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Short Stories for Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills in EFL:

Schema Theory activities at A2.1 level

in "La Inmaculada" High School in Cuenca, Ecuador

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Resumen

Fundamentada en la experiencia del autor, los estudiantes de la Unidad Educativa Fiscal La Inmaculada no practicaban la lectura frecuentemente, así, los estudiantes poseían habilidades de comprensión lectora inadecuadas. El propósito de esta tesis es asistir a estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera que pensaban que la lectura en otro idioma estaba relacionada con la traducción literal de los textos o la ejecución de actividades mecánicas llevándoles a la frustración y desmotivación en vez de disfrutar la riqueza literaria del texto.

Dos clases intactas de las mismas características, número de estudiantes y nivel de lenguaje fueron escogidas como grupo experimental y de control. Un cuestionario para medir la motivación lectora (MRQ) fue administrado, seguido de un pre-test de comprensión lectora basada en el CEFR. Después de establecer el nivel de inicio se aplicó el tratamiento usando historias cortas y actividades de teoría esquemática con el grupo experimental. Los participantes leyeron una serie de cinco textos en la primera etapa mientras que en la segunda etapa realizaron una lectura extensiva de la adaptación de George Eliot, Silas Marner. Al final del tratamiento, un post-test de la misma complejidad del pre-test fue administrado a ambos grupos así como un examen para medir actitudes de lectura al grupo experimental.

Los resultados mostraron un cierto grado de efectividad sobre el uso de historias cortas con actividades de teoría esquemática para el mejoramiento de las habilidades de comprensión lectora. Además los resultados revelaron que el uso historias cortas crearon un mejor nivel de motivación después de leer en inglés.

La tesis está organizada de la siguiente manera: Capítulo uno provee una perspectiva general de la literatura incluyendo la teoría esquemática y sus principios asociados al proceso cognitivo para desarrollar habilidades de comprensión lectora. Así también revisa las historias cortas como el género más adecuado para trabajar con adolescentes. El Capítulo dos describe la metodología de investigación. El Capítulo tres presenta los resultados y analiza la información generada durante el tratamiento. La tesis concluye con recomendaciones y conclusiones relacionadas a los resultados del experimento.

Palabras Clave: Literatura, Teoría esquemática, comprensión lectora, historias cortas.



Abstract

Based on the author's experience, the students of the Inmaculada Public High School were not used to reading frequently, and thus, they did not have adequate reading comprehension skills. This thesis wanted to assist EFL students who thought that reading in another language is about literal translation and doing mechanical activities leading to frustration and demotivation rather than enjoying the richness of the text itself.

Two intact classes of the same characteristics, number of students and language background were chosen as the experimental and the control groups. A questionnaire to measure the construct of reading motivation (MRQ) was administered, followed by a pre-test for reading comprehension based on the CEFR (Common European Framework). After having established a benchmark, the application of the treatment using short stories and Schema Theory activities took place with the experimental group. The participants read a set of five texts in the first stage while in the second stage they did extensive reading of an adaptation of George Eliot's "Silas Marner". At the end of the treatment, a post-test of the same complexity as the pre-test was administered to both groups, as well as a survey about the experimental group's reading attitudes.

The findings showed a certain degree of effectiveness of the use of short stories and Schema Theory activities for enhancing reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the use of short stories created an enhanced level of motivation to read in English.

The thesis is arranged as follows: Chapter One provides an overview of the literature including Schema Theory and the principles linked to the cognitive process of developing reading comprehension skills. The Literature Review also looks at short stories as the most suitable genre for working with teenagers. Chapter Two describes the research methodology. Chapter Three presents the findings and also analyses the data gathered during the treatment. The thesis concludes with recommendations and conclusions related to the findings of the experiment.

Key Words: Literature, Schema Theory, Reading Comprehension, Short stories



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Declaration of ownership

I certify that this thesis has been written by me and that any help received in preparing this work, and all sources used, have been acknowledged. This thesis has not already been submitted for any other degree or diploma in any educational institution.



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Declaración de Derecho

Yo certifico que esta tesis ha sido escrita por mí y que cualquier ayuda recibida en la preparación de este trabajo, así también como todos los recursos utilizados han sido debidamente reconocidos. Esta tesis no ha sido previamente presentada para la obtención de ningún título o diploma en ninguna institución educativa.



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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who taught me that even the biggest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time. A special feeling of gratitude to my beloved God and friends who supported me spiritually throughout my life.

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Background and Justification

Many Ecuadorian language instructors of English seem to be frustrated by the fact that students from public high schools do not read in Spanish very often and do not feel any commitment to read in English either. Ecuadorian textbooks for teaching English have very little literature and the topics are sometimes far removed from the experiences of teenagers. As a result, there is not much motivation to read in English.

In my own experience, I have realized that this phenomenon is due to the absence of motivating material to read in English and the lack of focused strategies to build self-confidence for developing reading comprehension skills. Today, reading in another language is considered a door to expand horizons and influence positively the acquisition of the target language. According to the last national evaluation carried out by the Minister of Education and Culture in 2011 and based on the project entitled Curriculum Reform and Development for the Learning of English (CRADLE), there is a lot to do in order to improve the students' English level (MEC). The tests were applied to students at 10th basic level and 3rd Bachillerato level of education; the results showed that the students obtained 13.06 and 13.19 respectively with an average score of 13.13 out of 20 points in overall English proficiency skills. These learning outcomes could be improved if our students had more exposure to the language, which could be done through being exposed to meaningful topics for reading (Ministerio de Educación de Ecuador).

Studying literature in any language is one of the best ways to learn it and to begin to like it. I consider that short stories seem to be the most suitable choice of material to develop our students' reading comprehension skills because they contain a rich variety of language; also they constitute authentic, fun material, as well as include universal values and a real model of language use. Short stories are attractive because the action starts right at the very beginning and the students are usually eager to find out how the conflict in the story is resolved. The length of most short stories is ideal to manage in our 45-minute classes and fit very well with large groups.

The present research project can provide useful information for other teachers that are interested in including short stories in their classes and can lead to gaining all the benefits mentioned before. Teaching English using short stories using Schema



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Theory activities is of relevance for English language teaching in Cuenca, Ecuador. The present study aims to provide some guidance on how to use short stories as a resource for enhancing reading comprehension skills at public high schools in a feasible manner.



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Introduction

Many EFL students appear to think that reading in another language is related to a literal translation of the text or getting bogged down in mechanical vocabulary activities. They tend to look for the meaning of each unknown word, leading to frustration and misunderstandings rather than enjoying the richness of the text itself. For many years there had not been much genuine material with meaningful and motivating topics for reading in the English classes of Ecuadorian schools. The situation changed last year when new textbooks were introduced as a subject for English.

Based on the author's experience, the students of the Inmaculada Public High School are not accustomed to reading regularly and, as a result, they do not have adequate reading comprehension skills. Motivational reading material plus an appropriate approach could help the learners to be more interested in reading for pleasure rather than being worried about grades. At the same time, learners' linguistic abilities, especially reading comprehension skills could be greatly influenced in different aspects, such as vocabulary acquisition and improvement, grammar patterns, pronunciation and reading skills.

This research developed a pilot program using short stories in the Ecuadorian educational context for enhancing reading comprehension skills through activities based on Schema Theory. The study demonstrates to what extent the use of short stories in an EFL classroom can contribute to the enhancement of reading comprehension skills and to what degree Schema Theory activities can lead to effective reading comprehension skills. Additionally, the experiment explored how far the use of short stories in the classroom can produce any motivation to read in English.

The research questions mentioned above focus on the issue of whether the use of short stories in the EFL classroom with activities based on Schema Theory could have a beneficial effect on reading comprehension skills. The research study was administered to an experimental group and a control group of 31 students in two groups of intact classes. The data for reading comprehension skills was collected through a reading post-test of closed-ended questions based on the CEFR at the beginning of the research and a post-test of the same complexity at the end to see if there had been any improvement. In addition, a questionnaire involving multiple



choice questions was administered to obtain data for reading motivation habits (MRQ) at the beginning and a survey at the end of the sessions measured the students' reactions regarding reading motivation.

Once the students' initial level of reading comprehension skills was established by the CEFR pre-test, a special treatment of 2 lessons of 45 minutes for 14 weeks (not including the administering of tests) followed. Each lesson contained pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading activities in line with the thinking behind Schema Theory including strategies such as inferring, predicting, mind-mapping, synonyms, filling gaps etc. Five stories involving intensive reading were explored through different activities focusing on reading comprehension. In the second stage, an adaptation of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* was used for the purposes of extensive reading.

After 36 periods, a final post-test based on CEFR with the same characteristics and level of complexity as the pre-test was administered to both the experimental group and the control group to demonstrate if there had been any progress in reading comprehension skills. The evaluation took place by comparing the data obtained in the pre-test and post-test in the experimental and the control group. At the end, the scores were compared statistically. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of reading habits was carried out based on both the initial MRQ questionnaire and the follow-up survey on reading habits motivation.

The first part of the present thesis provides an exhaustive account of how literature is incorporated in the classroom. Integrating literature in an EFL syllabus has been widely discussed by researchers, course designers and examiners since the 1980s (Clandfield). There are some educators, such as Lazar and Carolli, who state that literature is a source of language development in different areas. It encourages verbal or written interaction and cultural expansion; it also develops human interests, interpretative abilities, and the internalization of grammar patterns as well as new vocabulary, pronunciation and intonation.

As a possible approach, Schema Theory and its principles are described. Schema Theory is defined by Anderson as an organized network of knowledge and abstract mental structures; it represents people's understanding of the world (qtd. in [asiaeuniversity121](#)). Schema Theory is directly linked to reading comprehension skills since they involve a cognitive process that requires several steps.



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The second chapter provides a detailed description of how the research was carried out. A full account of the participants, the instruments applied, and the timeline is given. The third chapter presents the findings after administering the research instruments and the application of the treatment. The thesis concludes with a chapter on recommendations and conclusions arising from the research.



CHAPTER I: Literature Review

The following chapter aims at providing an overview about what implications arise when including literature in the classroom and what its role might be in education. Advantages and disadvantages of integrating literature in the classroom as well as the role of literature in the EFL (English as a foreign language) teaching context will be considered. Discussions about whether to teach or not to teach literature in an EFL classroom, Schema Theory and the related concepts, reading skills and the types of reading (intensive and extensive) will be reviewed. We will also look at the cognitive processes involved in reading comprehension. Finally, we will examine short stories as the best option and most suitable genre for working with teenagers in language teaching with emphasis on its educational benefits.

There are several advantages when using literature in the classroom, such as motivation, human development, cultural awareness, cognitive language acquisition, group interaction and authentic language awareness that educators such as Floris, Lazar, and Carolli mention in their writings (Floris 7-18; Lazar 5-23; Carolli 2-54).

All these aspects are going to be discussed while looking at the issue of integrating literature with educational objectives. At the same time, there are some well-known educators such as Duff and Maley who think that including literature in the syllabus does not represent a contribution to education. They are of the opinion that including literature can have some drawbacks such as language complexity, cultural misunderstandings, or demotivated students due to the length of the text, etc. (qtd. in Floris 4).

In this Literature Review, we will also consider the teaching of literature in an EFL context. These aspects need to be thought through since the research element of the present thesis was carried out in an EFL classroom and, therefore, it needs to be understood how literature can influence language learning when English is taught as a foreign language, namely without much language support or input outside the classroom.

The debate as to whether literature should or should not be taught in the EFL classroom will not end here, but it is important to give an account of the main arguments as well as consider how literature is best taught once this option is taken. The present research project uses Schema Theory activities as an approach and, therefore, the Literature Review will provide a detailed account as to what schema



theory is according to the main proponents of the theory. Schema Theory is mostly related to the development of reading comprehension. Reading comprehension will be discussed by looking at the two types of reading: intensive and extensive reading. The enhancing of reading comprehension skills will be promoted through the use of short stories which appear to be the best option for working with teenagers for several reasons that will be explained below.

Teaching literature in the classroom

Integrating literature in an EFL syllabus has been widely discussed by researchers, course designers and examiners since the 1980s (Clandfield). Some of those involved in EFL teaching agree that it provides a lot of benefits for language acquisition; meanwhile others think that it can create difficulties in the learning of the language. Below, the most important benefits of using literature in the EFL classroom will be surveyed. Literature can be motivating, especially if the teacher selects exciting pieces of reading, such as a thriller with a fair amount of suspense in it. Such stories tend to be more engaging for learners than the ones found in their standard course books. Likewise, analyzing poetry or a play engages the students in dilemmas of human interest and elicits emotions and thoughts about the given work of literature. It motivates the students because they can see the relevance for their own lives and can arrive at a real sense of understanding and shared experience (Clandfield).

Advantages of using literature in the classroom

Lazar further makes the point that literature educates the whole person (19). She says that apart from the valuable linguistic benefits, literature also has an educational function. By examining values in literary texts, the students develop their critical abilities, use their imagination and become emotionally involved. Lazar adds that when students give personal responses to a given text, they also build their confidence since they learn the ability of expressing thoughts relating to their society and traditions and connecting to the world outside the classroom (19).

On the whole, researchers agree that the studying of a foreign language is not all about words; it also refers to language discourse, namely, how people use language to communicate with each other and how the message is transmitted or interpreted, whether verbal or written (Carolli 9-11). For this reason, Carolli states that including literature in the EFL classroom helps the learner to develop a better understanding of the culture of the language to be studied and to communicate properly in different



situations and not just with native English speakers but with people from all over the world as well.

Today many educators, such as Lazar and Carolli, are of the opinion that including literature in an EFL context will result in an enrichment of the given language learning experience. This is because literature provides a useful tool for gaining a cross-cultural understanding of the target language, whether that takes place consciously or unconsciously (Lazar 16; Carolli 9-12).

Furthermore, literature encourages interaction. When learners are exposed to literary texts, they are encouraged to arrive at different interpretations of the text, which is beneficial because they get involved in discussions and can share ideas, feelings, opinions, and thoughts, etc. (Clandfield). All these human experiences can enhance oral communication.

Therefore, literature enhances different linguistic aspects of language. When students of intermediate or higher levels are asked to read a literary text, they start to accelerate the process of language learning, especially if they are motivated. They will start reading by themselves, which will help them to internalize grammar patterns and vocabulary as well as intonation (when the text is presented orally or as audio material). At lower levels the students may enjoy reading less, but including memorable texts using miming and listening will help to increase their vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar patterns as well (Lazar 17).

Literature increases students' interpretative abilities: In a literary text students are faced with different challenges, such as having to infer the meaning of an idiomatic expression or guessing the meaning of a word in a conversation. In a poem, a single word can go far beyond the straightforward dictionary definition. This implies that the learners start to develop an overall capacity to infer the meaning of a word in context or in metaphor. The students develop the ability to make interpretations and get involved in the possible assumptions and implications of the text (Lazar 19).

According to Clandfield, another good reason for using literature in the classroom is that literature provides authentic material. Whether students of a foreign language are asked to read or they read on their own initiative, they mostly read adaptations of literary texts because of the length and language complexity of the original. However, even adaptations of texts can provide a valuable input. These adaptations are beneficial for EFL students, because they take into account the students' language level and can be read in a short period of time.



The arguments about teaching literature do not end here. A further benefit is the expansion of the students' language awareness. This can be enhanced by asking learners to examine the sophisticated or non-standard examples of language, since they will be exposed to different forms of discourse, will learn about cohesion and the rules of syntax and also become familiar with some common collocations of the new words. Lazar agrees with Widdowson when she says that "We're also encouraging our students to think about the norms of language use" (18).

Below we will survey a study about including literature in the syllabus. In this study the researcher looked at the relationship between language and literature in an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classroom (qtd. in Butler 71). It was carried out by Chan in secondary schools in Hong Kong. His aim was to look at the relationship between English language and literature teaching. Moreover, he aimed at investigating the different ways of incorporating literature in the syllabus in order to strengthen the teaching process. Language and literature were taught separately in secondary schools in Hong Kong at the time the research was carried out, and Chan claimed that the result of this separation was a curriculum that was both emotionally and intellectually unsatisfactory.

Chan decided to integrate both literature and English language. He used songs, television drama, jokes, graffiti, etc, rather than traditional literary texts. He focused on language and wanted to stimulate sensitivity to and interest in improving language skills. The genres mentioned above provided plenty of authentic material so that the students were exposed to language use in a range of situations. Chan's hypothesis was that exposure to the texts and the designed tasks would have a positive effect on the integration between English language and literature teaching in secondary schools in Hong Kong as well as promote teacher development, increase students' and teachers' language awareness and forge an interface between language and literature (Chan qtd. in Butler 71).

Even though there was no direct evidence that connected the text and tasks to the performance and positive changes in the attitudes of the students in his experiment, Chan believed that his findings confirmed his hypotheses. In the concluding chapter, Chan mentions the challenges of his approach, such as avoiding well-recognized texts, the switch from common texts to unusual ones and the extra effort on the teacher's part rather than student-centered classes were required.



Chan also pointed out the importance of having had enthusiastic pupils and teachers while he was carrying out the research. Therefore, he found three pedagogical implications that his method had in common with the text-based approach outlined by McCarthy and Carter. These people also advocated the inclusion of texts not traditionally considered as literature; the treatment of literature as a resource; and the use of language-based approaches to the study of literature (Chan qtd. in Butler 73).

Disadvantages of using literature in the classroom

Although many experts confirm that the integration of literature in the EFL classroom provides a number of benefits, there are also some difficulties that teachers have encountered when using literary texts. Shorter texts could present some difficulties because “they do not offer extended contextual support and repetition which longer texts do” (Duff and Maley qtd. in Floris 4). Shorter texts do not provide enough exposure to the language, and learners can be limited by the input they are receiving (Floris 4).

There are also cultural difficulties; for example, according to Duff and Maley, “it is clearly impossible for an outsider to share fully the range of references of an insider” (qtd. in Floris 4). There can be many cultural expressions and connotations that can disorient the students. The lack of knowledge could confuse or create wrong perceptions of the people or culture that the students are reading about. In such instances, one could say that it is the job of the teacher to make appropriate clarifications and provide some orientation before reading a text.

According to Floris’ article, another problem of including literature in EFL classrooms is the language level. Sometimes students are reluctant to read in English because they view the text as incomprehensible. The language of the given piece of text is presented in unexpected ways and includes idiomatic expressions; vocabulary and grammatical structures are often considered to be too complicated. Lazar says it will depend on the teacher to choose the correct language level according to the language competence of the students they have (qtd. in Floris 4).

Finally, another difficulty is the length of the text. Both long and short texts may create problems. Longer texts might be considered as too difficult by students, especially if they do not like reading; in this case, they will rarely feel any motivation. Shorter texts may not provide enough vocabulary, grammar structures or expressions that the students can learn (Floris 4).



Integrating literature in an EFL context

Another aspect to be considered is the role of literature in EFL instruction. Teaching English to non-native speakers in an otherwise English speaking country (ESL context) is different from teaching English to non-native speakers in a non-English speaking country (EFL context). This implies that the methodology used for the teaching of literature in an ESL or EFL context should take the special characteristics of each into account.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis has some important implications when it comes to teaching literature in ESL/EFL. Krashen makes a contrast between language acquisition with ESL and language learning with ESL. He states that language acquisition is spontaneous and fairly fast, because there are unconscious skills predisposed by our brain. This acquisition happens when the learner is provided with comprehensible language input. In contrast, we have language learning that is conscious and somewhat slower because it implies more reflection on various features of the language such as linguistic patterns, pronunciation, intonation etc (qtd. in Durant 5).

Making a differentiation between the two when including literature will have a positive effect on the approaches that we use in the classroom. Some sort of activities, such as reading conversations in real context are likely to lead to language acquisition since these activities are performed automatically and can facilitate the students' spontaneous language acquisition. Other activities, such as filling gaps, vocabulary tasks, and questions and answers are related to the development of language learning because they are designed deliberately and self-consciously for a better understanding of the text (Durant 5).

According to Sariçoban and Küçükoğlu (160), the first use of literature in EFL classes started at the beginning of the century when the Grammar Translation Method was deemed to be the only suitable method of instruction for ELT (English language teaching) classrooms. The only objective was to translate the literary texts from the target language into the learners' native language causing a limitation in the use of literature. However, Sariçoban and Küçükoğlu state that over the last two decades, namely, starting from the 1980s, the goal of EFL teaching has changed, and the aim of teaching English is now to help students to communicate fluently in the target language. As a result of this, new ways of integrating literature in EFL classes have arisen; Sariçoban and Küçükoğlu conclude that literary genres with



their authentic nature are functional tools for all language levels if used appropriately (160).

Literature is the art of language and according to Chen Zhen, by including literature in the curriculum, students can learn culture, language and linguistics; the three are interrelated. Additionally, it appears that literature can be especially useful for students who are learning English in countries where there are fewer opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom (EFL context) (36).

Zhen emphasizes that literature is an important educational tool in the curriculum with noticeable advantages in EFL acquisition (37). Teaching literature in EFL serves two purposes: first, it is a language learning instrument, and second, it enhances literature appreciation. For Zhen, this appears to be the main difference between teaching literature to native and non-native speakers of English, since native speakers do not use literature for language improvement. However, one could say that in the educational systems of most countries, literature introduced at an early age does have the function of language improvement and enhancing critical thinking skills.

Zhen goes on to say that another characteristic is that learners in the EFL context have a limited understanding of English and, as a consequence, of literature as well. Their comprehension develops more slowly and they need simplified texts rather than original ones. Zhen concludes that teachers must be mindful of the cognitive processes associated with second language learning and make the right choices when selecting the material and the teaching methodology. He also draws attention to the fact that learners of different cultural backgrounds often have different interpretations and reactions to the views of the writer. In this case, EFL instructors should offer learners with some prior cultural information as a supplement before reading (Zhen 38).

Literature and culture

The relationship between literature and culture is another aspect to be considered. Literature in the classroom offers an expansion of the students' cultural awareness. Literature is able to increase the students' cultural sensitivity regarding the people whose language they are studying. It can provide insights of places, emotions, and reactions and dialects of inhabitants of a specific location at a specific time. It is said that the closest representation of culture can be found when reading some novels and poems (Widdowson qtd. in Lazar 16). According to Hernández, a



clear example of cultural awareness is presented in the novel *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (3). This novel offers a reconstruction of the lives of the inhabitants as long the Mississippi River in the late nineteenth century. It presents people's characteristics, their use of language, and reactions in that historical period (Hernández 3).

Other authors may choose to deal with general topics of human interest such as love, war, friendship, loyalty, etc. According to Durant, this approach is called pedagogic 'universalism' or 'cultural neutralism' (7). This approach focuses on specific concerns rather than the history and social issues of a particular place or culture. Such works of literature treat human experience as an over-arching issue that is common across historical periods or cultures, and they try to highlight common values, pleasures and fears (Durant 7).

Kaplan states that cultural differences lead to different approaches when teaching reading to L1 and L2 learners. Cultural knowledge is significant when comprehending some types of writing, such as the humor in *Garfield*. This US cartoon is humorous only when the reader can comprehend the cultural significance behind it (Al-Issa 43).

Ghosn draws attention to the fact that using literary texts may bring about more than just learning about other cultures when she says that "Literature can also act as a powerful change agent by developing pupils' intercultural awareness while at the same time nurturing empathy, a tolerance for diversity, and emotional intelligence" (qtd. in Anwar1).

Debating the integration of literature in EFL

So far a lot has been said about why literature should be taught and how it could be exploited for the purposes of teaching a foreign language. However, not all agree that literature should be part of the curriculum and even those who advocate its use write about the difficulties that may arise in an ESL/EFL setting.

According to Deborah Floris, English teachers and curriculum supervisors came to the conclusion that literature in English did not provide meaningful language usage for EFL classrooms in Indonesia. In the article entitled "The Power of Literature in EFL Classrooms", she states that most of the teachers and supervisors of that study complained that literary texts were difficult, hard to understand and irrelevant to the students' reality.



However, Floris states that these arguments against teaching literature could have come about by “the lack of knowledge on the advantages of literature text, the criteria for selecting literary texts and how to use the texts in classrooms” (Floris 2).

According to Carolli (9), the role of literature in L2 has been continuously questioned. She states that the debate on whether or not to use literature in the ESL or EFL field culminated in the 1980s. She cites the example of Australia, where the merits of teaching literature and /or languages was questioned mainly because of socioeconomic factors, namely citing the underprivileged background of many learners (Mehigan qtd. in Carolli 9).

The most important argument against the use of literature in EFL appears to be the difficulty of literary language and its relevance in the classroom, since some literary texts do not include examples of everyday language. However, Italian writers, such as Manzoni, wrote their novels using a simple style to expand their audience. Intermediate level Italian students can easily read the novel *I Promessi Sposi* published in 1827. Conversely, in 1998, learners of the same language found that the youthful and free styles of modern novels are difficult to read because they included colloquial, regional or youth expressions (Carolli 9).

According to Durant, any excerpt of conversation, be it written or oral, can be intensely embedded in its context, and, therefore can pose difficulties for the reader. He says that in order to interpret an utterance like “I told them it wasn't ready, but that it would be the day after we went there” students need to construct the terms “we” and “there” in relation to a specific given context. Otherwise, the text remains incomprehensible and incoherent, especially for learners at lower levels (9).

As opposed to this view, Widdowson has argued that since literary texts are written to be read in different contexts and in different periods, they can provide a high degree of self-sufficiency from specific contexts (Widdowson qtd. in Durant 9). He also states that the variety of language structures found in literature is beneficial in the classroom. Widdowson says that the referents in the above utterance contain language that is presented as different interpretative brainteasers rather than simple frustrating gaps (Durant 9).

Another argument against the use of literature in EFL classroom is the new tendency of introducing unconventional texts such as newspaper headings. These kinds of text are seen as uncommon and are not considered as literary instruments. The interpretation of this kind of document is easier for students and do not provide



sufficient language input for language learning. Widdowson and others have suggested that literary texts, particularly lyrical poetry, involve more complex and better organization than conversation or most non-literary discourse. It is better to use traditional texts like poetry if interpretative skills are going to be developed (Durant 9).

This approach of using unconventional texts presents two major disadvantages. One is that a piece of reading such as a newspaper heading or a short excerpt of a conversation keeps the students somewhat isolated from the text and language. According to Robert Scholes, the reader is prevented from what he describes as “an active environment of creative experimentation at a personal and collective level” (Zoreda qtd. in Durant 9). The other is that the readers only follow the indications and lines provided by the text and miss the other possible literary references provided by traditional texts (Durant 9).

In conclusion, one might say that the use of literary texts in an EFL classroom provides a number of benefits to the learner since literary texts present authentic material; the learners are exposed to the language naturally and receive input from different perspectives. They are more aware of the linguistic parts of the language such as grammar structures, vocabulary and writing styles, pronunciation and variations of the language.

Moreover, the learners can develop interpretative skills encouraging communication and interaction among them while analyzing and discussing texts. Also, they develop their human values since the texts present topics of interest for them and are related to the learners’ experiences. They can identify themselves with the protagonists or situations presented in the text. Finally, the immersion of the learner in literary texts provides culture awareness; they become more familiar with places, historic events, and descriptions of people’s behavior at specific times according to social statues, religion or country (Al Issa; Anwar).

It is important to take into consideration what other researchers, such as Durant and Widdowson, suggest when trying to introduce a literary text in the classroom. First of all, literature texts can go from the traditional to the uncommon; they can be introduced taking into account the age group, language level and cultural background. These texts can be very motivational for the learners if the teacher selects the material carefully.



However, if the selected texts are presented in their original form in a group of low language level, it can be demotivating because the learners may think it is hard to understand them and just focus on the comprehension of the linguistic part rather than the richness of the literary part (Durant 10). The learners' age is of importance because they prefer to read topics where they feel engaged; most of the time these are topics of interest: love, friendship, family, war, etc. The genre of the literary text also needs to be considered since groups with lower levels of language proficiency are not always ready to read or analyze poetry or long narrative texts. Lastly, the learners' culture is also of relevance when reading in English, because western and eastern cultures think differently; even on the same continent, there can be differences which need to be explained in advance by the teacher before reading a literary text (Durant).

Schema Theory

The famous social psychologist and philosopher, Émile Durkheim says that "Language is not merely the external covering of a thought; it is also its internal framework. It does not confine itself to expressing this thought after it has once been formed; it also aids in making it" (qtd. in Hernández 3).

When using literature in EFL classrooms, it is important to find approaches to enhance reading comprehension skills for a better understanding and appreciation of the text. Many EFL instructors have used Schema Theory activities as an approach in the EFL classroom; this term will be looked at from different perspectives in the section that follows.

The developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget used the term as early as 1926. However, it was the renowned educational psychologist, R. C. Anderson who developed the notion of Schema Theory in 1977 (asiaeuniversity 121).

Schema theory describes how knowledge is acquired, processed and organized. The starting assumption of this theory is that "the very act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world". According to this theory, knowledge is a network of mental frames or cognitive constructs called schemata (plural for "schema"). Schemata organize knowledge stored in our long-term memory (Bartlett qtd. in Ajideh 4-5).

This learning theory is described by Anderson as an organized network of knowledge and abstract mental structures. This network represents people's understanding of the world. In fact, contemporary learning theories describe Schema



Theory as an attempt to explain how new knowledge is encoded in our long-term memory. Schallert stresses that abstract concepts are best understood after prior knowledge linkages have been established (qtd. in asiaeuniversity 121). Alba and Hasher state that “Schema facilitates the selection of information based on our interests. The schema enable the selected material to be organized abstractly and assist the individual in the processes of interpreting and integrating the new material, based on what he or she knows already” (qtd. in asiaeuniversity124).

In Anderson’s understanding, (qtd. in asiaeuniversity 122) Schema Theory has the following characteristics: Schemata are always organized meaningfully; they can increase and develop as an individual gains experience. Second, each schema is added to more schemata (background information) which at the same time contain subschemata. Also, schemata are flexible and are modified moment after moment according to the information that is received. Additionally, schemata are reorganized when new data need to restructure the previous concepts. Finally, the mental representations, which are the results of an entire process, are combined to form knowledge as a whole instead of just a sum of its parts.

A simple example is to think about a schema of a dog. In that schema there will be mostly knowledge about dogs in general, such as barking, four legs, teeth, hair, and tails, and probably information about specific dogs, such as collies (long hair, large, Lassie) or springer spaniels (English, docked tails, liver and white or black and white, Millie). What could also emerge is the thought of dogs within the context of animals and other living things; that is, dogs breathe, need food, and reproduce. Knowledge of dogs could also include the fact that they are mammals and they are warm-blooded. Depending upon each person’s personal experience, the knowledge of a dog as a pet (domesticated and loyal) or as an animal to fear (likely to bite or attack) may be a part of your schema. Each new experience incorporates more information into one's schema (Schema Theory 1).

Carrell states that generally, there are three major types of schemata: linguistic schemata, formal schemata and content schemata (qtd. in Li Xiao, Wu and Wei 18). Linguistic schemata are described as the readers’ existing language proficiency in grammar, vocabulary and idioms. Schema Theory is closely related to reading comprehension skills because the linguistic knowledge plays an essential part in the comprehension of the text. It is almost impossible for the reader to decode a text without linguistic schemata.



Carrell describes formal schemata as organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts. The texts contain different types of knowledge such as genre, organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar and level of formality. Readers use their schematic representations of the text such as fiction, poems, essays, newspaper articles, academic articles in magazines and journals to help comprehend the information in the text (Carrell qtd. in Li Xiao, Wu and Wei 18-19).

Finally, content schemata denote the background knowledge of a text, or the theme that a text talks about. They include cultural knowledge and previous experience in a field as well as familiarity. To some extent, content schemata help the learners to understand texts by predicting, choosing information and removing ambiguities. The familiarity of a text has an important influence on readers' comprehension. The more the learners know about the topic, the more easily they can understand the information of a text (Carrell qtd. in Li Xiao, Wu and Wei 19).

Schema Theory and reading comprehension

In order to have a clear idea of the use of Schema Theory activities for reading comprehension purposes, it is important to start by defining reading itself.

Grabe and Stoller say that reading implies “drawing meaning *from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately*” (9). According to the teaching staff of Delaware University, “Reading is an active process of constructing meaning in which the reader incorporates textual information into his existent system of knowledge”. This definition seems to take into account Schema Theory as well (Udel).

The definition of reading is closely related to reading comprehension which is developed through a whole cognitive process that needs to be activated through a variety of approaches going step by step until one reaches an effective comprehension of the text (Gilakjani and Ahmadi 142).

There may be differences between the writer's intention and the reader's comprehension. Sometimes readers feel that they understood a text, but they get to a different interpretation of the author's intention (Hudson qtd. in Scott). A factor for failure in reading comprehension is, on occasion, the lack of cultural awareness. For example, humor is principally susceptible for misinterpretation. A piece of text entitled 'It's a mugger's game in Manhattan' (Greenall and Swan qtd. in Scott) appeared humorous to the native-speaker teacher but it was found scary and shocking by L2 readers in Japan. Another factor for the failure in reading comprehension in EFL is



the lack of schemata by non-native speakers. For instance, the concept of 'full moon' in Europe is related to schemata of horror stories and madness, while in Japan it is linked to schemata associated with eternal beauty and the Moon (Wallace qtd. in Scott).

Rumelhart defines reading comprehension as the process of choosing and verifying conceptual schemata for the text (Rumelhart qtd. in Zhang 198). According to the Schema Theory it is not only the reader's prior linguistic knowledge or level of proficiency in the second language that is important, but the reader's prior background knowledge of the content area of the text as well as of the rhetorical structure of the text that are also important (Carrell qtd. in Zhang 198).

Schema Theory is mostly used in an attempt to enhance reading comprehension skills. Carrell and Eisterhold state that "every culture-specific interference problem dealt with in the classroom presents an opportunity to build new culture-specific schemata that will be available to the EFL/ESL student outside the classroom" (Carrell and Eisterhold qtd. in Scott). Consequently, it is more beneficial to help the reader to build prior background knowledge related to the topic through proper pre-reading activities. According to Carrell, schemata may be constructed by including lectures, visual aids, demonstrations, real-life experiences, discussions, role-play, text previewing, introduction and discussion of key vocabulary, and key-word/key-concept association activities (qtd. in Scott).

Carrell stresses that Schema Theory has some interesting implications when reading in English as a foreign language (Al-Issa 44). She says that teachers must be sensitive to the difficulties that ESL or EFL learners are faced with when reading a text. Their lack of comprehension can be caused by being unfamiliar with the cultural background of the text and its language. Therefore, Carrell suggests that ESL/EFL teachers should work on reducing the problems that students encounter when reading. The chosen reading materials have to stimulate the students' schemata, which will result in a better comprehension of what is going to be read. Carrell and other researchers point out that ESL/ EFL reading comprehension can be affected by the failure of schema activation rather than the learners' lack of schemata (Al-Issa 44).

According to Al-Issa, there are three main implications for teachers when incorporating knowledge. First of all, the teacher must take into account the content of the text that the learner is going to read about. Second, an important part of the



reading process could be atrophied if the reader has not been actively using his background knowledge. Third, the teachers' main goal has to be the development of abstract activities such as making interpretations, problem-solving and creative activities by which the learners can take advantage of whatever knowledge or information that they already have. In fact, teachers should work to activate and use the learners' background knowledge in order to help them become better readers (Al-Issa 44).

According to Williams, there are three significant phases of the schema activation process for the purposes of developing reading comprehension; the pre-reading phase, the reading phase, and the post-reading phase. The most important phase which helps to build on background knowledge is the pre-reading stage. It can be developed through activities such as showing pictures, slides, movies, games or sounds. During this phase, students can write about their knowledge of the subject and discuss their background knowledge with other students (qtd. in Al-Issa 45). In the second phase, the students read about the topic presented. It is important to make students skim the text and later the teacher can ask them to read it in depth. The reader can make notes of the new information they find. As they continue reading, their knowledge of the subject is expanded (qtd. in Al-Issa 45). Finally, in the post-reading phase, learners develop some activities that help to integrate their previous background knowledge into a new schema structure. Through a series of comprehension questions, vocabulary games, or acting out the selection, the students begin to incorporate their new background knowledge into a greater schema (qtd. in Al-Issa 45).

A fair amount of research studies have looked at the use of Schema Theory. Winfield and Barnes-Felfeli (qtd. in Al-Issa 43) observed a class of twenty ESL students of intermediate level. Half of them were Hispanic and the other half were non-native speakers of English whose mother tongue was Hebrew, Arabic, Navajo, Greek, etc. The class read a sixth grade level passage of two translated texts: Don Quixote and one on the Japanese Noh theatre. The task was to read the passages after which 15 minutes were given to the students to write down everything they could remember from the text.

All of the students had different levels of background knowledge related to the topic; all of the students worked on pre-reading activities as well. The results showed that the non-Hispanic students performed consistently well on both texts. The



Hispanic scored below the others on the Noh text from Japanese origin but on Don Quixote they obtained higher results. According to the researchers, the reason for those results is due to the use of familiar material which raises fluency. (Al-Issa 43)

Another study conducted by Koh (qtd. in Al-Issa 43) looked at the effects of familiar context on students' reading comprehension. The concept of familiar contexts has arisen from the assumption that the learner's comprehension of a text is determined by the prior knowledge that the reader has received about particular text. Koh further suggests that students must be conscious of what processes are required for being an effective reader. In short, the learners activate their schemata for the recreation of meaning from the text rather than focusing on decoding the text word by word, which is a characteristic of how ESL reading material is often processed (Al-Issa 43).

Extensive and intensive reading

Reading various kinds of texts (namely, not exclusively literary ones) is still one of the basic language skills that are taught as part of foreign language instruction. Reading is often described as having two types: extensive reading and intensive reading. According to Day and Bamford, the term extensive reading is credited to Harold Palmer for being the first in referring to a large amount of reading focused on the meaning of the text (qtd. in Susser and Robb). For another researcher, Palmer, extensive reading has the advantage of being both informative and pleasurable (qtd. in Susser and Robb). In fact, we can say that extensive reading contains a large amount of text and, more often than not, the text is read for pleasure rather than just for academic purposes or for obtaining grades.

Extensive reading in language learning has real-world purposes. Day and Bamford (qtd. in Susser and Robb) describe this type of reading activity through ten principles: First of all, the material that is going to be read is easy and manageable. Further, it contains a variety of reading topics; they can be available in different genres as well as topics of interest such as love, hatred, anger, friendship, family, etc. Learners are free to choose what they prefer to read, which makes extensive reading more pleasurable. Another characteristic is that learners read as much as they can without any time pressure. The main purpose of reading is usually associated with pleasure, information, and general understanding. Moreover, reading does not result in any external reward; instead, it involves a personal reward of enjoyment and emotional experience. The speed of the reading is mostly fast rather



than slow. The reader usually reads individually and silently. Finally, the teacher's role in extensive reading is just orienting and guiding the students. The main function of the teacher is to provide a model of a successful reader (qtd. in Susser and Robb).

Intensive reading, on the other hand, involves learners reading in detail involving specific learning objectives and tasks. According to Brown "intensive reading calls attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, and the like" (qtd. in MacLeod).

Brown describes intensive reading as a process that involves students reading selections by the same author or several texts about the same topic. When this occurs, content and grammatical structures repeat themselves and students get many opportunities to understand the meanings of the text. In the context of foreign language instruction, some of the most important characteristics of intensive reading are as follows: first, it is usually classroom based. Further, the reader is intensely involved in looking at the text in depth. Moreover, students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of the text rather than its message / content. Students focus on surface structure details, such as grammar and discourse markers. In addition, students identify key vocabulary to succeed in comprehension. Students may draw pictures to help them in problem solving. Most texts are read carefully and thoroughly several times. The aim is to work on expanding the learners' language knowledge rather than simply developing reading skills (qtd. in MacLeod).

Short stories in EFL instruction

Stories have been a substantial part in any culture (networking 2). The origins of short stories origins were with the oral tradition of storytelling, for instance Aesop's fables, folktales and fairy tales that were documented by storytellers around the world. In past times, stories were used to explain philosophies about the world (myths), to recall the fabulous performances of past kings and heroes (legends), to explain moral lessons (fables and parables) or purely for entertainment (folktales and fairy tales) (net working 2-6).

In the 19th century, the short story began to develop as a literary genre when magazines became more popular and extensively read. By the twentieth century, the short story was a well-established literary genre in the West. It was due to the influence of writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov etc. Consequently, the short story flourished throughout the twentieth century and



writers began to explore a diversity of genres such as love stories, fantasy and horror stories, crime and mystery stories, and science fiction (networking 7-8).

Nowadays English has become a globalized language and the number of writers has increased. There are both male and female writers from various cultures and countries all over the world writing in English, even when it is not their mother tongue (networking 9). According to Walther, the short story now belongs to the genre of narrative prose. Some of the most relevant characteristics of a short story are its brevity that delimits its plot, the narrow choice of protagonists, and the strong functionality of the different parts in the story. Poe describes this genre as follows: “The short story is single effect, complete and self-contained while the novel is, of necessity, broken into a series of episodes” (qtd. in Walther).

Let us now turn to the issue of using short stories in EFL instruction. Short stories as a literary genre provide diverse benefits if they are properly used. Žaneta Urbancová in her thesis entitled “Using Stories in Teaching English” states that short stories provide rich language input in the EFL classroom, for example, new vocabulary, reading comprehension skills, genuine grammar structures, and connotations. Moreover, they are very motivational because they contain topics of universal values with moral lessons and characters representing different personalities that enhance their critical thinking (Urbancová 5).

Furthermore, Floris states that students can perceive language in a variety of ways; as a result, the learners become more sensitive since the material is presented at many levels of difficulty. This sensibility establishes a connection between the learner and the soul of the language because it is presented through authentic topics of interest for them. Widdowson states “It is probably better to consider authenticity not as a quality residing in instances of language but as a quality which is bestowed upon them, created by the response of the receiver...” (qtd. in Floris 2-6). It is then the reader who ultimately gives sense to the literary text by interpreting and reacting to it in different ways.

Likewise, short stories expand personal involvement and may give rise to various interpretations because one single piece of literary work could be interpreted in different ways by members of the same group. According to Edgar Allan Poe, short stories are defined as “a narrative that can be read at one sitting, one-half hour to two hours, and that is limited to ‘a certain unique or single effect’, to which every detail is subordinate” (qtd. in Pardede).



Using short stories to enhance reading comprehension skills in an EFL classroom can be a challenging task when working with teenagers who were the main participants of the present experiment. According to Urbancová, teenagers need to be constantly motivated as compared to other groups. They are very sensitive about how people perceive them as individuals and this is more important to them than the teacher's approval. Love and friendship are universal topics and can be relied on to catch their attention (Harmer qtd. in Urbancová 12). That is why EFL instructors should connect language teaching to the teenagers' feelings, experiences and interests. They have to be motivated to use their own thoughts and experiences when answering questions about a text, rather than just answering questions and carrying out complex tasks removed from their experiences (Harmer qtd. in Urbancová 13).

In the following case study, the researcher investigated whether the use of short stories in a junior secondary ESL classroom in Hong Kong could increase the students' interest and motivation. The reason for carrying out this study was that, according to a survey by a special committee on language education, only 10% of the students were strongly motivated to learn English. Moreover, there was a lack of confidence toward learning English. This finding was discovered in another administered survey done by Yu, Liu and Littlewood in 1996. They found that 32 % of the students did not feel confident when they had to speak in English (Yang 2).

The study conducted by Chi Cheung Ruby Yang (2) was conducted in Hong Kong with a group of twenty students aged 12 to 14. The students' mother tongue was Cantonese and although most of them had studied English since primary school, their level of English was poor. The study was carried out by using the narrative approach to storytelling. The researcher used two short stories in this experiment; the first "Pooh's Honey Tree" an adaptation of 34 pages and "Pinnocchio" an adaptation of 24 pages. The researcher states that because of the relatively short length of the stories, they were read in short periods of time, which is an advantage. Likewise, these stories contained simple and comprehensible language that facilitated the students' comprehension, and lastly, they were stories that the students had already heard in their mother tongue. For all these reasons, these stories were eminently suitable for students with the low level of his learners (Yang 3-6)

The methods and data collection of this study were both quantitative and qualitative. The researcher used the quantitative method for the pre-test and post-



test while the qualitative method was used for semi-structured group interviews and class observations. The experiment lasted four periods and was done in two cycles: two periods for each short story. It started with a pre-test for measuring the students' initial attitude toward reading short stories in English. Using a checklist, the teacher-researcher also made some observations about the students' responses at the end of each lesson (Yang 7).

After reading the two stories, a post-test was administered in order to see if there was an increment in the students' motivation and confidence. Finally, an interview was carried out with a group of six students of mixed levels; there were two of high level, two of intermediate and two of low level. It was done in order to record reactions from different points of view such as preferences in genres, language level etc. There were some limitations concerning the experiment. The first limitation was that the number of the participants in this experiment was small, since there were only twenty of them (Yang 8).

The second limitation was that the interview was done with six interviewees only and most of them were male students with just one female per group. Female students might feel ashamed of expressing their thoughts and this could affect the results, causing bias. The third limitation is the duration of the experiment; the researcher states that the time was too short to draw far-reaching conclusions about the effectiveness of using short stories (Yang 8).

The conclusion of this study was the following: Short stories are suitable for students of low language proficiency levels if the stories are well-chosen, but they will not necessarily instantly motivate students. The key is that the stories should present topics of interest and match the language level fairly well. Using short stories with the storytelling approach drew positive responses in the interview and the post-test, but the students' confidence could not realistically be boosted in such a short period of time (Yang 15-16).

In another case study entitled "Narrative Strategies in an EFL Classroom: An Experiment" carried out by Champa Tickoo in Osmania University, India, we can see some of the benefits of using narratives in an EFL classroom (in this case, short stories were used as well as other resources). The study had two main aims. The first was to help with the difficulties of teaching English, particularly in one of the high-school classes. The problem was that although the class in question had studied



English for eight years, they could neither speak nor write it. Therefore, they had built up negative attitudes towards the learning of the language.

The second was to satisfy the author's own desire to find out how, as a non-native teacher, he could respond to the problems by putting into use different strategies that he had acquired in confronting similar situations over the years. This experiment was piloted in an EFL classroom with students aged 14-15 in a state high school in the twin cities of Hyderabad-Secunderabad. The experiment lasted approximately 35 weeks and surveyed events as indicators in learner development (Tickoo).

The study began with a discussion between the actual English teacher of the class and the researcher concerning the English achievements of the class after eight years of learning English. The answers showed that the teaching process was a failure for many pupils when it came to expressing their thoughts and feelings in spoken or written English. Also, the class teacher believed that for some of the students to be able to do so was an almost impossible goal.

Tickoo realized that most of the learners had different problems in learning English, for instance, the structure of the language including tenses, agreement, word order, verb usage, as well as problems with punctuation and spelling; beyond the language aspect there were serious attitudinal problems. There was a loss of confidence in themselves and in the educational system, mainly related to the learning of English.

The selected stories had different characteristics. Their lengths were varied as well as the subject themes. They included everyday events and stories from daily newspapers or magazines as well as Indian epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. The teacher-researcher utilized stories of incidents that happened on the way to school or events at home the previous evening, simple anecdotes, reports of events in India or from other parts of the world. They were discussed in groups and presented by each group to the whole class. Methodologies such as discussions, reconstructions of ideas to explain details, mother tongue use, brainstorming, group work discussions, acting out, and reading aloud helped them to do away with stage fright and anxiety and encouraged them to enjoy their English classes. The activities changed the students' negative attitude and shyness towards the learning of the language. Furthermore, Tickoo realized that many of the students started to gain confidence when they wanted to express their ideas or to share them with the class.



Even laughing at each other's mistakes became part of the language learning process and led to a more comfortable learning atmosphere. Group work became a regular part of class work; the sharing of a story was a special time in the class that the students all looked forward to (Tickoo).

The conclusion of the experiment is that five findings are noticeable and require further study and supporting evidence. The stories need to be used well and should be made suitable for the pupils' learning needs. Second, the use of the learners' native language has an immense potential that has not as yet been fully recognized or adequately seized. Third, having group work in pairs or small groups provides great benefits at the high school level and does not cause problems (Prabhu qtd. in Tickoo). Fourth, for Tickoo, reformulation seems to work better with a teacher who is a proficient non-native speaker; one who can supply meaning based on the reformulation of sentences instead of correcting. Finally, it is important to provide pupils with opportunities to do things on their own. Furthermore, allowing the students to express their thoughts without the teacher's intervention or his/her attempts to correct them can also contribute to success (Tickoo).

The next research study was carried out by Sarvenaz Khatib in Iran. The purpose of the study was to introduce a reader-response approach while teaching English short stories to Iranian EFL learners. In this study, the researcher was interested in investigating probable differences in the reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and the motivation for the further reading of English literature between students experiencing the reader-response approach and those going through the traditional method (152).

Two intact classes took part in the research, one with 24 and the other with 21 students at Allameh Tabataba University. The participants were aged between 18 and 24. They were all students of the second academic semester majoring in English translation. Their course involved a four-hour reading program per week; the researcher was the instructor for a 2-hour session every week. The treatment started with a reading comprehension quiz, a vocabulary test, and a motivation questionnaire which were all evaluated. The two groups also took a TOEFL reading comprehension test in order to guarantee that their language skills at the start of the treatment were more or less the same. Afterwards, one class was randomly chosen as the experimental group, while the other became the control group (Khatib 151).



After reviewing several collections of English short stories, six short stories were chosen by the researcher in order to be used in both the experimental and control group throughout the course. These short stories were all selected on the basis that they were supposed to evoke emotional responses and urge the students to express their opinions on and interpretations of the story line (Khatib 152).

The findings of the experiment revealed that the experimental group directed with the reader-response approach could give aesthetic responses to literature without prejudicing their comprehension of the literary text. However, there were no significant differences in the level of vocabulary acquisition or the students' degree of motivation in the two groups. The researcher concluded that language educators have to find appropriate literary texts, in harmony with their students' level of proficiency, interests and needs (Khatib 157).

Further, it was reported by the participants in both the experimental and the control group that they were truly thrilled by the content of the short stories in their reading course and that they were highly motivated to participate in all class discussions. This was due to the fact that they were familiar with the themes of the stories as well as the events and moods that they described. They found short stories less tiresome and monotonous than the scientific non-literary texts used in their courses prior to the experiment. Lastly, many students declared that the short stories kept them thinking and exploring even after the class and that the events and characters kept their minds captivated. These comments indicated the effective nature of literature not only in the enhancement of general English but also in developing the students' mentality and critical thinking (Khatib 158).

It is exactly for the reasons outlined above that short stories are deemed more suitable for the teaching of literature in the EFL classroom than other genres. Pardede, in his article, "Using Short Stories to Teach Language Skills", emphasizes that in order to succeed in using short stories, the teacher should consider some important aspects when choosing the story. For example, theme, cultural background, length of the text, period of time exposure, linguistic and style level, strategies and methodology are all important factors. He refers to Murdoch who states: "Short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance English language teaching courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency" (qtd. in Pardede).



Saricoban and Küçükoğlu (160) have concluded that from among all literary genres, short stories are the most preferred ones in language classrooms. According to Arıkan's research findings (qtd. in Saricoban and Küçükoğlu 160), students found that reading short stories requires simpler reading strategies than other genres, such as novels, poetry and drama. The students involved in the study acknowledge that the latter are difficult to follow.

Saricoban and Küçükoğlu state that there are several advantages of using short stories in ELT classrooms. One of them is the length (more precisely, the shortness) of the text. As they are shorter than a novel, short stories are effective tools of teaching in classroom situations maintaining students' focus of interest and attention. Its setting, characters and compelling plot, captures and holds the attention of the learners, which is an important part of the learning process (161). The use of short stories to teach English has other benefits including motivational, literary, cultural and higher-order thinking skills. Short stories permit the instructors to teach the four language skills at all levels of language proficiency.

Arioğul emphasizes the following aspects concerning the inclusion of short stories in the ESL / EFL curriculum offers the following educational benefits (qtd. in Saricoban and Küçükoğlu 161). They make the students' reading task easier due to being simple and short. They expand the readers' worldviews about different cultures and different groups of people. They also provide more creative and challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge.

Therefore, short stories offer authentic material which motivates learners to read since they present a world of wonders and a world of mystery. They offer students the chance to use their creativity and promote critical thinking skills. Short stories can facilitate the teaching of a foreign culture. Since they offer universal language, students feel more comfortable and freer helping them to communicate with each other at different language levels. Finally, short stories help students to explore a superficial meaning and discover implied messages and meanings, enabling them to transfer this knowledge to their own world. Another important benefit of using short stories to teenage and adult learners at all levels is to develop their reading skills. They help to improve not only students' reading comprehension skills, but their other language skills as well. (Saricoban and Küçükoğlu 161)

All in all, Pardede and Saricoban and Küçükoğlu agree that short stories can be a good source of language instruction in ELT classes at almost all levels. When



choosing the right short stories, the students' proficiency level, age, and interests should be taken into consideration. Another important aspect to be considered is the objectives set by the syllabus, namely how the story and its content match the desired educational outcomes. In addition, a suitable material for the classroom is one that considers the students' needs, interests, and cultural background. Another criterion to consider is if the particular literary work stimulates the learners' interest. It is important to choose books which are relevant to the life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner. Finally, the level of the complexity of the story also needs to be considered when choosing the suitable material since it is crucial for the learners to understand the plot. (Saricoban and Küçükoğlu 161).

Summary

It can be said that several educational benefits arise when including literature in the classroom: motivation, human development, cultural awareness, cognitive language acquisition, group interaction and authentic language awareness (Lazar, Floris, Carolli).

As opposed to this view, there are other educators who are of the opinion that including literature in the classroom does not represent a contribution to education because owing to the complexity of language in literary texts it can cause drawbacks such as cultural misunderstandings, or demotivated students due to the length of the text to be read (Duff and Maley qtd. in Floris).

Nevertheless, a number of educators contend that literature also has an important role to play in the EFL teaching context since it presents authentic material, the learners are exposed to the language naturally and receive input from different perspectives; and the latter aspect may lead to heightened cultural sensitivity. Learners become aware of the linguistic elements, such as grammar structures, vocabulary and writing styles, pronunciation and variations of the language. Interpretative skills are also developed, encouraging communication and interaction (Al Issa, Anwar).

Using short stories in the classroom can be exploited by integrating Schema Theory approaches in the process. Schema Theory is directly related to reading skills and its two main types: intensive reading and extensive reading. Extensive reading is mostly referred to as reading a large amount undertaken for pleasure rather than grades or recompenses (Day and Bamford qtd. in Rob). Intensive reading is described as reading in detail involving specific learning tasks. The latter requires



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attention to be paid to grammatical forms and other structured details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, etc. (qtd. in MacLeod).

Using short stories can become a challenging task when we try to incorporate it in the classroom, especially if inappropriate pieces of reading texts or genres are selected. For this reason, short stories seem to be an excellent option when developing reading comprehension skills in EFL. The length of the text, the variety of the themes and the level of complexity all make short stories suitable for working with teenage groups, resulting in a higher level of motivation and the urge to read on in an EFL setting that characterized the conditions of the present research project.



Chapter II: Research Methodology

Data collection techniques

The research study was carried out as Thesis Type Two, which comes under the heading of “theoretical-applied” and follows Paradigm eight, namely is of an experimental-quantitative-interpretative character (Embleton 21); in other words, the main characteristics of this piece of research are an experimental or quasi-experimental design, quantitative data and interpretative/statistical analysis. Some qualitative data have also been included in the study. Therefore, the research methodology used in this case is both quantitative and qualitative since one of the goals of this research was finding out to what extent the use of Schema Theory activities in short stories can influence the enhancement of the reading comprehension skills. By applying the methodology outlined above, I was able to describe the phenomena, analyze and compare findings between an experimental and a control group, and finally come to some conclusions.

Participants

The research project involved two groups of thirty students each. The experimental group of thirty students was chosen at random and belonged to the first year of Bachillerato. They were 14 to 15 years of age studying at “La Inmaculada” High School, which is a state high school in Cuenca, Ecuador. The participants of the study attended classes during the afternoon and had five periods of English per week lasting forty minutes each. The students belong to a low socio-economic stratum and often live in dysfunctional families. There is no library in the high school and there is only limited access to technological resources. The students’ level of English is low pre-intermediate (basic users) which corresponds to the A2.1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as adapted by the Ecuadorian Education Minister (Ministerio de Educación Ecuador).

The control group was made up of thirty students belonging to an intact class and having the same characteristics as mentioned above with regard to the experimental group. They were also doing their first year of Bachillerato at the same state high school. They received classes using their standard or set textbook and were doing additional activities in their exercise books as part of the normal procedure of teaching-learning.



Procedure

This study aimed at collecting information in order to find out to what degree the use of short stories accompanied by activities based on Schema Theory can lead to more effective reading comprehension skills. The study also was designed to find out if the use of short stories motivates students to continue reading in English.

To start with, a diagnostic test of reading comprehension was administered to the students. The reading pre-test consisted of closed-ended questions from level A1 to level B1 of the CEF and was carried out at the beginning of the research. At the end of the treatment the students took a post-test of similar complexity in order for the researcher to see if there had been any improvement. These tests were administered to both the experimental and the control group.

The pre-test intended to measure the students' level of reading comprehension skill in English at the beginning of the process and it allowed the researcher to obtain verifiable scores based on standard testing since it revealed their real level of the language. The pre-test was an adaptation of tests based on the Common European Framework and elaborated by Education Development International (EDI). The test contains five readings which go from level A1 to B1.

After reading each piece of text, the students had to fill in a worksheet with closed-ended questions. There were three categories for answering; the first one was A if the answer was true, the second was B, if the answer was false, and the third was C if the students thought that the answer was not in the text. The first piece of text only had A and B as options to choose from. The very same texts as well as the test questions were used for both groups.

Before administering the test, the students were given clear instructions; for example, they were asked not to use a dictionary, read each question carefully, only mark one answer for each question, and try to answer all the questions. The first reading was exclusively about reading information on posters; for instance movie titles, actors, prices and days of the week. It corresponded to the A1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (Council of Europe). Students at this stage are able to understand short and simple texts, a single phrase, simple messages on postcards, and recognizing familiar names, words or basic phrases (69). The students were asked to look at the three pictures carefully. Then they had to read the information on the posters and after having read the information the students were asked to choose



an answer for each of the five statements on the answer sheet .The students had to select (A) for true answers and (B) for false answers.

In the second reading, the students read about people and personal information pertaining to them, such as names, countries, nationalities, family members, and hobbies. It corresponded to the A2.1 level which describes people who can understand short and simple texts that contain highest frequency lexicon. It includes a section of international vocabulary items (Council of Europe 69). The students were asked to read each paragraph and then they had to decide whether each statement is true (A), false (B) or unknown (C). For this reading the answer sheet included a total of ten statements.

The third reading was of a more complex nature and was about hotels for vacations. Each paragraph included vocabulary about location, cost (money), prepositions of place, sports, parts of a house, and sports items. It corresponded to the A2.2 level that matches people who can comprehend short and simple texts about familiar problems of a specific type which contain high frequency everyday or job-related language (69) Once again, the students had to determine the answer for each statement, choosing A, B, or C as explained above. The fourth reading contained just one long passage and was an informative text about the origins and properties of coffee. This reading belongs to B1.1 level that describes people who can recognize significant points in newspaper articles on familiar matters. The students had to provide answers to ten statements and follow the same procedure as with the other readings by choosing A, B or C. The fifth reading was the most complex for the students, since it belonged to B1.2 level describing people that can read realistic texts with a satisfactory level of comprehension. It was a piece of informative text about the origins and types of soap. Once again, the students were asked to decide on ten statements by choosing A, B, or C (Council of Europe 69-70) (see Annex 1).

At the end of the treatment period, a reading post-test of the same complexity as the pre-test was carried out with both the experimental and the control group. This allowed the researcher to compare the data with those of the pre-test and establish if there had been any improvement in reading comprehension skills both as regards differences between the two groups and within the experimental group over time.

Following the pre-test on reading skills, the next step was to find out what the reading habits of the experimental group were, since the treatment was designed to



affect the students' attitudes toward reading (apart from the intention of improving reading comprehension skills). The purpose of applying a questionnaire of this kind was to identify the degree of the students' motivation at the beginning of the experiment and then find out if there was a change in the students' motivation to read at the end.

For the purposes of measuring this construct, the so-called Motivation for Reading Questionnaire or MRQ designed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995, 1997) was used. The MRQ questionnaire was originally designed to measure reading habits of students in L1 but later it was introduced to L2 students to evaluate and assess their reading habits in their mother tongue. It is a well-accepted model in terms of reliability and validity; it was previously administered to a sample of 105 fourth and fifth grade elementary students at one mid-Atlantic state school and 148 (Guthrie et al., 2004) and 150 (Wigfield et al., 2004) third grade students from four mid-Atlantic state schools, respectively. Unrau and Schlackman also used the MRQ test successfully with a sample of 2000 sixth, seventh and eighth grade middle school students from one school in the Los Angeles area, USA. This questionnaire reveals data about the construct of "motivation to read". It contains eleven constructs related to reading habits; there are a total of fifty-three dimensions to be answered. Each construct has a set of closed-ended questions attached to them in the form of statements. The answers are graded. If the respondent thinks that the statement is very different from him/her, they are requested to circle a 1. If the statement is a little different, they have to circle a 2. If the statement is a little like the respondent, he/she is expected to circle a 3 and, finally, if the statement is a lot like the respondent, he/she is asked to circle a 4.

A typical question looks like this:

- If the teacher discusses something interesting I might read more about it.

Very different from me 1	A Little Different from me 2	A Little like me 3	A lot like me 4
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In this way, these constructs become quantifiable. For the purposes of the present research project, the options for answering in the questionnaire were adapted and reduced to the categories "agree and "disagree". Moreover, It is to be noted that for the purposes of data analysis, we will only be looking at the data that



can be related to attitudes and outcomes regarding reading habits in English as a foreign language.

The questionnaire was administered to the treatment and control group and contained the original 53 items. Below leave out how many items each section has.

The first construct of the questionnaire is “Reading Efficacy”; it contains three items and aims to measure the student’s individual self-evaluation about their ability to read. The second construct is “Reading Challenge” and it is about how hard students try to read or if they just do not care about it. There are five items in this section. The third construct is “Reading Curiosity” and measures the students’ curiosity or interest for reading; this section contains six items. The fourth construct concerns “Reading Involvement” and tries to measure the students’ attitudes when they have to read or their level of participation in an activity that requires reading; this part has six items. The fifth section is “Importance of Reading”; it measures the students’ opinions about the importance of reading in English; in this section we find two items. The sixth section talks about “Reading Work Avoidance” which lets the researcher know how motivated or unmotivated students are to read a text in English; this section contains four statements. “Competition in Reading” is the next section and measures how challenging and competitive students are when they have to read, this part has six items. The next construct is “Recognition for Reading” which measures the students’ expectations after reading and how they feel, this part contains five statements. “Reading for Grades” is expected to measure the students’ opinions when they know they are going to be graded for reading in English; in this section there are four items. The tenth section is “Social Reasons for Reading” which tries to measure the students’ reasons when reading in English; they have to answer seven statements. Finally, the eleventh construct is “Compliance”, which tries to measure the students’ commitment for reading; it has five items to answer.

It was decided that qualitative analysis may provide information to be established at the end of the process, if the participants were motivated by the short stories and the Schema Theory activities. For this reason, a final instrument was used with the experimental group. A less structured reading habits survey with closed and open-ended questions was carried out to gauge the participants’ feelings, attitudes and emotions regarding the treatment. The instrument contains four closed questions; however, two of them are multiple choice questions and the students have to select from a list of categories. The other three questions of the survey are open-ended



questions and focused on the aspects that the students enjoyed the most and the least during the process. At the end, the students are asked if they would read a book in English again and give their reasons for yes or no. The open-ended questions were given in Spanish and the students were asked to reply in Spanish as well, because it was assumed that they could express their opinions, feelings and reactions about the experiment in a more sophisticated manner in their mother tongue.

Chronology of the treatment

The treatment started at the end of February 2013 and lasted three and a half months. The treatment was applied every week in periods of two class-hours of forty minutes. Some readings required more than one double session (see Tables 1 and 2). There was a total of thirty-six periods of class dedicated to the research, not including the four extra periods for tests application.

The treatment was carried out by intensive and extensive reading sessions using short stories of different lengths. Each lesson contained pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading tasks in line with Schema Theory activities using strategies such as inferring, predicting, mind-mapping, synonyms, word-definition matching, gap filling, true/false questions, and open-ended questions related to critical thinking etc.

The following Table illustrates a summary of the readings, length, number of lessons, and activities developed with the experimental group.



Short Stories Intensive Reading				
Title	# Reading	Length	# Lessons	Activities
-Lost and Found	1	1 page	2	-Prediction of events. -Matching definitions to vocabulary. -Mind-mapping the end of the story. -Choosing True / False / Not in the text
-A strange animal	2	2 pages	2	-Look and describe the picture -Answering questions to predict the picture -Matching synonyms -Answering questions about the text -Mind-mapping completion -Circling True/False/C for not in the text.
-The Butterfly lovers	3	2 pages	2	-Look at a picture and predict the story: underline one sentence -Reading the word in context: underline the synonym -Read and put the sentences in chronological order to make a summary -Read and answering T/F -Think and answer questions about the text
- The Amazing Mr. Endicott	4	2 pages	2	-Vocabulary building: matching the opposites -Select the correct picture to predict the story -Predicting the story; T/F next to each statement. -Completing a graphic organizer about events and characters in the story -Answering questions about the story
- Fireball Over Holbury! Mystery Object Seen in Night Sky Experts suspect meteorite	5	3 pages	4	-Vocabulary building: read the sentence and complete with the correct word. -Predict the story: Underline the sentences that predict the story -Decode a sentence taken from the story presented in pictures -Match sentences taken from the text to the correct part of the story -Drawing the end of a story -Think and answer questions about specific events in the story
Total			12	

Table 1: Intensive Reading
Source: Short Stories



Additionally, the students were trained to use their bilingual dictionaries properly and take advantage of them. They acquired a number of learning strategies such as using alphabetical order, interpreting symbols, understanding abbreviations (e.g. adj., adv.), understanding phonetic transcriptions and stress marks. The use of a dictionary helped the participants to quickly find the meaning of specific vocabulary items in the stories. All these strategies helped them to develop better reading skills and become more independent learners. The practice in vocabulary use also provided the students with the opportunity to compare concepts in their mother tongue and the target language.

Intensive reading was conducted through a set of five short stories of different genres, and five interim worksheets based on developing reading comprehension skills after each story. The chart that follows shows the timing and order of the last part of the experiment.

Reading 1

During the first week, a story based on real life events and entitled “Lost and Found” was presented (Heyer). The text is less than a page long with simple vocabulary and structures. There were three activities during the pre-reading phase. The first activity consisted of asking the students to read the title of the text and then predict the general idea by selecting possible story lines from the options provide.

The second activity also used the prediction technique, but in this case, the students had to predict four events or details that they thought were going to happen in the story and four events that were not going to occur in the story. The structure “will: for uncertain things” was introduced, although it was not the main point of the lesson plan.

The third activity consisted of preparing the students for the lexicon. They had to read a list of words taken from the text as well as a list of definitions and were asked to match each word with the correct definition. The students used two techniques for this activity: inferring and correct dictionary usage searching for the meaning of words by looking up the roots. After that, the first part of the text was handed out; the students used two main techniques for reading: skimming, during which the students underlined difficult words or expressions that they did not know, and scanning when they had to use their dictionaries to find key vocabulary and details.

During the next phase, the students carried out while-reading activities in order to check their progress and link comprehension of the first part of the reading. Once



again they had to predict what was going to come and complete a graphic organizer with four main ideas. They had to recall previous information in order to predict what was going to happen to the two protagonists of the story. Finally, they read the second part of the text using the same skimming and scanning techniques as before and did an after-reading activity.

This final activity was aimed at checking the students' comprehension. In order to do this, they had to read statements about the two parts of the text and then decide on the correct answer: A if the answer was true, B if the answer was false and C if the information was not included in the text.

Reading 2

The following week the students explored another genre, namely, an African legend entitled "A strange Animal" (Collie J, Slater S) with a moral lesson in it. It is about a page and a half long with more vocabulary items and an increased level of structural complexity.

Previous knowledge regarding this story was activated through carrying out the following activities:

First, a list of three questions was presented to the students in order to mobilize their critical thinking. So that they could answer the first question, the students looked at a picture, discussed it among themselves and wrote conclusions about it. Answering the second question implied that the students had to make predictions through discussing the characteristics of the protagonists in the story. The third question asked the students to read the title and predict what the story was about.

Second, a list of ten key words taken from the text was presented. The participants were asked to read the list and also read the two options next to each word. One of the options was a synonym while the other was a distractor. The students needed to use the Spanish-English section of their dictionaries in order to look for the synonyms.

For the first part of the reading the students again read individually and used skimming and scanning techniques. After that, they accomplished the while-reading activities that consisted of answering questions about real experiences and situations. These questions were about family decisions, obedience and how much they felt involved in their family's affairs. Then there was a list of family members introduced using a graphic organizer; the students had to rank each family member according to their opinion about who made the most important decisions at home. It



was interesting to notice what the students' rank was in the list and to listen to their reasons they gave to explain the family dynamics. The students then read the second part of the text using the same techniques as mentioned above.

Next, they proceeded to work on their after-reading activities. The final activity had a list of eight sentences. The way of answering had a little variation; in this case, there was a space left where they had to write the correct answer: A, B or C with the same categorization for answering as in the first short story.

Reading 3

"The Butterfly Lovers" is a short story of the same complexity and length as the previous story (English for students). Third in the line, this story is a Chinese legend that explores feelings such as love after death and faithfulness. For the pre-reading part, two activities were prepared. The first one consisted of looking at a picture about the story and reading five sentences which contained ideas related to the story. The students then had to guess which sentence was the correct answer. The second activity was related to vocabulary building in context. Ten sentences with a key word in bold were introduced. After each sentence, two words were given: one of them was a synonym and the other an antonym. The students had to choose the synonym for the word in bold in each sentence.

This was followed by a single while-reading activity. The students had to read carefully some sentences and order them from one to ten. The list of ten sentences had to complete a summary of the story of what they have just read.

Finally, the after-reading phase consisted of two activities. During the first task the students had to analyze ten sentences about the text and then write T if the sentence was true and F if the sentence was false. The very last activity promoted the students' critical thinking. They answered four opened-ended questions: the first one asked about the reasons for one of the protagonists in the story to behave in a specific manner. They had to analyze the protagonist's personal characteristics and his/her role in the story in order to write a good answer. In order to answer the second question, the students had to analyze the very core of the story, a situation that made them think about their own reactions if they happened to be in the same situation.

The third question also required that the students do some analysis, but this time they had to think or make inferences about the meaning of the most important symbol in the story, namely, the meaning of the two butterflies. The last question was



more personal and asked for their opinion of the story; the students were asked to explain if they liked the story or not as well as give their reasons for their personal choice. Once again, this short story was divided into two parts that were read using the skimming and scanning techniques.

Reading 4 and 5

Each of the next two pieces of reading are about two pages long. They belong to the science fiction genre and constitute two parts of the same story. The first part is entitled “The Amazing Mr. Endicott”, and the title of the second part is “Fireball Over Holbury! Mystery Object Seen in Night Sky: Experts Suspect Meteorite” (Windmill 108-111). They describe the story of a one-hundred-year old man with amazing powers. In the first part of the story, “The Amazing Mr. Endicott”, the students were prepared with a set of three activities in the pre-reading section.

The pre-reading phase for the first part of the story involved three activities. The first task consisted of reading a list of ten key words presented in bold in the activity as well as in the text itself. After reading, the students had to choose from the three options given next to each word in bold. Finally, the students were asked to look for the opposite of the words in bold. This activity was done in groups of four people, because vocabulary work requires a lot more time than other activities. Each group was assigned to work on two or three words only; the information gained was then shared in a plenary. This was found to be the most time-effective way of sharing knowledge in the whole class.

The second pre-reading activity instructed the students to look at a set of three pictures. Each picture represented a genre (science fiction, fairy tales... etc); the students then decided on the best-fitting picture that predicted the story that followed. The third task involved a list of ten sentences describing possible events in the story. The participants had to write T if they thought the sentence was true or F if they thought the answer was false, thereby making predictions about the story line.

After that the students began to read the first part of the story; they worked in pairs so that they could help each other develop a better understanding of the text and the vocabulary that they were exposed to. As in the previous weeks, the students mainly used skimming and scanning for both the first and the second part of the reading; the only difference was that the students worked in pairs and sometimes in mixed-ability groups.



The next step was to accomplish the while-reading activity; it consisted of the completion of a mind-mapping graphic organizer about the main character of the story, Mr Endicott. The students had to think about his personal characteristics, his closest friends and relationships, the kind of food and habits that kept him in shape, the description of his hometown and the abilities he might have retained as a one-hundred-year old.

The after-reading activities consisted of answering a set of five open-ended questions. The first question presented an expression that one of the characters used; the students had to infer the message behind it. For the next question the students made comparisons between two of the characters, while the last three questions asked about specific details, such as dates and places, events at the beginning of the story, or causes and consequences of a specific event.

The following week the participants read the concluding part entitled “Fireball Over Holbury! Mystery Object Seen in Night Sky: Experts Suspect Meteorite” (Windmill 108-111). The pre-reading activities started directly with vocabulary building since the participants had already built up some previous knowledge by being familiar with the first part. This activity consisted of giving the students a list of key vocabulary; the class of thirty students was divided into eight groups. Four words were assigned to each group and they were given the task of finding out the meaning. After each group had finished, the groups had time to share what they found out as well as clarify the concepts.

The next activity involved a list of twenty sentences with blank spaces. The students again had to work in groups, read each sentence and fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list. The students then had to make some predictions: they had to read a list of statements and underline the event that they thought would take place in the concluding part of the story. This was followed by the students reading the first half of the concluding part in groups.

After that a pictogram was presented as a while-reading activity. The students had to discover the secret message; in order to do that, they had to re-read the story and find the message in the story. The second task was laid out with statements taken from both parts of the story in a box and two columns. One of the columns had the title of the previous week’s story at the top, while the other had the title of the second part that the students had just read. The task was to establish the sequence of the events in the two parts of the story. The after-reading activities were carried



out by accomplishing two tasks: the first one asked the participants to draw the ending of the story since it had lots of science fiction elements that could encourage the use of their imagination. In the next activity the students had to answer hypothetical questions. The first question made the students think about what they would have done if they had been exposed to a similar situation; beyond the facts they had to explain their reasons. The second part of this activity was not a question as such: the students were asked to write a different ending for the story.

When reading part one and two of this story, the students did not need any specific directions about how to read or which technique they should use, because they started to develop their own individual reading skills even though they were working in groups.

Altogether, the reading of the five short stories described above required a total of sixteen class periods, because the last two pieces of reading were longer than the initial three and involved more complex activities.

Reading 6

The next part of the treatment was carried out by extensive reading. The students read an adaptation of the classic “Silas Marner, The Weaver of Raveloe” by George Eliot. The text adaptation has one thousand four hundred words and is as stage four out of six. (West C). The book contains ten chapters, but each lesson plan was designed for the reading of two units. Each lesson plan covered four periods of forty-five minutes, although some of the lesson plans required more time due to the length of the text. Each lesson plan included the pre-reading, while- and after-reading activities. During the process, the students intensified activities such as matching synonyms, word definition, brainstorming, inferring and critical thinking.

The Table that follows illustrates the timing and order of the last part of the experiment.



Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe Retold by Clare West /Extensive Reading				
Title	Reading	Length	Lessons	Activities
-Chapter 1: Silas Marner, past and present -Chapter 2: Godfrey and Duncan Cass	1	12 pages	6	Prediction: underlining sentences Vocabulary building: matching definitions True-False sentences Characters descriptions: matching Answering questions Matching: positive/negative adjectives to characters
-Chapter 3: Where is Silas's gold? -Chapter 4: Godfrey is in trouble	2	5 pages	4	-Matching definitions to vocabulary -Matching events and characters -T/F statements: Rewriting the false statements
-Chapter 5: Silas's neighbors --Chapter 6: The New Year's Eve dance	3	5 pages	4	-Matching: definition and vocabulary -Vocabulary completion in context -Prediction: events to chapters -Drawing and brainstorming a phrase from one of the main characters: critical thinking -Matching: phrases to characters
-Chapter 7: Silas finds his "gold" -Chapter 8: Eppie has grown up	4	6 pages	4	-Prediction: event to a character -Vocabulary building: selecting the correct word in context -Finding and underlining the vocabulary in the text -Brainstorming a picture of a scene in the chapter -Rewriting a summary of the story using key words -Deciding True/False sentences Correcting false sentences
-Chapter 9: Godfrey confesses at last -Chapter 10: Eppie has to decide	5	8 pages	6	-Predicting a picture -Matching synonyms for new vocabulary -Analyzing phrases; expressing opinions -Choosing T/F sentences about the chapter
Total			24	

Table 2: Extensive Reading
Source: George Eliot's Silas Marner

In this process, the pre-reading activities were specially designed to activate the students' minds through reading titles and predicting, skimming and scanning and anticipating future events; the while-reading activities helped to develop reading comprehension skills through a critical view of what they have read; finally, the after-reading activities were carefully designed to check reading comprehension.



The processing of the first two chapters “Silas Marner, past and present” and “Godfrey and Dunstan Cass” were carried out in the following manner. The first activity asked the students to underline the sentence that best described the story they were going to read. In order to do this, they had to read the title of the chapter as well as the first five sentences and then choose the best option thereby making a prediction about the story. The second pre-reading task consisted of a vocabulary building activity using a list of twenty-five words and twenty-five definitions. The students worked in groups of six to save time and each group had to clarify the meaning of five words with the help of the definitions. After that, the groups shared the information with the whole class. Later, the participants had to read each definition carefully and match them to the correct word. After activating the students’ minds, they proceeded to read the first chapter; this time they were not asked to work in groups, because some of them had already acquired the skill of being an independent reader and preferred to work alone.

In the next phase, the students were given two reading comprehension tasks. During the first activity, the students had to read a list of ten sentences taken word by word from the text or paraphrased by the teacher. Some of them were true statements, and some of them were false. The students had to choose between two options: A if they thought that the statement was true, and B if they considered that the statement was false. In the next task a chart was presented with two columns. One had the names of the main characters listed, while the other was left blank for the description of the character in question. The students had to scan the text again, find the description pertaining to the characters and complete the chart with the correct information for each character.

The after-reading activities involved two tasks. The first one contained five open-ended questions. They referred to specific details in the text, such as the characters’ behavior, names, places, dates, and the causes and consequences of certain events. The next task required that the students match a list of adjectives and the characters they read about. They needed to match the characters and the characteristics. Later the students had to explain if the adjective in question was a positive or a negative one and explain why it is right or wrong to display that kind of behavior.

During the next four periods of the treatment, the students read chapters three and four of the book “Where is Silas’s Gold?” and “Godfrey is in Trouble”. By this



stage, the students had already built up sufficient background information concerning the protagonists and the main / most important events of the story.

The pre-reading activities were set up as follows: during the first one, the students were asked to read a list of twenty words taken from the text; then they had to read definitions and match them to the correct word. They worked in groups in order to save time. After that, they proceeded to make predictions about the possible solutions to the problem that had already been highlighted. The students read a list of six sentences and had to decide if the solutions described were realistic or not and could or could not appear in the following chapter. This activity encouraged the students to look at the problem carefully and discuss the various options that were, actually, quite similar and, therefore, required some consideration and weighing up.

The next activity was part of the while-reading phase. It involved presenting five direct quotes taken from five different characters in the story. The students had to scan the text again and identify the character who uttered those words. There was one after-reading activity during which the students read five sentences about the story. They had to decide if they were true or false; in case they decided that the given sentence was false, they had to re-write it with the correct information. The reading of these two chapters took place in a very leisurely manner; each student chose a place where they felt most comfortable to read. Some of them preferred to sit on the floor and read alone while others preferred to form small groups of three or four people. There was not any suggested technique for reading since they had already learned how to do it and how to use their dictionaries.

Continuing with the experiment, chapters five and six “Silas’s Neighbors” and “The New Year’s Eve Dance” were introduced to the participants during the following week. In the pre-reading section the students were exposed to a list of key vocabulary. First, they had to find the meaning of the vocabulary from the box provided. After that, they had to link the words to a list of definitions provided below. Then there was general feedback to check the answers involving the whole class.

During the following activity, the participants worked in groups using their dictionaries for vocabulary building; again, they only had to work with a limited number of words provided in a box. Then the participants were asked to read a list of ten sentences and had to fill in the blanks with words taken from the box. After this activity, each group shared their answers with the whole class in order to check right answers.



Finally, the teacher also provided some feedback on vocabulary usage. The third activity was related to predictions concerning the content of subsequent chapters. There were two tables presented; each column contained the topics for the units that the participants were going to read. Next to the two charts there were a couple of sentences. The purpose of this activity was to encourage the students to predict what was going to happen in each chapter; they read the sentences and the titles and then they had to analyze the information and make connections. The answers were not checked by the teacher, because the aim was for the students to keep an open mind and give them an opportunity to see if they were right in predicting the twists and turns of the story or whether they had a different perception of how the storyline should unfold.

There was one while-reading activity designed; however, there were three aspects to be dealt with. First, the participants were asked to consider two quotes taken from the text. These quotes had a moral lesson and invited the participants to think about the message and reach conclusions as well as connect the moral lesson with their own experiences. Second, the students were asked to use their imagination and draw the scene associated with the quote. The final task was to brainstorm the scene that they drew and end up with five thoughts or ideas.

The after-reading activity contained expressions taken from the text. The participants read a list of ten expressions that they needed to find in the text. In order to do so, they had to go back, scan the text again, and find the expression and the character in the story who uttered those words. They had to match the expressions and the characters.

In the course of reading the next two chapters, “Silas Finds His Gold” and “Eppie Has Grown up”, the students’ minds were activated by a predictive pre-reading activity. The students were provided with a list of five sentences referring to future events in the story. They had to link these sentences with some of the characters in the story, in line with what they had learned about them before.

The second activity of this phase was aimed at vocabulary building. The participants were given a list of fourteen sentences related to the text they were going to read. The sentences contained three words in parentheses and the students had to choose the option that best fitted the meaning of the sentence. Each participant handled this task on their own since by then they were trained to infer, connect, discriminate and use the dictionary in an appropriate manner. The following



activity asked the participants to read the sentences from the previous exercise again and to focus on the words in bold; then they had to skim the chapter and find the words in the text and underline them.

The while-reading activities that followed were meant to encourage students to make connections with what they had read before. The students were asked to look at a picture about a given situation in the story. In their groups, they had to brainstorm the scene after analyzing and ordering their ideas. In fact, they had to describe the picture based on their own interpretation of what they were seeing. The next task of this phase consisted of re-writing a paragraph using some headlines from another chart, imagining that they worked for a newspaper (E. George 82-83). This task invited the participants to use their creativity and imagination to create a paragraph that summarized what they had read until then.

The after-reading activities were designed in order to check the participants' comprehension of both chapters through sentences that required answers with T if they were true and F, if they were false. The students also needed to re-write the false statements using the correct pieces of information. The students scanned the text again in order to confirm the correct sentence. This exercise did not need to be checked by the teacher since the students themselves were able to read the text again and find the right answers.

Before getting down to read the last two chapters, "Godfrey Confesses At Last" and "Eppie Has to Decide", the participants had to look at an illustration and then write a paragraph predicting the final events in the story. The students were asked to think about a possible ending. All the activities mentioned above provided enough background information for the students to imagine and predict an ending for the whole story.

The following activity asked the students to read a list of fifteen words in bold. There were three options next to each word that the students needed to look at. One of the three answers was a synonym of the word in bold, the other two were distractors; the students had to find the synonym and eliminate the other two choices.

In the course of the final pre-reading activity, the participants were asked to look at a list of words from a box, start reading the chapter, then find and underline the words from the box while skimming the text. This activity helped the students to see the words in context. Before actually reading the text, the students worked in groups



in order to find the meaning of some key vocabulary and achieve a better understanding of the text.

After reading all but the last chapter, the students carried out some while-reading activities concerning the last chapter. This consisted of making reflections on some of the things that two of the characters had said. Their reflections concerned critical situations in the story. The participants read each quote and compared them with their own experiences; in this way, they could write about their own interpretations, thoughts, perceptions and feelings. The next task involved giving the students a set of ten sentences and asking them if they were true or false. This after-reading activity was aimed at measuring reading comprehension exclusively.

Finally, the thirty participants of the experimental group wrote a summary of each chapter in the form of a reading diary. Each chapter was supposed to be summarized on less than one sheet of paper. The students were asked not to worry about how much they wrote or whether their grammar was right since the content of what they had written was deemed to be more important than grammatical accuracy.

Data Organization Techniques

The data organization will be carried out depending on the variables and the construct of this study. The scores of the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test are going to be organized through the use of tables, charts and statistical graphics which would let me organize the information into two categories: correct and incorrect answers.

For the organization of the MQR questionnaire, the data will be organized in tables that quantify the students' answers according to the categories "agree and "disagree".

Lastly, the responses obtained from the final survey will be organized according to the number of students' answers. Therefore, the open-ended questions will be organized according to the pattern that is mostly expressed by the students.

Data Analysis Techniques

Reading comprehension skills will be analyzed through quantitative -statistical charts and for its analysis there are aspects such as categorizing, frequency of answers, and correlations which need to be considered when organizing data. Also, the numbers of correct and incorrect answers are going to be examined to determine all the aspects mentioned above.



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These techniques are going to be used to obtain data from the pre-test and the post-test. Likewise, they are going to be used to compare patterns and look for relations between the experimental group and the control group. After that, a qualitative analysis of attitudes toward reading will be carried out based on both the initial questionnaire and the follow-up survey on motivation. The data will be compared and analyzed according to the finding of patterns, categorizing, and frequency of answers; all of this will be reflected on statistical charts.

Finally, some of the students' responses taken from the final survey are going to be mentioned and directly quoted in order to analyze their reactions and feelings toward the experiment.

**CHAPTER III: Data description, analysis and interpretation****Reading habits questionnaire (MRQ)**

The present chapter starts with the description, analysis and interpretation of a questionnaire about reading habits (MRQ), the pre-reading comprehension test, the post-test and a reading habits survey of the participants of the experiment and the control group.

First, we will look at the data obtained by the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) administered both to the experimental and the control group. The MRQ was originally used as an instrument to establish the students' reading habits in L1, but a number of research studies have used it to look for data in L2 and in EFL specifically. It contains 53 items and is intended to investigate 11 constructs of reading motivation. For the purposes of the study, only the aspects related to teaching English as a Foreign Language were taken into account when analyzing the students' reading habits. The students' answers were summarized based on the two categories of "Agree" and "Disagree".

Construct 1: Reading Efficacy

The first construct was assessed by how much the students agreed with statements 2 and 3.

1. I don't know that I will do well in reading next year.
2. I am a good reader.
3. I learn more from reading than most students in the class.

Table 3 illustrates the data obtained for this construct in the experimental and control group.

Reading Efficacy					
Groups:		Experimental		Control	
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 2	Stat. 3	Stat. 2	Stat. 3
Agree	A lot like me	12	7	6	15
Disagree	Very different from me	18	23	24	15
	Total	30	30	30	30

Table 3: Reading Efficacy: Experimental and Control group
Source: MRQ

As can be seen in Table 3, the answers given to statement 2 in the experimental group were as follows: 12 students (40%) agreed, while 18 students



(60%) disagreed in the experimental group. The control group had 6 students (20%) who agreed and 24 (80%) that disagreed with this statement.

The majority of students both in the experimental and the control group disagreed with statement 2, which means they did not think they were good readers. However, a higher number of students in the experimental group agreed with the statement than those in the control group.

A possible explanation as to why such a high number of students feel that they are not good at reading is because the 15-16-year-old students of 1st of Bachillerato at La Inmaculada High School in Cuenca did not read a lot and, as a result, they were not confident about their reading abilities. Additionally, they did not have a realistic perception of their level in reading, possibly because there are not that many tasks related to reading skills development which could give the students an idea about the level of their reading abilities.

Figure 1 for the Reading Efficacy construct shows a comparison between the experimental group and the control group regarding the students' opinion as to whether they were good or bad readers.

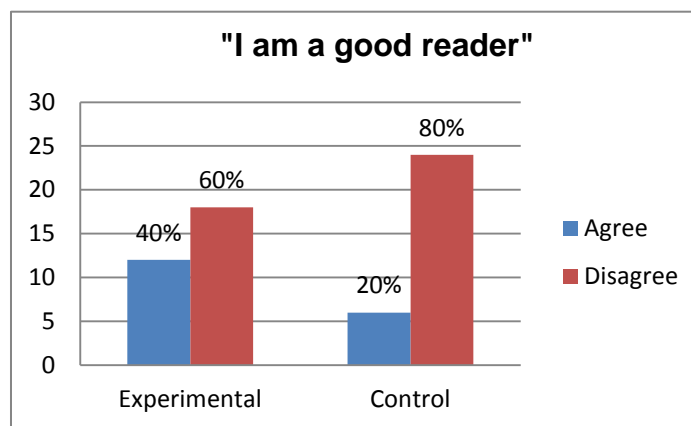


FIG. 1: Reading Efficacy: Stat. 2
Source: MRQ

As is obvious from Figure 1, 20% more of the students in the experimental group believed that they were good readers. One might assume that, as a result, the students in this group would turn out to be more confident readers.

For statement 3, the experimental group obtained the following results: 7 students (23.3%) agreed and 23 of them (76.7%) disagreed. Regarding the control group the results were as follows: 15 students (50%) agreed while 15 of them (50%) disagreed with this statement.



It can be concluded that a high number of students in the experimental group were sure that they did not learn better by reading while a small number of students said that reading provided considerable support for them when learning. Half of the students in the control group agreed, which points to the fact that they were sure of their learning style; another half disagreed about learning more from reading.

The results could be due to the fact that students in the experimental group were not aware that reading can provide any major support in the learning process. They might prefer other ways of learning, such as watching videos, doing written exercises, debating etc. They did not consider reading as an activity that can lead to a significant improvement in their learning. It is possible that the half that disagreed in the control group were of the same opinion.

Figure 2 shows a comparison between the experimental group and the control group regarding statement 3.

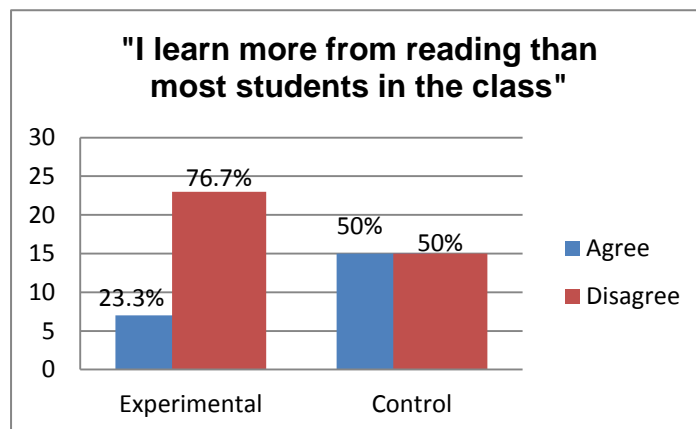


FIG. 2: Reading Efficacy: Stat. 3
Source: MRQ

As can be seen in Figure 2, there were a lot more students in the experimental group who were of the opinion that reading did not provide special benefit for their learning than in the control group. This suggests that the experimental group did not have high expectations of a series of reading activities.

Construct 2: Reading Challenge

The second construct contains 5 items, but for the purposes of this study only the data obtained for the second statement were analyzed.

1. I like hard, challenging books.
2. If the project is interesting, I can read difficult material.
3. I like it when the questions in books make me think.



4. I usually learn difficult things by reading.
5. If a book is interesting I don't care how hard it is to read.

Table 4 illustrates the data obtained for this construct in the experimental and control group.

Reading Challenge			
Groups:		Experimental	Control
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 2	Stat. 2
Agree	A lot like me	12	10
Disagree	Very different from me	18	20
Total		30	30

Table 4: Reading Challenge: Experimental and Control Group
Source: MRQ

Concerning statement 2, the experimental group provided the following results: 12 students (40%) agreed, implying that they were prepared to read difficult material if the project was interesting, while 18 students (60%) disagreed with this statement. As regards the answers in the control group, the data show that 10 students (33.3%) agreed while 20 of them (66.7%) said they disagreed that they were ready to delve into and read difficult material in order to work on an interesting project.

The data show that both the experimental and the control group had little commitment toward challenging projects that require reading and looking for information even if the topic was of interest to them. However, the experimental group had a higher number of students wanting to read difficult material for the sake of an interesting project. A very low proportion of students in the control group were of that opinion. The control group had a higher percentage of students that were definitely not ready to read demanding pieces of texts even if the project was engaging enough.

The possible explanation for these results might be the students' lack of confidence and insufficient experience in reading. The students were not confident about their abilities when reading and felt unmotivated and anxious about texts that they presumed they would not understand. Handling difficult texts seems to have created negative experiences when they had to read, leading to a low level of motivation.



Figure 3 compares the data gathered from the two groups. This makes it possible to visually grasp which of the two groups felt more motivated or reluctant to read when the project they were working on was deemed interesting.

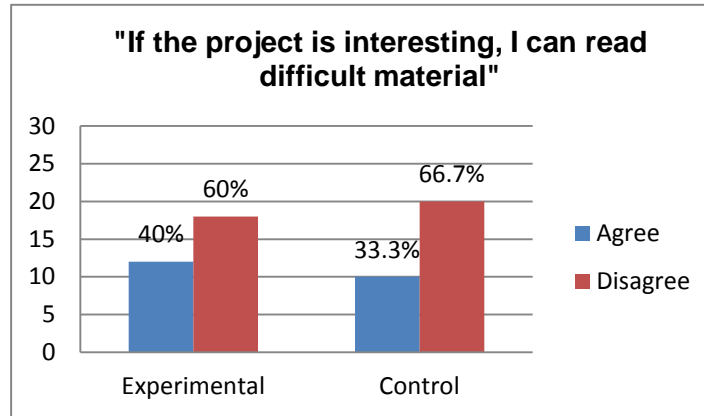


FIG. 3: Reading Challenge: Stat. 2
Source: MRQ

Figure 3 suggests that the two groups are more or less comparable from the point of view of the statement analyzed.

Construct 3: Reading Curiosity

The third construct is Reading Curiosity and contains 6 items. For the purposes of this study, only statements 1 and 3 were considered.

1. If the teacher discusses something interesting I might read more about it.
2. I have favorite subjects that I like to read about.
3. I read to learn new information about topics that interest me.
4. I read about my hobbies to learn more about them.
5. I like to read about new things.
6. I enjoy reading books about living things.

In Table 5 the data gathered in the experimental group is presented.

Reading Curiosity					
Groups:		Experimental		Control	
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 1	Stat. 3	Stat. 1	Stat. 3
Agree	A lot like me	19	21	6	19
Disagree	Very different from me	11	9	24	11
	Total	30	30	30	30

Table 5: Reading Curiosity: Experimental and Control Group
Source: MRQ



As regards statement 1, the data in the experimental group show that 19 students (63.3%) agreed and 11 (36.7%) disagreed. The data from the control group show that 6 students (20%) agreed while 24 (80%) disagreed that they were likely to follow up a subject if the teacher made them interested in the related topic.

As is apparent from what has been presented above, the participants in the experimental group were more inclined to read if they found the material presented by the teacher interesting enough. However, the results also show that the students in the control group were less inclined than those in the experimental group to investigate a topic by reading even if the teacher talked about something that may have caught their attention; in other words, they did not seem to be much influenced by their teachers.

Figure 4 presents the comparison between the two groups regarding statement 1.

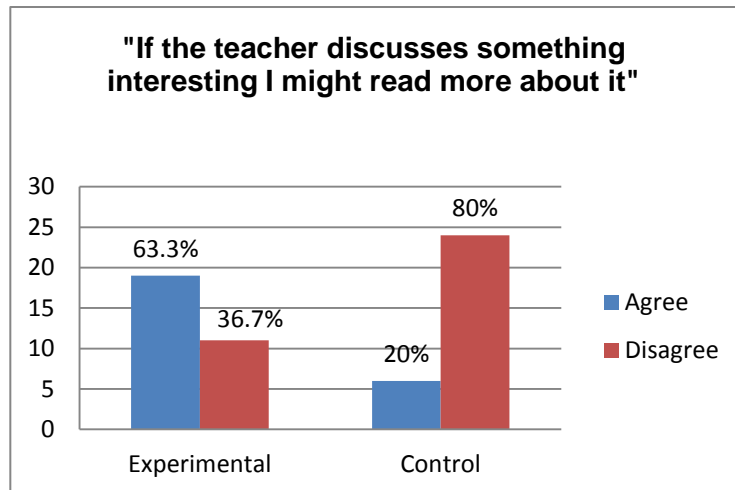


FIG. 4: Reading Curiosity: Stat.1
Source: MRQ

Figure 4 shows the considerable difference between the attitudes of the two groups. Three times as many students in the experimental group than in the control group were prepared to follow up interesting topics by reading. This, once again, implied that the experimental group was better disposed to receive the suggested treatment.

As for statement 3, “I read to learn new information about topics that interest me”, the experimental group’s results indicate that 21 students (70%) agreed and 9 (30%) disagreed. In the control group 19 students (63.3%) agreed while 11(36.7%) disagreed with the statement, that implied that they may look to reading as a means of learning new things about topics that interest them.



These results imply that a high percentage of students in both the experimental and the control group were fairly keen to read and learn new things about topics of interest for them.

It follows from the results presented above that students need to be inspired by a topic of their interest in order to change their attitude related to reading and to feel encouraged to read about new things.

Figure 5 shows the data regarding statement 3

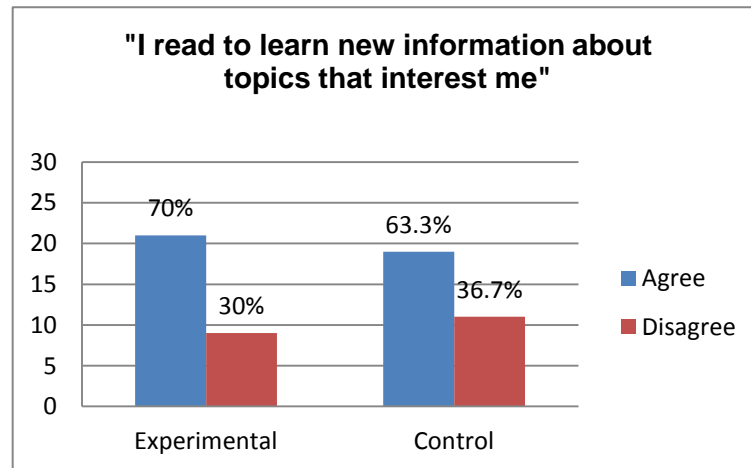


FIG. 5: Reading Curiosity: Stat.3
Source: MRQ

Construct 4: Reading Involvement

This construct contains 6 items. In the present study, the first, the second, the fifth and the sixth statements were analyzed in order to gauge the students' preferences concerning literary genres.

1. I read stories about fantasy and make believe.
2. I like mysteries.
3. I make pictures in my mind when I read.
4. I feel like I make friends with people in good books.
5. I read a lot of adventure stories.
6. I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book.

Figures 6 shows the data gathered in the experimental group regarding statements 1, 2, 5, and 6.

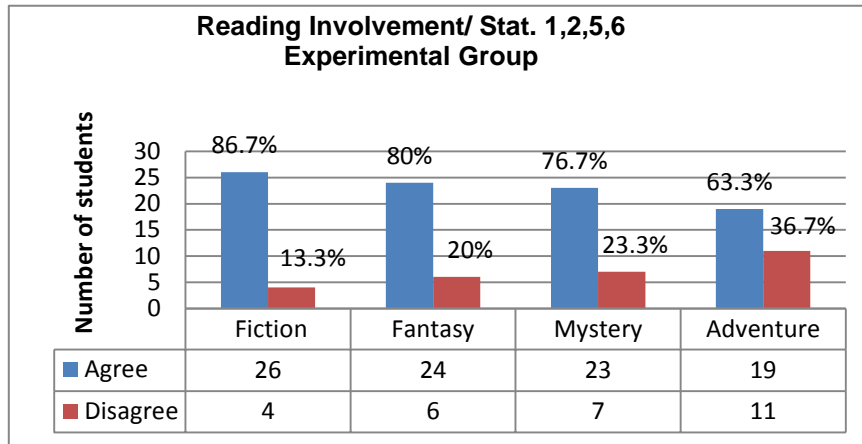


FIG. 6: Reading Involvement: Stat. 1, 2, 5, and 6
Source: MRQ

Figures 7 shows the data gathered in the control group regarding statements 1, 2, 5, and 6.

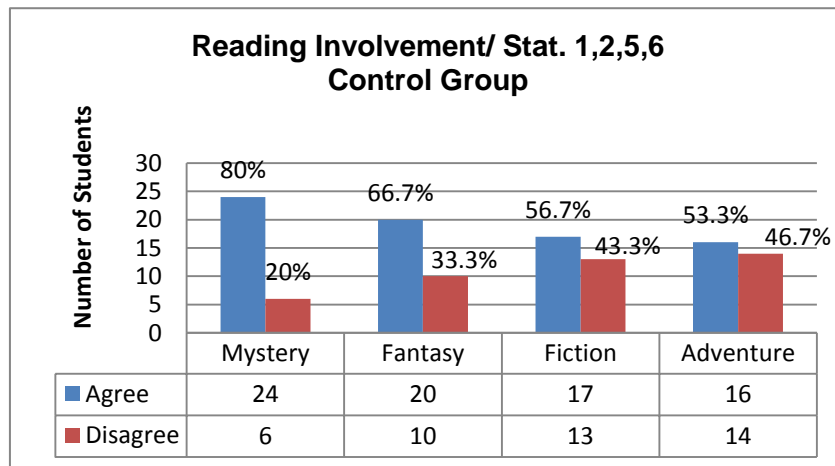


FIG. 7: Reading Involvement. Stat. 1, 2, 5, and 6
Source: MRQ

As can be seen, the experimental group chose fiction (86.7%) as the most popular genre while the control group selected mystery stories (80%). Then we have fantasy (80%) in the experimental group and fantasy (66.7%) in the control group. Mystery (76.7%) was chosen in third place in the experimental group while fiction (56.7%) was chosen in the control group. The category of adventure got the fewest votes in both groups: the results were 63.3% in the experimental and 53.3% in the control group, respectively.

Both the experimental and the control group showed that students loved stories, which they found interesting. Adding up the results of both groups, the most popular genres were in this order: fantasy, mystery, fiction and adventure. These



genres could have brought about the students' involvement, because they identified with topics of universal interest for teenagers.

Construct 5: Importance of Reading

The fifth construct contains 2 items but only statement 2 was included in the analysis.

1. It is very important to me to be a good reader.
2. In comparison to other activities I do, it is very important to me to be a good reader.

Table 6 shows the data gathered regarding statement 2 in the experimental and control group.

Importance of Reading			
Groups:		Experimental	Control
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 2	Stat. 2
Agree	A lot like me	23	21
Disagree	Very different from me	7	9
	Total	30	30

Table 6: Importance of Reading: Experimental and Control Group
Source: MRQ

The data in the experimental group show that 23 students (76.7%) agreed while 7 of them (23.33%) disagreed that being a good reader was very important compared to other activities. In the control group, 21 students (70%) considered that they preferred to be a good reader rather than achieve outstanding results in other activities while 9 of them (30%) disagreed with this statement.

Both groups had high percentages of students who agreed that being a good reader was very important compared to other activities; however, more students of the experimental group than those of the control group seemed to agree with the statement. Both groups had a low percentage of students who possibly preferred to do other activities rather than reading.

Figure 8 provides a comparison of the data gathered in both groups.

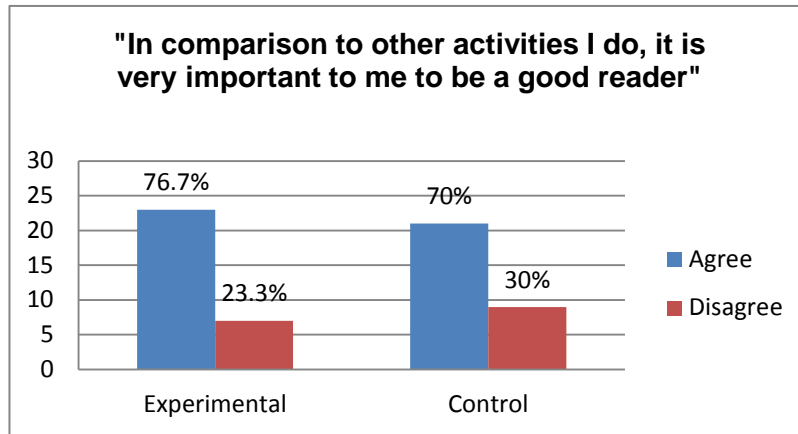


FIG. 8: Importance of Reading: Stat. 2
Source: MRQ

Figure 8 suggests that a similar proportion of students in both groups considered it was important that they should be good readers.

Construct 6: Reading Work Avoidance

This construct has 4 items but only statements 2 and 3 were evaluated since these are the ones that could be linked most to an EFL context.

1. I don't like vocabulary questions.
2. Complicated stories are no fun to read.
3. I don't like reading something when the words are too difficult.
4. I don't like it when there are too many people in the story.

Table 7 shows the data collected from the experimental and the control groups.

Reading Work Avoidance					
Groups:		Experimental		Control	
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 2	Stat. 3	Stat. 2	Stat. 3
Agree	A lot like me	10	14	20	13
Disagree	Very different from me	20	16	10	17
	Total	30	30	30	30

Table 7: Reading Work Avoidance: Experimental and Control Group

Source: MRQ

The results of the experimental group show that 10 students (33.3%) agreed and 20 of them (66.7%) disagreed. In the control group 20 students agreed (66.7%) with statement 2 while 10 (33.3%) disagreed.



In the experimental group, a high number of the students did not appear to be worried about how difficult the stories might be when reading. A low number of students agreed that complicated stories are not fun to read. The control group declared the opposite to the experimental group. A high percentage of students agreed that complicated stories were not fun to read, while a small number of the students agreed that these kinds of stories were pleasurable. The experimental group, therefore, appeared to be more comfortable reading challenging stories.

The explanation for the results in both groups could be that challenging stories represent a goal for the students. The experimental group seemed to be more willing to read complicated stories than the control group.

Figure 9 makes a comparison of data between the experimental and the control group concerning statement 2.

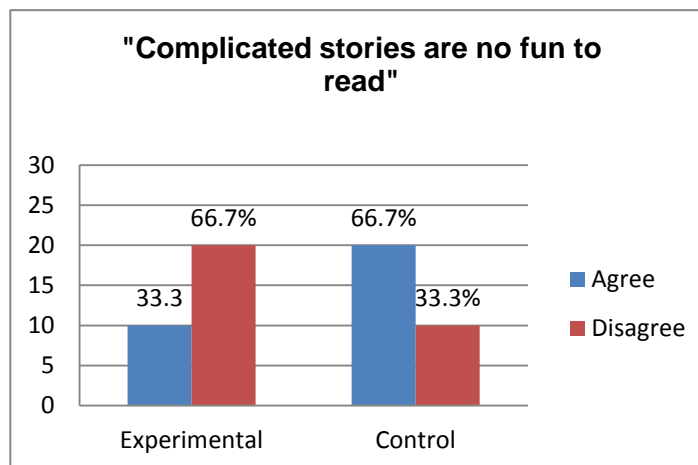


FIG. 9: Reading Work Avoidance: Stat.2
Source: MRQ

Figure 9 suggests that the two groups were strikingly different in their attitudes to reading complicated stories. The experimental group was a lot more prepared to make an effort and read complicated stories.

The third statement, “I don’t like reading something when the words are too difficult”, brought the following results: 14 students (46.7%) agreed and another 16 (53.3%) disagreed. In the control group, 13 students (43.3%) agreed and 17 of them (56.7%) disagreed.

The experimental and the control groups both answered that difficult vocabulary did not worry them when reading in English; therefore, there ought to be



other factors for not reading. Nevertheless, a significant percentage of students in both groups agreed that dealing with difficult words was the main reason for not reading.

The results seem to suggest that complicated words in themselves might not be the exclusive reason for the students' reluctance to read. There might be other aspects behind the lack of desire to take up reading as a useful and/or enjoyable activity. It is quite possible that beyond the challenge of complicated words, it is the understanding of a piece of text, namely, reading comprehension, that constitutes a burdensome task for at least some of the students.

Figure 10 shows the results regarding statement 3 for both the experimental and the control group.

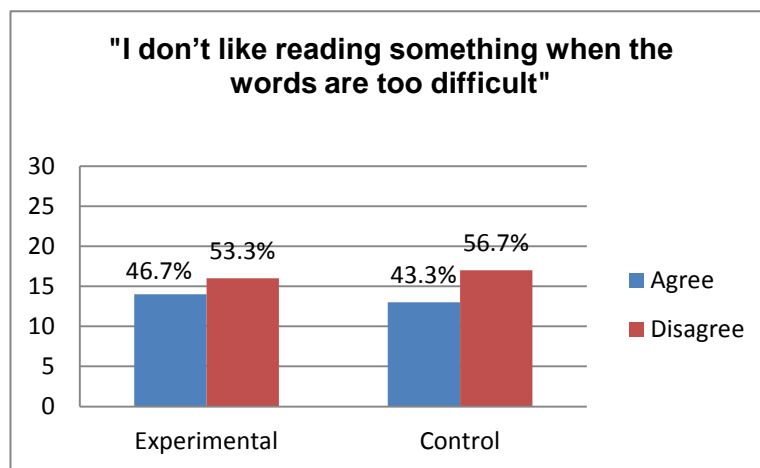


FIG. 10: Reading Work Avoidance: Stat.3
Source: MRQ

Figure 10 demonstrates that more or less half of the students in both groups were prepared to deal with challenging vocabulary while the other half found it burdensome and off-putting.

Construct 7: Competition in Reading

The next construct contains 6 items. For the purpose of the study only the first statement was included in the analysis.

1. I try to get more right answers than my friends.
2. I like being the best at reading.
3. I like to finish my reading before other students.
4. I like being the only one who knows an answer in something we read.
5. It is important for me to see my name on a list of good readers.
6. I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends.



Table 8 shows the information regarding how competitive students were based on their replies to statement 1.

Competition in Reading			
Groups:		Experimental	Control
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 1	Stat. 1
Agree	A lot like me	20	17
Disagree	Very different from me	10	13
	Total	30	30

Table 8: Competition in Reading: Experimental and Control Group
Source: MRQ

Answers given by students in the experimental group show that 20 of them (66.7%) were keen on showing a good performance in reading tasks while 10 students (33.3%) disagreed with this statement. Seventeen students (56.7%) of the control group said that they agreed with wanting to get more right answers than their friends in reading tasks and 13 students (43.3%) disagreed.

Both the experimental and the control groups displayed a certain amount of competitiveness, but when comparing the results of the experimental group with those of the control group, it can be implied that the experimental group was more interested in getting more right answers than their friends.

Although both groups seemed not to read very often, it is possible that when they did, it led to a certain amount of satisfaction and increased motivation after accomplishing their reading tasks well.

Figure 11 compares the data of the experimental and the control group.

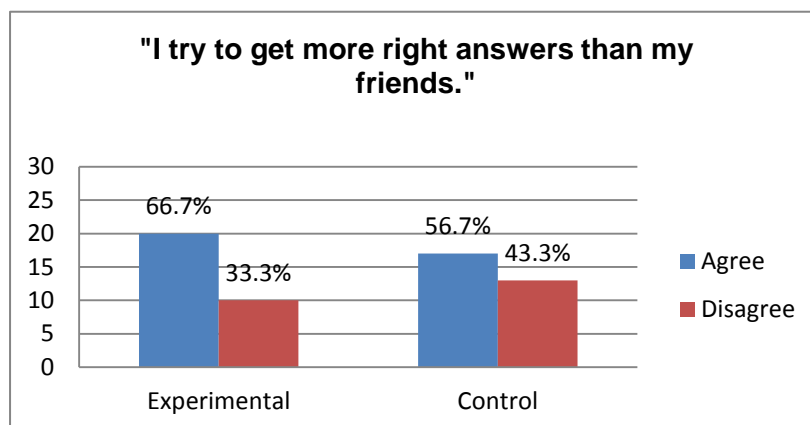


FIG. 11: Competition in Reading: Stat.1
Source: MRQ



The majority of the students in both groups appeared to be competitive; the experimental group is somewhat keener on getting better results than their peers.

Construct 8: Recognition for Reading

The following construct has 5 items. The third statement was deemed to be relevant for the analysis.

1. I like having the teacher say I read well.
2. My friends sometimes tell me I am a good reader.
3. I like to get compliments for my reading.
4. I am happy when someone recognizes my reading.
5. My parents often tell me what a good job I am doing in reading.

Table 9 presents the data for the experimental and the control groups.

Recognition for Reading			
Groups:		Experimental	Control
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 3	Stat. 3
Agree	A lot like me	10	15
Disagree	Very different from me	20	15
	Total	30	30

Table 9: Recognition for Reading
Source: MRQ

Table 9 shows that in the experimental group 10 students (33.3%) agreed and another 20 (66.7%) disagreed with the statement that they liked receiving compliments for their reading. Fifteen students (50%) agreed and 15 (50%) disagreed in the control group.

The results show that about two-thirds of the students in the experimental group disagreed that they wanted to receive recognition for their reading efforts. One-third agreed with the statement. The answers in the control group were divided in the middle; half of the students liked receiving compliments, the other half did not or did not care.

It is possible that the exact meaning of the word “compliment” was not quite clear to the participants. They may have thought it referred to their marks or grades rather than encouragement and praise coming from their teachers, parents and friends. It is possible that the students who liked receiving compliments in both



groups saw recognition as a sign that they were doing well. Such feedback may encourage them to continue reading.

Figure 12 shows a comparison of the data gathered in both groups.

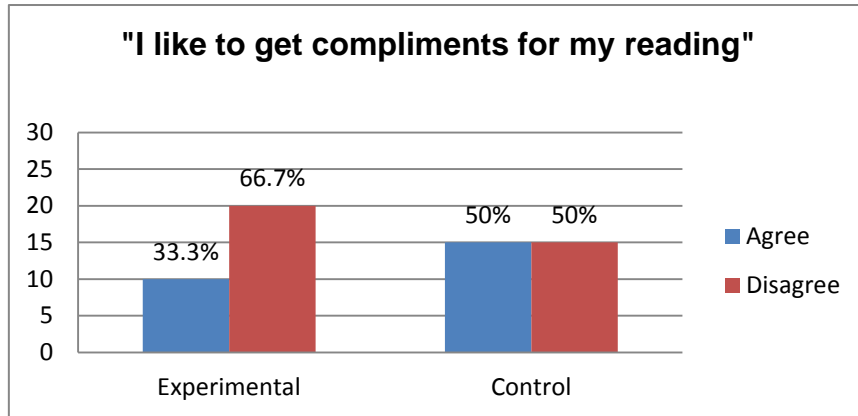


FIG. 12: Recognition for Reading: Stat.3
Source: MRQ

Figure 12 seems to suggest that the students in the experimental group were not too concerned about (verbal) recognition. This might imply that some of their motivation is intrinsic.

Construct 9: Reading for Grades

This construct contains 4 items. The third statement was deemed to be meaningful for the purposes of the present research project.

1. Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing in reading.
2. I look forward to finding out my reading grades.
3. I read to improve my grades.
4. My parents ask me about my reading grade.

Table 10 shows the data regarding statement 3.

Reading for Grades			
Groups:		Experimental	Control
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 3	Stat. 3
Agree	A lot like me	15	19
Disagree	Very different from me	15	11
Total		30	30

Table 10: Reading for Grades: Experimental and Control Group
Source: MRQ



As regards the experimental group's answers to statement 3, 15 students (50%) agreed while 15 of them (50%) disagreed. The control group shows that 19 students (63.3%) agreed, while 11 students (36.7%) said that they disagreed.

The data demonstrate that the experimental group's answers were divided. Half of the students agreed that they read because it helped to improve their grades while the other half disagreed. A higher percentage of students in the control group admitted that they read with the purpose and expectation that this activity will help them achieve better grades. One-third of the students in the control group said that improving their grades was not the main reason why they engaged in reading.

One explanation for the answers given by the students who disagreed about reading to improve their grades could be that students might think they have alternative, perhaps better, ways of improving their grades than doing so by reading. Fewer students hold strongly that they need reading as a means of improving their grades.

Figure 13 summarizes the data from both the experimental and the control groups.

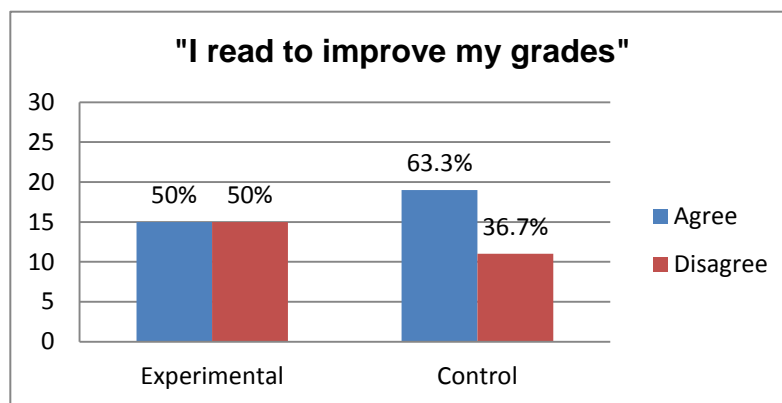


FIG. 13: Reading for Grades: Stat.3
Source: MRQ

Figure 13 shows that more students in the control group were interested in reading for improving their grades. This might imply that the level of extrinsic motivation was higher in this group.

Construct 10: Social Reasons for Reading

This construct has 7 items. Statements 3 and 7 were found to be relevant and included in the study.

1. I visit the library often with my family.
2. I often read to my brother or my sister.



3. My friends and I like to trade things to read.
4. I sometimes read to my parents.
5. I talk to my friends about what I am reading.
6. I like to help my friends with their schoolwork in reading.
7. I like to tell my family about what I am reading.

Table 11 illustrates the information regarding statement 3 and 7 in both groups.

Social Reasons for Reading					
Groups:		Experimental		Control	
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 3	Stat. 7	Stat. 3	Stat. 7
Agree	A lot like me	11	9	11	11
Disagree	Very different from me	19	21	19	19
	Total	30	30	30	30

Table 11: Social Reasons for Reading: Experimental and Control Group

Source: MRQ

The answers to statement 3 show that 11 students (36.7%) in the experimental group agreed and 19 of them (63.3%) disagreed. In the control group, 11 students (36.7%) agreed while 19 students (63.3%) disagreed about their inclination to trade things to read with their friends.

It is evident that two-thirds of the students in both groups were reluctant to share books or things to read. However, a little more than one-third of the students were happy to share their readings and, as a result, participate in each other's reading experiences.

There are various ways to interpret these results. It could be said that the students do not share books and readings because, owing to the limited financial means of their families, there is practically not much to share or there may be a cultural bias against sharing in general. This would imply that they need to look for other sources of entertainment. As for those students who share their readings, one has to assume that there is at least some money set aside for buying books and magazines, but once this happens, it makes sense to share the limited resources and swap books or other readings, most probably among students who have the same taste and affinity to the various literary genres.



Figure 14 compares the data for both the experimental and the control group regarding statement 3.

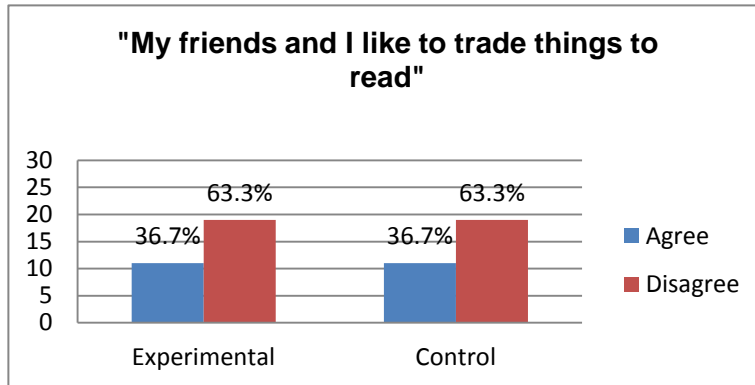


FIG. 14: Social Reasons for Reading: Stat.3
Source: MRQ

Figure 14 highlights the fact that the two groups are identical in this regard.

Statement 7, "I like to tell my family about what I am reading", is related to the parents' involvement with their children's development in reading. In the experimental group 9 students (30%) agreed and 21 students (70%) disagreed. The data in the control group show that 11 students (36.7%) agreed while 19 students (63.3%) disagreed.

The answers given to statement 7 show that a high proportion of students in the experimental and the control groups was reluctant to share the content of what they were reading with their families. Around a third of the students, however, liked to share information with members of their family.

It is possible that in both groups a high percentage of students did not share what they read because they did not spend much time with their families. However, a small number of students in both groups liked to tell their family what they were reading. One might guess that these families were somewhat better off.

Figure 15 illustrates the data for both the experimental and the control group.

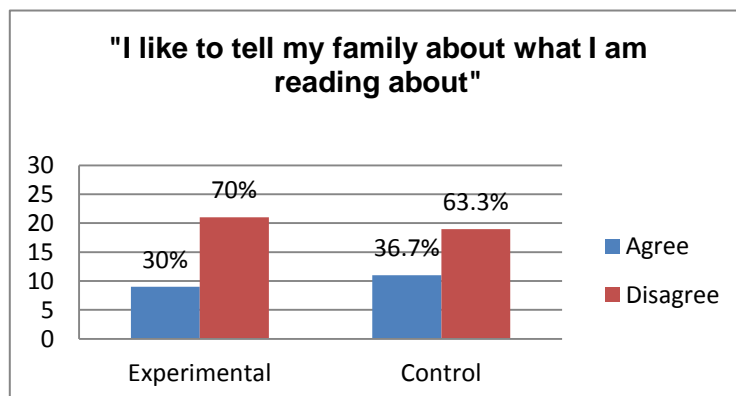


FIG. 15: Social Reasons for Reading: Stat.7



Figure 15 reiterates what has been said above: teenagers are more inclined to not reveal to their family members what kind of reading interests they have.

Construct 11: Compliance

This construct contains 5 items. Statements 2 and 4 were going to be analyzed for the purpose of this project.

1. I do as little schoolwork as possible in reading.
2. I read because I have to.
3. I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it.
4. Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me.
5. I always try to finish my reading on time

Table 12 shows the data obtained in the experimental and control group.

Compliance					
Groups:		Experimental		Control	
Coding	Degree of Identification	Stat. 2	Stat. 4	Stat. 2	Stat. 4
Agree	A lot like me	9	18	9	23
Disagree	Very different from me	21	12	21	7
	Total	30	30	30	30

Table 12: Compliance: Experimental and Control Group

Source: MRQ

The answers given in the experimental group regarding statement 2 reflects that 9 students (30%) agreed while 21 of them (70%) disagreed. In the control group the results were the same: 9 students (30%) agreed and 21 students (70%) disagreed.

The data show that a high number of students of the experimental and the control groups disagreed that they read because they had to. They were of the opinion that they did not read just because they felt obligated. However, about one-third of the respondents in both groups agreed that they only read because they had no other option.

The results seem to suggest that more than two-thirds of the students in both groups read for pleasure or were ready to read when they needed information. Those who felt that reading was an unwelcome obligation may have reacted this way for lack of time, lack of money to spend on books, limited access to a library or internet, or lack of motivation.

Figure 16 illustrates a comparison of both groups regarding statement 2.

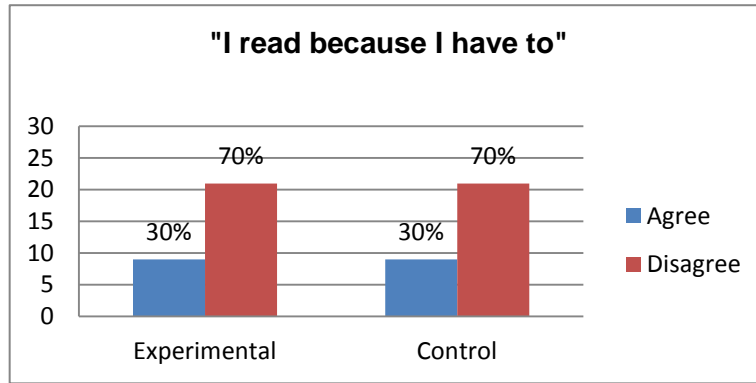


FIG.16: Compliance: Stat.2
Source: MRQ

Figure 16 illustrates that the two groups are identical in their attitudes when it comes to reading for pleasure or out of obligation or external pressure.

As for statement 4, 18 students (60%) in the experimental group agreed and 12 (40%) disagreed. In the control group, 23 students (76.7%) agreed while 7 students (23.3%) disagreed.

The figures show that for the participants in the control group it was more important to finish their assignments than for those in the experimental group. A smaller percentage in both groups disagreed that accomplishing the reading tasks was central for them.

Figure 17 illustrates a comparison of the data between the experimental and the control group regarding statement 4.

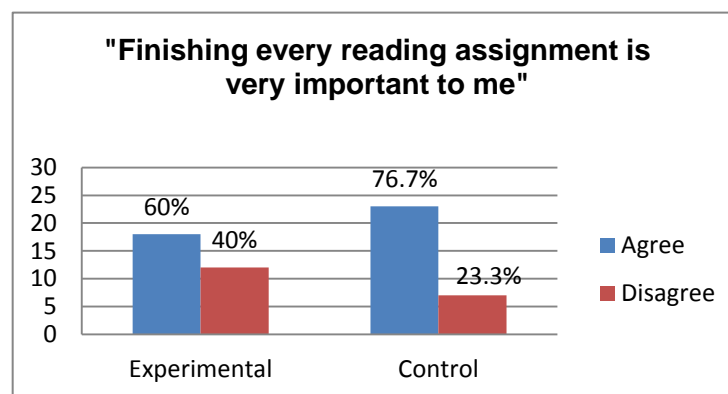


FIG. 17: Compliance: Stat.4
Source: MRQ

Figure 17 suggests that members of the control group were more inclined to take finishing their reading tasks seriously. As opposed to this, two-fifths of the students in the experimental group did not attach too much importance to this.



Summary

Let us summarize the main results arising from the analysis of the eleven constructs of the MRQ. The students of 1st of Bachillerato in La Inmaculada High School showed low Reading Efficacy. A high number of students in both groups answered that they were not good readers and that they did not learn better through reading. When comparing the data, it can be seen that members in the control group considered themselves worse readers than those in the experimental group. However, more students in the control group said that they learned better through reading than in the experimental group.

The construct of Reading Challenge of both groups was deficient; both groups obtained similar scores saying that they were not willing to read even if the project was of their interest. The Reading Curiosity construct also obtained poor results. Statement 1 shows that neither of the groups had enough curiosity for investigating a topic after discussing something interesting with the teacher. Nevertheless, the experimental group seemed to be more willing to be influenced by the teacher rather than was the control group who disagreed almost totally. In statement 3 regarding that they read to learn new information of topics of their interest, both groups obtained considerable scores of agreement although the control group had a lower percentage.

The Reading Involvement construct shows that the preferred genres for the experimental group according to the students' scores were the following: Fiction, fantasy, mystery and adventure while the control group preferred mystery, fantasy, fiction and adventure. Both groups coincided in fantasy as the second preferred genre and adventure as the least favorite. The construct Importance for Reading shows that for both groups it was important to be a good reader compared to other activities. The experimental group obtained higher results compared to the control group. The Reading Avoidance construct regarding statement 2, "complicated stories are no fun to read" shows that both groups agreed with similar scores. Regarding statement 3, "I don't like reading something when the words are too difficult" both groups disagreed although the control group disagreed with smaller scores compared to the experimental group.



Concerning the construct Competition for Reading, both groups agreed that they liked obtaining more correct answers than their friends. Though, the experimental group seems to be more competitive than the control group comparing their scores. As for Recognition for Reading, both groups said that they did not like to receive compliments for their reading. Only 50% of the answers in the control group disagreed, which means that a higher number of students of this group felt well about receiving compliments than the students in the experimental group. The construct Reading for Grades shows that both groups agreed about using reading as a way to improve their grades. However, the scores of both groups were not very significant. A smaller percentage of students in the experimental group agreed compared to the results in the control group.

The Social Reasons for Reading construct shows that neither of the groups liked trading reading material with their friends and none of them shared what they were reading with their parents. Similar scores were obtained for both statements. The experimental group obtained a higher percentage of students who did not share things about their reading with their parents. Finally, the Compliance construct shows that both groups disagreed with the statement “I read because I have to”. They obtained similar scores, while for the statement “finishing every reading assignment is very important for me”, both groups agreed, although the control group had higher scores than the experimental group.

Reading Comprehension Pre-test

The present reading pre-test contains five texts of different complexity and style that go from A1 to the B1 level according to the Common European Framework (CEFR). Each text was taken from the reading section of JETSET from Education Development International (EDI) entry levels 2, 3, and 4. After each piece of text, there were between 5 and 10 closed-ended questions that the students were asked to answer in order to check their reading comprehension.

The present analysis will start with a comparison of the data obtained from the experimental group and the control group concerning the five levels. The scores were taken from the number of correct answers obtained from the answer sheets. Table 13 illustrates the data.



Reading Comprehension Pre-test					
Experimental /Control Group					
Participants	Reading 1 JETSET entry level 2 (CEF A1 starters)	Reading 2 JETSET entry level 2 (CEF A2.1-movers)	Reading 3 JETSET entry level 3 (CEF A2.2-flyers)	Reading 4 JETSET entry level 4 (CEF B1.1)	Reading 5 JETSET entry level 4 (CEF B1.2)
Experimental Group	91/150 difficulties	195/300 difficulties	127/300 difficulties	119/300 difficulties	114/300 difficulties
Control Group	75/150 difficulties	164/300 difficulties	134/300 difficulties	117/300 difficulties	102/300 difficulties

Table 13: Reading Comprehension Pre-test
Source: JETSET based on CEFR

Reading 1

Table 13 illustrates that the experimental group obtained 91 correct answers out of 150 in Reading 1 (see annex 2). The students were able to identify simple messages in a paragraph or simple information on posters related to names of actors, time, schedule, days of the week, prices and movie genres. However, students as a group could not carry out the task in 59 instances. They failed to answer statements that were related to solving simple problems, such as agreeing on the best schedule for a group of friends, most suitable time, and preferences of genre and the best movie according to the criteria in Reading 1.

The control group obtained 75 correct answers out of 150. A smaller number of students compared to the experimental group were able to identify simple information in a poster. Likewise, they could not solve the same simple problems that were presented to the experimental-group.

Figure 18 shows a summary of the data gathered in level A1 for both the experimental and the control groups.

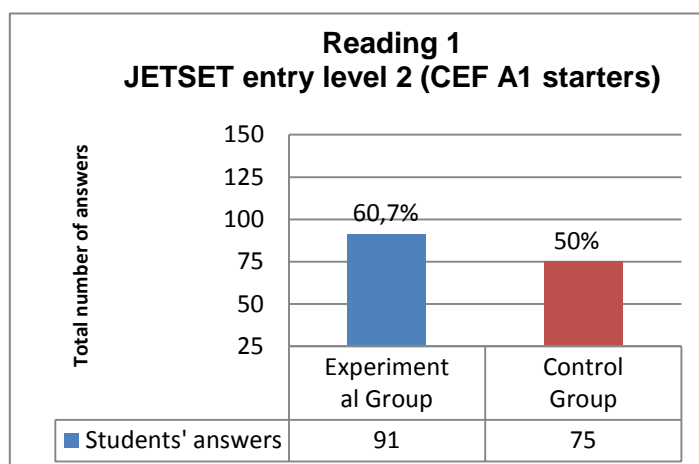


FIG. 18: Reading Comprehension Pre-test 1
Source: JETSET entry level 2 (CEFR A1)



Reading 2

This was a longer and more complex piece of text (see annex 2). It contained a visual aid and simple vocabulary corresponding to the A2.1 level. There were a total of 195 correct answers out of 300 at this level corresponding to the experimental group and a total of 164 out 300 corresponding to the experimental group. One hundred five answers in the experimental group and 136 in the control group were incorrect.

In both cases, the students often did not understand short, simple texts related to everyday vocabulary including some international vocabulary items such as countries and nationalities, family members and relationships, subjects, ages, places and hobbies or the interests of each person described in the text. The students could read isolated sentences but they could not establish connections among the characters presented in the texts. They had difficulties when identifying family relationships or calculating distances, which was required, since each person in the text attended different schools and this was relevant for the correct answers to be given.

Figure 19 illustrates the data regarding the A2.1 level for both the experimental and control group.

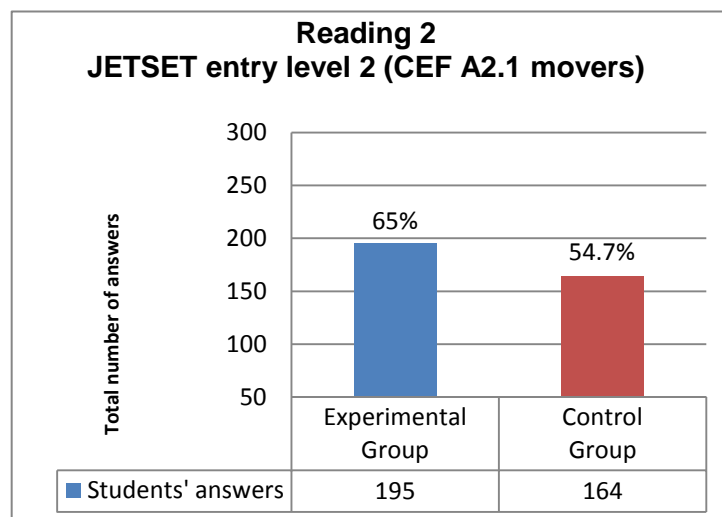


FIG. 19: Reading Comprehension Pre-test 2
Source: JETSET entry level 2 (CEFR A2.1)



Reading 3

In Reading 3, corresponding to the A2.2 level (see annex 2), the experimental group achieved 127 correct answers out of a total of 300, while the control group obtained 134 correct answers of a total of 300. It demonstrates that the students who gave correct answers were able to recognize vocabulary about hotels, locations, cost (money), prepositions of place, sports, parts of a house, and sports items. The students who obtained correct answers in both the experimental and the control groups could comprehend short and simple texts about common problems of a specific type such as jobs, prices, and vacations described in everyday language.

The fact that there were 173 incorrect answers in the experimental group and 166 incorrect ones in the control group demonstrates that a high number of students were not able to solve simple problems; for example, choose the best hotel by price, types of services, or the best location related to the most important tourist sights. The students had some difficulty in discriminating information regarding the specifications mentioned before and also the number of people involved, the financial situation of each family and locations that might influence people's choices.

Figure 20 shows a summary of the data of the experimental and control groups corresponding to level A2.2

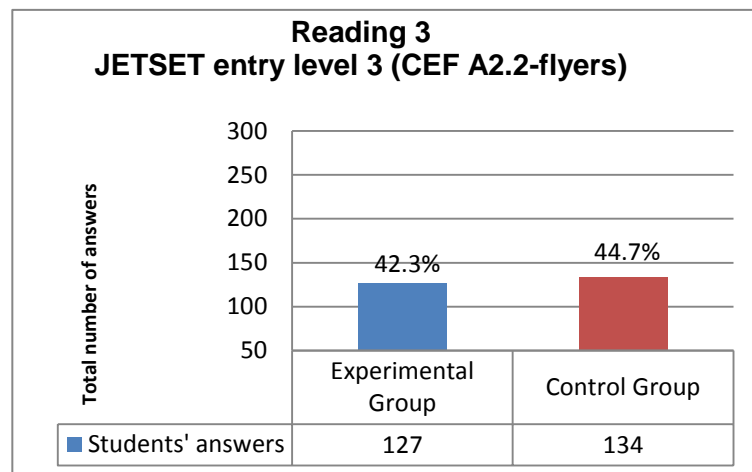


FIG. 20: Reading Comprehension Pre-test 3
Source: JETSET entry level 3 (CEFR A2.2)

Reading 4

Reading 4 corresponds to B1.1 level (see annex 2). The students of the experimental group obtained 119 correct answers out of a total of 300, while the control group got 117 correct answers out of 300. In both cases, the students were



presented a piece of informative text about the origins and properties of coffee. The text was longer than the ones before and involved more complex vocabulary.

The students who obtained correct answers had to scan and skim the text and identify information related to the good and bad effects of caffeine, food and drinks that contain caffeine, the appropriate climates and temperature for growing coffee, types of coffee seeds and the places of its origin. One hundred eighty one answers of the experimental group and a similar number of 183 of the control group had trouble identifying the vocabulary mentioned above.

Figure 21 shows the data gathered in both groups related to level B1.1.

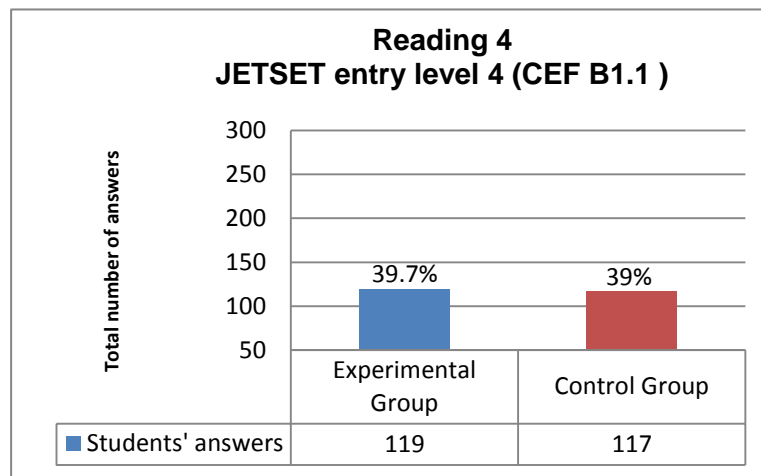


FIG. 21: Reading Comprehension Pre-test 4
Source: JETSET entry level 4 (CEFR B1.1)

Reading 5

Reading 5 corresponds to B1.2 level (see annex 2). The students of the experimental group obtained 114 correct answers out of 300, while the control group got 102 rights. Both groups were given a piece of informative text containing historical events and the changes over time of how soap has been used over the centuries. The text at this level was longer and contained more complex vocabulary than the ones before.

The students of both groups obtained low scores at this level; however, a certain albeit small number of correct answers demonstrated that the students of both groups were able to recognize information related to the various uses of soap, its ingredients, the taxes involved and the types of people who used it. With the text becoming more and more complex, a high number of students in both groups gave incorrect answers. 186 incorrect answers of the experimental group and 198 of the control group demonstrated that they were not ready for this level.



Figure 22 illustrates the information gathered in both groups in level B1.2.

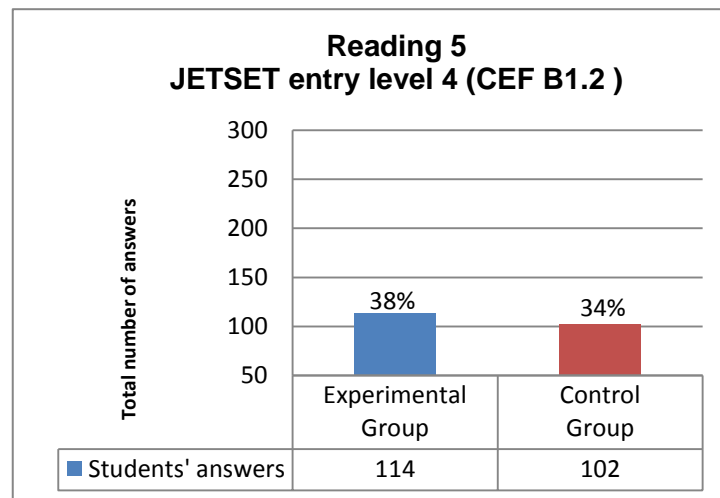


FIG. 22: Reading Comprehension Pre-test 5
Source: JETSET entry level 4 (CEFR B1.2)

Summary

With regard to the findings in this test we can come to the following conclusions. Both the experimental and the control group groups obtained acceptable competency in levels A1, A2.1 while their scores in levels A2.2, B1.1 and B1.2 were unsatisfactory. In Reading 1 the students of both groups did not have outstanding scores although the experimental group performance was better; they failed to solve a simple problem of choosing the best option to watch a movie according to a problem presented that included time, cost and preferences of movie genres. They could answer statements that included true or false information but not the ones which required more analysis according to the situation outlined. Reasoning skills were inadequate in both groups.

In the case of Reading 2, it can be seen that the experimental group's scores were better than those of the control group. However, neither group obtained very impressive scores in this level. The students failed to establish connections such as family relationships, calculating distances and origins. These statements were mostly related to international language and everyday situations. In Reading 3, both groups ended up with unsatisfactory scores. It can be said that neither of the groups were ready to solve more complex problems and deal with vocabulary related to tourism.

As for Reading 4, it can be safely said that neither group was ready for this level. Their scores were poorer than in the previous level. The students failed to



recognize information related to the origins, effects, types and benefits of coffee. The text was informative with more complex vocabulary and longer length. In Reading 5 the students of both groups obtained the lowest scores of this test. In this instance, they again were unable to deal with an informative piece of reading about chronological events related to the origins of soap, its use, ingredients and evolution, etc. This level was definitely inappropriate for the students.

Figure 23 shows a summary of the whole test comparing the two groups.

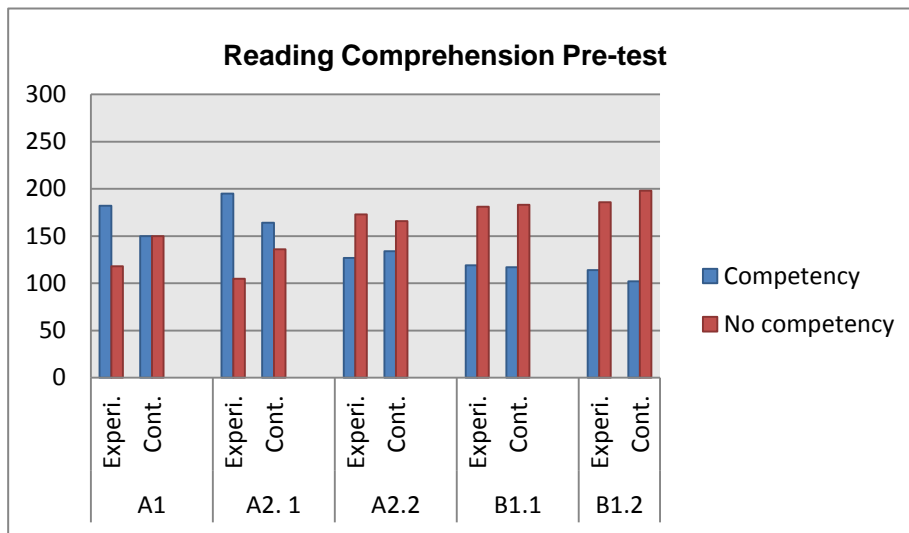


FIG. 23: Reading Comprehension Pre-test Summary
Source: JETSET A1, A2.1, A2.2, B1.1, and B1.2

Reading Comprehension Post-test

The reading post-test consisted of five texts of different complexity and styles that went from A1 to the B1 level according to the Common European Framework (CEFR) (see Appendix 9). Each text was taken from the reading section of JETSET from Education Development International’s (EDI) entry levels 2, 3, and 4. There were from 5 (in level A1) to 10 closed-ended questions that students were asked to answer. The Reading Comprehension post-test aimed to compare the data obtained with the pre-test with both experimental and the control group.

Table 14 illustrates the data gathered in the experimental and control group concerning levels A1, A2.1, A2.2, B1.1 and B1.2. The analysis of each level was done according to the number of correct answers obtained from the answer sheets.



Reading Comprehension Post-test					
Experimental / Control Group					
Participants	Reading 1 JETSET entry level 2 (CEF A1 starters)	Reading 2 JETSET entry level 2 (CEF A2.1 movers)	Reading 3 JETSET entry level 3 (CEF A2.2 flyers)	Reading 4 JETSET entry level 4 (CEF B1.1)	Reading 5 JETSET Entry level 4 (CEF B1.2)
Experimental Group	92/150 difficulties	197/300 difficulties	115/300 difficulties	115/300 difficulties	119/300 difficulties
Control Group	80/150 difficulties	137/300 difficulties	105/300 difficulties	90/300 difficulties	97/300 difficulties

Table 14: Reading Comprehension Post-test
Source: JETSET based on CEFR

Reading 1

The data gathered at A1 level show that the experimental group obtained better scores than the control group overall (see annex 13). The experimental group obtained 92 correct answers while the control group had 80 out of 150.

However, the experimental group did not improve their scores to any considerable degree over their pre-test results for level A1, as the number of correct answers for the latter was 91, only 1 less than in the post-test (92).

The control group improved the results obtained in the pre-test. They showed an increment of 5 correct answers in the post-test. Nevertheless, there is still a difference of 12 correct answers compared with the experimental group. It remains a fact, though that the two groups had a 16 point difference in the pre-test in favor of the experimental group. Therefore, it could be argued that the control group, to some extent, caught up with the experimental group.

Figure 24 shows a comparison of the data gathered in the two groups at A1 level in the pre- and post-test.

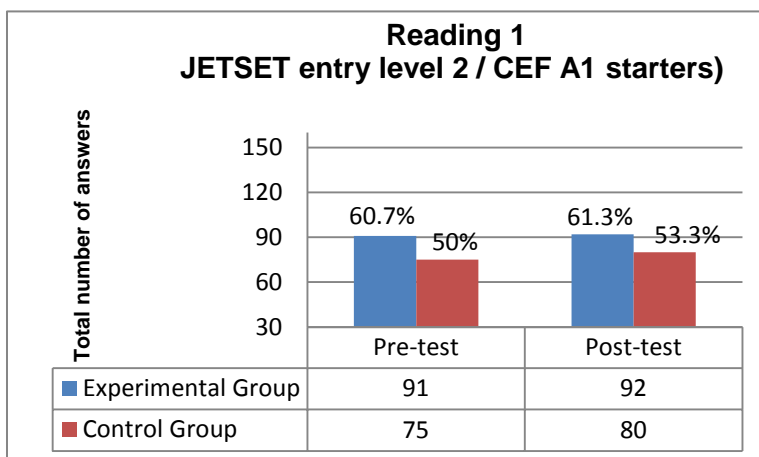


FIG. 24: Reading Comprehension Pre-Post/test
Source: JETSET entry level (CEFR A1)

Reading 2

The data gathered at A2.1 level show that the experimental group obtained better scores than the control group. The experimental group obtained 197 correct answers while the control group got 137 out of 300.

The experimental group obtained consistent scores compared to the pre-test. The group had 197 correct answers in the post test, while in the pre-test this figure was 195. The control group did not keep the level achieved in the pre-test. They had 164 correct answers in the pre-test while they obtained 137 in the post-test. The experimental group had a minimal increment of 2 points while the control group reduced its score.

Figure 25 shows the difference between the two groups in terms of percentage rates.

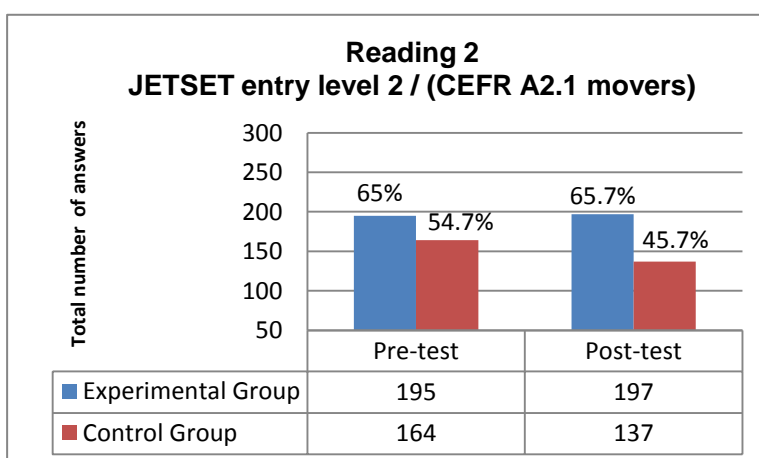


FIG. 25: Reading Comprehension Pre-/Post test
Source: JETSET entry level 2 (CEFR A2.1)



Reading 3

The results obtained at A2.2 level show that the experimental group obtained 115 correct answers while the control group got 105 out of 300. The experimental group's performance was better than that of the control group.

However, the experimental group did not achieve good results compared to the pre-test. This group lost 12 points in the post-test. Likewise, the control group lost 29 points comparing the two tests. Both groups decreased their scores instead of showing any improvement.

Figure 26 shows a comparison of both groups in the pre-test and post-test. The data show the percentage rate difference between the two groups.

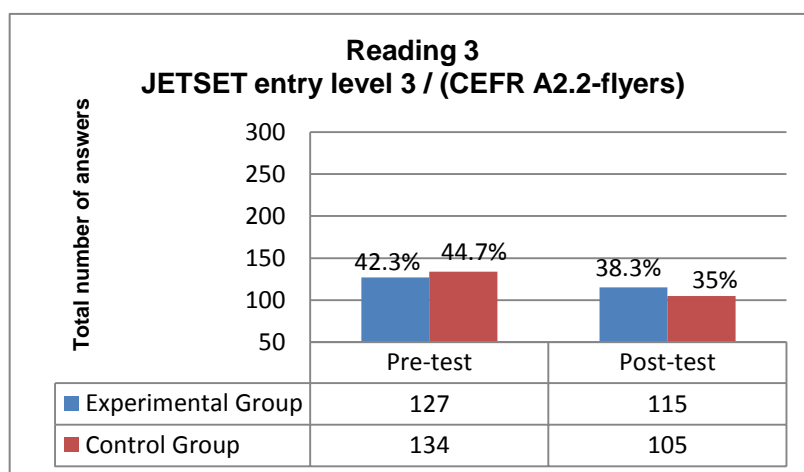


FIG. 26: Reading Comprehension Pre-/Post test
Source: JETSET entry level 3 (CEFR A2.2)

Reading 4

The results show that the experimental group obtained 115 correct answers while the control group got 90 correct answers out of 300 at B1.1 level. The experimental group's performance was higher than that of the control group.

The experimental group obtained 119 correct answers in the pre- test, while in the post-test they obtained 115, showing a decline of 4 points at this level. The control group's results dropped considerably: they had 117 correct answers in the pre-test while they obtained 90 correct answers in the post-test. The experimental group reduced its score slightly while the control group reduced its score significantly.

Figure 27 shows a comparison of the data gathered in both groups in the pre-test and post-test.

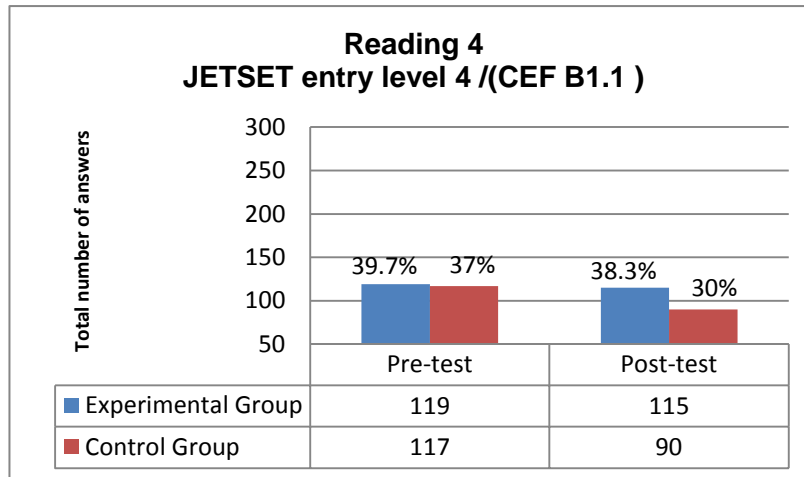


FIG. 27: Reading Comprehension Pre-/Post test
Source: JETSET entry level 4 (CEFR B1.1)

Reading 5

The experimental group obtained 119 correct answers while the control group achieved 97 correct answers out of 300 at B1.2 level. As before, the experimental group performed better than the control group.

The experimental group's results showed a minor increment compared to the pre-test. This group obtained 114 correct answers in the pre- test, while in the post- test they managed to get 119, showing a slight rise of 5 points at this level. The control group was unable to reach the same level as in the pre-test. They had 102 correct answers in the pre-test while they obtained 97 correct answers in the post- test. The experimental group improved its score to some extent while the control group reduced its scores.

Figure 28 shows the data gathered in both the experimental and the control groups in the pre-test and the post-test.

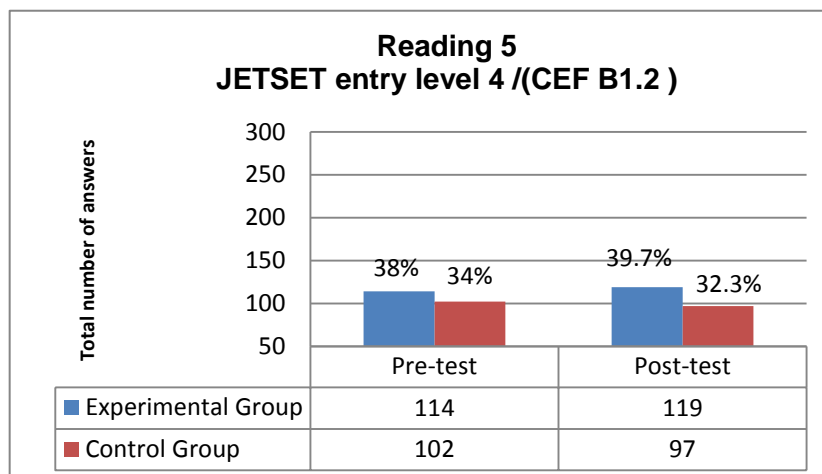


FIG. 28: Reading Comprehension Pre-/Post test
Source: JETSET entry level 4 (CEFR B1.2)



Summary

After the experimental group received 36 hours of treatment using Short Stories with Schema Theory activities it was found that they did not improve their reading comprehension skills significantly. This group advanced by 1% in level A1, 0.7%in level A2.1 and 1.67% in level B1.2 while there was a decline of 4% in level A2.2 and 1.34% in level B1.1. The data let us conclude that the experimental group only maintained their scores in 3 levels while in the other two their scores declined to some degree compared to the pre-test. It suggests that the treatment did not bring about any major improvement in the reading comprehension skills of this group of students.

Figure 29 shows the data of the experimental group regarding the improvement in the pre-test and the post-test.

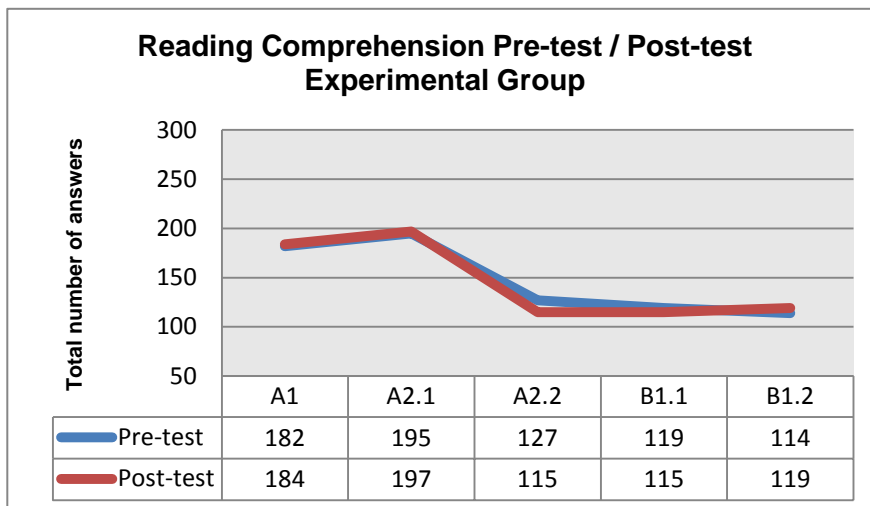


FIG. 29: Reading Comprehension Pre-/Post test Experimental Group
Source: JETSET

In contrast, the control group raised their points by 3.33% in level A1 while they had a decrease of 9% in level A2.1, 9.67% in level A2.2, 9% in level B1.1 and 1.67% in level B1.2. Therefore, the control group only raised their level in level A1 while it declined in the other four levels.

Figure 30 shows the data of the control group regarding the improvement obtained in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

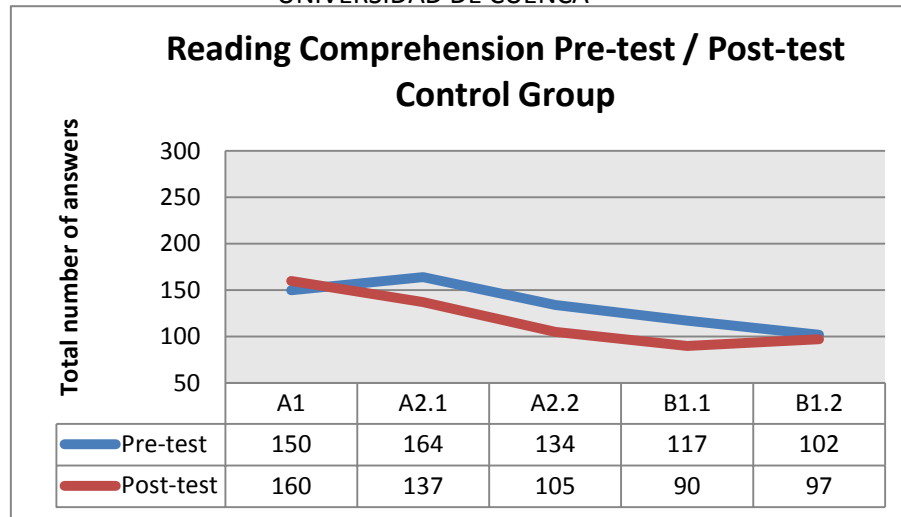


FIG. 30: Reading Comprehension Pre-/Post test Control group
Source: JETSET

It is possible that there were some external factors at play such as the time when the test was administered, lack of commitment to the test, other evaluations pending after the English class and tiredness. All of these could have contributed to the poor results obtained.

Even though the results did not improve and there has been some decline, the experimental group did not decrease its performance by the same degree as the control group. This is to say that the experimental group did better than the control group by not losing as many points as the experimental group.

Reading Habits Survey

The following survey was aimed at gathering data from the experimental group only and was administered after the treatment in order to gauge the students' attitudes to reading in English. It contained seven questions: 4 of them were closed-ended questions (3 Yes/No, 1 multiple-choice) and another 3 were open-ended.

Question 1

The analysis below starts with a multiple-choice question about the students' preference of genre when reading. The students were asked to rank each genre and give 1 if they liked it a lot and give 2 if they did not like a specific genre at all.

Table 15 illustrates the results about their preferred genre in English.



Preferred genre when reading in English - Experimental Group				
Genre	Like	Dislike	No answer	Total of students
1. Myths/ legends/ fantasy	22	5	3	30
2. Magazines/articles	19	10	1	30
3. Real stories	18	11	1	30
4. Sciencefiction	18	11	1	30
5. Poetry	17	13	0	30
6. Biographies	17	10	3	30
7. Sports	16	12	2	30
8. Adventure	15	13	2	30
9. Mystery/Horror	13	16	1	30

Table 15: Students' preferred genre in English
Source: Reading Habits Survey

Table 13 shows that the most popular genre is myths, legends and fantasy with 22 likes out of 30, while 5 students did not like this genre at all and 3 did not provide any answer.

The genre “magazines” was chosen as the second favorite in this group. Nineteen students answered that they liked this type of reading, 10 did not like it, and 1 did not answer. The data show that the students preferred unconventional texts where a diversity of topics can be explored in simple articles rather than the traditional genres. In third place, the students chose “real stories”. Eighteen students said that they liked this genre, 11 did not like it and 1 did not answer. This group of students was interested in stories of real events and human interest. The next genre was science fiction. Eighteen students liked this genre, 11 students did not like it and 1 student did not answer. This genre obtained the same number of answers for the categories “like” and “don't like” as the previous one, and for that reason both genres are in the third place position.

The following genre was poetry: 17 students said that they liked it while 13 said that it was not their favorite. The same number of 17 “like” votes was given to biographies, 10 did not like them at all while 3 did not respond. “Sports” is in the next place; 16 students said that they liked to read about it, 12 did not like it and 2 students did not answer. Stories of adventure obtained 15 “like” votes, 13 did not like them at all and 2 did not answer. Mystery and horror genre are in final position; 13 students like it, 16 students did not like it and 1 did not answer.

The next figure shows the preferred genres from the most to the least popular.

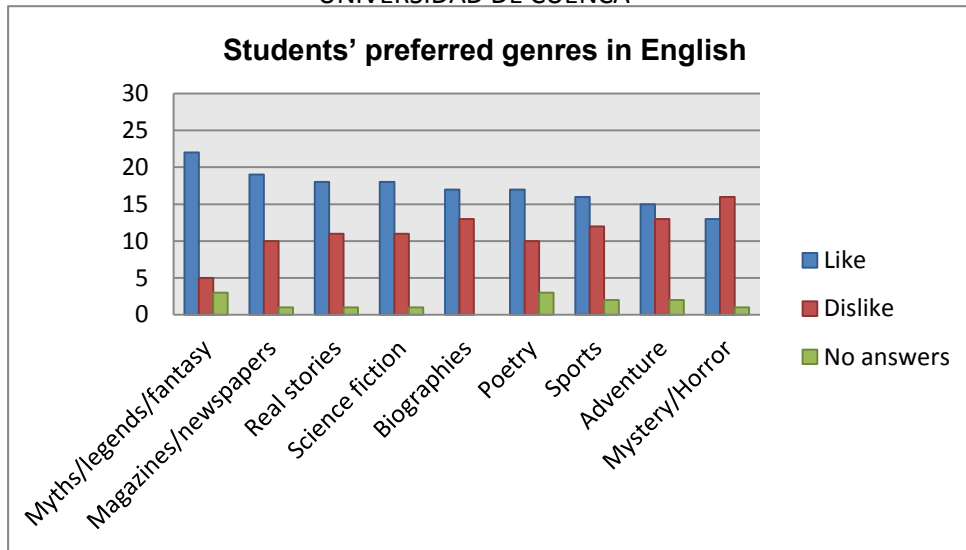


FIG. 31: Students' preferred genres in English
Source: Reading Habits Survey

Question 2

This was an open-ended question. The students were asked to mention the last article, book or story that they had read in English excluding the stories that they read during the experiment.

The information gathered for question 2 is illustrated in Table 16.

The last book, article or story that you read in English	
Silas Marner	19
Lyrics	4
Legends / horror stories	2
News and sports	2
Animals: Willi	1
Science Fiction (UFO)	1
Novels in Spanish	1
Total	30

Table 16: The last text in English that students read
Source: Reading Habits Survey

As is evident from the answers in Table 16, 19 out of 30 students of the experimental group mentioned the adaptation of the book “Silas Marner the Weaver of Raveloe” as the last book or text that they read in English although they were asked not to include texts that were part of the experiment.



It is probable that in the case of these 19 students, *Silas Marner* was the only book that they had read in English during their whole time at school. Reading a book from cover to cover, even if it was an adaptation, could be considered as an achievement for them and perhaps that is why they mentioned it in the survey. Therefore, it can be assumed that their declared preference for English language genres in question 1 is perhaps more like a wish list of what they would like to read if they read more in English.

Another type of text that was mentioned four times was lyrics. This was predictable since students of this age group love singing foreign songs, especially in English. They tend to read and learn the lyrics of songs, as well as like to obtain information or follow the trending songs of their favorite singers.

Two of the students mentioned horror stories and legends as the last pieces of texts that they had read in English. It is possible that these students liked stories that allowed them to use their imagination. Another two students said that they read news and sports stories in English. The reason could be that these students feel inspired by the sport stars of Europe or other non-Spanish speaking countries. It is common to find more up-to-date information about these sports stars if they read the news in English.

Animals, science fiction (UFO) and a novel in Spanish obtained one vote each. It is possible that one of the students was looking for information about animals as part of a school project or simply because this person loves animals. Another student could have been curious to learn more about extra-terrestrial beings. The last person mentioned a novel in Spanish although the students were asked not to include their readings in Spanish.

Question 3

This was a closed-ended question: the students were asked to say how much time they spent reading in English. They could choose from among the following options: everyday, 5 times per week, twice a week, “only when someone makes me read” and “I read as little as possible”.

The students' answers are summarized in the figure below.

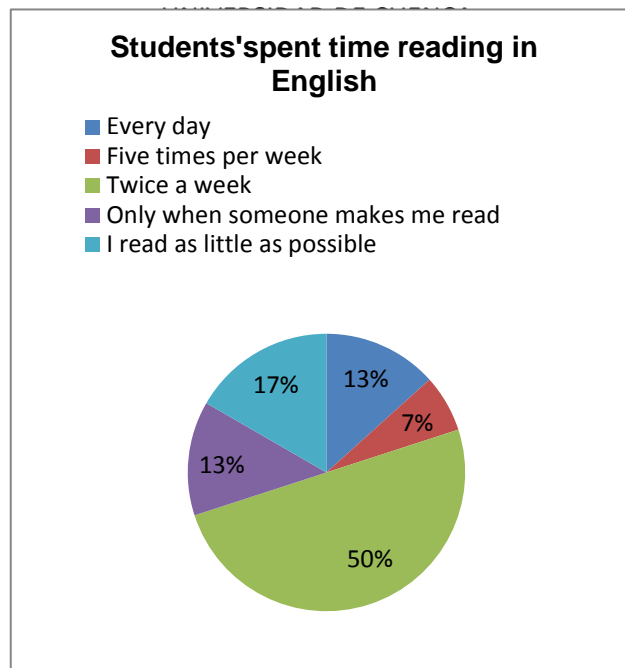


FIG. 32: Students' spent time in Reading
Source: Reading Habits Survey

Fifty percent of the students said that they read twice a week in English. Although it is not impossible that some students read in English regularly, it can be assumed that they included the reading of English texts that were part of their school work when describing their reading habits in English.

Seventeen percent of the students said that they avoided reading as much as they could while 13% chose the answer “I only read when someone makes me read”. This means that the students only read because they felt some kind of obligation and not for pleasure or out of curiosity. They read because it was part of the tasks in their syllabus.

“I read every day” obtained 13%, which shows that a small number of students started to incorporate reading habits. The last option, “I read five times per week”, was chosen by 7% of the respondents. It is possible that the students considered the five school days as the time for reading in English. They might consider the school text book as part of their reading material.

In conclusion, adding up the options I read “every day”, “five times a week” and “twice a week”, it can be said that 70% of the students read in English probably during the school week, which is remarkable since it would suggest that there is some affinity or curiosity to read in English. The other 30% said that they read as little as possible, or only when they did not have another option. They are definitely not the most avid readers in English.

**Question 4**

The fourth question was open-ended: the participants of the experiment were asked to describe three aspects they felt they had learned as a result of the treatment. After analyzing the main points of the students' responses, the data were organized and arranged by the researcher in a chart according to four categories that were divided according to the students' responses: linguistic aspects, learning/reading strategies, cultural awareness, and social interaction. The analysis and interpretation of these results is qualitative.

Table 17 illustrates the data obtained for Question 4.

Learning outcomes as a result of reading in English		
Categories	Features	Responses
Linguistic	- New vocabulary	19
	- Phrasal Verbs/Expressions	8
	- Pronunciation	8
	- Grammar structures	5
Learning/Reading strategies	- Use of dictionary (L/R)	3
	- Skimming/Scanning (R)	3
	- Concentration (L)	3
	- Reading long texts (R)	1
	- Reading comprehension techniques (R)	5
	- Critical Thinking: Reasoning (L)	6
	- Extracting main ideas (L)	4
Raised Cultural Awareness	- New countries	3
	- People	2
Social Interaction	- Groupwork	3
Total		73/90

Table 17: Learning Outcomes
Source: Reading Habits Survey

The students were asked to give three answers, but as can be seen in the Table above, 17 answers were missing: 15 students only provided 2 answers and one student gave 1 answer.



The most frequent answer that pertained to the linguistic aspect was that they learned new vocabulary. The students who did so recognized that they had a limited vocabulary and that this experiment brought about some improvement in this regard.

The second and third elements in this category have the same number of responses. The students said that they learned phrasal verbs as well as pronunciation. There were a significant number of phrasal verbs that they found during the reading and they recognized that they are an important feature of the English language and many are used in colloquial language. They also said that they learned pronunciation. As part of the treatment, the students were reading aloud regularly. This allowed them to rectify some common mistakes in pronunciation and led to a realization that this aspect of their language skills had improved.

The students mentioned critical thinking in fourth place. They said that they acquired some learning strategies through developing reasoning and a critical approach. They were immersed in a storyline that made them look for possible solutions or simply feel that they could identify themselves with the characters in the text.

Grammar structures and reading comprehension techniques obtained the same number of responses (5). The students recognized that grammar structures were an important part for understanding a text. It is possible that some structures became more familiar to them during the reading process some examples are the past tense form of verbs or certain expressions such as once upon a time, he/she said, he/she cried, suddenly he/she realized, last night, he/she saw, etc.

The students also learned reading comprehension techniques. They learned how to predict the twists and turns in the story through pictures and by analyzing the title. They could also learn how to skim and scan a text with efficacy and how to extract the main ideas or important details.

Figure 33 summarizes the students' responses to this question

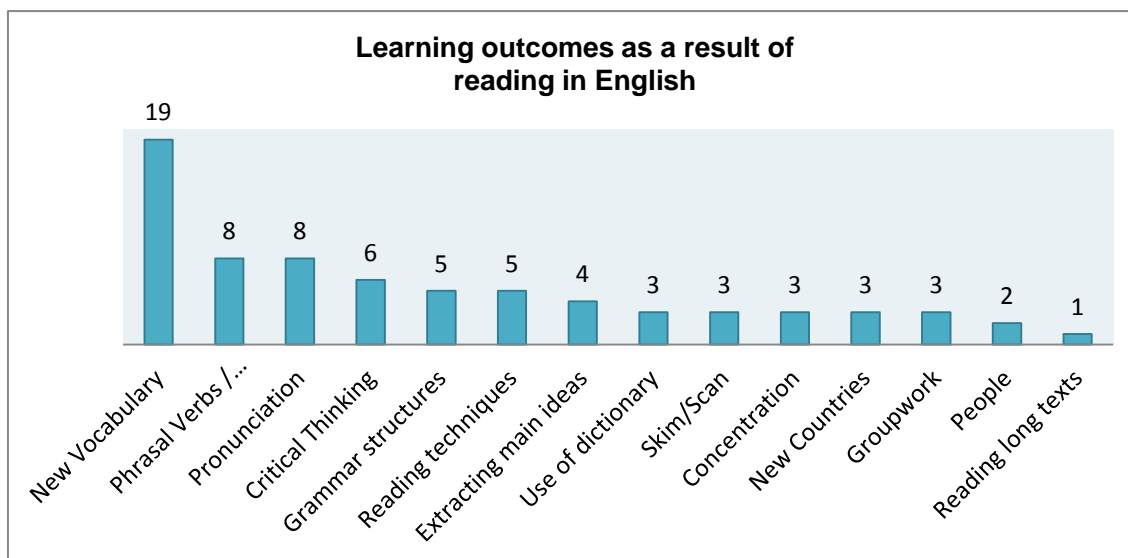


FIG. 33: Learning outcomes as a result of reading in English
Source: Reading Habits Survey

Question 5

Question five was an open-ended question. The students had to state what the three most difficult aspects of reading in English were for them. The number of mentions were counted and categorized for the purposes of organizing the data that are illustrated in the chart below according to four categories: linguistic aspects, learning/reading strategies, cultural awareness and motivation.

Table 18 illustrates the data obtained regarding Question 5.

Three most difficult aspects of reading in English		
Categories	Features	Responses
Linguistic	Pronunciation	5
	Use of dictionary	3
	Recognition of structures	9
	Vocabulary	29
	Literary text punctuation	2
	Idiomatic expressions	2
Learning/ Reading strategies	Comprehension of ideas	11
	Concentration	3
	Thinking in English	3
	Length of reading	1
	Reasoning - Critical Thinking	2
	Reading : Skimming / scanning	1



Cultural Awareness	Understanding cultures	1
Motivation	Lack of motivation	2
Total		74

Table 18: Three most difficult aspects of Reading in English
Source: Reading Habits Survey

The answers given to Question 5 indicate that although the students recognized that they had learned new vocabulary, it was still a problem for them when reading. They agreed that vocabulary is one of the most difficult aspects of learning a new language, because not having an extensive vocabulary makes the comprehension of a text more difficult and looking for the meaning of new words in the dictionary requires a lot of time.

The students chose the comprehension of ideas as the second most complicated aspect of reading in English. They admitted that they had problems when trying to understand important events of a story. This was crucial for them since the comprehension of ideas was essential if they wanted to perform well in the activities that followed and to assess their progress.

Recognition of structures was chosen in third place. The students said that they had problems when reading a text because they were not able to recognize structures of specific tenses that could tell them what the protagonists' intentions were, when they were speaking or when a specific event took place. They were unable to recognize some important grammatical structures such as the past tense forms of regular and irregular verbs and the future structure with will/won't or going to.

The fourth most difficult aspect was pronunciation. The students thought that it was especially difficult when they had to read aloud. The use of a dictionary, concentration and thinking in English were other aspects considered by students as the most difficult when reading in English. The students recognized that they had problems when trying to find a word in the dictionary because they did not know how to look it up in the form it is given in the dictionary; for example, they were looking for *starts* instead of *start*, or *thinking* instead of *think*. They were asked to try to think in English but the problem was that they tried to translate every single word, losing the continuity and the richness of the text. They acknowledged that they often lost concentration and had to re-read the text again.



The students also believed that literary text punctuation, idiomatic expressions, critical thinking and lack of motivation also led to difficulties during the process. The students gave 2 votes to each aspect mentioned above. Literary text punctuation, as in the example that follows, could create some confusion in the students' minds since at their level of English they could misunderstand who was talking in the text, to whom they were talking to, or what was the real intention. The following, for example, confuses them:

While the Squire calling for Dr. Kimble, the ladies came closer to look at the pretty child.

'Whose child is it?' one of them asked.

'I don't know,' replied Godfrey wildly. 'Some poor woman's –
She's been found in the snow, I think.'

'You'd better leave the poor child here with us then,
Master Marnar,' offered Mrs. Kimble kindly (West Clare 49).

Idiomatic expressions were also difficult for the students. They recognized that they tended to translate the text word by word. They had to appreciate that an expression may not have the same meaning when looked at as words in isolation. For example: He's in love. The students translated the expression as *el está en amor*, instead of *el está enamorado*.

Critical thinking proved difficult for some students who did not like to look for solutions. The students were constantly asked to look for possible answers to specific events in the story. They also had to solve word-games, order paragraphs or match characteristics to people in the story. Two of the students said that they definitely did not like reading in English and this resulted in their low motivation to read in English.

The last aspects considered as difficult were the length of the text, skimming/scanning and culture awareness. One student felt some frustration when he/she saw the length of the text for the purposes of extensive reading. He/she considered that it was an endless task to accomplish. Skimming and scanning required reading the text twice, and the same student could have felt that it was a boring and unproductive activity.



The last difficulty was culture awareness. The student who mentioned this aspect had little information about the country, people or customs in the specific text explored. This lack of information could have created some misunderstanding in his/her mind.

Figure 34 illustrates the students' responses to this question.

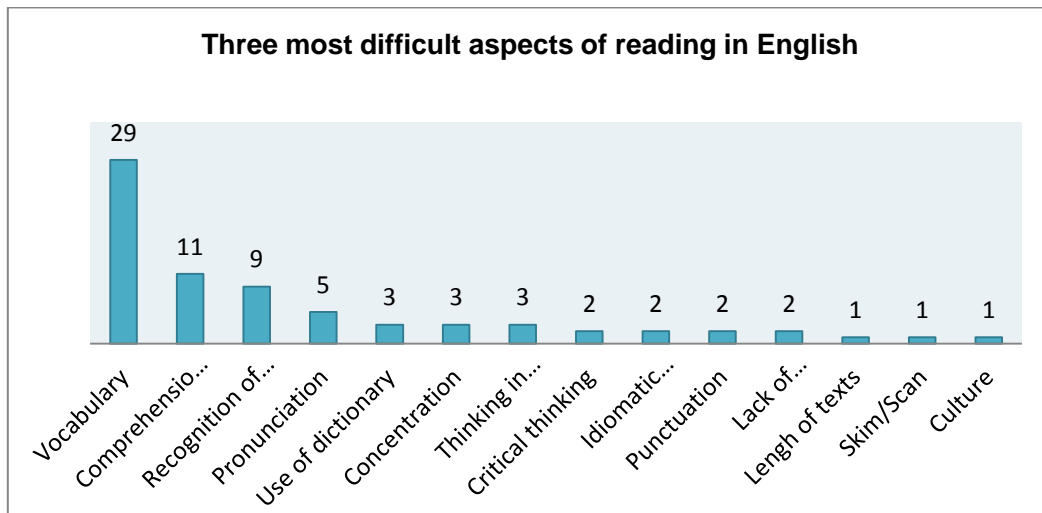


FIG. 34: Three most difficult aspects of reading in English
Source: Reading Habits Survey

Question 6

Question 6 was a closed-ended question. The students were asked to indicate if they had ever read in English before the experiment. The students had to choose between Yes or No.

The following pie chart presents the students' responses to this question.

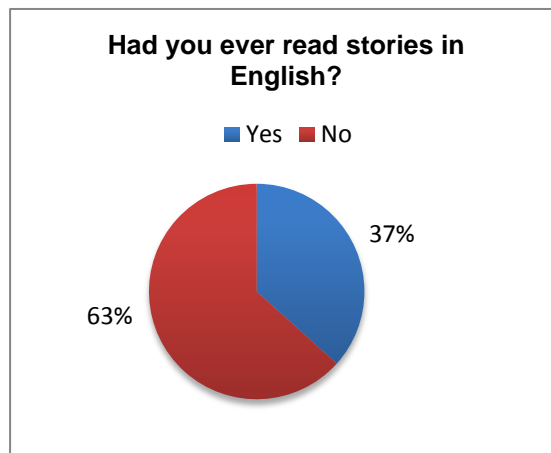


FIG. 35: Students who had/had not read stories in English
Source: Reading Habits Survey



As is evident, most of the students, namely 63 %, had never read stories in English. In their responses to Question 2, they mentioned some pieces of text, but they included those used for the purposes of the experiment, stories in Spanish, lyrics, news on sports or articles in magazines. The other 37% acknowledged that they had never read literary pieces of text in English.

Question 7

This question had two parts. The first one was a closed-ended question which asked the students if they would read in English again. It was explained to them that the question referred to formal reading of literary texts: short stories, books, poems, novels and not magazines, lyrics or sport news. The students had two options to choose from: Yes or No.

The answers are shown in the following pie chart.

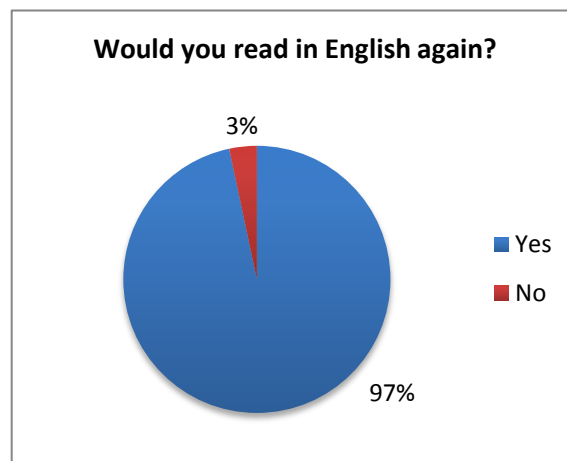


FIG. 36: Students who wish to read literary text in English again
Source: Reading Habits Survey

As it is shown in the pie chart, 97 % of the students were willing to read in English again, while 3 % said that they would not like to read in English in the future.

The next part of this question asked for the reasons why the students would like to read in English again. The students were free to express their opinions related to the reading experience they had in the experiment. The data were organized according to the frequency of the students' mentions of a certain aspect.

Table 19 illustrates the experimental group's opinion regarding the second part of question 7.



Reasons for reading in English			
Yes		No	
English level improvement	15	Difficult comprehension	1
Interesting stories	12	He/ she did not like to use the dictionary	1
Vocabulary improvement	10		
Fun/enjoyable stories	5		
Pronunciation	3		
Challenging	2		
Total number of responses	47		2

Table 19: Reasons for reading in English
Source: Reading Habits Survey

Table 19 shows that the students' main reason for reading in English again would be because they think it provides benefits that lead to the improvement of their English proficiency. Fifteen out of 30 students answered that they expect that reading in English would lead to an improvement in their English level. The following phrases are sentences taken from the students' answers.

“Yes, because I learn more from that language”

“Yes, I'd read in English again because I can improve it”

“Yes, because in that way learning English was easier”

The second reason why the students would read again was because they considered that the themes of the stories were interesting. Twelve students answered that the stories were interesting or fun and those reasons would motivate them to read in English again. Some responses are for instance:

“Yes, because the stories were interesting and fun”

“Yes, because the stories of myths, horror and other topics were interesting”

Vocabulary improvement was the third reason that would motivate the students to read in English again. They seem to have recognized that they had learned new words during the treatment and had some enhancement of their vocabulary.

“Yes, because when I finished my first book in English I learned about 20 new words and I'd like to learn one-hundred more”



“Yes, because I learned new words and enriched my vocabulary”

Five students said that the stories were fun and enjoyable and that is why they would read again. They felt comfortable reading the kind of stories that motivated them to continue reading. The next reason was pronunciation. The students thought that their pronunciation would benefit from reading aloud or reading for their group. Finally, some students said that reading these kinds of texts was challenging. Although it was hard for them, they could overcome the difficulties. This created some positive feelings toward reading and motivated them to say that they would read in English again.

One of the students said that he/she would not read in English again because the comprehension of the texts was very difficult and because he/she did not like to spend time on using the dictionary and looking for the meaning of new words.

Summary

The following graphic connects the students’ responses regarding what they learned, the most difficult aspects or reading in English and their reasons for reading.

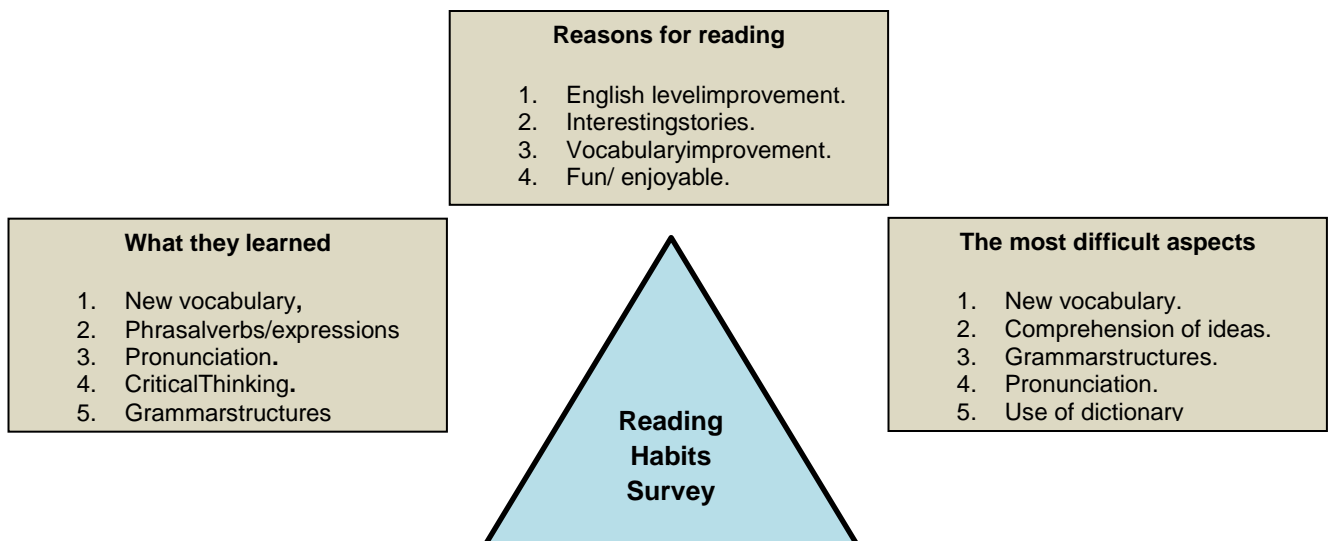


FIG. 37: Triangulation

Source: Reading Habits Survey



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The students' answers in Figure 37 shows the relationship between the different aspects. The students acknowledged that they learned new vocabulary and stated that they would like to continue learning more new vocabulary, although it was considered as the most difficult part of the process. They also agreed that they learned phrasal verbs, expressions, grammar structures and critical thinking. The students considered the comprehension of ideas, grammar structures and use of dictionary as the most difficult aspects. On the whole, what they learned and what was difficult for them made them think that reading would help them to improve their English language proficiency.

Pronunciation was also mentioned as an aspect in the three questions looked at above, which shows that the students were concerned about it. They have the feeling that they need to continue to improve their pronunciation although they recognize that it is not at all easy. Finally, interesting, fun and enjoyable stories increased the students' motivation and their desire to continue to read in English.

Although the results of the experiment were not spectacular and are somewhat controversial, the attitude of the students has changed for the better and this might mean that in the longer term their English will improve more than it might have improved without the treatment. Certainly, becoming familiar with literature in English can help them with language learning overall.



CHAPTER IV: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

After analyzing the findings in the literature review and the data gathered with the four instruments, namely, the Motivation Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), the Reading Pre-test, Reading Post-test and the Reading Survey in both the experimental and the control groups, the following conclusions can be made.

According to the experts cited in the Literature Review, the integration of literature in EFL instruction has considerable advantages as well as some disadvantages. The integration of literature can produce linguistic, cultural and motivational benefits. However, if there is an inappropriate selection of the text, or the genre and an unsuitable length for the students' level, there could be some drawbacks; for instance, linguistic and cross-cultural misunderstandings leading to frustration during the reading experience.

Taking into account the three main aspects mentioned above as criteria for the selection of literary texts in an EFL classroom, namely, appropriate material, genre, and level, short stories were selected as the best instructional tool to carry out this research. The studies in this area showed that short stories were appropriate due to their characteristics, such as the length which delimits the plot as well as the setting and the characters. All this provides a good opportunity for language learners to become and stay engaged. Additionally, the rich language input lets the students perceive the texts in a variety of ways.

Previous research studies showed that in the course of reading short stories, learners become more sensitive to learning new vocabulary and grammar structures; also their interaction, interpretative abilities and critical thinking tend to improve. All these benefits are just small pieces of a puzzle that lead to the enhancement of reading comprehension skill. Besides, according to some previous studies, short stories enhance motivation because they concern topics of universal values with moral lessons and characters representing different temperaments and behaviors with which the students can identify.

It is important to note that the reading comprehension aspect of a text is a whole cognitive process that requires several steps in order to be achieved. For the purpose of this study, Schema Theory activities were used to lead the students of the experimental group to enhance their reading comprehension skills. Previous



research has demonstrated that the use of Schema Theory activities stimulates the students' minds and enables them to obtain better results in their reading comprehension.

Some researchers have found that the importance of Schema Theory to develop reading comprehension lies in how the reader connects previous information to the understanding of the new topic. Furthermore, it was established that some mechanisms, such as pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading activities, were beneficial when it came to activating the reader's comprehension.

After administering the MRQ questionnaire, it was found that both the experimental and the control groups had similar profiles as regards their reading habits. Both groups were aware of their low reading efficacy in English. Most of them said that they were not good readers and there were a few who recognized that reading activities had helped them to improve their learning to some extent. Regarding the construct Reading Challenge, neither of the groups was willing to read even when they were presented with a project of their interest. A high number of students had little commitment toward challenging projects. The third construct, Reading Curiosity, showed some variation. The experimental group was more willing to learn new things and start investigating after receiving the teacher's input, while the control group showed less interest to read after they had listened to the teacher. Both groups said that through reading they learned about the topics of their interest apart from projects related to school.

The Reading Involvement construct of both groups showed that if the students had the opportunity to read, the genres in order of preference of the experimental group were fiction, fantasy, mystery and adventure while the control group preferred mystery over fantasy, fiction and adventure. The construct Importance for Reading showed that both groups were aware of the importance of reading. Reading Work Avoidance indicated that more than half of the students in both groups stated that complicated stories and vocabulary are not the main factors for not reading, while the other students agreed. Additionally, both groups seemed to be competitive to some extent in order to accomplish their reading tasks well. They declared that they did not attach to much importance to receiving compliments for their reading skills. Half of the students of both groups indicated that they read to improve their grades; the other half could have been using other techniques for the same.



Concerning their Social Reasons for reading, neither group liked to trade reading materials with their friends and neither did they share what books they were reading with their parents or relatives. Lastly, they declared that they read not just because they had to, but because they had other reasons to do so. They were also concerned about finishing their reading assignments.

With regard to the findings in the reading comprehension Pre-test, the following conclusions seem to be justified. Both the experimental and the control groups obtained acceptable competency in levels A1 and A2.1, while their scores in levels A2.2, B1.1 and B1.2 were unsatisfactory.

After thirty-six hours of reading sessions using short stories and Schema Theory activities, a reading comprehension post-test was administered to both the experimental and the control groups. The data obtained allowed to establish to what extent the use of short stories contributed to the enhancement of reading comprehension skills and if Schema Theory activities resulted in more effective reading comprehension skills. The findings obtained from a comparison between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group and the control group helped the researcher arrive at the following conclusions.

By comparing the pre-test and post-test results the experimental group only had a slight improvement in their reading scores in levels A1, A2.1, and B1.2. This group reduced their scores in levels A2.2 and B1.1. On the other hand, the control group only improved in the A1 level and showed a considerable decrease in levels A2.1, A2.2, B1.1 and B1.2. Comparing the results obtained in the pre-and post-test, it was found that although the experimental group did not show a considerable improvement in the post-test, the instruction using Schema Theory activities and short stories helped the students to maintain stable scores compared to the control group. Since it was the first year when schools started using course books provided by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education based on the CEFR system and adapting the levels of A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2, B1.1, and B1.2 to suit local needs, the results of the research lead us to believe that the students of the experimental and the control groups were gradually reaching the level expected of public high schools and that they were still progressing from level A1 to A2.1.

Regarding the Reading Survey administered at the end of the sessions to the experimental group, the conclusions are as follows. The students seemed to have kept the same preferences about fiction, fantasy and mystery compared to the



answers provided in the MRQ about their past experiences in reading. They also mentioned unconventional genres such as magazine articles, sports and true stories as favorites.

Concerning the students' past experiences about reading in English, the students' answers confirmed the results previously obtained in the MRQ about their poor reading habits. For many of them it was the first time they had read a whole story; most of them mentioned readings in Spanish or the short excerpts from their English book. The data also confirmed that 30% of the students read because they felt some obligation, and 70% of them read only during the school week. As for the questions related to learning outcomes, special difficulties and motivation it became apparent that new vocabulary, grammar structures and pronunciation were three important factors to consider. Ninety-seven percent of the students admitted that they would like to read again because they felt they could improve their English proficiency as a result. Furthermore, they found the stories fun and enjoyable, and at times challenging.

Recommendations

The main findings of the present research study suggest that using short stories can be a rewarding means of engaging students and improving their language skills, especially their reading comprehension. It should be emphasized that short stories are especially useful in classroom settings as they are easy to manage and do not create too much time pressure.

One of the recommendations might be that short stories should be no more than three pages. The students' age and interest need to be taken into account and a well-established routine for reading sessions should be set up.

It is evident that a lot of students in public high schools in Ecuador have relatively little experience in reading English. Therefore, it might be advisable to introduce a full scale reading program that would also include encouraging students to read more in their first language.

Regarding future research, it would be worthwhile to carry out further experiments that involve different age groups and students whose socio-economic backgrounds might be different from those of the experimental and control groups of the present research. Another research area might be looking at the close relationship between extensive reading and vocabulary acquisition in an EFL setting



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considering the fact that learning English as a Foreign Language implies limited authentic input away from the English classroom.



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Annex 1: Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ)

University of Cuenca

Title of the project: Short Stories for Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills in EFL: Schema Theory activities at A2.1 level in “La Inmaculada” High School in Cuenca-Ecuador

Date: _____ **Grade:** _____ **High School:** _____

Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ)

Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997

53 items

The purpose of the following research is to investigate the habits of reading in EFL in a high- school of Cuenca-Ecuador. In the following questionnaire there are no rights or wrong answers; I’m just interested in YOUR ideas about reading. To give your answer, write ONE number on each square.

If the statement is **very different from you**, circle a 1.

If the statement is **a little different from you**, circle a 2.

If the statement is **a little like you**, circle a 3.

If the statement is **a lot like you**, circle a 4.

11 constructs

Reading Efficacy (3 items)

- I don’t know that I will do well in reading next year.
- I am a good reader
- I learn more from reading than most students in the class

Reading Challenge (5 items)

- I like hard, challenging books
- If the project is interesting, I can read difficult material
- I like it when the questions in books make me think
- I usually learn difficult things by reading
- If a book is interesting I don’t care how hard it is to read

Reading Curiosity (6 items)

- If the teacher discusses something interesting I might read more about it
- I have favorite subjects that I like to read about



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- I read to learn new information about topics that interest me
- I read about my hobbies to learn more about them
- I like to read about new things
- I enjoy reading books about living things

Reading Involvement (6 items)

- I read stories about fantasy and make believe
- I like mysteries
- I make pictures in my mind when I read
- I feel like I make friends with people in good books
- I read a lot of adventure stories
- I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book

Importance of Reading (2 items)

- It is very important to me to be a good reader
- In comparison to other activities I do, it is very important to me to be a good reader

Reading Work Avoidance (4 items)

- I don't like vocabulary questions
- Complicated stories are no fun to read
- I don't like reading something when the words are too difficult
- I don't like it when there are too many people in the story

Competition in Reading (6 items)

- I try to get more answers right than my friends
- I like being the best at reading
- I like to finish my reading before other students
- I like being the only one who knows an answer in something we read
- It is important for me to see my name on a list of good readers
- I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends

Recognition for Reading (5 items)

- I like having the teacher say I read well
- My friends sometimes tell me I am a good reader
- I like to get compliments for my reading
- I am happy when someone recognizes my reading
- My parents often tell me what a good job I am doing in reading

Reading for Grades (4 items)

- Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing in reading



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- I look forward to finding out my reading grades
- I read to improve my grades
- My parents ask me about my reading grade

Social Reasons for Reading (7 items)

- I visit the library often with my family
- I often read to my brother or my sister
- My friends and I like to trade things to read
- I sometimes read to my parents
- I talk to my friends about what I am reading
- I like to help my friends with their schoolwork in reading
- I like to tell my family about what I am reading

Compliance (5 items)

- I do as little schoolwork as possible in reading
- I read because I have to
- I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it
- Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me
- I always try to finish my reading on time

Thanks for participating in this research ☺



Annex 2: Reading Comprehension Pre-test

**PRE-TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION
A1 to B1 LEVEL**

UNIDAD EDUCATIVA FISCAL MIXTA CENTRAL LA INMACULADA

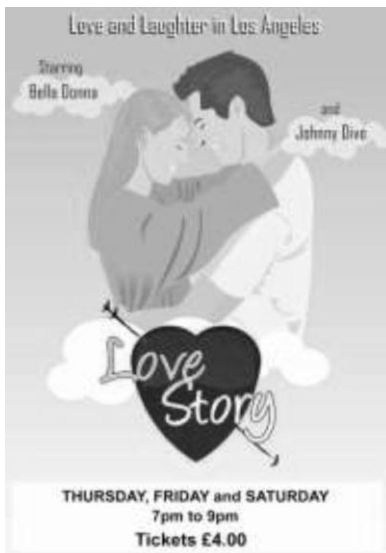
Age: 14-15 years old

Grade: First of Bachillerato # _____

PART ONE (A1)

Look at the picture and select true (A) or false (B) to each of the questions below. Mark your selections on your answer sheet.

Maria, Rose and Vicky want to go to the cinema. Maria doesn't like horror films, but loves any film starring Johnny Divo. Rose can't go to the cinema on Sundays and doesn't want to spend more than \$5 on the ticket. Vicky has seen The Ghost Train before, can go to the cinema on Friday and likes films that make her laugh.



1. The Ghost Train is the longest film.
2. Love Story is the most expensive.
3. Johnny Divo is in two of the films.
4. They can see the Ghost Train at the weekend.
5. The best film for all of them is Captain Zorro.

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| A | B |
| A | B |
| A | B |
| A | B |

(5 marks)



PART TWO (A2.1)

Read about each person and then decide whether each statement is true (A), false (B) or unknown (C). Mark your answers on your answer sheet.



Paul. Paul is ten years old. He comes from Africa but now he lives in London with his parents and his two older brothers. He moved to London three years ago. His school is only one kilometer from his house so he always walks to school. His favorite subject is history and he likes playing football.

Jenna. Jenna is twelve years old but it is her birthday next week. She lives next door to Paul with her mum and dad and her younger brother. She has to travel ten kilometers to school every day. When she was ten she went on holiday to Italy. She loves cats but she is afraid of dogs.



Alex. Alex was nine last week. On his birthday he went to the zoo with his friends. He is Jenna's younger brother and he goes to the same school as Paul but he is not in the same class. He goes to a karate class every Saturday morning but he doesn't like any other sports.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Paul was born in London. | A | B | C |
| 2. Paul is the youngest in his family. | A | B | C |
| 3. Jenna is nearly thirteen. | A | B | C |
| 4. Jenna is the youngest in her family. | A | B | C |
| 5. Jenna's favorite subject is chemistry. | A | B | C |
| 6. Paul and Jenna go to the same school. | A | B | C |
| 7. Alex took three friends to the zoo on his birthday. | A | B | C |
| 8. Alex and Paul are in different classes. | A | B | C |
| 9. Alex likes football. | A | B | C |
| 10. All the children live in London. | A | B | C |

(10 marks)



PART THREE (A2.2)

Read the following texts and select (A) true, (B) false, or (C) not in text, in answer to each of the statements below.

Hotel Miramar

Only five minutes walk from Taunton Beach, The Miramar Hotel is perfect for a family holiday. It has an indoor swimming pool and children under twelve can join The Sunshine Club for fun and games every afternoon. Bed and Breakfast costs £30 a night.



The Lakeside Hotel

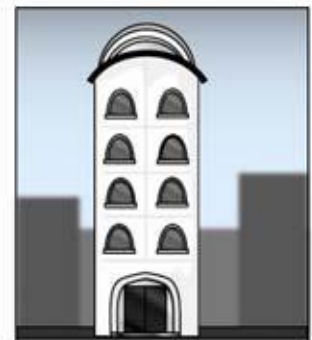


This is a two hundred-year-old country house on the shores of Lake Coniston. If you want a quiet time, just enjoy the beautiful mountain scenery, but if you're looking for excitement you can go climbing or sailing or diving. From

November to February you can also go skiing. Prices start from £40 per person per night.

The Metropolitan

This is right in the middle of London opposite Hyde Park and Close to all the major shops, theatres and tourist attractions. Visit our Health Spa for a massage or a sauna, or exercise in our new gymnasium. A family room costs £100 a night and you can eat a three-course meal in our restaurant from as little as £15.





PART THREE: ANSWER SHEET

1. Hotel Miramar is close to the beach.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

2. Hotel Miramar has an outdoor swimming pool.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

3. Eight-year-olds can join the Sunshine Club.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

4. Dogs are welcome at The Lakeside Hotel.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

5. The Lakeside Hotel was built last year.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

6. If you want to go shopping you should stay at The Lakeside Hotel.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

7. The Metropolitan is near Hyde Park.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

8. Many famous people stay at The Metropolitan.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

9. The Lakeside Hotel is the most expensive.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

10. This information helps people choose a hotel.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

(10marks)



PART FOUR (B1.1)

Read the article on Coffee then answer the questions on the following page by choosing True (A), False (B) or Not in the text (C). Mark your answers on your answer sheet.

Coffee – Did You Know?

Coffee, like chocolate and cola drinks, contains caffeine, a drug that is believed to be as addictive as nicotine or alcohol. Caffeine can cause headaches, stomach-aches and make you irritable as well as preventing you from enjoying a good night's sleep.

Nowadays, many people prefer to drink decaffeinated coffee (coffee that has had the caffeine removed), but real coffee lovers complain that this affects the taste of the coffee.

Coffee trees only grow in tropical and sub-tropical lands. They need a temperature of between 65 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit and annual rainfall of between 40 and 120 inches, although dry weather is needed for harvesting.

Coffee trees grow best on hills because this allows the water to drain away – coffee trees do not like to get their feet wet! Volcanic soil produces the best crop.

There are three main varieties of coffee trees: Arabica, originally found in Ethiopia, produces the best quality beans and is the most widely cultivated at high altitudes; Liberica comes from Liberia and grows best below 2000 feet; the third variety, Robusta, is a very strong plant that does not need much tending and is ideal for “instant” coffee.

Coffee originated in Ethiopia where it grew wild in the humid climate, but it was not introduced into Europe until the seventeenth century, when Coffee Houses became popular meeting places. Women, however, were not allowed in the Coffee Houses of England at that time.

In seventeenth –century Germany, only members of the royal court were permitted to drink coffee and the king sent spies called “coffee –smellers” into the street with orders to punish any ordinary people found roasting coffee!



PART FOUR: ANSWER SHEET

1. Chocolate contains some caffeine.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

2. Caffeine can stop your sleeping.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

3. "Liberica" produces the smallest coffee beans.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

4. Most people drink decaffeinated coffee these days.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

5. Coffee trees do not grow well in volcanic soil.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

6. Ordinary people in seventeenth century Germany were not allowed to drink coffee.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

7. Coffee trees were first found growing wild in Liberia.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

8. The Coffee Houses of seventeenth century England were popular places for men and women to meet.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

9. Coffee beans need to be picked when the weather is dry

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

10. Some of this information is about the ideal conditions for growing coffee trees.

A= True

B= False

C= Not in the text

(10 marks)



PART FIVE (B1.2)

Read this article on Soap then answer the questions on the following page by choosing True (A), False (B) or Not in Text (C). Mark your answers on your answer sheet.

SOAP



Only a hundred and fifty years ago, soap was so expensive that only very rich people could afford it. In those days, soap was taxed and earned well over a million pounds a year for the British government, until William Gladstone abolished the tax in 1853.

It isn't certain when soap was first used, but a factory that produced it was discovered in the ruins of Pompeii. There is a legend that, at a place called Sapo Hill, in Rome, in

around 1000BC, women, who were washing clothes in a stream, accidentally discovered that animal fat, wood ashes and clay made a kind of soap.

During the seventh century, the Spaniards and Italians began making soap using goats' fat and beech tree ashes, and the French experimented with olive oil. The English didn't produce soap until the twelfth century, when they made it by boiling dead animals and adding 'lye', a caustic solution obtained from wood ash. This was a very smelly process and in 1192 a monk, called Richard of Devises, wrote of the bad smells made by soap-makers in Bristol.

By the seventeenth century, it had become so popular that King Charles I decided it would help him to raise more money from taxation. By 1636 it was forbidden to make soap outside a one-mile limit of London and Bristol, and the Soap Tax was introduced. Taxmen carried the keys with which to unlock the special pans used to make it, and they stood guard while the soap was boiled.

In the nineteenth century soap was sold in big blocks to wholesalers, and shopkeepers carved off smaller pieces for their customers. It was William Lever who had the idea of cutting it into small bars, wrapping it in paper and putting it into small cardboard boxes.

The basic chemical process used to make soap has changed little through the ages, but these days soap is more likely to be perfumed, there are many varieties to choose from, it is widely available, inexpensive and tax free!

PART FIVE: ANSWER WORKSHEET



1. Soap used to be very cheap.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

2. In 1853, soap was abolished.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

3. There is evidence that soap was made in Pompeii.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

4. At Sapo Hill, women discovered soap by accident.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

5. The best kind of soap is made from olive oil.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

6. 'Lye' comes from dead animals.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

7. In the seventeenth century, soap could only be made outside Bristol or London.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

8. William Lever's customers preferred their soap in a box.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

9. The author mentions five ways in which soap is different 'these days'.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

10. This article is about the history of soap-making.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

(10 marks)

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Annex 3: Lost and Found

Pre-reading activities

1. Skim “**Lost and found**”. Then underline the general idea of this passage.

- A) The story is about a lost treasure.
- B) It tells the story of triplets.
- C) It is a story about a father and his son.
- D) It is a story about a mother who loses her daughter.

2. Fill in the following chart. Write 4 things that you think are going to be mentioned in the text and 4 things that you think will not happen.

IT WILL HAPPEN...	IT WILL NOT HAPPEN...
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

3. Read the following definitions and match them to the correct word.

- Friendly a) To bring up (the child of other parents) specifically by a formal legal act.
- Easy b) Either of two children or animals born at the same time.
- To adopt c) Triplets, three children born at one birth.
- Twins d) Not requiring much labor or effort; not difficult; simple
- Guess e) Not hostile
- Triplets d) to think, believe, or suppose



LOST AND FOUND

Part 1

Bob Shafran was happy. He was at a new school, and the other students were friendly. “Hi, Bob!” they said. But some students said, “Hi, Eddy!” Bob didn’t understand. He asked another student, “Why do some students call me Eddy?”

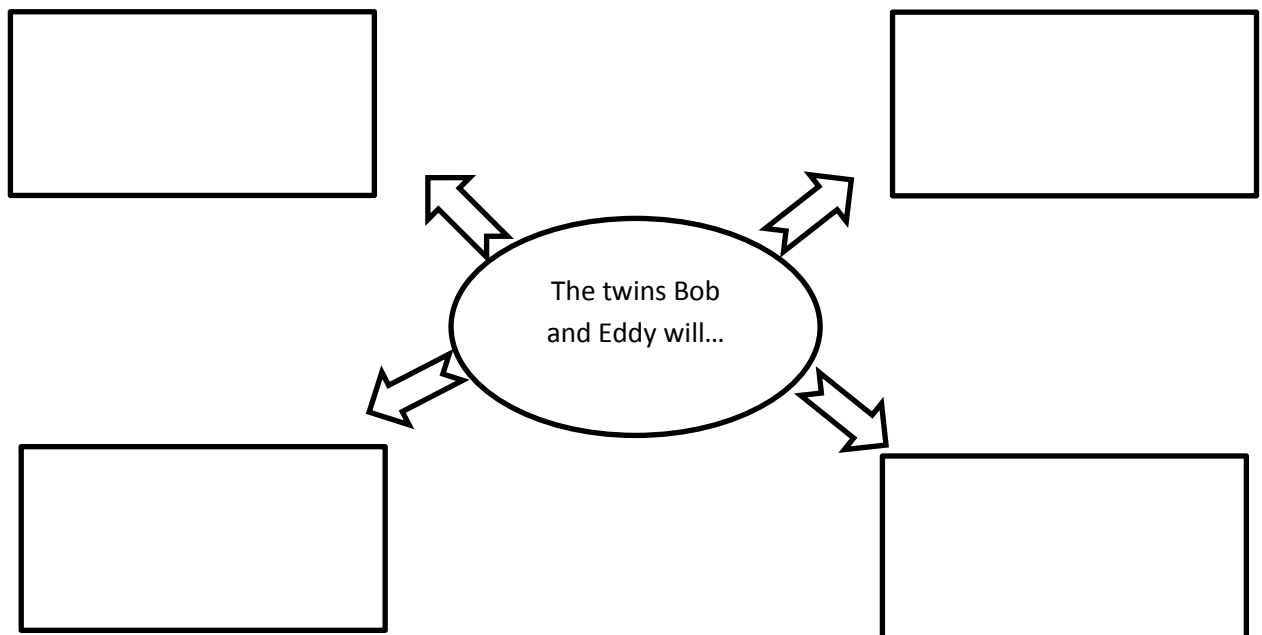
“Oh, that’s easy to explain,” the students said. “Eddy Galland was a student here last year. Now he goes to a different school. You look like Eddy. Some of the students think you are Eddy.”

Bob wanted to meet Eddy Galland. He got Eddy’s address from a student and went to Eddy’s house. Eddy opened the door. Bob couldn’t believe his eyes. He looked exactly like Eddy! Bob and Eddy had the same color eyes and the same smile. They had the same dark, curly hair. They also had the same birthday. And they both were adopted.

Bob and Eddy found out that they were twin brothers. Soon after the boys were born, one family adopted Bob, and another family adopted Eddy. Bob’s family never knew about Eddy, and Eddy’s family never knew about Bob.

While-reading activities

4. Make 4 predictions about how the story ends.





Part 2

Bob and Eddy's story was in the newspaper. There was a photo of Bob and Eddy next to the story. A young man named David Kellman saw the photo in the newspaper. David couldn't believe his eyes. He looked exactly like Bob and Eddy! He had the same color eyes and the same smile. He had the same dark, curly hair. He had the same birthday. And he too was adopted.

Later David met Bob and Eddy. When Bob and Eddy saw David, they couldn't believe their eyes. David looked exactly like them! Why did David look exactly like Bob and Eddy? You can probably guess. Bob and Eddy are not twins. Bob, Eddy and David are triplets.

After-reading activities

5. Circle the correct answer: A (true) B (False) C (not in the text)

a) Eddy felt so happy in that school.

A B C

b) Eddy studied at the same school last year.

A B C

c) Bob did not want to meet Eddy.

A B C

d) David read the story of Bob and Eddy in the newspaper

A B C

e) Eddy, Bob and David had a good family relationship.

A B C

Works Cited

- Heyer S, True Stories in the News: A Beginning Reader. 2nd edition, Longman.



Annex 4: Strange Animal

Strange Animal

An African story re-told by Alexander McCall Smith



Pre-reading activities

1. Look at the photograph and discuss these questions in class.

- What are the people in the photo doing?

- What kind of people are going to participate in this story?

- Read the title of the story. What do you think is going to happen?

2. Look at the following words. Underline the correct synonym or similar word.

- **To shout:** a) to yell b) to run fast
- **To warn:** a) to keep calm b) to prevent
- **To pick up:** a) to acquire b) to collect
- **Bush:** a) a small tree b) a small animal
- **To frighten:** a) to smile b) to scare
- **Drum:** a) an instrument of percussion b) an instrument of wind
- **To harm:** a) to kill someone b) to damage someone
- **To scoff at:** a) to make fun of b) to cough



- **To hang:** a) to suspend something b) to liberate something
- **Idleness:** a) an ending of a movie b) an state activity

PART 1

There were many people to tell that boy what to do. There was his mother and his father, his grandfather, and his older brother. And there was also an aunt, who was always saying: "Do this. Do that." Everyday this aunt would shout at him, and make a great noise that would frighten the birds.

The boy did not like his aunt. Sometimes he thought that he might go to some man to buy some medicine to put into her food to make her quiet, but of course he never did this. In spite of all, his aunt's shouting and ordering about, the boy always obeyed her, as his father said he must. "She has nothing to do but shout at you," the boy's father explained. "It keeps her happy." "When I'm a big man I'll come and shout in her ear," the boy said. It was good to think about that.

There was a place that the aunt knew where a lot of fruit grew. It was a place which was quite far away, and the boy did not like going there. Near this place there were caves and the boy had heard that a strange animal lived in these caves. One of his friends had seen this strange animal and had warned people about going near that place.

But the aunt insisted on sending the boy to pick fruit there, and so he went, his heart a cold stone of fear inside him. He found the trees and began to pick the fruit, but a little later he heard the sound of something in the bush beside him. He stopped his task and stood near the tree in case the strange animal should be coming.

Out of the bushes came the strange animal. It was just as his friend had described it and the boy was very frightened. Quickly he took out the drum which he had brought with him and began to beat it. The strange animal stopped, looked at the boy in surprise, and began to dance.

All day the boy played the drum, keeping the strange animal dancing. As long as he played the drum, he knew that there was nothing that the strange animal could do to harm him. At last, when night came, the strange animal stopped dancing and disappeared back into the bush. The boy knew that it had gone back to its cave and so he was able to walk home safely. When he reached home, though, his aunt had prepared her shouting.

"Where is all the fruit?" she shouted. Thinking that he had eaten it, she then began to beat him until the boy was able to run away from her and hide in his own hut.

The next day, the boy told his father of the real reason why he had been unable to bring back fruit from the tree. He explained that there had been a strange animal



there and that he had had to play his drum to keep the animal dancing. The father listened and told the story to the aunt, who scoffed at the boy.

“There are no strange animals at that place,” she said. “You must be making all this up.” But the father believed the boy and said that the next day they would all go to the fruit place with him. The aunt thought that this was a waste of time, but she was not going to miss any chance of shouting, and so she came too.

When the family reached the tree there was no strange animal. The aunt began to pick the fruit from the tree and stuff it into her mouth. Calling to the boy to give her his drum, she hung it on the branch of a tree in a place where he would not be able to get at it easily.

“You must pick fruit,” she shouted to the boy. “You must not play a drum in idleness.”

The boy obeyed his aunt, but all the time he was listening for any sounds to come from the bush. He knew that sooner or later the strange animal would appear and that they would then all be in danger.

While Reading activities

3. Now think about your family and answer these questions.

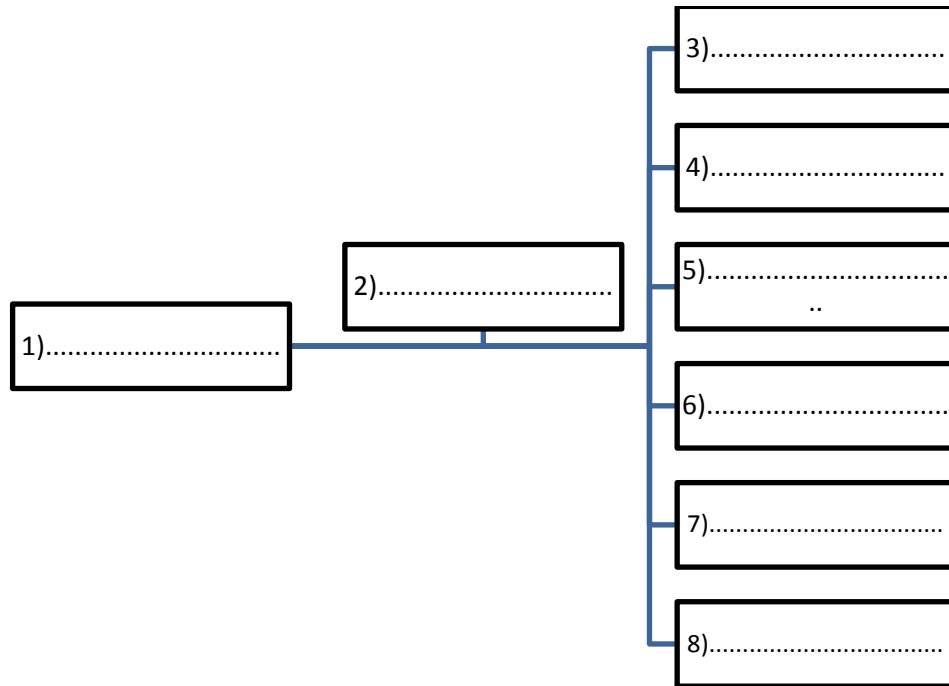
- Who tells you what to do at home?

- Who makes the most important decisions?

- Do you take part in making those important decisions? Explain.

4. Put the members of the family in order according to your situation. Which people in your family tell others what to do?

Child, mother, grandmother, grandfather, older brother, younger sister, father, uncle, aunt, older sister, younger brother.



PART 2

When the strange animal did come, it went straight to the boy’s father and mother and quickly ate them up. Then the aunt tried to run away, but the strange animal ran after her and ate her too. While this was happening, the boy had the time to reach up for his drum from the branch of the fruit tree. Quickly he began to play this drum, which made the strange animal stop looking for people to eat and begin to dance.

As the boy played his drum faster and faster, the strange animal danced more and more quickly. Eventually the boy played so fast that the animal had to spit out the father and the mother. The boy was very pleased with this and began to play more slowly. At this, the strange animal’s dancing became slower.

“You must play your drum fast again,” the boy’s father said. “Then the strange animal will have to spit out your aunt.”

“Do I have to?” the boy asked, disappointed that he would not be allowed to leave the aunt in the stomach of the strange animal. “Yes,” the boy’s father said sternly. “You must.”

Reluctantly, the boy again began to play the drum and the strange animal began to dance more quickly. After a few minutes it was dancing so quickly that it had to spit out the aunt. Then darkness came and the strange animal went back to his cave.

The aunt was very quiet during the journey back home. The next day she was quiet as well, and she never shouted at the boy again. Being swallowed by a strange animal had taught the aunt not to waste her time shouting; now, all that she wanted to do was to sit quietly in the sun. The boy was very happy.



After-reading activities

5. Answer the following questions. Put, True (A), False (B), not in the text (C).

- The message of the story is that people should live in harmony with the nature. _____
- The aunt hated her nephew. _____
- There was a place which was far away but full of delicious fruit. _____
- The strange animal began to dance when the boy played his drum. _____
- The aunt thought that the strange animal was just an invented story. _____
- The strange animal spitted out the boy's family because it didn't like humans. _____
- The boy wanted to help his aunt and save her from the strange animal. _____
- The aunt was sorry about her bad attitude with her nephew. _____

Works Cited

- Collie J, Slater S, Short Stories for Creative Language Classrooms, Cambridge University Press, page 9 2003



Annex 5: The Butterfly Lovers

THE BUTTERFLY LOVERS

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. **Look at the picture. Then underline the idea that best describes the story you are going to read.**

- It tells the story of a warrior who loves a princess secretly.
- It describes a young couple who fell in love although their families are enemies.
- It is about a young couple who love each other after death.
- This story is about a girl who never finds her true love.
- It is a story about a mother and the marriage of her one and only daughter.



2. **Circle the word that has a similar meaning to the words in BOLD in the sentences.**

- Before Cinderella went to the party she had to do all the **household work** such as cleaning, laundering and cooking.
 - a) Housekeeping
 - b) Babysitting
- My friend won the lottery and now he's a **wealthy** man.
 - a) Rich
 - b) Poor
- When I study a lot before an exam, I feel **confident** and get good grades.
 - a) untrue
 - b) Secure
- My friend **disguised** himself as Frankenstein for the last Halloween party.
 - a) Get dressed
 - b) Dressed up
- Kate didn't have many problems doing her Math's homework, she did it **readily**.
 - a) Easily
 - b) Consciously
- It was 4:30 so they **hastened** because the movie started at 4:45.
 - a) Run
 - b) Hurry
- I was **overjoyed** for being accepted to the university.



WHILE-READING ACTIVITIES

4. Summarize the first part of the story. Put the following sentences in order.

- Her father did not want to go against the traditions; however he let her study if she was admitted. _____
- Every morning she put on her disguise and went to school where she met Liang. _____
- After some years, Zhu realized she was in love of her friend Liang. _____
- In China the girls were raised to do the housekeeping at home. ___1___
- She told Liang that when they finished school he should ask her father for her sister's hand. _____
- Liang saved some money and after some time, he went to Zhu's house. _____
- Zhu was very clever and decided to dress up like a boy in order to be admitted. _____
- Finally, Zhu confessed that she was a girl and that she was in love with him. _____
- But many years ago there was a girl who desired to go to school. _____
- She wanted to stay with Liang for the rest of her life and thought of a plan. _____

5. Read the second part of the story.

Liang was dazed by the revelation, but soon recovered and caught Zhu in a warm embrace. Suddenly everything had fallen into place. Now he knew why he had felt such a strong love for Zhu. Zhu took him to her father who listened attentively to what Liang had to say, but when the young man asked for Zhu's hand, he shook his head. He told Liang that Zhu had already been promised to another man, a wealthy merchant. Nothing that Liang said could make Zhu's father **change his mind**.

Liang left, shattered. He felt frighteningly alone. The thought that he would never see Zhu again filled him with pain. On the way, he collapsed and died. When Zhu learnt of Liang's death she lost all desire to continue living. She pretended to agree to the



marriage arranged for her on condition that the wedding procession passed by Liang's grave.

As the wedding procession neared the cemetery the wind began to howl and the sky grew dark. Zhu jumped down from her palanquin and rushing to Liang's grave threw herself on it, sobbing uncontrollably. A peal of thunder suddenly rent the air. The next moment, a bolt of lightning hit the grave, breaking it open. Zhu leapt into it.

The storm subsided as quickly as it had started. When Zhu's relatives reached the grave and looked into it, all they saw at first was an empty coffin. Then out flew two butterflies, dancing as if they could not believe they were together. And as the people standing around the grave watched in fascination and in astonishment the two lovely butterfly lovers flew out of sight.

AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

6. Answer True (T) or False (F) to the following sentences.

- Zhu's family was not wealthy. _____
- Her father did not want her to study because of their traditions. _____
- Zhu was admitted in the school as a girl. _____
- Zhu lived with her aunt. _____
- Liang became a good friend of Zhu's aunt as the years passed. _____
- Zhu wanted to stay with Liang the rest of her life. _____
- She asked Liang to get a job and ask for her hand. _____
- Zhu's father let her get married to Liang. _____
- Liang felt so sad that he collapsed and died on the way. _____
- Zhu married another man. _____

7. Think and answer.

- **Why did Zhu disguise herself as a man to be admitted to the school?**

- **What was Zhu's condition for the wedding?**

- **What do the two butterflies mean?**

- _____



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- **Did you like the story? Explain.**

- _____

- _____

Works Cited

English for Students “The Butterfly Lovers”, <http://www.english-for-students.com/Stories.html>



Annex 6: The Amazing Mr. Endicott

THE AMAZING MR ENDICOTT

ERIC BROWN

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

- **Read the following words. Then choose the opposite meaning among the options.**
- Fit : A) in good physical condition B) unfit C) being in good health
- Cottage: A) cabin B) hut C) apartment
- Foreign: A) not native B) external C) outer
- send overseas: A) send abroad B) send beyond the sea C) stay in the country
- pop out: A) leave B) go out C) pop in
- set off across: A) walk through B) pass by C) cross
- crest: A) bottom B) top C) peak
- heather: A) grass B) ling C) heath
- drift off: A) float B) wander C) settle
- slip out: A) stay in B) drain C) slip away
- stare: A) gaze B) not look C) peek
- lay awake: A) lay asleep B) unawaken C) awaken

1. Read the title. Then circle the picture that best describes the story that follows.



2. Read the following sentences. Write T or F if you think that these events are going to happen in the story.

- The story is about Mr. Endicott's love for music. _____
- The story is about Mr. Endicott's experience with a UFO. _____
- Mr. Endicott's best friend is a six-year old boy. _____
- Mr. Endicott's best friend is an extraterrestrial. _____
- There is going to be a school party. _____
- There is going to be a birthday party. _____
- Mr. Endicott comes from another planet. _____
- Mr. Endicott has traveled around the world. _____
- Mr. Endicott has special powers. _____



- Mr. Endicott makes fantastic magic tricks. _____

3. Read the 1st part of the story.

Mr Endicott was one hundred years old that week. Imagine that. *One hundred!* He was born in the last century, in 1987. Although he was ninety years older than me, he was still **fit** and active. He walked ten miles a day just for fun. He had a photographic memory – he never forgot anything he ever saw, heard or read. His **cottage** next door was like a museum stuffed with a thousand fascinating objects collected on his travels around the world.

But the most important thing about Mr Endicott was that he was my best friend. What's the Diplomatic Service? I once asked my mum. "It means the civil servants who work for the Government in **foreign** countries."

"Mr Endicott worked for the Diplomatic Service," I said. "He told me he was posted to a dozen of different countries." I thought about that. I was only six at the time. "But how did they find an envelope big enough?"

Mum laughed and told me that being posted to another country meant **being sent overseas** to work. Even so, I grew up thinking that Mr Endicott was magical, some kind of wizard who climbed into giant envelopes and **popped out** –*hey presto!* – in hot and dusty countries. But the truth was even stranger...

One week before his hundredth birthday party, I went for a long walk with Mr Endicott. Every week he **set off across** the moors with his knapsack full of sardine sandwiches and a flask of coffee. My mum packed a lunch in my Power Ranger lunch-box and joined him.

Over the years he had told me a hundred amazing stories – about his life in distant countries, the strange and wonderful things he had seen and experienced. But today he was quiet as he stood up the hillside above the village. Perhaps he was contemplating the fact that he was almost one hundred years old.

We paused at the top of the hill and looked around us at the rolling moorland and our village nestling in the valley. He pointed at the horizon with his stick. "Over this way, Tommy. I want to show you something."

One hour later we stopped on the **crest** of a hill and stared across the vale. It looked like every other stretch of moorland we'd crossed that morning. We sat on a rock, munched our lunch and drank our coffee. Mr Endicott mopped his face with a big white handkerchief. "Did I ever tell you that I was born in Holbury?" he asked.

Holbury was a small town a mile from my village. I shook my head. As far as I could recall, he had never mentioned where he came from. "Well, I was. A hundred years ago next week. Seems like just yesterday that I was a lad your age, playing on the moors..." He paused, staring into the distance, or into the distant past. "I was a bit like you, Tommy. Curious. Happy with my own company. I'd often go wandering off



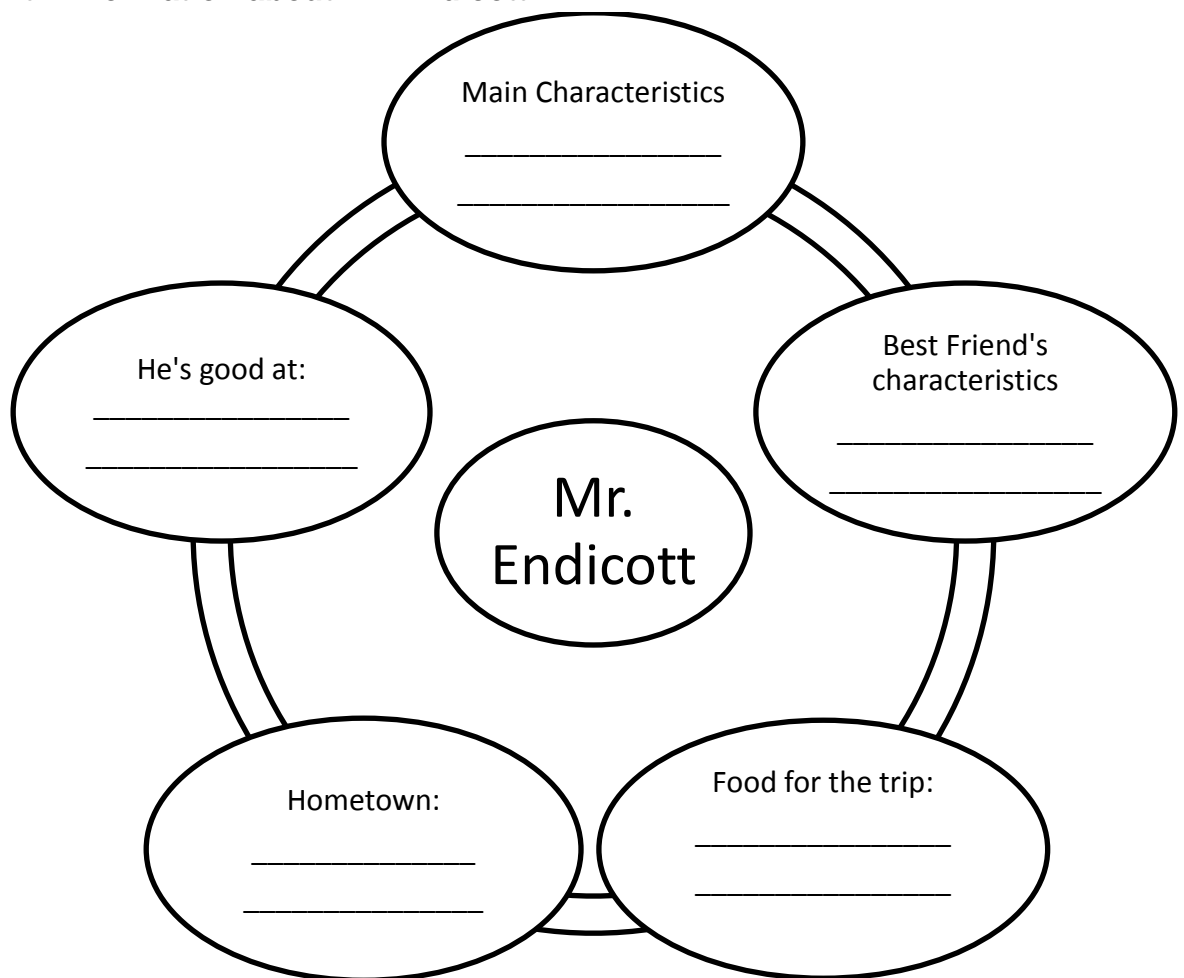
by myself. Exploring. Watching the wildlife, the birds and animals that made the moors their home.”

We finished our sandwiches and **set off** again. I waded through the knee-high **heather**, the wiry plants scratching my bare legs. At last Mr Endicott stopped and pointed at a large, circular hole in the ground before us, perhaps one meter deep. “I’ve never been back here since that day,” he said to himself. I stared at the hole. “What is it?”

He looked at me. “What happened here is a long story,” he told me. “I do believe it’s a two-parter.” I smiled. Mr Endicott stories were sometimes one-parter, tales that could be told in one afternoon, and sometimes two-parter, longer stories that took two afternoons to tell.

He turned and we set off back to the village. “This happened a long time ago,” he said. “And I’ve never told anyone about it. Never trusted anyone enough to tell them what happened. But you... you remind me of the boy I was, Tommy. So here’s the first part.”

4. WHILE READING ACTIVITIES: Complete the following graphic organizer with information about Mr. Endicott.





5. Read the 2nd part of the story.

Mr Endicott told me that it happened in September 1907. He was lying in bed, unable to get to sleep. Every time he **drifted off**, he thought he could hear a voice in his head, telling him to climb out of bed and walk onto the moors. So he did. He obeyed the voice. He was curious. He got dressed and crept quietly downstairs and **slipped out** of the back door.

As he walked towards the moors, he could no longer hear the voice. But he seemed to know where to go. He left the lane and strode across the moorland. It was a moonlit night and the heather stretched away like the waves of a vast, silver sea. He had no idea what was happening, but he was not afraid.

Then he was standing on the hillside where we had eaten our lunch, **staring** across the moonlit moors. Suddenly, out of the southern sky near the constellation of Orion, came a fiery ball. He **stared** at it, a part of him frightened at what he was seeing, but another part calm. The voice entered his head again, telling him not to panic.

Then the fiery ball did something very strange. It slowed down. As he watched, the ball lost all its fire and became a dark shape against the stars as it lowered itself slowly to the ground. The boy walked towards it as if in a trance. "I couldn't stop myself," Mr Endicott said now. "I was drawn towards the object. I *had* to walk towards it. What happened next changed my life."

I **stared** at him in fascination. "What did happen next?" I gasped. He smiled. "Look, we're almost home. That's the end of part one. Part two is next Saturday." I said goodbye, my head full of his amazing tale. I wondered if I could wait a whole week to hear the second part of the story.

I **lay awake** for a long time that night, thinking about what Mr Endicott had told me. Just as I was falling asleep, I had an idea. In the morning I caught a bus into town and made my way to the local newspaper office. I asked if I could look in their records department for copies of their paper from September 1907. "You're in luck," a junior reporter told me as we entered the cellar where all the back-issues were kept. "The *News* was founded in 1906. Here we are, September 1907."

He deposited a pile of old newspapers on the desk before me, then left me alone in the dusty room. For the next two hours I looked through paper after paper searching for a report about lights in the sky.

I was beginning to give up hope. I had looked through more than twenty newspapers with no luck. The dust was making me sneeze. Then, in the last-but-one paper, I found what I was looking for. The report had three headlines, each one smaller than the last, which was the fashion in old newspapers.



6. Answer the following questions about the story.

- "He told me he was posted to a dozen of different countries." What does Tommy think about this expression?

- What was Mr. Endicott like when he was Tommy's age?

- How did the story of Mr. Endicott begin? And when did it happen?

- Why couldn't Mr. Endicott tell Tommy the complete story?

- What did Tommy do in order to discover what really happened with Mr. Endicott in 1907?

Works Cited

- A new Windmill book of Short Stories, Tales with a Twist, edited by Mike Royston, Heinemann New Windmills, page 108-111, 2000



Annex 7: Fireball Over Holbury! Mystery objects Seen in Night Sky

Fireball Over Holbury! Mystery Object Seen in Night Sky Experts suspect meteorite

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Read the words in the box and complete the sentences below.

Crew, witnesses, lawn, surrounded, cellar, harm, dragged, cloudless, moonlit, strode, flask, hissed, knapsack, gun, begged, leaked out, tapped, plummeting, approached, oddly

- The police interrogated the _____ after the accident.
- The boy found his old bicycle full of dust in the _____.
- The week _____ while I was sick in hospital.
- I don't think it's going to rain today; the sky is _____.
- I was late today. I _____ until I got the last bus of the morning
- She always brings a _____ full of apple juice to the school.
- I have snacks, some candies, a sandwich and my book inside my _____.
- It was a terrible show; people _____ the singer on stage.
- I never win anything. Today I won a ticket for the cinema _____.
- A terrible smell _____ of that bottle of milk.
- I was so nervous when the singer of the band _____ to me.
- Mary was barefoot on the lawn when she was _____ by ants.
- The child drew a forest full of animals, trees, flowers and a very green _____.
- That man will need a complete _____ to rescue his car from the river.
- The pilot jumped and saved his life when the aero plane was _____.
- This is a beautiful night full of stars and our faces are _____.
- The policeman _____ the car when he couldn't find the robber.
- The kid took the knife but he didn't cause any _____.
- The students _____ the teacher for a second opportunity to take the exam.
- The robber stole one million dollars threatening the bank clerk with a _____.

2. Predict and underline true sentences about the story that follows.

- Mr. Endicott dies before his one-hundredth birthday.
- Mr. Endicott is kidnapped by the UFOs.
- Mr. Endicott decides to go with the UFOs and live on the stars.
- The UFOs are discovered by the police officers.
- Tommy is taken by the UFOs with Mr. Endicott.
- Tommy is given special powers by the UFOs.



- The story ends when Tommy wakes up from a dream.
- The story ends when Tommy says goodbye to Mr. Endicott.

3. Groupwork: Read the first part of the story.

I read: *A number of independent **witnesses** reported seeing a bright fireball in the night sky over the Holbury moors on the evening of the 25th. Said PC Crowther: "It was the size of a house and fiery, and it came down on the moors a mile above the town. I investigated but discovered nothing suspicious.*

I read other eye-witness accounts. Finally an astronomer from London gave his opinion: *It sounds very much as though your witnesses saw a meteorite, which are common at this time of the year...*

I left the **cellar**, thanked the junior reporter, and caught the bus back home. So Mr Endicott had seen something that night, all those years ago. And, I knew, it was something much more than a meteorite. On Saturday Mr Endicott would tell me everything...

The week seemed to **drag**. I looked out for Mr Endicott, but he remained inside his cottage. I thought of paying him a visit and **begging** him to tell me the second part of the story, but that would have been rude. I would just have to be patient and wait.

On Saturday, the day before his birthday party, I packed some sandwiches and hurried out to meet Mr Endicott. He was waiting by his garden gate, staring into the **cloudless** sky. "Wonderful day for a walk, Tommy. Fit and ready?"

"Fit and ready!" I declared, and we set off up the lane and across the moors. We **strode** a mile along the bridleway, then turned east towards Holbury and the strange, circular depression in the ground.

Mr. Endicott talked all the way but not about what he had seen on the moors that night. He talked about his long life, his experiences in World War One. He told me about the many countries he had visited while working for the Government. At last we arrived at the hole in the ground. We sat and ate our lunch in silence.

I asked: "Can you tell me the second part of the story, Mr Endicott? What happened when you walked towards the fireball?" He smiled and finished his coffee. He seemed to take a long time to pack his **flask** and sandwich-box into his **knapsack**. He stood.

"Where did I get to Tommy? Ah, yes," he said as we set off home. "By the time it touched the ground, it was no longer a fireball. It was... it was a dark, oval shape – something like a rugby ball. Steam rose from its surface, and it **hissed** in the silence of the night. **Oddly**, I wasn't frightened."



He told me that he walked towards the object and stopped, staring up at it in silent wonder. He saw that the thing was made of some kind of dark metal, and he could see windows or view screens on its upper curves. As he stared, he told himself that he could make out shapes behind those windows, small people-shapes.

What happened next took him by surprise. A section of the oval dropped down to form a kind of ramp. From inside the object a white, foul-smelling gas **leaked out**. He covered his nose with his hands and backed away.

Then, as he stared, he made out a small figure walking down the ramp through the mist. "What happened then?" I asked. "The figure **approached** me slowly, holding out its hand. It was small – no larger than yourself. It was dressed in a silver suit, and wore some kind of glass helmet. Behind the face-plate, I made out its features. I had two big black eyes, no nose at all, and just a slit for a mouth." "An alien!" I gasped.





Mr Endicott nodded. "An alien," he said. "Did it attack you?" He smiled. "No – no, it didn't attack me. It came in peace. Of course, I was frightened to begin with. But then I heard a voice in my head, again. It told me not to be afraid, that I would not be harmed. They were a peaceful people..."

Mr Endicott paused. We were almost home. "And then?" I asked "And then an alien reached out its long arm. It held something in its hand, something like a pistol. The voice in my head told me not to panic. I stood there, very still, and the alien touched me with its pistol. Suddenly I felt heat pass through me, and I was **surrounded** by light." We had paused outside my house – and at that very second my mum appeared at the door. "Tommy, there you are. Afternoon, Mr Endicott. All ready for tomorrow? Come on, Tommy – it's dinner time."

"But the rest of the story!" "Tomorrow, Tommy," he said. "I'll tell you what happened, tomorrow."

WHILE READING ACTIVITIES.

4. Decode the message. Find the sentence in the story.

The  in my  me  not 2 

(Noun) (Noun) (Verb: past tense) (adjective)

5. Find and circle the sentences in the text. Then put the numbers in the correct column of each story.



READ THE SENTENCES BELOW

- 1:He told me he was posted to a dozen of different countries.
- 2: He was waiting by his garden gate, staring into the cloudless sky.
- 3: He seemed to take a long time to pack his flask and sandwich-box .
- 4: I’ve never been back here since that day.
- 5: I felt heat pass through me, and I was **surrounded** by light.
- 6: He was lying in bed, unable to get to sleep.
- 7: He deposited a pile of old newspapers on the desk before me.
- 8: I’ll tell you what happened, tomorrow.

THE AMAZING MR. ENDICOTT

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

FIREBALL OVER HOLBURY!

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

6. Group work: Read the second part of the story.

We held the party on the **lawn** of our back garden. All the neighbours came, and lots of dignities, the vicar and the Lord Mayor from town. A photographer from the local paper was there, taking shots of Mr. Endicott cutting into his cake. Even a TV **crew** turned up and interviewed him. “How does it feel to be one hundred years old, Mr Endicott?” the reporter asked with stunning originality. “I must say, you do look well for your age!” I wondered what the papers and TV would say if they knew that Mr Endicott had met an alien being!

When I found myself alone with Mr Endicott, I said, “You said you’d tell me the end of the story today.” He smiled at me. “Later,” he whispered. “When we’re quite alone. I promise.” Except, there was no later.

The party ended, and the Lord Mayor insisted on taking Mr Endicott off to an official function in town. Disappointed, I watched the Rolls Royce carry him away. That night I could not sleep. Once I did slip off, but awoke seconds later. I thought I heard a voice in my head...

But that was ridiculous! I must be dreaming of what had happened to Mr Endicott, back in 1907. I climbed out of bed and stared through the window. The moon was full, illuminating the moors with its silver light. As I stared, I saw a figure. It was Mr



Endicott, standing on the skyline, and looking back at my house. He waved at me, then turned and walked off across the moors. I dressed as fast as I could, crept downstairs and let myself out through the back door. I ran to where I had seen Mr Endicott, and stared across the moors.

There he was, striding with determination through the heather. I gave chase, shouting his name and pleading with him to slow down. I wondered if I was dreaming...

Then, high overhead, I saw the fireball. It streaked across the night sky, **plummeting** rapidly to earth. As I watched, its fiery tail disappeared, and the object... the *spaceship* ... came to rest on the **moonlit** moorland. "Mr Endicott!" I cried. He turned. "Tommy," he said. "I promised I'd tell you how it ended." He took my hand and together we walked towards the spaceship. We stopped, staring.

"When the alien touched me with its pistol-device," Mr Endicott whispered, "I was surrounded by a bright white light, and a voice in my head explained everything. **It** told me that I would never fall ill, that cuts and bruises would quickly heal. That I would live on Earth to be a hundred. In here," he **tapped** his chest, "I have never aged. And my memory – that, too, was a gift from the aliens."

"But why? Why did they help you like this?" "The voice told me that they would return for me when I was one hundred years old. They would take me to their home among the stars, where other humans like me live. You see, the aliens are scientists. They wish to learn as much as possible about us with the least possible interference. They do this by giving one person every century special powers, and then returning for this person. I will tell them everything I know about this world, which thanks to my memory is a lot..."

He paused. Before us, the spaceship opened. Down the ramp walked a silver-suited alien. I wanted to turn and run, but a voice in my head told me to be calm. As I watched, Mr Endicott walked towards the alien. They talked. Then my friend turned to me. "Goodbye, Tommy," he said. "Perhaps, in time and space, we will meet again."

Then he turned and walked quickly up the ramp into the spaceship. The alien faced me, staring with its big back eyes behind the glass of its face-mask. I wanted to shout after Mr Endicott, ask him what he meant. The alien reached towards me, and in its hand was a device like a pistol. I heard a voice in my head: "We wish you no **harm**, Tommy. If you, too would like a long life on Earth, and then an even a longer life among the stars..."

That was all it said, but it was enough. Did I want to live for ever, it was asking? Did I want a perfect health, a photographic memory, and a hundred years on Earth? Did I want to live among the stars with Mr Endicott and others like him, and the aliens?



I stepped forward and held out my hand, and the silver being touched me with the **gun**. I felt a warmth spread through my body, and was surrounded by light. I felt a wonderful peace which I knew would be with me for the rest of my life.

Later, I watched the spaceship rise and disappear into the night sky, then turned and made my way back home.

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

7. Draw the ending of the story.

8. Answer:

- If you were Tommy and had an encounter with an alien, would you take the opportunity to live for a hundred years with special powers? Explain.

- Think and write a different ending for the story.

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Annex 8: Silas Marner Chapter 1 and 2

SILAS MARNER/ CHAPTER 1 and 2

The Weaver of Raveloe

by George Eliot

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

1. **Read the title again and underline a description that best matches the story you are going to read.**
 - a. Silas Marner is a ghost that haunts the people in an old house in England.
 - b. The story is about Silas Marner, a young man, who has a terrible secret to confess.
 - c. Silas Marner is an insane person that can see the future.
 - d. Silas Marner is a man who was condemned to live a lonely life without friends for a crime that he did not commit.
2. **Read the definitions then write one of the words from the box.**

linen weaver shortsighted loom devilish fit clerk chapel bent engaged
 delight tremble kneel/knelt draw-lots blame shoemaker floorboard gamble
 farrier squire inherit careless quarry fetch

- a. A machine that weavers use to make cloth: _____
- b. It is a kind of material to make cloth or bed sheets or tablecloths:

- c. A man who is the main landowner in a rural community:

- d. It's a profession in which people use a loom to make cloth:

- e. To go after and bring back something: _____
- f. A person who is not able to see at long distances: _____
- g. Someone who is going to be married: _____
- h. Something related to devil: _____
- i. A medical condition of unconsciousness caused after an epilepsy attack:

- j. A worker of an office who keeps records and files: _____
- k. A place of Christian worship, a separate altar, in a church or cathedral:

- l. Something that it is not straight; it is curved: _____
- m. The action of vibrating with short slight movements: _____
- n. Something that causes extreme pleasure or satisfaction; joy:

- o. To rest or support oneself on their knees: _____
- p. The action of attributing responsibility or accuse. _____



- q. A person who makes or repairs shoes or boots: _____
- r. An open surface excavation for the extraction of stone, marble, etc.

- s. The action of playing games of chance to win or obtain money:

- t. A person who shoes horses: _____
- u. To make a decision by voting on pieces of paper and putting them in a box:

- v. To receive properties, money, etc. by succession: _____
- w. Something done with or acting with insufficient attention; negligent:

- x. One of the boards forming a floor: _____

WHILE READING ACTIVITIES

- a. **What do you know about Silas Marner? Circle T (True), or F (False).**
- b. Silas Marner lived in a town in England called Raveloe. T F
- c. His best friend was William Dane. T F
- d. Silas was engaged with Nancy Lammeter. T F
- e. He suffered of fits that left him in a strange state of unconsciousness. T F
- f. He killed and stole the money of one of the chapel leaders. T F
- g. Silas Marner had many friends and was very popular. T F
- h. He lived with his wife in a cottage. T F
- i. Silas knew how to make medicine from flowers and plants. T F
- j. Collecting gold coins became a habit and a reason for living for Silas. T F
- k. He kept all his money in a box. T F

3. Scan the text again and underline each character description: Then write it in the box.

Characters	Description
Silas Marner	
William Dane	
Sally Oates	
Squire Cass	
Old. Mr. Macey	
Dunstan Cass	
Godfrey Cass	
Miss. Nancy Lammeter	



AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

4. Answer the following questions.

a. Why didn't people from Raveloe like the linen-weavers?

b. What did people believe that happened to Silas when he had a fit?

c. What happened when Silas was taking care of a chapel leader who was ill?

d. What is the secret of Godfrey Cass?

e. What Dunstan Cass asked for to his brother in order to keep the secret?

5. Match protagonist with an adjective: Is it right to behave like that? Give a reason.

Lonely		
Envious		
Unfaithful		
Ambitious		
Dishonest		

Works cited

- Eliot George, Silas Marner, the weaver of Raveloe, retold by West Claire, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2008 pages, 74-75-76-77.
- <http://www.wordreference.com/es/>



Annex 9: Silas Marner Chapter 3 and 4

SILAS MARNER / CHAPTER 3 and 4
The Weaver of Raveloe
by George Eliot

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

1. Read the following definitions and then write one of the words from the box.

mad, wet, owes owe, scornful, avoid, breath, bang/banged, weak, wave, punish, poacher, agree, bribe, relieve, look forward to, perhaps, pedlar/peddler, reach, throw/threw off, steal/stole

- a) To wait or hope for, with lots of pleasure: _____
- b) To arrive at or get to a place, person: _____
- c) To free oneself of or discard: _____
- d) Moistened or covered with water or some other liquid: _____
- e) Something which is made with disdain; derision: _____
- f) The air inhaled or exhaled during respiration: _____
- g) To move the hand as a greeting: _____
- h) To take something from someone without permission: _____
- i) A person who illegally hunts game or fish on someone else's property:

- j) Mentally deranged or insane: _____
- k) Possibly or maybe: _____
- l) A person who sells illegal drugs or narcotics: _____
- m) To put a penalty or sanction on someone such as imprisonment, fines, or death: _____
- n) To be in debt: _____
- o) To hit or knock with a loud noise: _____
- p) To promise or offer something (or gain influence), illegally: _____
- q) A person that lacks of physical or mental strength or force: _____
- r) To give assent or consent: _____
- s) To keep out of the way or to prevent: _____
- t) To bring alleviation of pain or distress: _____

2. Answer True (T) or False (F). What will happen with Silas' gold?

- Dunstan Cass feels repentant for stealing the money and returned it. _____
- Silas Marner discovers that Dunstan is the robber and kills him. _____
- Dunstan shares the gold with his brother and keeps the secret. _____
- Silas asks a ghost for help in order to recover his money. _____
- Silas recovers his money in the house of the rich Squire. _____
- Silas asks for help from the people in the town of Raveloe. _____



WHILE READING ACTIVITIES

3. Scan chapter 3 again and match the event with the character?.

EVENT	CHARACTER
"I tell you, people <i>have</i> seen ghosts,"	
"You can't accuse someone who hasn't done anything wrong, Master Marner".	
"He was going to eat hot meat."	
"You must explain what you mean if you want us to believe you"	
"I'll throw this glass at you if you accuse me of stealing your money!"	

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

4. Answer True (T) or False (F). Rewrite the False sentences using the correct information.

- Silas though that old Mr. Macey stole the money. (____)

- Godfrey didn't tell the truth to his father. (____)

- Godfrey was more worried about his horse, Wildfire, than his brother. (____)

- The Squire wanted to marry Dolly Winthrop to his son Godfrey. (____)

- The opinion of the villagers about Silas' devil powers didn't change after the robbery. (____)

- Dolly Winthrop asked her son to sing a Christmas song for Silas. (____)

Bibliography

- Eliot George, Silas Marner, the weaver of Raveloe, retold by West Claire, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2008 pages, 20,21,22,23,24, 25,26,27,28,29,30,31, 77.
- <http://www.wordreference.com/es/>



Annex 10: Silas Marner Chapter 5 and 6

SILAS MARNER/CHAPTER 5 and 6

The Weaver of Raveloe

by George Eliot

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

1. Read the words in the box from chapter 5 and match to the correct definition.

worth, moan, harmless, bake, get ill, kindness, suit, knock, carol,

- a. A sound expressive of suffering or pleading _____
- b. A person who receives hospitality at the home of another. _____
- c. Set of clothes of the same or similar material designed to be worn together _____
- d. Something having a high value _____
- e. A joyful hymn or religious song _____
- f. To cook bread, pastry, etc. in an oven _____
- g. To give a blow or push to; strike _____
- h. Not causing any physical or mental damage or injury _____
- i. To lose good health; to get sick. _____
- j. A kind, considerate, or helpful act _____

2. Read the words in the box of chapter 6 and complete the sentences below.

smell, sharply, blushed, shy, vicar, cheerful, good-looking , sudden, waist, impolite

- a. John said hello to everyone except to Maria; he was _____
- b. The boy _____ when he dropped a glass of juice over his girlfriend.
- c. Mommy is cooking; there is a good _____ in the air.
- d. The little girl did not want to sing in front of the people because she was _____
- e. The new classmate has pretty eyes and beautiful hair. I think, he is _____
- f. Mr. Macey keeps _____ although he suffers of different illnesses.
- g. My father left the hall _____ when he saw my grades.
- h. It was a _____ decision because I did not have time to think about it.
- i. The _____'s speech makes me reflect about my bad behaviour.
- j. My _____ hurts after exercising a lot.



3. Read the titles of chapter 5 and 6. Then match them to the sentence that best describes each chapter.

Chapter 5: Silas's neighbours

Chapter 6: The New Year's Eve Dance

- a. People passed by Silas's house to cheer him up.
- b. Godfrey felt happy dancing with Nancy
- c. Nobody cared about Dunstan's absence.
- d. The Squire caused Nancy's dress damage.

WHILE READING ACTIVITIES

4. Think about this phrase "But the only thing that had made his life worth living had gone, and now he had nothing to look forward to." Then Draw the scene and brainstorm five sentences about it.

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

5. Read the sentences and match them to the correct character.

Mr. Macey, Nancy, the Squire, Dolly Winthrop, Dr. Kimble, Priscilla, Mrs. Osgood, Godfrey Cass, Silas Marner.

- "But I beg you stop weaving on Sundays." _____
- "I used to think you worked for the devil." _____
- "Thank you for your kindness." _____
- "Why is he waiting for me?" _____
- "We ugly girls don't need husbands!" _____



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- “When I look at Miss Nancy here, I think she’s more beautiful than any girl I’ve ever seen.” _____
- “Miss Nancy, will you save a dance for me? _____
- “So, will you please have the first dance with me?” _____
- “I’d be glad to see a good change in anybody, sir.” _____
- “Well, I want to stay.” _____

Bibliography:- Eliot George, *Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe*, retold by West Claire, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 1998 pages, 31-44.

<http://www.wordreference.com/es/>



Annex 11: Silas Marner Chapter 7 and 8

SILAS MARNER/ CHAPTER 7 and 8
The Weaver of Raveloe
by George Eliot

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

1. Predict: Read each sentence and then write the name of the character who is going to say this phrase.

- "I don't care if Godfrey is ashamed of me! I want people to know we are married." _____
- "I've come for the doctor," "There is a woman -dead, I think- near my cottage" _____
- "You'd better leave the poor child here with us then, Master Marner," _____
- "The woman is dead, I'm afraid. She's very thin, and looks very poor. But she's got a wedding ring on. She'll be buried tomorrow." _____
- "Now I can make Nancy and myself happy. And the child? Well. It won't matter to her whether I'm her father or not." _____

2. Underline the correct option in order to complete each sentence below.

- After working all day I went home and (woke up / slept / lay down) on the sofa.
- My doctor was (unable/ unconscious/ unsuitable) to diagnose the problem with my knee.
- The kid was a bit (sad/ jealous/ mad) of the new baby in the family.
- Mommy cooked (porridge/salad/ sausages) to eat for breakfast.
- The girls felt (anxious/ ashamed/ interested) of cheating on the test.
- The clerk (worked /demonstrated/ managed) to open the door for the ladies.
- She was very happy for winning the contest; there was a (shadow/ brightness/mystery) in her eyes.
- The little kid (toddled/ walked / ran) on the stairs and fell down because he is just a three-year-old.
- The newspaper reported that the dead woman will be (entered/buried/carried) on Sunday.
- The boys (hesitated/ considered/noticed) whether or not to jump in the pool.
- You surely find butter, milk and other products in the (bank/ grocery store /dairy).
- Her best friend lied to her and she felt very (ashamed/interested/disappointed).
- This couple travels easily around the world because they are (childless/ busy/ careless).



- There a terrible smell coming from the (screen/ clouds/drainage)

3. Find the vocabulary from exercise 2 and underline them in the text.

WHILE READING ACTIVITIES

4. Look at the scene and write five sentences to describe the scene.



5. Imagine you work for a local newspaper. Use the words below to write a paragraph according to the headline.

Woman dead in the snow

- New Year's Eve/woman dead/snow/Raveloe.
- name/unknown/wedding ring/who/husband.
- two-year old child/ safe and well.
- local weaver/found child/ plan /adopt

Woman dead in the snow

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

6. Answer True (T) or False (F) to the following sentences. Correct with the right information.

- Eppie is now sixteen year old. T F

- Nancy is happy with Godfrey. T F

- Nancy and Godfrey are sad because their only baby died. T F



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- Godfrey suggested Nancy to adopt a child. T F

- Silas never told Eppie the truth about how her mother had died in the snow.
T F

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<http://www.wordreference.com/es/>



Annex 12: Silas Marner Chapter 9 and 10

SILAS MARNER/ CHAPTER 9 and 10

The Weaver of Raveloe

by George Eliot

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

7. Look at the illustration and write predictions about what is going to happen in the next two chapters.



8. Read the words in bold, and then

underline the synonym of each word.

- Bottom : a) boat b) deepness c) foot
- Drown: a) go under b) hurt c) throw
- Proud: a) beaming b) selfish c) arrogant
- Stare : a) watch b) observe c) look at directly
- Duty: a) law b) honor c) obligation
- Owe: a) lend b) to be indebted to someone c) borrow
- To brush: a) groom b) to paint c) to cook
- Annoyed: a) happy b) irritated c) interested
- Guilty: a) culpable b) criminal c) sinful
- Bring out: a) obtain b) invite c) take out
- Lawful: a) illicit b) legal c) unfaithful
- Shine: a) burn b) glow c) overshadow
- Whisper: a) live b) drown c) murmur
- Crowd: a) multitude b) crow c) crown
- Refill: a) fill up again b) put on c) repeat

9. Look at the words in the box. Find and underline them in the text.



bottom	drown	proud	stared	duty	owe	brush	annoyed	guilty
bring out	lawful	shone	whispered	crowd	refill			

WHILE READING ACTIVITIES

10. Read the following passages then write your opinion about these lines.

- **Godfrey:** “Everybody’s secrets are discovered sooner or later, Nancy. I’ve lived with a secret ever since I married you, but I’m going to confess it now. I don’t want you to discover it from someone else, or hear about it when I’m dead.”

- **Nancy:** “You have only hurt me a little, Godfrey, and you’ve been a good husband to me for fifteen years. But it is the other woman who you’ve hurt the most, and I don’t see how you can put that right.”

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

11. Circle True (T) or False (F) next to each sentence about the story.

- Gold had a special value for Silas. T F
- Godfrey apologized for Duncan’s robbery of Silas’s gold. T F
- Silas felt comfortable with important people at his house. T F
- Silas felt happy and excited when Godfrey offered to adopt Eppie. T F
- Eppie rejected the offer of being adopted by the Cass family. T F
- Godfrey felt that by adopting Eppie, he would feel less guilty. T F
- Silas thought he was selfish and accepted to let Eppie go with the Cass. T F
- Eppie accepted the proposal and left Silas. T F
- Godfrey and Nancy forced Eppie to live with them. T F
- Godfrey confronted his mistakes from the past. T F
- The next spring, Eppie married to Duncan and lived together with Silas. T F

Works Cited

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- <http://www.wordreference.com/es/>



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Annex 13: Reading Comprehension Post-test

POST-TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

Universidad de Cuenca

Facultad de Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Master Course of English language and Applied Linguistics

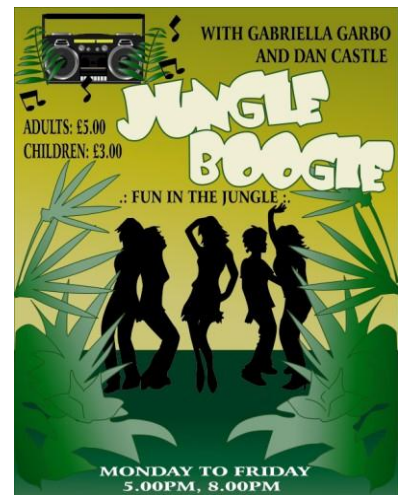
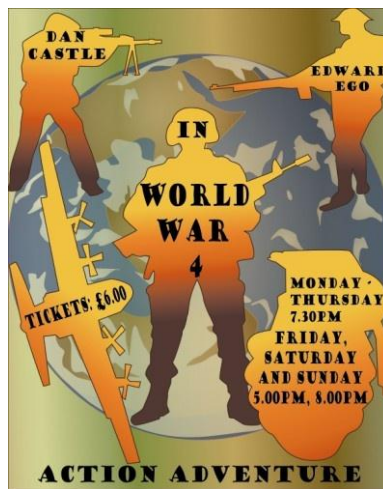
Title of the project: Short Stories for Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills in EFL: Schema Theory activities at A2.1 Level in “La Inmaculada” High School in Cuenca-Ecuador.

Date: _____ **Grade:** First of Bachillerato # _____ **Age:** 14-15 years old

PART 1

Look at the pictures and select True (A) or False (B) to each of the questions below. Mark your selections on your answer sheet.

The McDonald family (Mr McDonald, Mrs McDonald and their son, Jamie) want to go to the cinema together. Mrs McDonald’s favourite actor is Dan Castle, but she doesn’t like war films. Jamie and his father both like horror films but Mr McDonald is working on Saturday and Sunday evening. Jamie likes all kinds of films.



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Tickets for <i>The Living Dead</i> are the most expensive. | A | B |
| 2. The best film for all of them is <i>Jungle Boogie</i> . | A | B |
| 3. Dan Castle is in all three films. | A | B |
| 4. <i>World War 4</i> is on every day. | A | B |
| 5. They can all see <i>Jungle Boogie</i> at the weekend. | A | B |



(5 marks)

PART 2

Read about each person and then decide whether each statement is true (A), false (B) or unknown (C). Mark your choices on your answer sheet.



Satoshi comes from Japan but now lives and works in Spain. He moved to Barcelona two years ago. He walks on the beach every morning at half past seven. His favourite things about Barcelona are the food and the warm weather.



Marie is French Canadian. Her husband is called André and they were married in 2007. They live opposite Satoshi and they go for dinner once or twice a week to practise their English. Marie takes the train to work because the trains are cheap in Barcelona. She likes her job very much but wants to find a job nearer to home.



Michele is from Italy. He came to Spain four years ago. He is a photographer and a teacher and works at the local university. He doesn't have any family in Barcelona but his best friends are Satoshi and Marie. He likes travelling and going to the beach. He speaks English, Italian, Spanish and Russian.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Satoshi moved to Barcelona three years ago. | A | B | C |
| 2. Satoshi is from Tokyo. | A | B | C |
| 3. Marie lives near Satoshi. | A | B | C |
| 4. Marie does not like her job. | A | B | C |
| 5. Michele likes his job. | A | B | C |
| 6. Michele speaks four languages. | A | B | C |
| 7. Marie takes the train to work. | A | B | C |
| 8. Satoshi likes the people in Barcelona. | A | B | C |
| 9. Michele lives with his family in Barcelona. | A | B | C |
| 10. At seven-thirty every morning Satoshi walks on the beach. | A | B | C |

(10 marks)



PART 3

Read the following texts and select (A) True, (B) False or (C) Not in Text, in answer to each of the statements on the next page. Mark your selections on your answer sheet.

FUN HOLIDAYS

Rock School

This is THE place for talented teenagers! You can perform individually or join a band. We offer professional tuition in singing and dancing, guitar and drums as well as the best accommodation and great food. There are daily rehearsals leading up to your very own show at the end of the week. You can win big prizes!

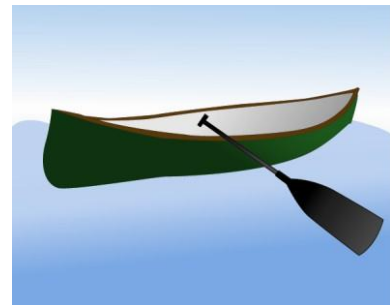


Ages 12 – 16

Price: £250 a week

Water World

Forget about surfing the net – try the real thing! You can try kayaking, canoeing and body-boarding too. You can even help to build a raft. Costs include the use of wet suits and all the equipment you need. No experience is necessary but you must be confident in the water and be able to swim 50 metres.



Ages 10 – 18

Price: £185 per week

Extreme Adventure

Are you looking for adventure? Then this is the place for you. We have a huge Climbing and Abseiling Tower and you can test your nerves on our High Ropes and Giant Zipwire. All our equipment is very safe and our instructors are fully qualified. We also have the muddiest assault course in the UK!



Ages 10 – 16

Price: £225 per week



PART 3: ANSWER SHEET

1. You can join a band at Rock School.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

2. There is a rehearsal every day at Rock School.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

3. Rock School is the least expensive Fun Holiday.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

4. At Water World you can try scuba-diving.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

5. You have to take your own wet suit to Water World.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

6. Water World is the only Fun Holiday suitable for seventeen-year-olds.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

7. The Giant Zipwire at Extreme Adventure is the highest in the UK.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

8. There is a very muddy Assault Course at Extreme Adventure.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

9. A week at Extreme Adventure costs more than a week at Rock School.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

10. This information helps people to choose a holiday.

A = True B = False C = Not in Text

(10 marks)



PART 4

Read this article on tourism then answer the questions that follow by choosing True (A), False (B) or Not in Text (C). Mark your choice on your mark sheet.



Tourism, did you know ... ?

In eighteenth century Britain, only a few extremely rich people travelled abroad. They would go on a 'Grand Tour' of Europe lasting sometimes up to two years.

In Italy, they often bought wonderful works of art very cheaply. Even up to the middle of the nineteenth century only people who had a lot of money could afford to travel to other parts of Britain. However, when railways were built, more and more ordinary people could also go to the coast, if only for a weekend or even for a day.

The traditional British seaside holiday really only entered the nation's way of life at the beginning of the twentieth century when workers started to be given holidays with pay.

In the second half of the twentieth century the availability of cheaper air travel meant that tour operators could offer 'package holidays' (flights and hotel accommodation all arranged and included in a special single price). Spain and the Mediterranean area became extremely popular for holidays.

In 1913 Blackpool, a large seaside town in the north of England, had 4 million visitors, mainly from the cotton-mill towns in Lancashire.

Nowadays people fly to more distant places for their holiday. Today a 400 passenger aeroplane can fly non-stop from London to Johannesburg in 11 hours, and from London to Bangkok in 14 hours. The United States of America is now a very popular destination. About 43.5 million Britons now go abroad for a holiday every year.



PART 4: ANSWER SHEET

1. Not many people travelled overseas from Britain in the eighteenth century.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

2. Those who went on a 'Grand Tour' were usually very rich.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

3. Works of art were usually very expensive to buy in Italy.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

4. Before railways were built, few ordinary people were able to enjoy the coast.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

5. Once people had holidays with pay, they started going away to the seaside more often.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

6. Many visitors from the south of England went to Blackpool for their holidays.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

7. Blackpool has always been the most popular seaside town in Britain.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

8. The British invented the 'package holiday'.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

9. Large planes flying from London to Bangkok have to stop for more fuel on the way.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

10. Nowadays, it is as quick to fly from London to Bangkok as to Johannesburg.

A = True B = False C = Unknown

(10 marks)



PART 5

Read this article on Maps then answer the questions on the following page by choosing True (A), False (B) or Not in Text (C). Mark your choices on your answer sheet.

MAPS – DID YOU KNOW?



Maps help us to comprehend our surrounding world by using pictures and were made long before reading and writing were invented.

The earliest map that we know of is a cave painting in the Lascaux caves in France. The painting shows part of the summer night's sky 16,500 years ago. Modern astronomers can still understand the night sky shown in the map.

A four thousand year old map made by the Babylonians is still in existence. Many ancient mapmakers thought that the world was completely flat, but explorers like Magellan in the fifteenth century sailed around the world and helped to make better maps.

Even the old idea that the earth is a perfect sphere is wrong. Measurements taken by satellites above the earth, show that our planet is slightly pear-shaped.

Satellites have provided more accurate information and have helped us to see and map parts of the world that were little known or never seen by humans before.

Satellites floating 825 kilometres up in space have photographed the Amazon rain forest and have shown that an area the size of twenty football pitches is being cut down every minute.

Pictures taken from space have shown that one of the world's largest areas of inland water, the Aral Sea, has been shrinking very quickly. Factories and farms have taken the water that used to flow into it, making the sea dry up.

Modern satellite maps show the effects of global warming and pollution and help us to understand the world around us.

More and more drivers nowadays rely on satellite navigation in their cars, so the traditional road map may not be around much longer.





PART 5: ANSWER SHEET

1. Writing was invented a long time after the first map was drawn.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

2. The first map was a map of the night sky.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

3. The first map was made by the Babylonians.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

4. Magellan's explorations helped the mapmakers to improve their maps.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

5. The Babylonian mapmakers were very rich men.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

6. Our planet is a perfect sphere.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

7. Maps can show the effects of global warming.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

8. The Aral Sea is used by farmers.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

9. The Amazon is the size of twenty-two football pitches.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

10. Water has been taken from the Aral Sea for drinking.

A = True B = False C = Not in text

(10 marks)

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- <http://www.edigreece.gr/edigreece/a011.php>



Annex 14: Reading Habits Survey

READING HABITS SURVEY

Universidad de Cuenca

Facultad de Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Master Course of English language and Applied Linguistics

Title of the project: Short Stories for Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills in EFL: Schema Theory activities at A2.1 Level in “La Inmaculada” High School in Cuenca-Ecuador.

Date: _____

Grade: _____

1. Please rank the kinds of books that you prefer to read. 1 (like), 2 (dislike)

Genre	1	2
Adventures		
Science Fiction		
Myths, Legends and Fantasy		
Poetry		
Sports		
Mysteries / Horror		
Real Stories		
Biographies		
Magazines and Newspapers		

2. Write the last book/ story or article in English that you have read:

3. How many times do you spend reading?

_____ I read every day of the week..

_____ I read at least 4 times per week.

_____ I read at least 2 times per week.

_____ I only read because someone makes me read.

_____ I hate reading and read as little as possible

4. Nombre tres cosas que aprendió sobre leer en Inglés?

5. De acuerdo a su criterio, nombre tres aspectos más complicados sobre leer en Inglés?



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6. ¿Había leído anteriormente historias en Inglés? Si _____ No _____

7. Volvería a leer un libro en Inglés? Explique porque SI o porque NO.



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Annex 15: Silas Marner The Weaver of Raveloe

An appropriate citation has been made for the book mentioned above and its use was only for research purposes. The mentioned material can be found in any bookstore of the locality.