology has globalized the learning world. The globalization of technology has led to the creation of special labs for the learning of foreign languages. There are many applications that make learning easier, such as PhotoStory, Adobe Flash Player, Power point, Microsoft Word, and so on.

3.2 Multimedia

Multimedia is as important as any other technological tool, especially in education; it offers many ways to improve upon the teaching-learning process, through audio, videos, sounds, software, etc.
class becomes less boring and more successful. There are many applications that make learning easier, such as PhotoStory, Adobe Flash Player, Power point, Microsoft Word, and so on.

2.2.1 PowerPoint

This is a Microsoft tool that is useful in education because we can create interactive presentations to explain a specific topic through slides.

In this application we can put voices, sounds, text, graphs, pictures, gifs, and maps that the teacher may find helpful to apply in his/her class. Students will be motivated to learn a different subject through a PowerPoint Presentation because it is interactive, but it depends on the teacher’s creativity in the creation of the slides; he/she will have to combine colors and forms, use hyperlinks, etc.

2.2.2 Microsoft Word

As we know, Microsoft Word is a text processor which is relatively easy to use. We can create documents, letters, and activities that help teachers throughout the teaching process. Students can write their own papers combining types, color, style, and font size; they can insert images, graphs, maps, etc.; and finally, students can add color to the page, and use frames, hyperlinks, etc.

2.2.3 Adobe Flash Player

Adobe Flash is an interactive animation software program. This application can be used to create pictures and animate them through vectors and raster graphics, and it uses a language of its own called Action Script. Flash Player is a program that runs Adobe Flash files.

After the explanations of the multimedia tools, we are going to present some interactive activities based in an American folktale. These activities are developed through Microsoft tools as Power Point, Word, and Flash Player. We decided use these tools because these ones catch the students’ attention and improve in a better way the classroom process. For the developed of these activities that are in the CD, you need a computer and a projector for a good process of the class. Actually, the technology is the most important tool in the education because it offers many applications to improve the teaching-learning process.
INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES USING FLASH PLAYER, MICROSOFT POWER POINT, AND MICROSOFT WORD.

A GIFT FROM SAINT NICHOLAS
A NEW YORK FOLKTALE

Once upon a time, there was a man called Claas who lived in New Amsterdam. He was a single man. He had a business where he sold geese.

A long time before, he had met Antije who was a pretty blonde woman. Claas fell in love with her. She had many suitors; one of them was the burgomaster, but he was a bad man. Then Antije gave her heart to Claas.

After many months, Claas and Antije got married and they were happy and prosperous raising geese and children, but the burgomaster was a vengeful man, so he made them pay high taxes for the neighborhood improvements and they spent all their money paying those improvements.

Then they became poor people. On Christmas Eve, Claas´s family did not have money to buy bread and cheese in order to eat.

Claas remembered that he had a fine pipe that he had received the last Christmas. He began to look the pipe for hours and finally he found it. Suddenly, a strange man opened Claas´s house door.

The strange man entered Claas´s home and Claas and Antije were surprised and afraid, but the strange man sat down and began to make sly jokes; he sang songs for half an hour. The family was really happy. After that the strange man was starving, but the family did not have any food.

Suddenly, the strange man asked Antije to look in the cupboard for a roasted goose and she opened the cupboard and she found the roasted goose,
cakes, wine, salads, cookies and the like. They were surprised at that; they were very happy and began to eat the food.

Finally, the strange man looked at the clock that marked midnight. He was surprised and he disappeared up the chimney while telling the family “Merry Christmas to you all and Happy New Year!”

The next morning, Antije found a bag full of silver bearing the words “A Gift from Saint Nicholas”, and they became the happiest and a richest family in New Amsterdam.

THE END
INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

*INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES*
Exercises

* Put the correct word in the picture
A Gift From Saint Nicholas Word Search
*Imagine and write the end of the folktale*
MATCH THE PICTURE WITH THE SENTENCE

Claas paid taxes to the burgomaster

The family did not have money to buy food.

Claas and Antije were happy with their children

Antije found a gift from Saint Nicholas.

The strange man sang songs with the family.
Listen and number the pictures in the correct order.
Order the letter in the sentences

Class and ______ got married. (jeiant)

Class found a fine __________. (ppie)

Antje gave her __________ to Claas. (arteh)

The ______ was empty. (dbparocu)

Saint Nicholas disappeared up the __________. (cimneyh)
There was a man
__________ Claas.

* Choose the correct verb about
"A gift from Saint Nicholas"

He _______
geese.

Sells  Sell  Sold
Antije _______ many suitors.

Had  Have  Has

The burgomaster _______ a vengeful man.

is  are  was
A strange man _______ the door.

Opens  Open  Opened
CONCLUSIONS

- By using the technique called digital storytelling, the students’ attention is incremented to a high degree.
- Computer media can be applied across the curriculum to all levels.
- One of the most interesting aspects of using media is that it is very easy to develop interactive activities.
- The most interesting tools that can be used to develop digital storytelling are Microsoft PowerPoint, Word and Adobe Flash and Flash Player.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Avoid planning very long lessons because time is sometimes very short and the interaction between learner and teacher, learner and learner, and learner and computer is superior.

- When we use activities that involve internet, we have to be sure that we will have online connection and that the velocity will not be slow.

- Prepare all the material such as the flashcards, software, projector, quizzes.

- Be sure that Adobe Flash Player is installed in each computer of the lab or in the principal computer.

- Be prepared with a plan B if technique problems occur.
Next, there is a quiz where the teacher will know whether or not students understand the story with these results the teacher will determine if the interactive activities in the classroom worked.

**Anex 1**

**A Gift from Saint Nicholas Quiz**

1. Which are the main characters of the story?
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________.

2. Put the correct word

   Claas sold ____________.
   Dogs                        cats                         geese

   Antije had many ____________.
   Sisters                    brothers                      suitors

   The Burgomaster was a ____________.
   Bad man                 happy man                  sad man

   The strange man was _________________.
   Batman                 Saint Nicholas                Spiderman

3. Write sentences in past tense with the verbs.

   Sell ____________________________
   Have ____________________________
   Enter ____________________________
   Sing ____________________________
   Find ____________________________

4. Circle true or false

   Antije got married with the burgomaster. T___ F___
   Saint Nicholas disappeared up the chimney. T___ F___
   Claas and Antije had 5 children. T___ F___
   Antije found a bag of food. T___ F___
   They became in a rich family. T___ F___
Bibliography


INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

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