



ABSTRACT

The present paper provides insights into teaching reading to youngsters in the EFL Classroom. The analyses of a lack of reading habits along with the study of the unawareness of Cultural Identity are bond in this research. Both issues have been linked in light of teaching English as a Foreign Language with the classroom as a background. The paper shows that with adequate guidance and choice of literature the difficult task of motivating teenagers to read can be tackled.

Literature related to the theme of study is explored and reviewed as to get a broader idea concerning Reading, Storytelling, Folklore and Cultural Identity. In this way, this paper centers on studying and getting depth into theories as well as on interviewing different groups of learners, with the purpose of discovering their interests towards the subject matter. Tables and figures are presented in addition to an analysis of results taking into consideration that it could be used as a pioneer contribution for further studies.

Key words:

Cultural Identity, Storytelling, Folklore, Reading, Extensive Reading, Legends



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MAESTRÍA EN LENGUA INGLESA Y LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA

**TÍTULO DE LA TESIS: ECUADORIAN LEGENDS AND FOLKTALES: A
JOURNEY FROM STORYTELLING TO READING IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

TESIS PREVIA A LA OBTENCIÓN DEL
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Al presentar esta tesis como uno de los requisitos previos para la obtención del título de Maestría en Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada, por la Universidad de Cuenca, autorizo al Centro de Información Juan Bautista Vásquez para que haga de esta tesis un documento disponible para su lectura, según las normas de la universidad.

Mónica Martínez Sojos

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INTRODUCTION

Two major problems are presented in this research paper. The first contemplates today's lack of reading habits, which has been growing increasingly, due to various factors that will be acutely analyzed in this proposal. The second dilemma ponders the perception of a constant unawareness of the importance of cultural identity, especially among groups of youngsters. Both issues have been linked in light of teaching English as a Foreign Language with the classroom as a background.

This research follows a combined methodology (both qualitative and quantitative) in which theories related to the topic of study are explored. Literature is reviewed in order to have a broader and clearer idea regarding Reading, Storytelling, Folklore and Cultural Identity. In this way, this research focuses on studying and getting depth into theories as well as on interviewing different groups of learners, with the purpose of discovering their interests towards the subject matter, taking into consideration that it could be used as a means to study the interactions among the members of a culture.

General notions about a variety of concepts on reading are exposed with the intention of finding a clear definition as well as to drawing preliminary conclusions. Afterward, the study examines the relevance and value of reading in the EFL classroom under a critical perspective. An approach to Cultural Identity is consequently presented by means of a compilation of the accessible literature. At this point a critically assessment position is offered along deep reflections concerning globalization and a currently nomadic way of life.

The significance of topics, such as Authenticity, Folklore and Storytelling are examined subsequently in relation to the educational field. The role of the EFL teacher is also scrutinized beneath self reflections and a personal voice. To conclude with the theoretical framework, an analysis of the contribution of an Ecuadorian writer, Nancy Crespo, is presented. Two of her textbooks -with 23



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different readings- *Ecuador, People and Places* and *Ecuador, and Ecuador, Land of Legends*, were tested and activities similar in nature to the ones used in the Extensive Reading methodology were applied to the participants of this proposal.

The methodology of the current study includes a description of the groups, the tools, the interview and the application of the textbooks. Surveys and questionnaires are offered to contrast and triangulate the collected information

A prominent writer, a well known intellectual of our community Eliecer Cardenas, was interviewed to obtain further information about the relevance of the idea of Cultural Identity.

A final chapter with conclusions and recommendations is offered in which the ideas of the author are presented in order to contribute to the educational community. However, and due to its results, it is important to state that this thesis does not intend to diminish the powerful and paramount influence of globalization. Doing so would be utopia, as if Don Quixote would be struggling against the wind mills. The challenge for the present thesis is to find a possible link involving the benefits given by Reading, Storytelling, Folklore and the idea of revaluing our Identity.

GENERAL GOAL

This research tries to discover the importance and meaningfulness of Cultural Identity, Reading and Storytelling in the EFL classroom.

SPECIFIC GOALS

- Define and study Reading and Storytelling in English as a tool for Foreign Language Learning.
- Define Cultural Identity in the context of Folklore and state its value and importance in education.



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- Assess and test the textbooks: Ecuador, People and Places and Ecuador, Land of Legends by author Nancy Crespo B.
- Propose the use of Ecuadorian legends and folktales as part of material to be used for both Reading and Storytelling activities.



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CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM

Research shows that today's fast society presses on individuals to underestimate the value and importance of reading. It seems people no longer have the habit of reading. A former study (carried out to plan a specialized magazine for children) showed that the general public tends to read 'light' material, such as, entertainment magazines, newspapers and self-motivation books. Reading as a tool for learning a second language should not be understood as a matter of less relevance. Quite the opposite, the idea of including reading as part of the curricula proposes that the reader-learner will enhance the process of learning a second language.

Not only has the importance of reading been diminished in education but also cultural identity of the nations. Globalization is a process which drives the variety of cultures from the world to disappear. Therefore, students who are part of this process tend to read material which has nothing to do with their roots and cultural surroundings. Furthermore, English textbooks focus on large worldwide audiences, where there is no scope for identity of subjects. The textbooks are produced for an international market and therefore, economical decisions are more important than didactical decisions. Irrelevant topics, along with standardized cultural issues, are being taught to students with no correspondence to their cultural values and roots at all. The problem arises when these students -who are challenged to face different customs and when cultural exchange needs to be focused- have no clue about their own culture.

A former pen pal project was held between Saint Isidore School in California (USA) and Catalinas High School in Cuenca (Ecuador), few years ago. The main objective of the project was to exchange cultural features: celebrations, traditions, customs, religious events and more. Nevertheless, and to the teachers' disappointment, no cultural exchange took place at all: Teenagers in Cuenca, Ecuador, were doing exactly the same activities that



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teenagers were doing back in California, USA. This case demonstrates the elevated level of globalization that civilization has reached.

With this in mind, this research tends to distinguish a link between Reading, Storytelling and Cultural Identity in order to propose and suggest material based on our own cultural background. Some groups of learners were interviewed in order to obtain relevant findings related to the topic of study in a focus groups format. Nineteen female teenagers, aged 15, with an upper intermediate level of English, constitute the sample of this research.

Surveys were applied to the same group of students to find out their feelings and assumptions towards the topic of Reading and Cultural Identity. Two textbooks -with 23 different readings- published by Ecuadorian author, Nancy Crespo B, *Ecuador, People and Places* and *Ecuador, Land of Legends*, were tested and extensive reading activities were applied to the students.

An additional interview with a writer was held to get further information associated with the topics of identity, storytelling, reading, culture and globalization.



CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 General considerations about Reading: Defining reading

2.1.1 General ideas

A generalized lack of critical comprehension skills, poor reading habits and absence of communicative abilities within students' performance are deep limitations of the educational system. Apparently people do not enjoy, nor put into practice, reading any longer.

In general, students learning to read in English do not like reading at all and they rarely do it. This is partly due to the way reading is approached in the language class, not only in the foreign language but in the native tongue as well. The reading skill is most often taught by close studies of short passages followed by –usually long and tedious- analysis of language.

Up to this point, it is a matter of extreme importance to define the concept of reading and to deepen this into the reasons why it should be relevant to include it as part of the syllabus, according to Jo Ann Aebersold and Mary Lee Field in their book *From Reader to Reading Teacher*:

In a general sense, reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text. The text and the reader are the two physical entities necessary for the reading process to begin. It is, however, the interaction between the text and the reading that constitutes actual reading. Granted, the meaning that one reader gets from the text may not be exactly the same as the meaning the writer of the text wished to convey. Likewise, the meaning that one reader gets from a text may be different from that of other readers reading the same text. These variations occur because of influences on the reader by family, community and cultural environment and because of individual



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differences in motivation, aptitude, and other personal characteristics. Readers use their varying resources to differing degrees when they read. Thus, reading comprehension differs from a reader to another (Aebersold and Field 15)

Therefore, reading is a process, a sort of a play, which needs two main characters: the text and the reader. Nevertheless, the dealings, the communication, the inference, the comprehension of a text, are the essential factors for reading to happen. Thus, the meaning that a reader might achieve from a text may differ from the one approached by another reader.

On the other hand, every single human being should be considered as a very particular universe in which different forces act. The chosen method to carry out our teaching is not the single relevant issue and it is not important only to select an appropriate reading approach. What matters is the understanding of individuals as a whole, in other words, as a response from their background, context and very particular past. Subjects are a mere reproduction of experience, emotion and inner values. What may be relevant for one student might not be significant for another. Therefore, teachers shall assume that there is no perfect or exact theory. Teachers' main objective should be to inspire learners' minds. It is their duty to awaken their brains. It is a goal to unify efforts in order to leave a legacy in their lives; one of authentic liberation which allows a sense of self-awareness so that injustice and lack of common sense are eliminated from the classroom.

It is also important to reckon the fact that the human brain was never meant to read. It was only due to the fascinating capacity of adaptation that mankind discovered reading. As Maryanne Wolf states in her book, *Proust and the Squid, the Story and Science of the Reading Brain*:

In other words, all human behaviors are based on multiple cognitive processes, which are based on the rapid integration of information from



very specific neurological structures which rely on billions of neurons capable of trillions of possible connections, which are programmed in large part by genes. In order to learn to work together to perform our most basic human functions, neurons need instructions from genes about how to form efficient circuits or pathways among the neurological structures. (Wolf 10)

From the very primitive reading done in clay tablets thousands of years ago, to the difficult process found in technological information today, the human brain has developed an enormous faculty that makes human civilization so different from the rest of nature. That is the ability which led humans to dominate the world and to take over its resources. This design of the brain is the one that helps us to change what has been given to us and allows us to go beyond.

Reading involves various features which should to be taken into account. Starting from the basic action of seeing until reaching the meaning-making of the observed text, reading is a process signed with inner qualities, such as memory, fantasy, dreams, knowledge, intuition, experience and feelings. Other aspects such as time, place, dominant brain hemisphere and very particular circumstances at the moment of reading are also important. Perceiving meaning as a voluntary act of recognition leads us to the idea that we “discover” a word because the concept it represents is already consolidated in our minds. Furthermore, we grasp a sense of words through a system of shared meaning. The idea of a “Collective Imaginary” strongly sticks to this scheme of common meaning since it refers to archetypes set by a community. Wide concepts, such as values, perspectives, narrative structure, myths, identity, culture, collective memory, utopia and much more are intrinsically related to the collective imaginary which undoubtedly influences one’s reading.

Reading is a process which is developed in a different manner according to various particular circumstances. Motivation, exposures to the language, and



genes are many of the influential factors to develop later reading. Learning to read begins in early childhood. The first five years are of transcendental importance. They determine whether the child will be a successful reader or not, as Wolf states in her book:

A prominent study found that by kindergarten, a gap of 32 million words already separates some children in linguistically impoverished homes from their more stimulated peers. In other words, in some environments, the average young middle-class child hears 32 million more spoken words than the young underprivileged child by age five. (Wolf 20)

Children who are exposed to the language have a better chance to succeed in the educational field. There are some phases to go on during the reading process. Jeanne Chall as cited in her web site modeled some stages of reading development. Each stage builds on previous skills acquired in earlier stages; problems in fluency and proficiency at any level can stop and delay the progress of the process. Chall mentions five stages:

Stage 0: Pre reading: In which familiarity with the language and its sounds is developed. Predictions and recognition of some words are typical in this phase. Approximate age of this stage: 6

Stage 1: Initial reading stage or decoding stage: Relationships between sounds and letters are established. The reader achieves an alphabetic principle and creates correspondences sound-symbol. Ages for this stage are 6 or 7.

Stage 2: Confirmation: In which the reader confirms the previously acquired knowledge and fluency in decoding skills continues to improve. Speed is also developed, as well as word recognition. This stage is critical since the reader stops making progress. The individual will remain in Chall's words, "glued to the print". Readers reach this stage at age 8.



Stage 3: Reading to learn: Motivation changes at this stage. The reader has enough skills to read to gain information. Vocabulary acquisition increases as a result of exposition to the written word. This stage is developed at around the age of 9.

Stage 4: Multiple viewpoints: The reader is now able to analyze and understand different points of view and criticize them. This stage is typical of high school years, ages 14 to 19.

Stage 5: Construction and judgment: Readers read selectively and form opinions of what they read. They construct knowledge. This is the highest level of the reading process and is achieved in college.

2.2 Perspectives in Reading in the EFL Classroom: is it valuable?

After this brief analysis of the concept of reading and its process, let us state now the importance of Reading as a useful approach to be used in EFL classrooms. It implies students reading long texts for general understanding, with the intention of getting pleasure from the texts. In this approach, students are allowed to choose the books they will read, depending on their interests, and there is not necessarily always a follow-up discussion or work in class. In this way, students are encouraged to read for **pleasure** and therefore become better readers.

The value of this intensive reading procedure, with its focus on the teaching of reading skills, has been questioned by some, who claim that teaching students reading strategies does not necessarily make them better readers. It is widely believed that people become good readers through reading, and that learning how to read should mean a focus of attention on the meaning rather than the language of the text. The principal objective of undertaking a Reading Approach is to get students to read in English and to like it. An



increase in reading fluency should be another objective. Because of this, reading should be a pleasurable activity for the student, promoted as much as possible by the teacher. The teacher should also assume also a paradigm role, that is to say, if the teacher is also seen to be a reader by the students, if the teacher gives the impression to be a good reader, then students will be encouraged to read. The teacher can talk in class about books that she or he has been reading, and if they are knowledgeable about the books in the class library, having already read them, then they can make genuine recommendations to the students about what to read. The teacher can also read aloud to the students, as a way of introducing students to different genres or individual books. And here is where Storytelling appears, a useful method to teach a foreign Language which will be developed later in this study.

It is now pertinent, to take into consideration, the fact that some researchers have mentioned the Extensive Reading Approach, a useful tool in the EFL class. For foreign-language learners, some researchers have found that the use of glossaries for complicated words is advantageous to vocabulary acquisition. A number of studies report significant incidental vocabulary gain in Extensive Reading in a foreign language. Promoters claim it can enhance skills in speaking as well as in reading.

In this context, Stephen Krashen poses the idea of five main hypotheses in the theory of Second Language Acquisition:

The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis,

The Monitor hypothesis,

The Natural Order hypothesis,

The Input hypothesis,

The Affective Filter hypothesis

Three of them relate, in a certain way, to the topic we are dealing with: The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, The Natural Order hypothesis and the Input hypothesis. The rest of them will be quickly mentioned. The Acquisition-



Learning distinction is the most fundamental of all the hypotheses in Krashen's theory. According to Krashen, there are two independent systems of second language performance: 'the acquired system' product of a subconscious process, very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language.

It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act and 'the learned system'. The learning process is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language; for example, knowledge of grammar rules. According to Krashen, 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'. It is important to state that these distinctions are not clear cut and that it seems really difficult to establish a sharp division between both concepts. It results somehow ambiguous to ascertain a clear dissection between these two processes which are intrinsically linked and which depend on the other to survive.

The Monitor hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the latter on the former. The monitoring function is the practical result of the learned grammar.

The Natural Order hypothesis is based on research findings which suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order', which is predictable. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, while others later on. This order seemed to be independent of the learners' age, L1 background and conditions of exposure. Krashen rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.

The Input hypothesis attempts to explain how the learner acquires a second language. This hypothesis is Krashen's explanation of how second language acquisition takes place. So, the Input hypothesis is only concerned



with 'acquisition', not 'learning'. The learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when receiving second language 'input' that is one step beyond the current stage of linguistic competence. Acquisition takes place when the learner is exposed to 'Comprehensible Input'. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that *natural communicative input* is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring, in this way, that each learner will receive input that is appropriate for the learner's current stage of linguistic competence.

Finally, the fifth hypothesis, the Affective Filter hypothesis, embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal role, in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. In this sense, Krashen gives a new contribution by highlighting the benefits and importance of affective matters in the classroom

Nation also finds Extensive Reading as an effective way to develop language acquisition. This is what he says when he refers to the topic:

The idea that learners can develop their language knowledge through extensive reading is attractive for several reasons. First, reading is essentially an individual activity and therefore learners of different proficiency levels could be learning at their own level without being locked into an inflexible class program. Second, it allows learners to follow their interests in choosing what to read and thus increase their motivation for learning. Third, it provides the opportunity for learning to occur outside the classroom.

However, before investing time and money in an extensive reading program, it is necessary to be sure that the learning that occurs from it is not restricted solely to the improvement of reading fluency, even though this in itself is a useful goal.



With these words, Nation poses the advantages of Extensive Reading in terms of flexibility, motivation, interest and learning outside the classroom. The reader also has time, when needed, to form and confirm hypotheses about meaning and usage. Speech, on the other hand, may pass by too quickly for this to be done. Research on extensive reading indicates that it can be a powerful aid in language acquisition.

Day and Bamford, promoters of the Extensive Reading Approach, gave a number of qualities related to it. These were: students read as much as possible; reading materials are well within the reader's grammatical and vocabulary competence; the material should be varied in subject matter and character; students choose their own reading material and are not compelled to finish uninteresting materials; reading material is normally for pleasure, information or general understanding; reading is its own reward with few or no follow-up exercises after reading; reading is individual and silent; reading speed is usually faster when students read materials they can easily understand; the teacher is a role model who orients the students to the goals of the program, explains the idea and methodology, keeps records of what has been read, and guides students in material selection and maximizing the effect of the program; teachers orient students to the goals of the program, explain the methodology, keep track of what each student reads, and guides students in getting the most out of the program and reading in general.

When thinking about the learner's language level, the vocabulary and grammar of the books that students read should not pose complexity. The objective of an Extensive Reading program is to encourage reading fluency, so students should not be stopping frequently because they do not understand a passage. However, the stories should not be too easy, as this may well discourage students, who feel they are getting nothing out of the books. Day and Bamford highlight the benefits that have been gained by the undertaking of Extensive Reading programs. These include gains in reading and writing



proficiency, oral skills and vocabulary, an increase in motivation and a positive effect.

Setting up a Reading program (no matter what the chosen technique is to be applied in the classroom) should not only lead students to improve their reading proficiency and other language skills, but will enable them to take pleasure in reading.

According to Silberstein, reading is a complex process. She describes it as an active process. A psycholinguistic perspective of reading states that efficient readers develop predictions related to a passage, using clues, knowledge and experience. This way, the reader is able to have expectations, and can refute or confirm them in the text.

Later on, Silberstein develops the idea of contemporary interactive perspectives which include concepts of interaction of identification and interpretation in two level skills: Lower level skills in which the reader is able to recognize words and grammatical forms in a system of automaticity, unconscious way. And higher level skills which include the ability to comprehend and interpret the text that was read.

The latter author analyzes other theories related to reading:

Schema Theory: emphasizes the role of preexisting knowledge to help construct meaning in a text (implicit). There are two modes of information processing:

Bottom-up (text based/data driven) is when linguistic input is mapped against the previous knowledge

Top-down (Knowledge based/ conceptually driven) is when readers use prior knowledge to predict what they will find in a text. Some techniques to facilitate top-down skills are content centered instruction and extensive reading or SSR (Sustained Silent Reading), which encourage students to read large amounts of a text for comprehension.



In Silberstein's words "successful reading requires skill in both top-down and bottom-up processing" (Silberstein 8)

Context is extremely important at the moment of reading. It enhances the process of both schemata and expectations. According to Silberstein context plays a fundamental role in order to achieve new knowledge through reading:

Given the fundamental role of preexisting knowledge in the comprehending process, one might assume that students can therefore read only about what they know. This is not the case. It would be a disservice to rob students of the opportunity to learn through reading. Similarly, it is not necessary or desirable for teachers to prepare students for everything they will encounter in texts. Along with information about texts and language, students need only a reasonable context and some knowledge of the topic to begin to learn from reading (Silberstein 8)

Meta cognitive awareness can also help in successful reading. This is to say, students who are able to monitor and control their own learning are using meta cognitive awareness skills. Current approaches seek to recover what remains implicit in the text.

The long discussed issue of learner autonomy is also studied in Silberstein's book. There are several arguments to encourage autonomy: First: personal engagement which will produce effective learning. Second, autonomy increases motivational skills which include reflective and attitudinal resources. Finally, in the case of EFL classrooms learners' autonomy fosters effective communication. Silberstein also analyzes the role of the reading teacher. The author explains that the goal of the teacher is to make students autonomous. This is to say, independent learners. A teacher has to train students, encourage and motivate them. Once the student is given the necessary tools to become an independent learner and starts to use them, the student reaches the main goal of education.



In a different context, Silberstein poses the importance of the material given to students to be read in class and she says:

A renewed interest in literature and songs in the second language classroom is evident in contemporary teacher-training and classroom texts (Silberstein 88)

According to Maley and Duff, as cited in Silberstein, there are various characteristics which may benefit the use of literature and songs in the classroom:

Universality

Non triviality issues (issues of human condition),

Motivation (as they provide pleasure)

Silberstein states that fables are also useful when learning a second language since they have a universal appeal and a moral to be analyzed. One of the reasons for developing critical skills is because they are valuable when confronting controversial issues. She also emphasizes the value of folksongs, since their longevity:

“Longevity attests to their success in incorporating values of a culture. Below is the first stanza of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”. Written during the U.S. Civil War, it became the marching song of the Northern armies. It survives today, one could argue, because it expresses a historically important strain of national consciousness: the notion of divine sponsorship

The Battle Hymn of the Republic

Mine eyes have seen the glory coming of the Lord;



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He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;

He hath loos'd the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword,
His truth is marching on" (Silberstein 97)

Therefore, the compass of the present study is not far from a realistic perspective under which the use of folktales, as well as legends, is a valuable tool for learning in the EFL classroom.

And later in her study, Silberstein mentions the transcendental role of Extensive Reading in these words:

Reading large amounts of prose for enjoyment and general comprehension (sometimes termed Sustained Silent Reading or SSR) can aid in developing both identification and interpretation skills (Silberstein 97).

In this way, when applying an extensive reading program in the EFL classroom, contemporary interactive reading approaches are being applied. This concept makes the present project valuable and worthwhile to be used. In Renandya and Jacobs' article they state:

Beyond powerful gains in language proficiency, reading offers more. It offers a richer understanding of the world and a place in the ongoing, worldwide dialogue on a universe of topics open only to those who are literate and who exercise their literacy. Thus, ER represents much more than a teaching device. It represents a lifelong habit, a habit that brings with it the power and wealth that language offers in such large quantities. By encouraging our students to read extensively and showing them how to do so, we help them strengthen their grip on the efficacious stool of reading. (Renandya and Jacobs 300)



2.3 An approach to Cultural Identity

Having stated basic concepts about Reading, it is imperative to move on towards identifying and clarifying main notions related to Cultural Identity. Culture refers to the customs, practices, languages, values and world views that define social groups. Those are based on nationality, ethnicity, region or common interests. Cultural identity is important for people's sense of self and the way they relate to others. A strong cultural identity can contribute a person's overall well-being.

Mankind constructs itself, based on the individuals' different experiences and unique physical and psychological characteristics. Culture is just a manifestation of that construction and even more, it constitutes what differentiates one group from another. Culture therefore, is a result of a long collective creation from our ancestors and which preserves peculiar features. A child is born as a human being with a legacy of ancestor's heritage and a very particular, unique structure. This structure is later filled with elements from the belonging culture through imitation. When someone feels part of a human environment, someone has reached identity. Identity, therefore shares ideas, beliefs and senses.

It is important to understand identity as a perspective of belonging, feelings, filiations and affective relations. According to Suarez Moreno, it is imperative to define identity and identities. Identity used to be understood as only ONE excluding concept which allowed controlling powers to manipulate the nation. Suarez recommends us not to think in binary, fixed, and opposed identities: white/Indian; male/female; citizen/peasant; local/national, but to think about identities in a permanent process of constitution and de constitution.

Later in the article, Suarez explains the idea of identity as a tool for resistance when she mentions various indigenous processes in Ecuadorean history, as well as women's fight for equal rights:



La Etnia y la “raza” pueden ser concebidas como expresiones de identidades etnizadas, por ejemplo en un estado plurinacional como el Ecuador, y sobre todo, como un tipo de identidad de resistencia (Suarez 35)

Ethnics and race can be understood as expressions of ethnic identities, for instance, in a multicultural state such as Ecuador, and moreover, as a type of identity of resistance (Translation: M. M.)

It is interesting to analyze identity from this particular point of view: Identity as resistance. Identity then becomes a collective force to struggle against oppression, political practices and education. However, Suarez mentions the idea of taking responsibility on that identity not only as rights but also it demands from individuals responding with compromise, commitment, tolerance, participation and adhesion in the political system.

According to Estrella Vintimilla

La identidad es sentirnos idénticos a nosotros mismos. Y orgullosos de nosotros mismos. Y por lo tanto, diferentes de los otros, a quienes les miramos, sin embargo en un plano de igualdad humana. (...) Por lo tanto, no es cuestión de huir de las diferencias, sino por el contrario, de aceptarlas y asimilarlas como parte indispensable de nuestra identidad, en la medida en que dicha diferencia es parte esencial del mundo de la vida, de nuestras vidas, como individuos y como pueblo (Estrella 24)

Identity makes us feel identical to ourselves as well as proud of ourselves. Therefore, we are all different from the others to whom we see, in a field of human equality. Therefore, it is not a matter of escaping



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from difference but on the contrary, it is a matter of accepting them and assimilating them as an indispensable, essential part of life, of our own lives as individuals and as a community. (Translation: M.M.)

Diversity is what makes us become individuals. Diversity is what makes us proud of being who we are. Diversity is what makes us equals as mankind. If we do not appreciate difference, we are irremediably condemned to extinction. The cited author later expresses:

Tenemos que juntar materiales suficientes, tenemos que realizar propuestas para inventarnos un nuevo país, por medio del ejercicio de una genuina voluntad cultural y política, que suponga una decisión de ruptura y, al mismo tiempo, una anticipación arriesgada del futuro, para lo cual debemos exigirnos un requisito indispensable: mirarnos en el espejo, y ¡reconocernos en nuestra propia identidad! (Estrella 25)

We have to gather enough material, we have to make proposals in order to create a new nation, through the use of a genuine cultural and political willpower, which supposes a decision to break away, and at the same time a risky anticipation of the future which means, look into a mirror and recognize our own identity. (Translation: M.M.)

Estrella mentions the idea of rupture as an act of freedom. Breaking out conventional structures will lead us to recognize ourselves in the mirror of identity and will enhance us to embrace the future. Only then, we will be able to propose new cultural and political offers.

And later in his journal, Estrella adds:

La sociedad ecuatoriana es una sociedad desencantada. Aquí las mafias políticas y los clanes económicos han desbaratado las esperanzas de quienes creemos que no es posible vivir sin



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promesas, de quienes luchamos por reabrir los caminos para soñar sueños que hagan vislumbrar nuevas posibilidades para la felicidad del ser humano (...) Una historia vivida a través de sistemas políticos en los que se ha impedido celosamente la participación activa y decidida del hombre común y corriente mediante una arremetida ideológica –y en numerosos casos mediante la fuerza bruta- que ha conseguido siempre concentrar el poder en cúpulas cerradas y ha pretendido enraizar en el habitante ecuatoriano una conciencia sumisa y domesticada, resignada, ausente de su propia realidad, bajo la muletilla repetida hasta el cansancio de que somos pueblos ingobernables, incapaces de protagonizar y de dirigir nuestro propio destino” (Estrella 27-28)

Ecuadorian society is a disappointed one. Here the political mafia and the economical clans have shattered the hopes of those who believe that it is not possible to live without any hope, of those who fight to reopen the ways for new dreams which may foresee new possibilities for human happiness, a history lived through political systems which have jealously avoided the active and decided participation of the common individual through the use of an ideological aggression – and in many cases through the use of force- A system which has achieved the concentration of power in closed circles and has tried to root in the Ecuadorian individual a domesticated, submissive consciousness. One that is absent from its own reality under the ceaseless repetition that we, Ecuadorians, are ungovernable people, unable to act out and direct our own destiny. (Translation: M.M.)

Self esteem and self consciousness in Ecuador is a paramount predicament. The author mentions various problems which constitute the main



limitations for a change. One of those, perhaps the strongest, is the political one, which has been a tool for subjugation. The writer mentions the repeated chant “we are ungovernable” which has recurrently deepened a sort of a handicapped idea of ourselves in Ecuadorians’ minds.

Throughout history, education has long served to the political and controlling powers. In Latin America at the time of colonization, education was a symbol of subjugation and elimination of identity. Native tongues, cultural background and religious beliefs were absolutely shattered in order to consolidate supreme power and submission. Similarly today, education supports a complex structure which tends to subjugate learners through a subtle, almost unconscious, way: globalization.

Despite all the efforts of educators and researchers, education and teaching still follow a prefixed path where contents are selected by an elite group. Curriculum and syllabus are chosen according to what seems to be correct to the establishment: large global audiences with no identity at all. Teaching in a world plagued of extreme contrasts is not an easy task. The planet has lost all sense of human understanding; people are devoted to making money and building social structures. Individuals appear as pieces of the free enterprise system, a giant engine. Identity has dropped its meaning. A global village stands on top of the ruins of ancient cultures. People are uniformed under the common dress of mediocrity. Teachers face the challenge of questioning themselves how far they can reach; to what extent they deserve to be called “masters” and what makes them authentic redeemers of students’ minds. Furthermore, they have to deal with low wages and poor academic support which make their daily living extremely difficult. A lack of motivation derives from this situation.

Identity and language are intrinsically linked. According to Kramersch in her book *Language and Culture*:



It is widely believed that there is a natural connection between the language spoken by members of a social group and that group's identity. By their accent, their vocabulary, their discourse patterns, speakers identify themselves and are identified as members of this or that speech and discourse community. From this membership, they draw personal strength and pride, as well as a language that make sense, like conversations, stories, reports, arguments, essays; 'discourse' is part of 'Discourse' - 'Discourse' with a big 'D' is always more than just language. Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. (Kramsch, Context and Culture in Language Teaching 65)

Nevertheless, we have to face a new era: A new era of changes and challenges. According to Dahlberg and Moss in their article, Towards a Pedagogy of Listening:

The same paradigmatic shift in thinking, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, can be extended to other aspects of being besides knowledge; for example to identity. This is vividly illustrated by Shahram Khosravi, an Iranian who has lived many years in Sweden. Writing of a recent visit back to Iran, he describes a growing feeling of homelessness, as he finds himself to be no longer "at home" in Iran and seeks some comfort in trying to rethink the meaning of identity in a world of increased border crossing:

What helps make this burden of homelessness easier is the hope of a new era of nomadity, of a globalization of people without roots, of a deterritorialisation of culture – that is that all of us, slowly but surely, are becoming modern nomads. More and more of us seem to start living in some form of exile, in forms of life which in existing ways of thinking are seen as deviant, threatening,



unnatural. A way to break away from this way of thinking is to try to finish viewing the human being and her identity in botanical terms of a tree, with roots and trunk. Perhaps “roots” no longer exist, perhaps they have never existed. Instead of roots there exists what the French philosopher Deleuze calls a “rhizome”, different to the idea of a root, with no beginning or end, always being in the middle.

If the botanical image of cultural identity is associated with territory, continuity and unit, a rhizomatic cultural identity is characterized by globalization, discontinuity and multiplicity. My grandfather was a nomad and his life was a continuous wandering on the way of fresh pastures. A couple of generations later, I am the nomad. It is a story of history which I appreciate.

(Khosravi, 1998: 28-29)

The concept and image of the rhizome are both challenging and transformative. They make the familiar –the linearity of development, the progression of knowledge, the essential nature of the subject- strange, or at least no longer self-evident and inevitable. They offer the possibility of resisting normalizing practices and of envisaging new ways of relating to the world and otherness. (Dahlberg and Moss 117-118)

Apparently this idea contradicts the constricted perception of identity as a concept of belonging to a particular community, to its roots and traditions. By narrating his own experience, Khosravi is merely clarifying the idea of this new era we are living in: one of changes, one of multiple voices and faces, one that is in constant change, one that is permanently flowing. Identity, therefore, has to refer to what we consider self awareness. The postmodernist thought consists in a vanishing space which allows and empowers a neutral position with no direct relation to identity, cultural differences and historical memory. Globalization, therefore, conducts a permanent flow of peoples, cultures and



capital towards deterritorialisation. Nowadays people are permanently moving. It is in the flow of this journey that they are required to preserve place and space through collective memory.

The lack of territorial basis causes that several of the identity cultures interrelate and feedback one to another beyond their geographical borders. Former axis references, such as country, nation, landscape, and geography are left behind in order to allow new global concepts take their place. Thus, individuals identify and define themselves rather for their distinctiveness of being women, indigenous, youngsters, homosexual, ecologists, than for their geographical place of origin, that is to say, Ecuadorian, Andean, or Latin-American. This is the new mankind we face.

2.4 Authenticity, Folklore and Storytelling: is it real?

A common idea in the field of teaching a Foreign Language is to consider the use of authentic material of relevant importance. This has taken place mainly because of the aim of developing cultural competence in language teaching. However, the definition of the term “authenticity” is an issue that needs to be reassessed. Kramsch clearly states the problem in her book *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* with the following words:

It is a truism to say that teaching language *is* teaching culture, but what exactly does it mean? How can learners in the artificial and standardized environment of a classroom have access to the central code of another culture? The foreigner, says Nostrand should be prepared to *encounter* the culture’s ground of meaning; but does he or she necessarily have to *understand* it? And is it at all feasible anyway? (Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* 177)

The idea of teaching the culture of the target language (English in our case) appears as a clear attempt to develop real communicative competence.



However, in the endeavor of doing so, we can confuse this goal. Kramsch explains that the use of “authentic” material was applied as a reaction against prefabricated artificial language of textbooks in order to achieve natural communication. She writes:

In their written form, everyday texts of information require readers to adopt the communicative reading strategies of native speakers: skim and scan for desired information, capitalize on the natural redundancy of a text and get clues from its context, recognize authorial intention and act upon it- for example, stop at a stop sign or bake a cake according to a recipe. As spoken exchanges, authentic texts require participants to respond with behaviors that are socially appropriate to the setting, the status of the interlocutors, the purpose, key, genre, and instrumentalities of the exchange, and the norms agreed by native speakers (Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* 178)

However, it is not because of the use of authentic material that we can say that a learner is in fact communicating in the target language. It depends on the *response* that the learner gives to that specific text. Authenticity has to deal mainly with the use and the appropriate answer to that particular stimulus. The notion of a generic native speaker has come so diversified that it has lost its meaning. (Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* 49)

In the peak of interest for communicative approaches to language teaching authentic material is presented to learners as if they were native speakers, with the expectation from the teacher of a natural reaction to it. But it is imperative to ask ourselves: authentic for whom, authentic of what? What are we are looking for? Kramsh writes:

Does cultural competence include the obligation to behave in accordance with the social conventions of a given speech community?
(...) The ability to behave like someone else is no guarantee that one will



be more easily accepted by the group who speaks the language, nor that mutual understanding will emerge. A tragic illustration is provided by the many Asian or Hispanic immigrants or Native Americans in the United States, whose linguistic skills may help, but in no way guarantee, their social integration (Kramersch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* 181)

It is therefore essential to decide if we as teachers want to be mere trainers of replica learners, who are being taught to imitate an artificial culture that does not belong to them at all. It is therefore extremely important to remember the transcendental role of the teacher as participant in a dialogic negotiation, as a mediator between the culture, the target language and that inner, individual experience which is taught in the EFL classroom.

2.5 Recent studies on Folklore and Storytelling

Stories are a principal channel for folklore, as it is for culture in general. Stories vary from ancient myths and legends, to personal-experience narratives, to the latest urban legends and e-mail hoaxes. Including them as part of the possible reading material for Foreign Language learners will promote their critical thinking abilities as well as enhance the idea of revaluing cultural identity. Folklore should be then understood as a whole from where branches such as beliefs, myths, tales and practices related to tradition emerge.

Folklore has to do with our daily activities, with the everyday creativity which is shared and passed on from one generation to another. Folklore stands as a flag to recognize and identify our background. Thus, the importance of folktales remains in the mere fact that they reflect the oral tradition and identity of a group. Folktales transmit the feeling of belonging to a certain community, the idea of having roots which are worth sharing with others.



Unfortunately storytelling is not a common practice in the student's homes as neither it is in the classroom. However, there is hope for its revival, at least in the classroom, since educators have long known the power of arts in contributing academic success. Storytelling is excellent for student exploration, besides it is accessible to all learners. All students need is imagination, ability to listen and speak. It helps students to explore their expressiveness as well as their ability to communicate thoughts and feelings. In other words, daily skills and competences are being practiced through Storytelling in the classroom. In today's society, media-driven world, Storytelling can be a hope to remind children that spoken words, traditions, roots and listening are important.

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of art. Not too long before media intoxicated the world, storytelling entertained not only children, but people in general, in a magical context. Stories, myths, legends and folktales were passed from one generation to another. Imagination was in charge to picture all the features of a story: the characters, the surrounding, and the environment. A good storyteller was appreciated in the community. Those were the days where all the family gathered together to listen to different stories. In this context, we can affirm that stories help create national and regional identity. Listening to stories can be not only a stunning creative experience for today's youngsters but a wonderful tool to enhance the process of learning a Foreign Language.

There are various skills which are developed during the process of Storytelling, according to the Story Arts web page. Some of them are:

Gaining Verbal Skills

Becoming verbally proficient can contribute to a student's ability to resolve interpersonal conflict nonviolently. Negotiation, discussion, and tact are peacemaking skills. Being able to lucidly express one's thoughts and feelings is important for a child's safety. Clear communication is the first step to being able to ask for help when it is needed.



Imagination

Both telling a story and listening to a well-told tale encourages students to use their imaginations. Developing the imagination can empower students to consider new and inventive ideas. Developing the imagination can contribute to self-confidence and personal motivation as students envision themselves competent and able to accomplish their hopes and dreams.

Passing on Wisdom

Storytelling, based on traditional folktale, is a gentle way to guide young people toward constructive personal values by presenting imaginative situations in which the outcome of both wise and unwise actions and decisions can be seen

2.6 The linkage: the Ecuadorian contribution

Ecuadorian writer Nancy Crespo realized the astonishing importance of creating a bond between identity, reading and teaching. Therefore, she has published two textbooks based on Ecuador's legends, people and places. The books are surprisingly written in English. Both contain useful activities to be used in class oriented to enhance communicative and grammatical competences. The texts also include creative writing projects which aim to reinforce lexis and vocabulary. Highland legends fascinatingly mix with the ones of the coast, the Amazon and Galapagos in the book *Ecuador, Land of Legends*. Ecuadorian figures, such as Jefferson Perez, Manuela Saenz, and Oswaldo Guayasamin, merge with the magic environment of places such as : El Panecillo, the Ruins of Pumapungo and Lakes of Ecuador in Crespo's text *Ecuador, People and Places*. In Crespo's words:



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Reading must be a key to reinforce English, but it is also a key to discover something very enjoyable. That is why legends of our country will help students learn a second language, and at the same time they will use real information about their country and culture. When a person uses authentic information for applying new knowledge, it is easier to understand and remember it. (Crespo, Ecuador, Land of Legends 5)

A brief synopsis of each tale will be later offered to help the reader of the present paper to be aware of a better context about Ecuadorian legends, stories and people.

In conclusion, students who are exposed to an extensive range of high-interest story books, and encouraged to read and share them, are consistently found to learn the target language more quickly. When immersed in a meaningful text, without tight controls over grammar and vocabulary, they appear to learn the language incidentally, and to develop positive attitudes towards books. In some cases, the benefits are found to spread to other subjects and languages. Implications are drawn for cultural identity awareness in our country and English learning.



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CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This research followed a combined methodology (both qualitative and quantitative) which offer the benefit to triangulate data in a broader way. Combination of methods in Second Language research is increasingly being used due to its various results. The use of a combined method provokes the confrontation of both qualitative and quantitative data giving useful insights into the final results. Further theories related to the topic of study were deeply investigated. Associated articles, journals and texts were analyzed in order to have a broader and clearer idea regarding Reading, Storytelling and Cultural Identity. Internet sites, as well as libraries of the city, helped in the proper development of this research. Updated books and material constitute the basis of this research. Reading, analyzing and comparing theories related to Reading strategies, Storytelling benefits and Cultural Identity clarified the path of this thesis. Theories from authors, such as Jo Ann Aebersold and Mary Lee Field, Maryanne Wolf, Jeanne Chall, Stephen Krashen, Paul Nation, Richard Day and Julian Bamford, and Claire Kramsch, are part of this survey.

With this in mind, this research focused on studying and getting depth into theories as well as on interviewing different groups of learners, in order to discover their interests towards Reading, Storytelling and Cultural Identity. Two textbooks -with 23 different readings- published by Ecuadorian author Nancy Crespo B, *Ecuador, People and Places* and *Ecuador, Land of Legends*, were tested and sort of extensive reading activities were applied with students.

3.1 The group

A group of 17 female teenagers (aged 15 and 16) from Catalinas High School (Unidad Educativa Experimental Rosa de Jesus Cordero) constitute the main sample of the thesis. Catalinas High School is a Catholic female institution with a philosophy of integral education in which students are protagonist of their own formation along with pedagogical guide of teachers. Catalinas High School



stresses the importance of individual compromise of change as the driven force to social change. The institution is based on moral values and focuses academic excellence. It is important to state that the mentioned school has an upper intermediate level of English, with a program of ten hours a week.

3.2 The tools

A survey for students was applied before presenting the stories for Reading and Storytelling. The results of this questionnaire helped clarify the students' level of interest towards the project of study. A second questionnaire was later applied in order to triangulate the information.

Storytelling and reading activities were applied in class. Later, interviews in focus groups format involved several participants in a group discussion, with the researcher acting as a facilitator, whose goal was to keep the group discussion targeted on Storytelling, Reading and Cultural Identity. The discussions were documented in video and tape recorded. This methodology was carried out before, during and after Reading and Storytelling.

3.3 The interview

An additional interview with a prominent writer was held to obtain further information associated with the topics of identity, storytelling, reading, culture and globalization.

Eliécer Cárdenas Espinoza (1951) is an Ecuadorian writer and journalist. He has published several books. Cárdenas is currently in charge of the Municipality Public library of the city, and he writes for various national newspapers, journals and magazines.

3.4 The material



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A meaningful and comprehensible input supposes material understood and related to students' cultural context. And it is here where we turn our focus on legends and folktales. Application of textbooks *Ecuador, People and Places* and *Ecuador, Land of Legends* by author Nancy Crespo

**BOOK ONE:
ECUADOR PEOPLE AND PLACES
PEOPLE**

Our National Pride

Jefferson Perez.

Jefferson Pérez, is a famous Ecuadorian speed walker. His multiple triumphs in both personal and athletic fields are narrated in this youth challenging story.

The Nightingale of America

Julio Jaramillo (J.J)

This story describes the life of the Ecuadorian *pasillo* singer, Julio Jaramillo, who became a celebrity because of his talented and gifted voice.

The Liberator's Liberator

Manuela Saenz

Manuela Saenz was one of the first to become a revolutionary leader during the independence of South America. Her role, hand in hand with Bolivar, was a decisive one in gaining independence.

The First Ecuadorian Female Doctor

Matilde Hidalgo de Procel

She was the first woman in Ecuador to graduate with honors from high school in spite of living in a society dominated by men. Later, she graduated as a doctor becoming the first woman to hold that title in Ecuador.

The Wonderful Artist



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Oswaldo Guayasamin

Guayasamín is considered the father of indigenous expressionism. He used his talent to denounce oppression and terrible conditions of life of people in Latin America.

The Old Fighter

Eloy Alfaro Delgado

The prominent politician was a visionary who made great efforts to improve the lives of Ecuadorians. He promulgated a new constitution with important secular changes.

PLACES

In the Middle of the Capital

El Panecillo

Panecillo was the name given by the Spanish to a small hill in Quito. Artist Herrán Matorres built a monument to honor the Virgin Mary based on the work of another sculptor, Bernardo de Legarda.

Our National Treasure

The Galapagos Islands

The Archipiélago de Colón lies in the Pacific Ocean 1,050 kilometers from the Ecuadorian mainland. The islands possess a unique flora and fauna which have been studied by scientists such as Charles Darwin and Jacques Cousteau.

The Heart of the Inca Empire

The Ruins of Pumapungo

They are located in the centre of Cuenca. Pumapungo was the administrative as well as the religious center of the Inca city Tomebamba.

The Government Palace

The Palace of Carondelet



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It was built in 1747. It was partially destroyed after an earthquake and Baron Luis de Carondelet, Presidente de la Audiencia, renovated the palace.

Natural Treasures

Lakes of Ecuador

One of the biggest tourist attractions is the existence of a large number of lakes, called "Route of the Lakes"

A Light in the Pearl of the Pacific

The Lighthouse of Santa Ana

The hill of Santa Ana is located in Guayaquil. The lighthouse was built to represent the first lighthouse built in Ecuador in 1841 on the Isla del Muerto (Isle of the Dead) in the most prominent entrance to the gulf.

BOOK TWO: ECUADOR LAND OF LEGENDS:

HIGHLAND LEGENDS

Cantuña and his pact with the devil

Cantuña was a respected indigenous in colonial times. He was asked to build the atrium of the Church of San Francisco. The payment was unbelievable but he had to do it in a short time. He then offered his soul to the devil with the condition that the stones of the atrium were in place before the first rays of the sun. He wrote in one stone that whoever used that stone recognized only one God. The little demons could not touch the stone and could not do anything and Cantuña won his soul back.

Huacas of Machachi

In old times there were no places to keep money and valuables safe. So people used to bury them in clay pots in different places such as walls, floors, gardens and patios. Only the owner knew where the huaca was and if died unexpectedly, the owners' spirit became a ghost until someone found the huaca.



The Pumapungo Maiden

Pumapungo was the favorite destination of the Inca Emperors. It was such a beautiful place with gardens, flowers, plant trees and fruits. There were Sun Virgins trained to honor the Inti. Nina was one of them and secretly fell in love with one of the temple's priest. When the Inca found out he ordered that the priest be killed. Nina died of sorrow. Her soul is haunted and whoever walks around this area can hear her mourning.

The Guagua Auca

There was a good priest, Guillermo. He was once called to a rich man's house to give mass and bless his new house. There was heavy drinking at the party so the priest decided to leave. On his way home, he heard a baby crying. "Look daddy, I have teeth" the baby said with a hoarse voice. The priest realized it was the devil so he galloped on his horse as fast as he could. He had saved himself from the guagua auca.

COAST LEGENDS

The Sad Princess of Santa Ana

The legend says that the Huancavilcas were a tribe of giants that liked to do whatever they wanted. They had a big treasure kept in a fortress. The cruelest was the King. He had a daughter and she was different from her father. The Huancavilcas killed a shaman who casted a spell on the king's daughter. She became ill. One night, the shaman's soul appeared before the king and asked him for his treasure in exchange for his daughter's health, but he refused, so the shaman condemned them and the huancavilcas disappeared.

The Ravine Devil

A devil lives in the ravines close to the rivers. He is always looking for houses nearby to pull them down a cliff. One night, he went to a party dressed up as a handsome and charming man and ordered all the children to go to bed. The bewitched parents obeyed except for one child, who hid under a chair. The



boy then realized that the man was the devil and that he was trying to pull the house down the cliff. He told his dad and with the help of a priest they saved the house and the people.

The Goblin

The goblin is a mythical character of Ecuador's different regions that lives in the forest and the jungles. He sits on big rocks in the rivers and wears a huge hat and dark clothes. He likes to chase young beautiful girls. He calls their attention by tossing stones or whistling. Tania was a beautiful teenager who unfortunately, saw the goblin and became an old speechless lady.

AMAZON LEGENDS

Never Make Fun of Kuartam, the Toad

A toad: Kuartam, lives in the depths of the jungle. The legend says that Muraya a young Shuar warrior, went hunting with his father and brother. The older hunters had already warned Muraya not to make fun of the toad or he would receive a punishment. That day, laughing, Muraya said to the toad: "Kuartam-tan, Kuartam-tan, let's see if you can punish me". A huge puma came from the jungle and ate the young boy.

Etsa and the Iwia Demon

Iwia was the most horrible gigantic demon that lived in the jungle. He used to carry a shigra (bag) in which he kept his findings. He had eaten all the Shuars except Etsa, a little boy, who was kept as his slave. Iwia told Etsa he was his father and he had to feed him. Little by little, Etsa ended up with all the birds from the jungle and he was very sad, until he found the Yapankam dove that told him to take all the feathers and blow them in his cerbatana. So he did and the birds revived. He killed Iwiwa and freed the jungle from this demon.

Nunkui, Mother Earth, and the Yucca Girl

The Shuar were very poor, they had no food. One day Nunkui, mother Earth appeared in front of them dancing and singing. She offered them a gift: her daughter. She told them to be responsible for taking care of her, not to beat



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her and to keep her clean. They accepted and found plenty of plants and fruits everywhere. One day, the children mistreated the girl. She called for her mother, who was really upset. She told the Shuar that from then on they will have to look inside the earth for food that came from heaven. All the fruit was swallowed up by the soil. This is the reason why today they have to dig to get yucca, the most important food for their meals.

GALAPAGOS LEGENDS

The Wailing Wall of Isabela Island

The Galapagos Islands were perfect to send criminals to serve their prison terms. The prisoners had to carry big stones from the islands, polish them and build a wall. Most of them died in terrible conditions while they built the “Wailing Wall”. The locals say that when the fog settles on the Isabela Island, especially at dusk and night, the island is filled with soft wailing. Others say that they have seen the prisoners on the trail to the wall.



CHAPTER 4 RESULTS: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Questionnaire 1

The following questionnaire was applied to 14 students in order to analyze if there are any differences in perception towards reading strategies applied in both native (Spanish) and foreign languages (English). The applied questionnaire presented 10 inquiries in which participants had to respond with True – False closed ended answers. The same questions were applied in both languages. The questionnaire was taken from the book *Advanced Reading Power: Extensive Reading, Vocabulary Building, Comprehension Skills, Reading Faster* by Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries.

Figure # 1 Advance Reading power – questionnaire		
QUESTIONS	True	False
1. It is always necessary to read every word of a passage		
2. It is a good idea to say the words aloud when you read		
3. Reading more slowly improves comprehension		
4. Knowing every word is necessary for comprehension		
5. As you read, you should always look up the meaning of words you do not know		
6. To read well, you need to know the pronunciation of every word		
7. Learning vocabulary is the only way to improve reading ability		
8. Learning grammar is the only way to improve reading ability		
9. You can read all kind of texts (books, newspapers, etc) the same way		
10. Reading in different languages requires different reading methods		
Source: <i>Advanced Reading Power</i> , Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries (vii)		



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Data was later analyzed according to the number of responses for each category and its percentile. The following chart presents the observed results. The questions that show a significant difference in outcomes are: Question number two, which refers to saying the words aloud at the moment of reading; question number four, which relates to knowledge of every word for comprehension; question number nine, which examines the readers' ability to read the same way in both languages, and finally, question number ten, which inquires about reading methods according to the language.



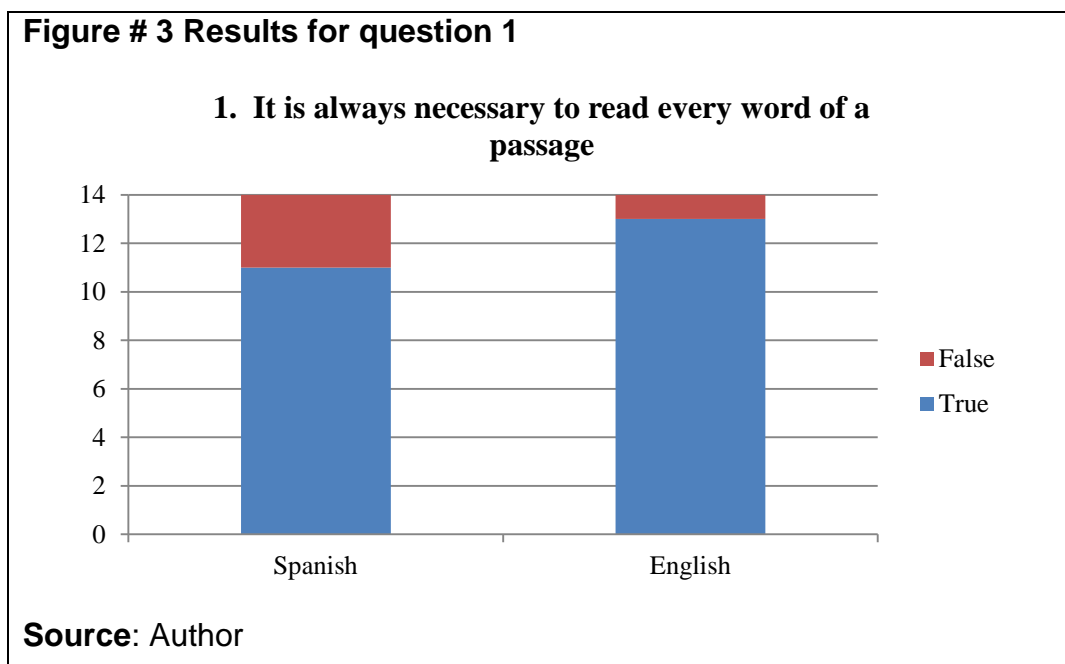
Figure # 2 Results of Advance Reading Power Questionnaire applied to 14 students								
QUESTIONS	SPANISH				ENGLISH			
	True	False	% True	% False	True	False	% True	% False
1. It is always necessary to read every word of a passage	11	3	78,6%	21,4%	13	1	92,9%	7,1%
2. It is a good idea to say the words aloud when you read	6	8	42,9%	57,1%	12	2	85,7%	14,3%
3. Reading more slowly improves comprehension	14	0	100,0%	0,0%	14	0	100,0%	0,0%
4. Knowing every word is necessary for comprehension	3	11	21,4%	78,6%	12	2	85,7%	14,3%
5. As you read, you should always look up the meaning of words you do not know	10	4	71,4%	28,6%	13	1	92,9%	7,1%
6. To read well, you need to know the pronunciation of every word	11	3	78,6%	21,4%	13	1	92,9%	7,1%
7. Learning vocabulary is the only way to improve reading ability	14	0	100,0%	0,0%	13	1	92,9%	7,1%
8. Learning grammar is the only way to improve reading ability	9	5	64,3%	35,7%	12	2	85,7%	14,3%
9. You can read all kind of texts (books, newspapers, etc) the same way	10	4	71,4%	28,6%	8	6	57,1%	42,9%
10. Reading in different languages requires different reading methods	9	5	64,3%	35,7%	7	8	50,0%	57,1%
Source: Author								



Each question has been individually analyzed with the purpose of observing similarities or differences.

Question 1:

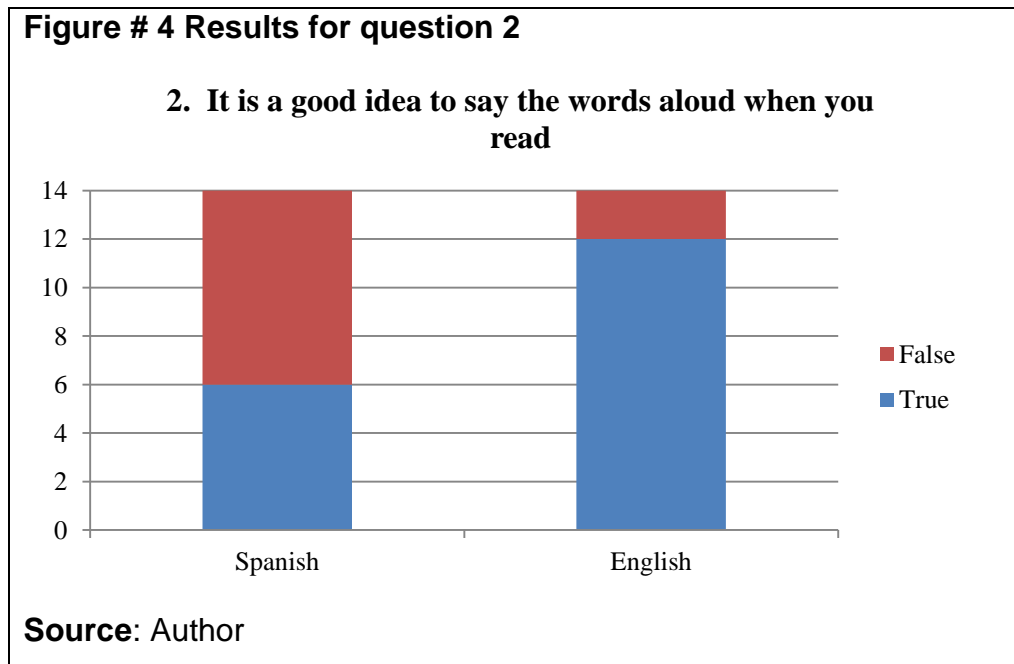
The objective in the first question was to examine the difference in strategies used to read in the native language to the ones used in the foreign language. The results show similar numbers for both languages, which mean that parallel strategies, are being used. 11 students out of 14 considered it necessary to read every word of a passage in Spanish, whereas 13 out of 14 agreed with this strategy in English





Question 2:

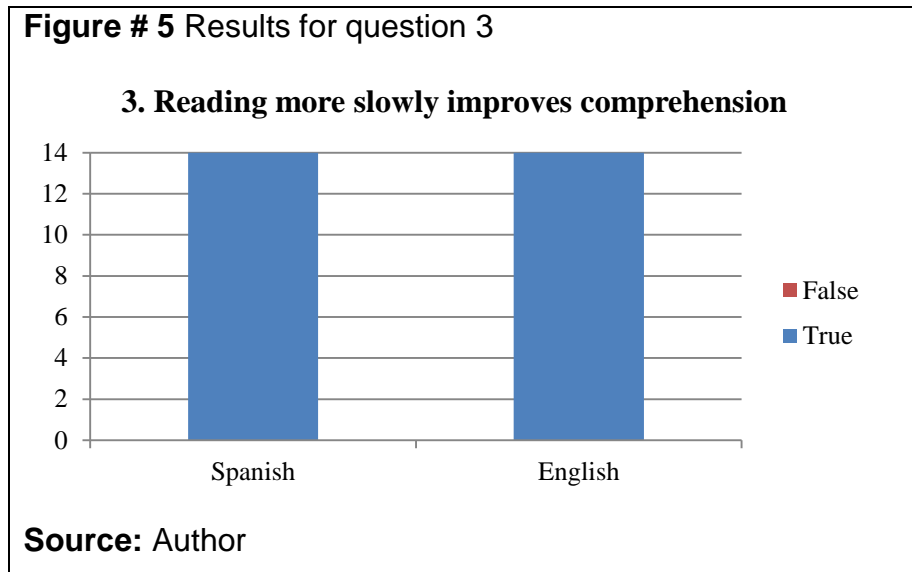
Question number two scans the strategy of reading aloud in both Spanish and English. Dramatic differences in results arise in this question. 6 participants considered this as a useful tool whereas 8 of them stated it as false. In contrast, 12 students out of 14 reported the strategy helpful when reading in the foreign language.





Question 3:

Question number three reveals the importance of reading slowly to improve comprehension. The outcome demonstrated the strategy valid for both languages.

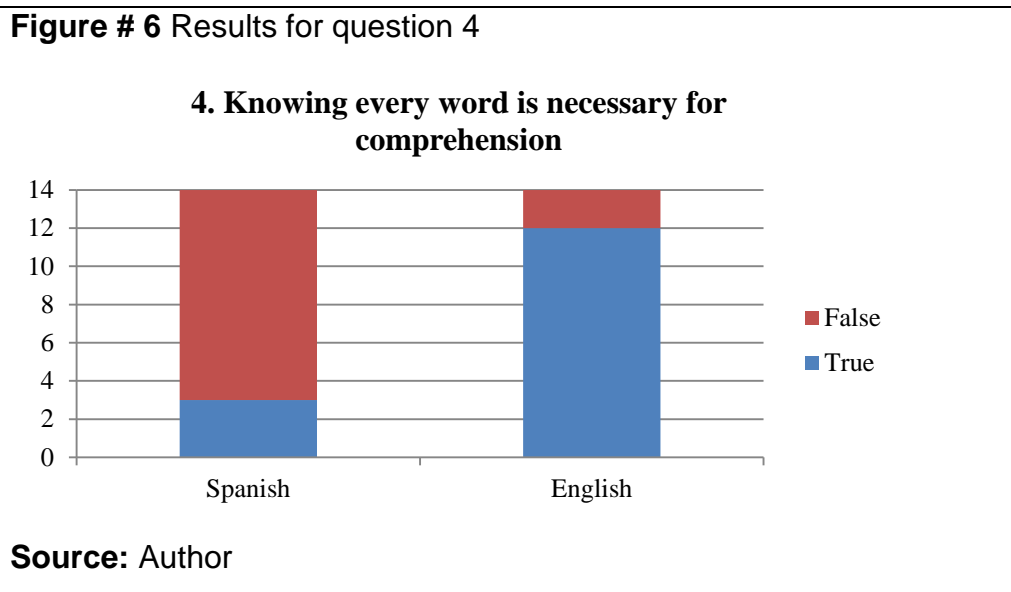




Question 4:

Question four comprises the issue of comprehension. Significant differences appear when comparing the native language vs. the foreign language. 3 out of 14 participants considered it important to know every word of a passage in Spanish, whereas 12 out of 14 admitted the inquiry as true in English.

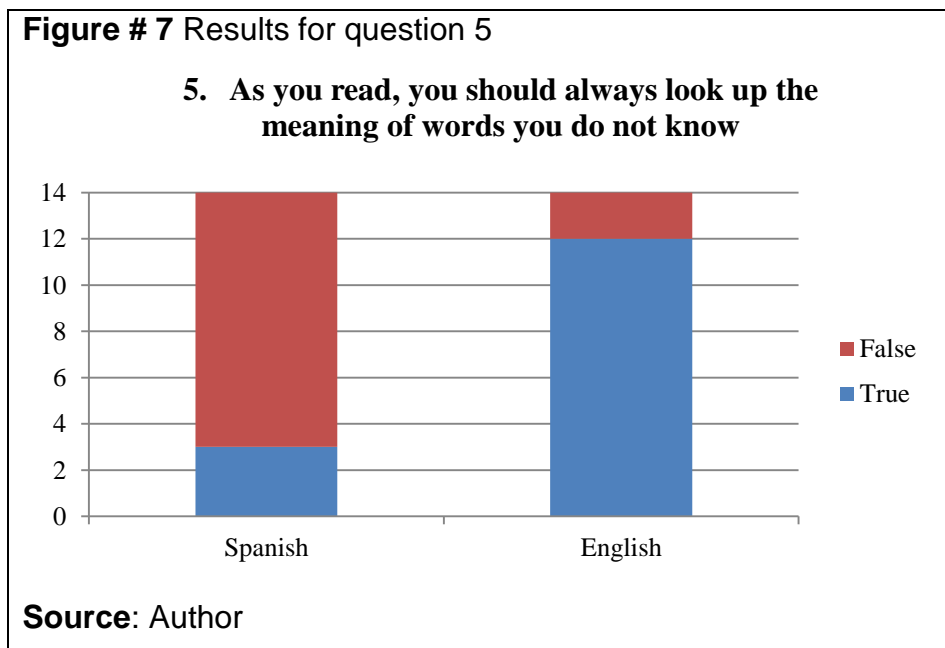
Figure # 6 Results for question 4





Question 5:

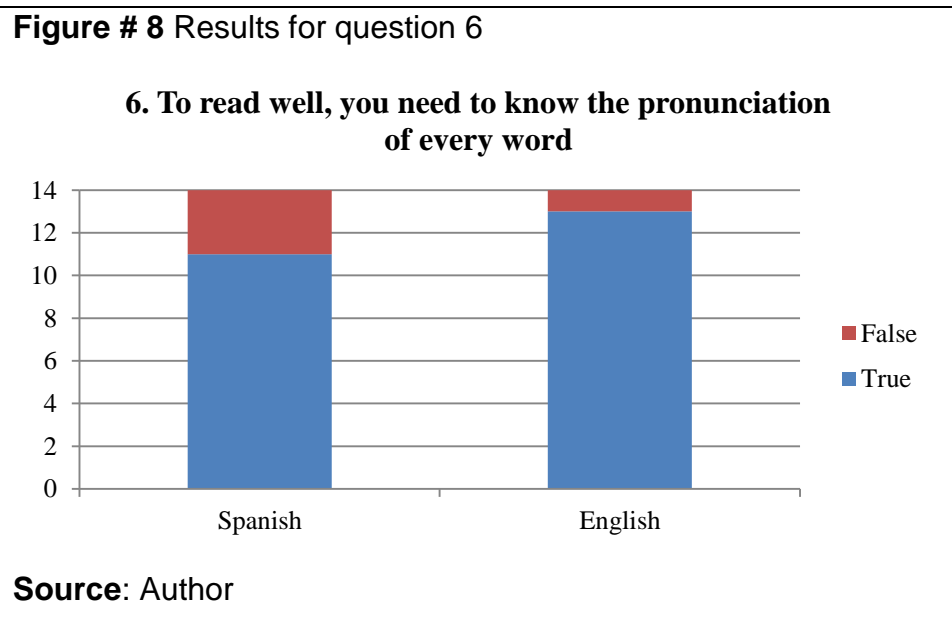
Question number five is linked in meaning to number four and also refers to the issue of comprehension. Ten participants acknowledged the question related to the use of dictionaries to be true in their native language while 13 out of 14 admitted its importance in the foreign language.





Question 6:

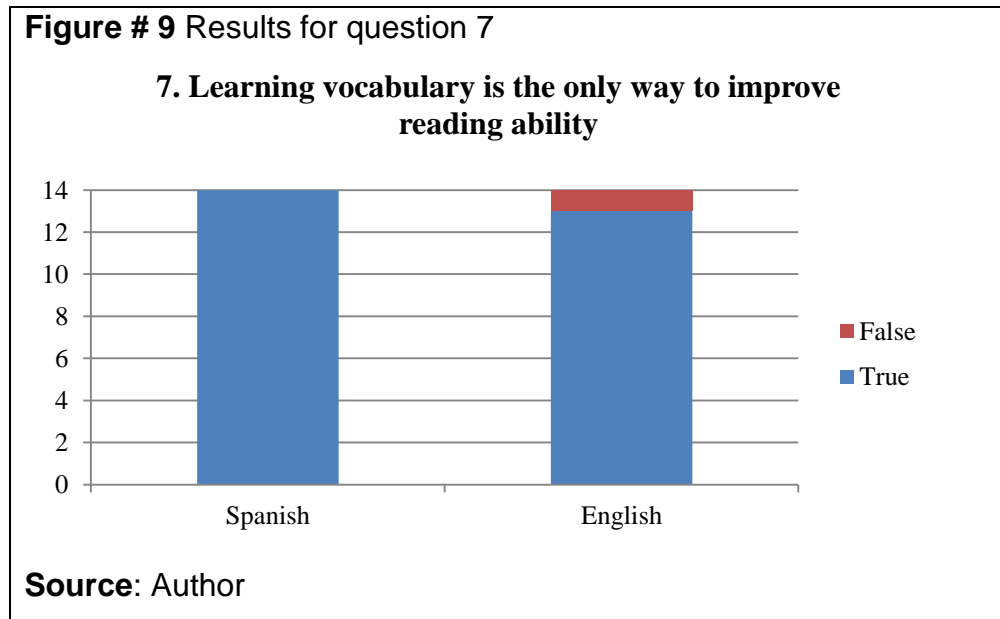
Question number six evaluated the subject of pronunciation in both languages. The results were similar. Participants acknowledged the importance of this matter in both cases.





Question 7:

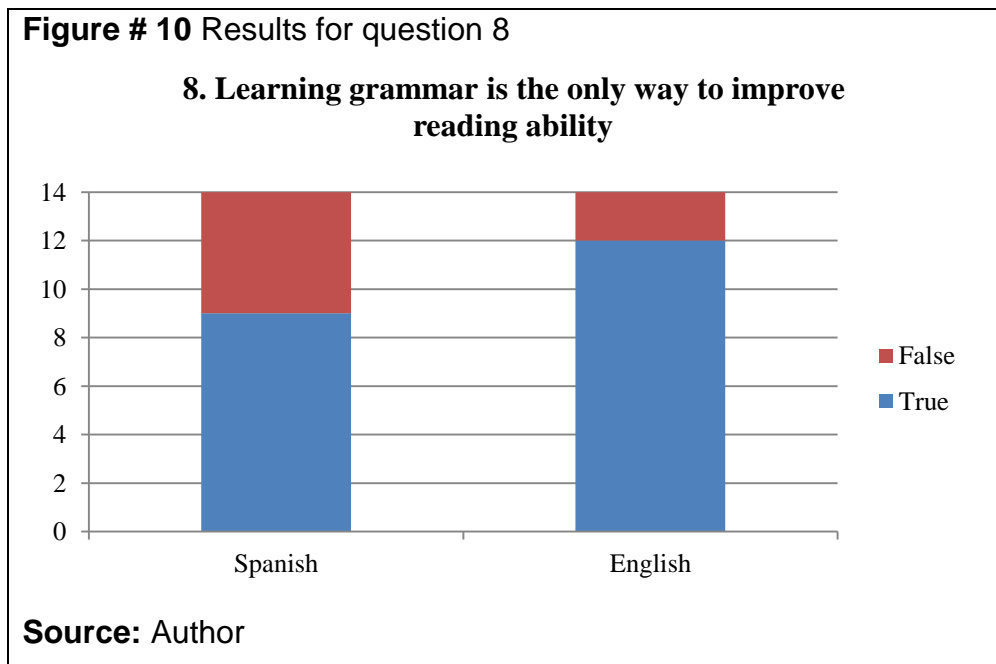
The issue of understanding vocabulary was tested in question number seven. Parallel answers were given in relation to the relevance of terms and words in both languages.





Question 8:

Question eight shows that 64,3%, that is to say 9 out of 14 recognize the importance of grammar in the native language, whereas 12 participants, that is 85,7%, considered it important and true in English.

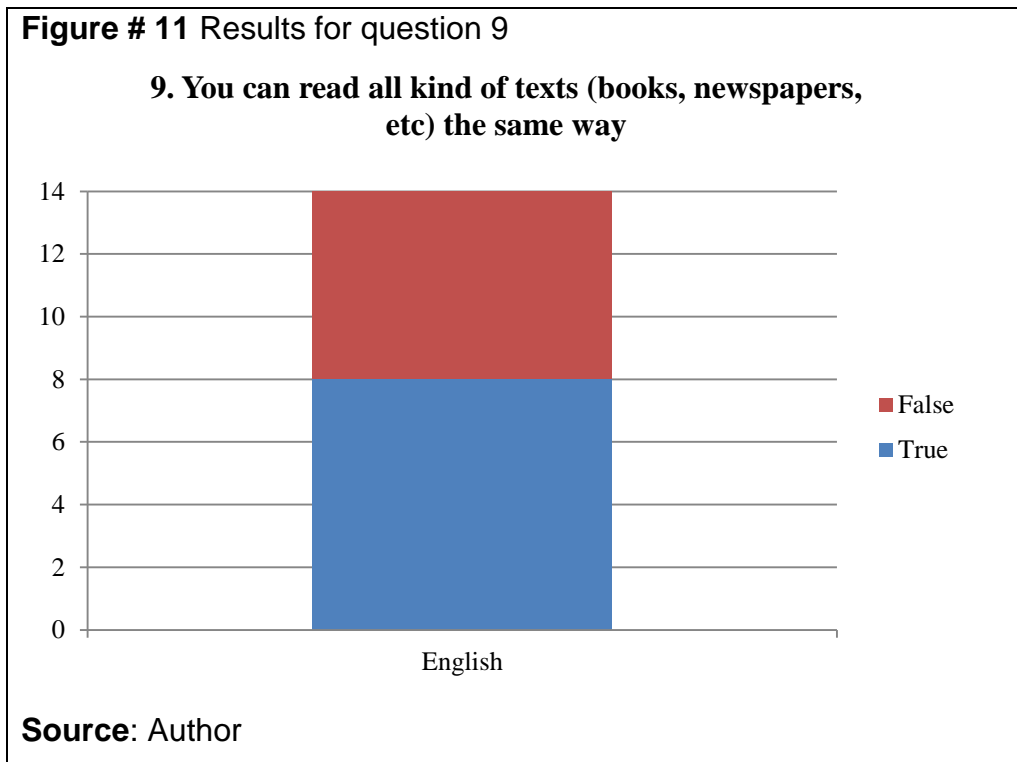


Outcomes of questions 9 and 10 had to be adapted to the needs of the present thesis since the author found them intrinsically related to the native language. Therefore, only one figure will be shown to demonstrate each questions' outcomes.



Question 9:

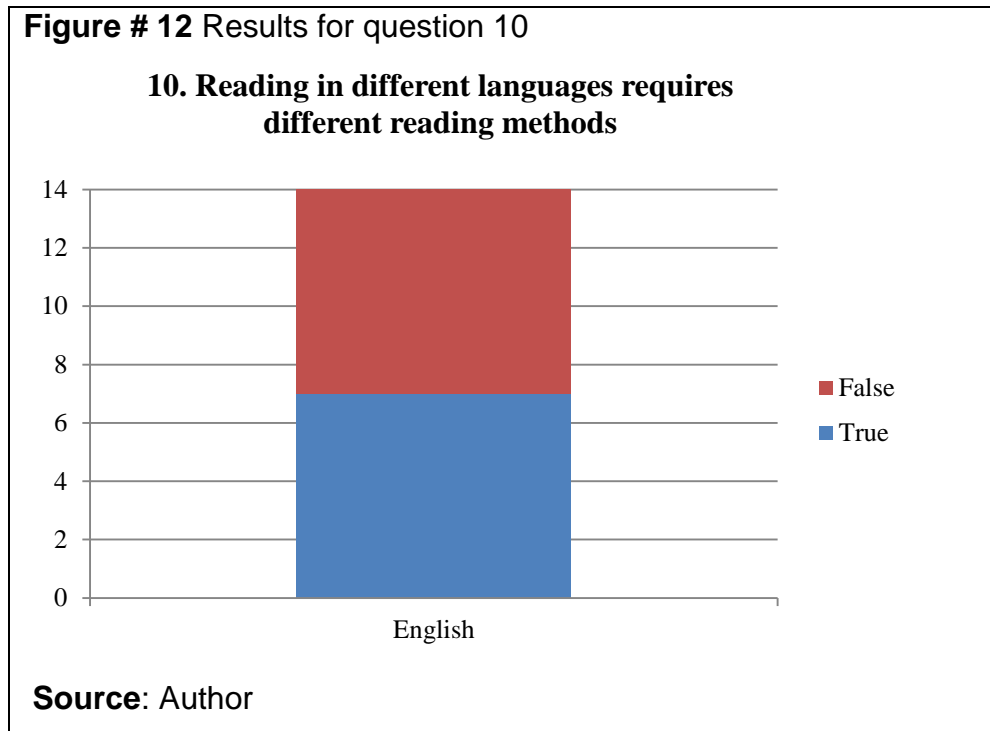
Question nine demonstrated differences related to the texts that can be read accordingly in each language. Ten out of fourteen students (71, 4%) considered it true when referring to the native language while eight out of six (57, 1%) judged it true in the foreign language.





Question 10:

To end with the questionnaire, question ten posed the importance of using different methods when reading in different languages. 9 out of 14 participants declared it true 64, 3% while 35, 7%, that is, 5 out of 9 said the sentence was false.



4.2 Introduction to Extensive Reading Questionnaire

A second questionnaire was used with the same group in an open ended answers format in order to browse and deepen concepts related to the topic. The following questionnaire was also borrowed from the book *Advanced Reading Power: Extensive Reading, Vocabulary Building, Comprehension Skills, Reading Faster* by Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries (Mikulecky S. y Jeffries 2)

As we can see in the following table the answers were varied and present concurrences with the ideas previously given. The first question scans the first experiences towards reading; the answers show somewhat an idea of



pleasure and nostalgia although feelings of disappointment and a lack of memories is also shown.

The second question evaluated the kind of material that participants had contact with. Lots of them mentioned books for children and all kind of books. The third question plays a fundamental role related to storytelling. It scans the habit of having someone reading for them, and whether they liked it or not. Question number four explores the material they like to read at the beginning of their readers´ history. Fantasy tales, princesses and love stories were the winners in this category.

The fifth question analyzes the delicate topic of teaching by exemplifying. It inquires whether adults read or not and their interests. The answers show that older adults read more than younger adults, and that their topic of preference is varied. Question six investigates the participants´ own preferences at the moment of reading. Again, they mention love stories as part of their favorite material to read as well as school mandatory books. This data matches perfectly with the information given in the focus groups later. Question seven scans the amount of time participants spend in reading. The scale varies from 1 to 10 hours. Questions 8, 9 and 10, scan the kind of books participants recall. An interesting list is given both in the native and the foreign language.

Figure # 13 Advanced Reading Power – Extensive Reading Questionnaire	
Questions	Answers
1. Looking back at your childhood, what do you remember as your first reading experiences?	Princesses, fantasy tales (x2) Colorful stories, sofa, teacher told me to, I don't remember, I hate reading, first grade journal(x2) With a cousin, don't remember(x2) Afraid to make mistakes in English, happiness, I thought I pronounced well and everyone laughed,
2. What kind of reading material did your parents have in the house when you were young?	All kinds of books(x4) Children books (x5) Newspaper, magazines (x3)



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	Books to color
3. Do you remember having books or other materials read to you as a child? If so, what did you like best?	My dad told me fairy tales, my mom(x3) Used to read me a book about a princess, legends, I don't remember, my parents, animals, princesses Cinderella (x2) Bible
4. When you were able to read on your own, what did you enjoy reading?	Fantasy stories(x4) Love stories (x2) Magazines with advices, short stories, mystery(x2)
5. Did your parents or other members of the family like to read? If so, what did they read?	History, classical, novels, reflection books, my mom(x3) Drama books, my grandfather(x3), Parents(x3) Grandparents, my grandmother, my dad
6. What kind of reading is important for your life today? For example, do you read a lot for school or for your job?	Novels. We read some books for school but they are not interesting, reading is culture. Love stories. Improves vocabulary and speech, English, Social Studies Literature, information to learn what is happening around the world
7. About how many hours a week do you usually read materials of your own choice (magazines, novels, newspapers, nonfiction)?	6 hours, when I have time, 4 hours(x2) 10 hours 2 hours (x2) 1 hour 3 hours 5 hours 9 hours
8. Do you have a favorite writer in your first language? A favorite book?	La biblioteca secreta en la escondida(x) by Leonor Bravo The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho(x2) María Fernanda Heredia Lágrimas de ángel, Almas Gemelas El amor es un no sé qué El día de ayer,
9. What books have you read in English?	Tom Riddle I'd tell you that I love you but then I'd had to kill you fairytales, no book(x5) The talented Mr. Ripley, Dan Brown, J.K. Rowling, Nicolas Sparks, Tuck Everlasting, the Giver, Tuesdays with Morrie, Romeo and Juliet(x2)



	Judy B. Jones, New Moon, Hostile love, Stephanie Meyer in Twilight(x2) The Ghost, Among the Hidden, the outsiders, lovely bones
10. If you could easily read anything in English, what would you like to read?	Novels, love stories (x4) dramas(x2)comedy, scary, history, about Ecuador, psychology, magazines (x3),
Source: Advanced Reading Power: Extensive Reading, Vocabulary Building, Comprehension Skills, Reading Faster by Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries and Author	

4.3 Survey about Cultural Identity

A third survey was applied to 17 students in order to collect information about Cultural Identity, Folktales and Ecuadorian Legends. The survey was presented to participants as follows:

Figure # 14 Survey to collect information about Cultural Identity, Folktales and Ecuadorian Legends	
SURVEY ABOUT CULTURAL IDENTITY....	
<i>The following survey intends to collect information related to Cultural Identity, folktales and reading in the EFL classroom. The results will be used as basis for a thesis investigation.</i>	
Age _____	Class _____
1. Do you like reading? Yes ____ No ____ Why? _____ _____	
2. Do you think reading is important to enlarge cultural knowledge? Yes ____ No ____ Why? _____	
3. If you are asked to read in English, what kind of material do you prefer to read? a. Science fiction ____ b. Novels ____ c. Legends ____	



d. Magazines ____
e. Others :

4. Do you consider reading a useful tool to be used and applied in the English class?
Yes ____ No ____
Why?

5. Do you like having someone read to you?
Yes ____ No ____
Why?

6. Who and when was the last time someone read a story to you?

7. Do you have an idea of what the term Cultural Identity refers to?
Yes ____ No ____
What?

8. Do you think it is important to be aware of self identity, values, culture?
Yes ____ No ____
Why?

9. Mention three Ecuadorian Legends that you recall.
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

Thank you so much for your cooperation

Source: Author

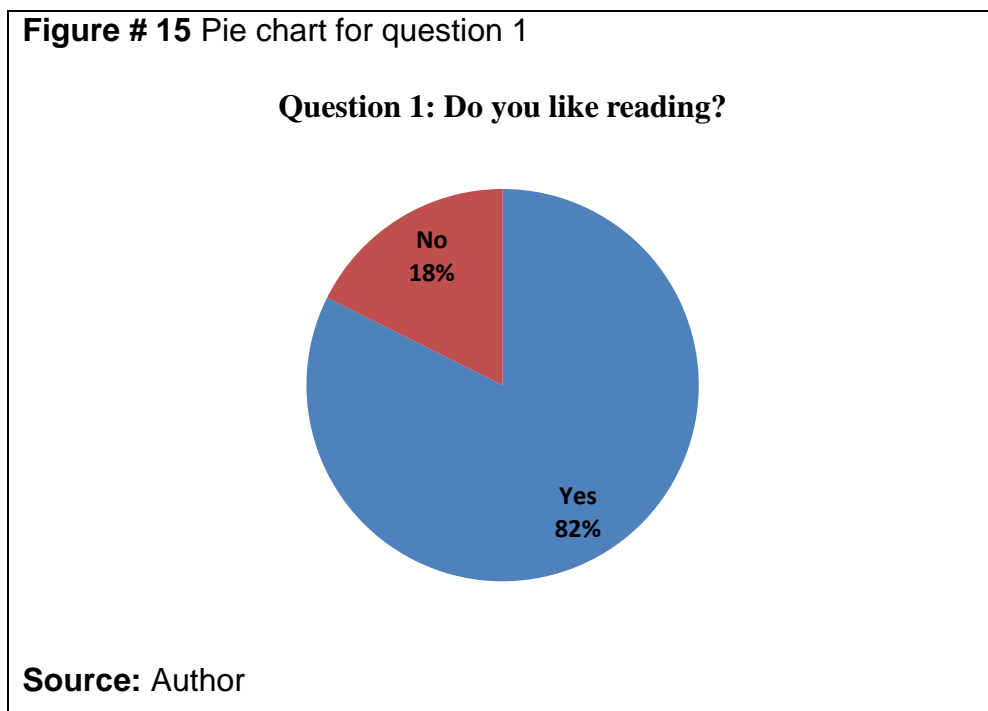
The outcomes and results were analyzed as follows:



For the first question examines if students like to read and why. The answers were clear towards a positive response: 82% of participants admitted that they liked to read, whereas 18% presented a negative answer.

Question		
1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	82%
No	3	18%
TOTAL	17	100,0%

The following graph shows the data as to analyze the outcomes of Question 1:



The reasons for the positive answer were stated according to frequency with these words:

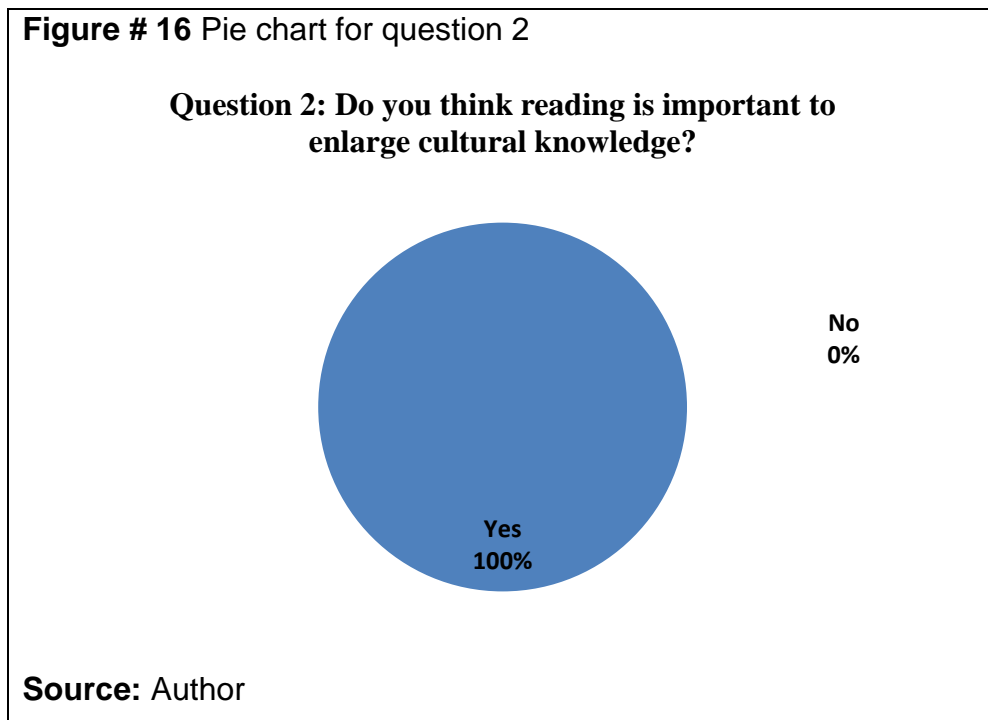


Why?
Fun, interesting, relaxing, imagination, knowledge, learn

Question number two searched information about the perspective towards reading in the context of cultural knowledge. The answer was astonishingly agreed by 100% of the participants.

Question		
2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%
TOTAL	17	100,0%

Figure number 16 shows in a graphic way the percentile of the result.



The reason repeatedly in most of participants was:

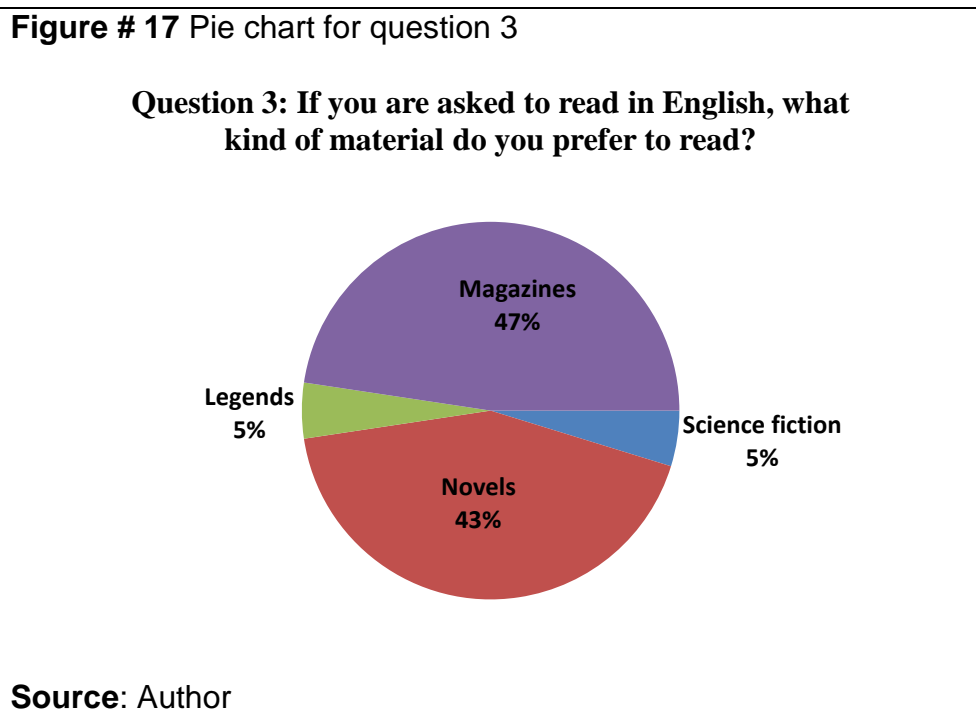
Why?
To learn



For question number three, which scrutinized the type of material students preferred to read, the answers were varied. Magazines were the winner with 48% of the positive answers followed by novels. It is important to say that these answers may be due to the age of the participants and to their social background.

Question 3	Frequency	Percent
Science fiction	1	5%
Novels	9	43%
Legends	1	5%
Magazines	10	48%
TOTAL	21	100,0%

The graph clearly shows the tendency stated by participants:



When participants were asked for other material that they like to read, they noted:

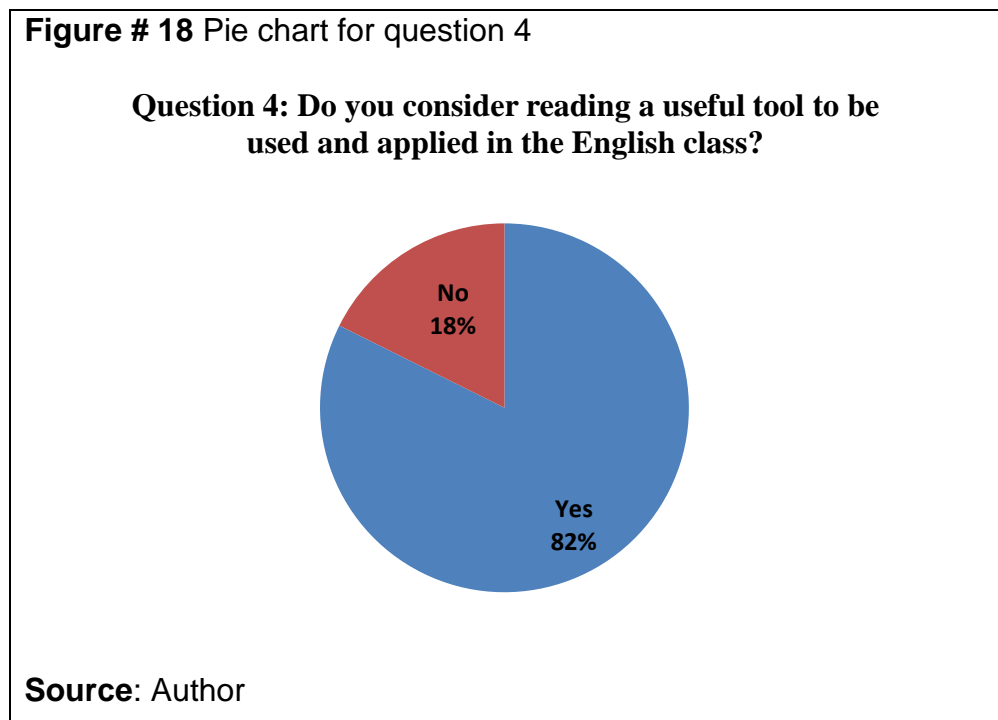
Others
love stories, funny stuff, historic fiction



Question number four reached the importance of reading in the English class. 14 out of 17 participants considered reading a useful tool in the EFL class, that is, 82% of the sample group.

Question 4	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	82%
No	3	18%
TOTAL	17	100,0%

Figure number 18 shows the outcome:



Next, students mentioned the various benefits given by reading with these words:

Why?
Yes because: new vocabulary, grammar, expressions, words, writing, other cultures, fluency.
No because: boring, not interesting, and only textbook.

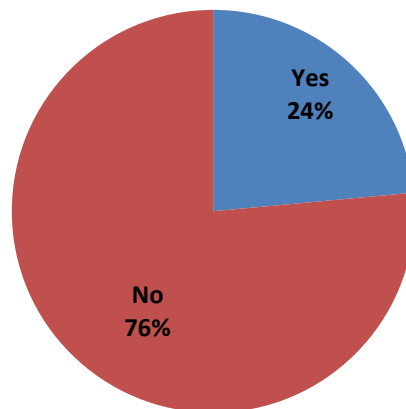


Question five analyzed the subject of storytelling. 76% of the participants adopted a negative answer. Only four students said that they liked having someone read for them.

Question 5	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	24%
No	13	76%
TOTAL	17	100,0%

Figure # 19 Pie chart for question 5

Question 5: Do you like having someone read to you?



Source: Author

The most frequently repeated answers were:

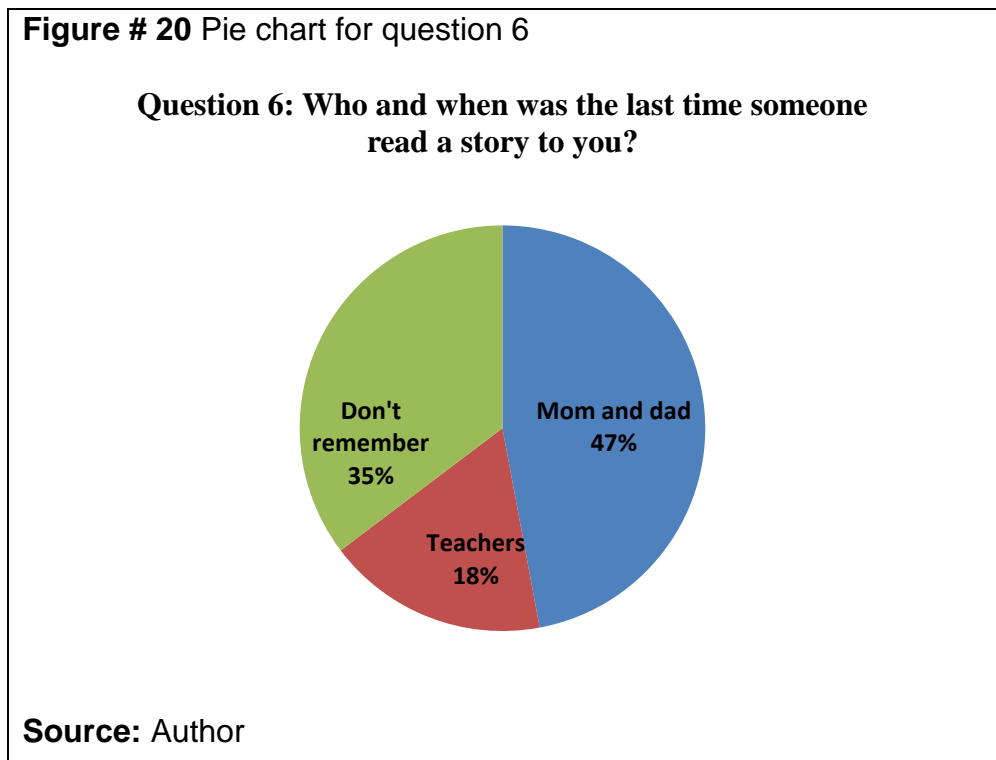
Why?
Yes: other voices, fun, I'm tired
No: I don't understand, it's not interesting, it's boring, I prefer to read myself, lack of concentration.



Question number 6 investigated who and when was the last time someone read to the participants. The highest score was given for parents followed by the answer “I don’t remember”.

Question 6	Frequency	Percent
Mom and dad	8	47%
Teachers	3	18%
Don't remember	6	35%
TOTAL	17	100,0%

The graph shows the trend in a clear manner:



The ages fluctuated between 5 and 10 years old for this question. This is to say, participants had the opportunity to have someone to read for them when



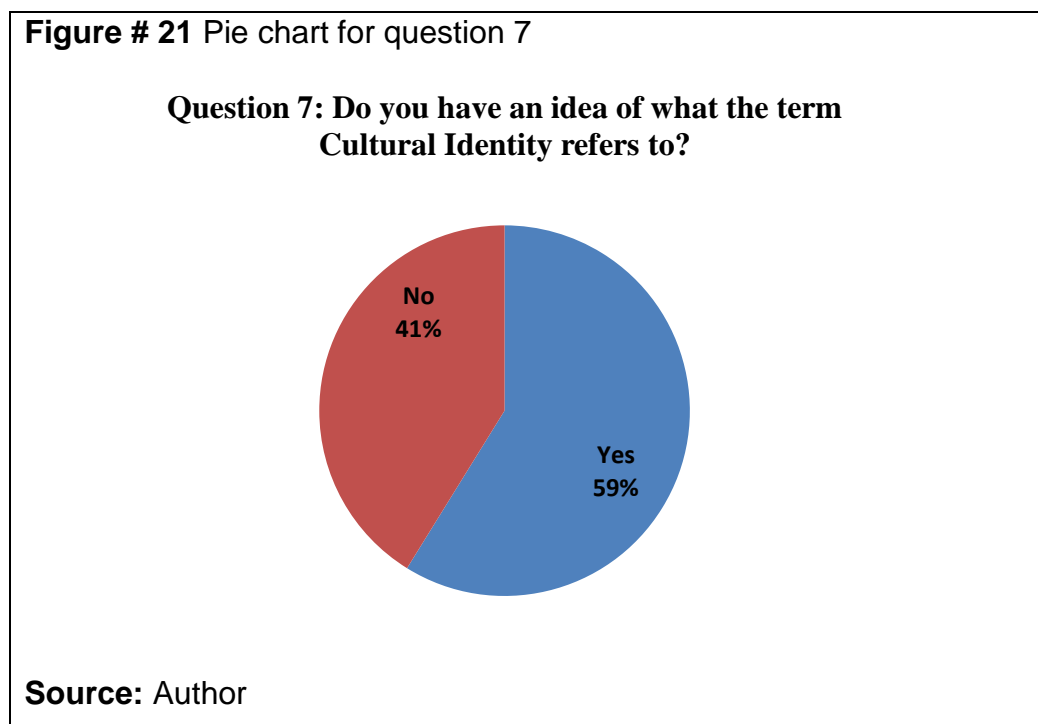
they were children. This information matches with the one given in the second questionnaire.

When was the last time someone read a story to you?
From 5 to 10 years old

Question 7 evaluated the concept of Cultural Identity among participants. The outcomes demonstrated that 59% of them were aware of it, that is to say, 10 of 17. 7 participants admitted not to being familiarized with the term.

Question 7	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	59%
No	7	41%
TOTAL	17	100,0%

The following chart presents the results in a visual style:





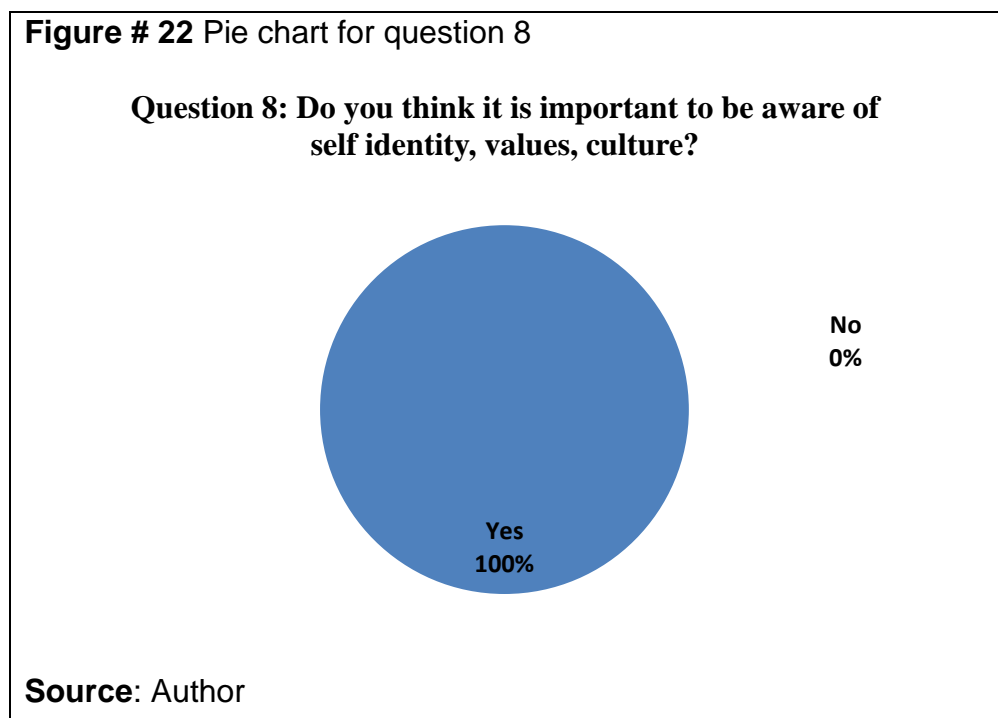
These were some of the concepts participants linked to the idea of Cultural identity:

What is it?
Knowing the culture, costumes, legends, ethnic groups, belonging to a group, identifying your self with the culture, pride.

Question 8 validated the importance of being aware of self identity, values and culture. The outcome was established in 100% as yes. The totality of participants considered the issue important.

Question 8	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%
TOTAL	17	100,0%

The graph demonstrates the total agreement in question 8:





Concurrent terms were the following:

Why?
Life, future, to be good people, to know about history, ancestry, who you are, talk good about your country, belong, culture.

Finally, question 9 sorted out a list of different legends given by participants which demonstrated to be clearly positioned in their minds.

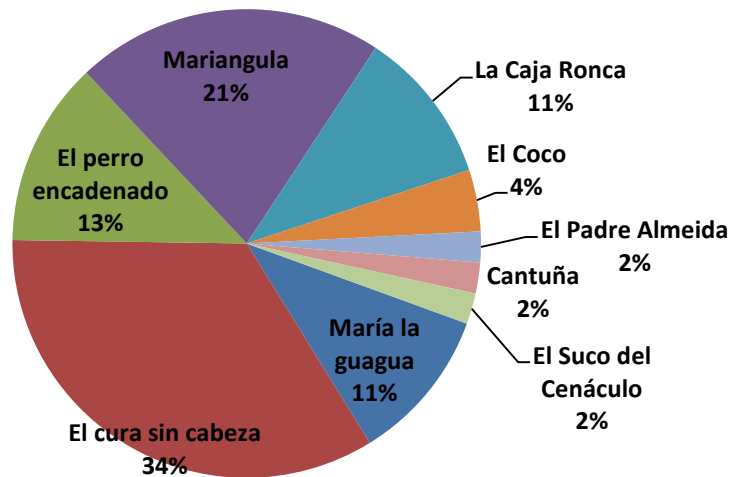
Question 9	Frequency	Percent
María la guagua	5	11%
El cura sin cabeza	16	34%
El perro encadenado	6	13%
Mariangula	10	21%
La Caja Ronca	5	11%
El Coco	2	4%
El Padre Almeida	1	2%
Cantuña	1	2%
El Suco del Cenáculo	1	2%
TOTAL	47	100,0%

The graph is clear to show the tendency



Figure # 23 Pie chart for question 9

Question 9: Mention three Ecuadorian Legends that you recall.



Source: Author

4.4 Storytelling per se, reading and a pleasant conversation

The class was divided into two small groups so it was feasible to work in a focus group format. The first group had nine participants and the second one had ten members. Participants were 15 and 16 years old. Both meetings were held on May 18, 2010 at the location of Catalinas High School. I acted as the researcher and facilitator of the group. A neutral student, who was not part of the class, helped me with the video recording and with the observation of the progress of the conversation. What follows is based on the Field Notes taken by myself on May 18, 2010. These notes are presented just the way they were taken in the field, that is, without editing. The language was used and produced by students; therefore the reader might find some grammatical errors.

GROUP 1



We are sitting in a cozy classroom, in a very noisy environment, students are sitting in a circle on the floor, and they feel free and comfortable, talking and teasing each other about boys. Since the researcher is an insider in the group, being the participants' teacher, there is a relaxed atmosphere, propitious for a dialogic negotiation. The students are told that they are participating in a thesis research (according to the ethical principles of informed consent) with a friendly introduction from the facilitator:

This is going to be the basis for my thesis. What we are doing is called a focus group. So, it's just a deep conversation, so as I told you my thesis will be about extensive reading, storytelling, legends, folklore and folktales. So, I want to search for some information, so, thank you for being here, you are free to leave the room if you are not willing to participate. So, let's start with your names, your age, and a brief introduction of yourselves (...) so my girls as I told you, I am going to read to you. Pretend you are little girls, because that's who you are, (laughs) and I am going to read a story, and I want you to listen to it, go on with the story, and then we will talk about it, and your impression on whether you liked it or not... The title of my story is "The sad princess of Santa Ana"

The researcher starts reading the story and asks the girls "*have you been to Guayaquil?*" The girls answer and make some comments about the city, as the teacher reads; she explains some key words and emphasizes the story events with the help of her voice intonation. Students listen carefully. After reading, the teacher elicits some impressions about the story. One of the girls says:

I think it is a really cool story because it's different, it's not the typical princess that found Prince Charming and she's free. But, she's waiting for true love, and it's a story that tries to teach people that the most important thing is not loving the material



things that you have but loving people because yeah, you can have million houses, and millions of everything but that's not going to go, though people loving people or loving someone is going to remain in your heart.

As the researcher elicits more answers she encourages students to think deeper about the text by asking them if they found any different element in the story and if they have heard the story before. Students answer no. The researcher explains that it is an Ecuadorian legend from the coastal region of the country. She says:

There are lots of stories, beautiful stories from our own land that we don't even know. To be honest, I didn't even know that we have these wonderful stories. So, now let's get a little bit deeper in our conversation. Let's talk about reading... Do you like to read? Why? Why not? What do you think about it?

In the book you create your own version, your own scenario

Belén, 16

You find a lot of things that give you a message, if you actually read you will find a lot of useful things, Joa 16

One of the girls opens the debate by saying that reading is boring. The rest of girls comment:

- no, I like it
- sometimes,
- well it depends on the book...
- on what you like
- I love police stories, suspense... (They start talking about the Twilight saga books)
- I like love stories, and I prefer the movie than the book



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One of the girls utters:

I read the books first and then I watch the movie, and I don't like it because it was so different from the book, in the book you create your own version, your own scenario. Like in the movie Da Vinci Code, it was Tom Hanks in the movie, and I didn't imagine him in the story. No, he's old! And I imagine the man with another personality...

As the dialogic transaction goes on, another girl emphasizes the richness of reading with these words:

I hate it when you watch the movie first, like for example, I watched twilight and then I started to read the book, and I couldn't picture the book in the movie and it was such a mess because I was like, ok this happens in the movie but it is not as the book says...and it's pretty confusing, and I think that when people make a movie, they shouldn't remove so many parts and characters of the book.

The researcher goes on with a fluent conversation and she then proceeds with the topic of reading. Students demonstrate to be engaged and interested. They are asked if they like to read and what kind of material do they read. Most of the students mention that they feel forced to read when the language teachers asks them to do so. They reflect on the fact of reading as a sort of an academic obligation. One of them says "Well I think that it is a good thing because if the language teacher doesn't ask us to read a book we will never read. I don't really love it but I think reading teaches you a lot" Students mention the various benefits of reading; they include imagination, increase of vocabulary, grammar and spelling.

The conversation continues and it gets deeper when the researcher raises the next question:



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So girls, we all agree that reading is somehow a forced activity, a must that you have to do, of course, there are some of you who enjoy reading, but...what do you think the problem is?

Many interesting and diverse answers appear. Students cooperate generously in an open and spontaneous way. They clearly state that the problem is that they are somehow used to the easy way of watching a film rather than reading a book and they come out with enlightening answers like:

I think if they start reading they should read a topic that is interesting for them. Vivi, 15

People should be given to read if they want to read, because if you don't want to read, you are not going to enjoy it. You are going to waste your time. It is going to be a mess. Joa, 16

These are the very basic concepts of Extensive Reading which shows that there is a principle inherent to students: Reading for fun and for ones' decision. The researcher explains that is what extensive reading is about. Students show interest in the theme.

Cultural Identity is what identifies a group of people, Taty, 15

The researcher carries on the interview as she turns to the topic of Cultural Identity and she introduces terms such as folklore, legends and myths. She inquires information, searching for outcomes. Words like traditions, customs and belonging come into sight. The group eagerly cooperates with the conversation. The students show knowledge and understanding about the subject matter. Next the researcher introduces the cornerstone question of the present paper with the following words:



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Ok, girls, I want you to be very profound now...Is there any connection between Cultural Identity and learning English? Is it important for you, you all have this very good level of English, is it important for you to know things about your own culture? Why?

Students are convinced that it is extremely important to know about their country. They state its importance by explaining that if they do not know about it they do not deserve to be called Ecuadorian. One of the participants says:

“I think you need to know your roots and to know yourself, if you don’t know your roots, then you don’t know yourself” Vivi, 15

Students continue contributing to the research as they mention the importance of Cultural Identity in order to understand where you come from. The exchange of ideas goes on under a critical thinking perspective when students analyze the material they use in their English class. They point out that nothing related to Ecuadorian topics is found in their textbooks. And above all, most of them admit that they plan to travel abroad as part of exchange programs. They fear that they are not prepared enough to be able to contribute to the foreign culture with their own. Students show a deep understanding of the problem and moreover they show interest in doing something to help solve it.

The study then moves to its final step: reading Nancy Crespo’s stories about Ecuador. The researcher prompts the participants with these words:

Before we finish, I would like you to stand up, you have a broad variety of stories there, and the material that I am presenting is called “Ecuador Land of Legends”, and also “Ecuador, People and Places”; both books were written by Ecuadorian writer Nancy Crespo, she has collected all these legends. So, I want you to go to the table, choose whatever you want and pick a lollypop and thank you so much for your cooperation. So, go, pick a lollypop,



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pick a story and read. I want you to read here, and I will give you, let's say 10 minutes to read, ok? And then we talk again.

(Students stand up and reach the table and start choosing their stories to read, they pick up their stories and lie down on the floor and read...)

Picture # 1 Students



Source: Author

Picture # 2 Students



A rich and deep conversation about the reading starts. Students contribute with a summary of the story they just read, and dialogic exchanges flow in the cozy and comfortable environment of the focus group. Most of the girls admit that they did not know about the tales that were presented. At the end, they reinforce the statement that it is important to include material related to Cultural identity in their textbooks. “Maybe the English books should have more things that are cultural from here (Ecuador), not only from other places”, Belén, 16.

To conclude, students suggest some ideas related to the activities that could be done with the stories. These include acting out, role playing, sculpting the stories.



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GROUP 2

If you want to learn a language, you have to read, Denise, 16

In a situation similar to the first one held with the first group the researcher starts the conversation of the focus group with a warm and friendly introduction:

First of all, thank you for being here. We are going to have a little conversation. This technique is called “focus groups” and we are just going to talk some topics that I want to get some information about. I´m planning to work in my thesis, so that´s why I need your cooperation for. If you don´t want to be here you are allowed to leave. It is not that you have to stay here. You are totally allowed to refuse. If you don´t want to participate, it is totally open. My thesis is going to be about reading, so little by little we will be getting into the topic and talking about the main ideas, and it is also related to cultural identity, so we will be getting some ideas. Don´t feel intimidated because you are being recorded. She´s filming just because I need to write down all the information I get. So, don´t be so scared, and don´t be so quiet. We are just going to have a conversation. So before we start, I would like you to introduce yourselves, tell me what´s your name, how old are you and what your interests are. Things that you like to do in your spare time and that...okay? So, who wants to start?

After a brief and relaxed introduction of the participants, the researcher starts with the topic. She motivates them to take part in storytelling as she reads *The Sad Princess of Santa Ana*. While she reads, she scans information from the girls and she emphasizes intonation. After the reading a discussion begins, based on the story. Similar to the first group, the contestants declare that this is the first time that they heard the story.

I like to read interesting books, Karen, 15.



The conversation then focuses on the issue of reading and students share ideas about it. Most of them say that they like reading as long as the story is engaging and motivating. The word “boring” is mentioned again, as in the first group. And then, one of the girls says: “you choose what you want to read, Denise, 16”

The researcher scans information about the participants’ preferences of what they like to read. Most of them mention romance, true stories, biographies, fiction, entertainment magazines as well as mystery and suspense stories. They also point out that if there is something that grabs their attention in a book they are more likely to feel eager to read more to find out the development of the story.

One of the participants clearly states that she does not like to read at all. The researcher re asks the question by offering the participant the option of magazines or entertainment stuff. Then, she says she does like that material but not books at all. The participants then discuss a little about the benefits of the movies and then the researcher inquires more information about reading with these words:

I want you to think a little bit deeper on that. Camila hates reading, she doesn’t like it, the first word that came when I asked the question about reading was the word BORING. Students reply: yeah, yes... Why is reading boring?

Participants answer that they have a broad variety of technological items, computers, cell phones as well as many places to go. Then the researcher turns the conversation to a different position when she questions about the latest Twilight Book (the book written by Stephanie Meyers is about vampires and love stories). The response is somewhat astonishing: Most of the participants raise their hands, including Camila, the one who declared her absolute dislike



towards reading. Ironically, she admits to have read the whole saga as well as the Harry Potter books.

The facilitator then moves the discussion to the topic of the habit of reading as she inquires about the reasons why people do not like reading any longer. One of the students brilliantly contributes with this opinion:

I think it is like we are losing our imagination, it's like they give us everything, they give us our imagination, for example Avatar, it's like the wildest thing you can imagine, but they serve it to you, in the movie, so you just sit there and watch and that is it. And then with books you are forced to think about it, and imagine a house, imagine a character, but since everything is given to us, we are too lazy to think anymore, but when we have to sit down, concentrate and read a book, we say: no, let's just watch the movie, Ana María C, 15

The researcher goes further with the conversation and she asks about the role of school and the approach of reading at school. She asks participants if they have ever felt "forced" to read in order to accomplish the mandatory curricula of the school. Students reply that they feel it all the time. They all comment about it and agree. One of them states:

I think they force us, because they make us read since we have to take a test, only because of that, it's not because we want to read, and we don't get interested in it, Ana Marie T, 16

The researcher encourages the girls to keep contributing in this issue. They continue with deep reflections about reading and then, a different perspective comes to light: they admit the fact that if teachers do not ask them to read, maybe they would not read at all. After this astonishing declaration the researcher concludes the idea by saying:



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Like, on one hand you wouldn't read at all, if the teacher wouldn't ask you. Right?(Students agree) But on the other hand, you feel forced because they choose the books that you have to read, they choose the topic, probably they're boring for you. (They agree)

One of the participants who has lived in the USA for several years contributes:

Yeah, that's totally right. In my school what they used to do, there was a choice of three books, you choose the one you like to read and you give a summary , and I think that's better because you get the one that mostly interests you, and I think that's better. Cause the book that we are reading now, I don't like it, it's so boring. Karen, 15

The researcher explains that the main approach of her thesis is precisely that one, she continues by saying that the method is called Extensive Reading and she says that it gives learners the chance to choose the text they want, by offering a wide variety of books and titles related to fiction, nonfiction, historical, biographies, drama, love, that they can choose from, because they are interested. She concludes her idea by stating the benefits of the method since it turns reading into a pleasant activity instead of an obligatory one. Participants agree with the researcher's ideas and comment about the method of Extensive Reading. Then a participant exemplifies the situation at schools when she says:

I have ten books and have to read one and I have to present a summary, but we are lazy, our society is lazy, I can get the summary from the internet and I can give it to the teacher and that's all. Denise, 16

The conversation flows in a natural way and it moves forward to the topic of the benefits of reading. The participants' responses include grammar, vocabulary, a learning experience, as well as common knowledge. The researcher explains that there are lots of benefits and that the first one should be to have fun. One of the participants shares a thought:



Read, all that I can tell you is read. Sooner or later you will start picking up on the words and how to spell them, sometimes variations in spell, after you read so much. Ana Maria C, 16

The exchange of ideas is led then to the matter of Cultural Identity. The researcher scans the first notions about it as she introduces terms such as folklore, myths, legends, and storytelling. Surprisingly to the researcher, participants contribute in a vast way with answers like this:

It's important, all the stories you have been told inside your country and inside your culture, because it takes you back to how were people living back then, So, it's like the Gods and myths and things like that, so you really get a real sense of the ideas they were thinking about, and it shows a lot of your culture, how you feel, and what you believe in, and things like that, and shows a lot about what you believe in, and it says a lot about the people. I think we've lost cultural identity now, like let's say I have no answer, this is not a relevant country, I think we should be proud of ourselves and show that to everyone else. Ana Maria C, 16

Students establish the pros of being aware of Cultural Identity from the perspective of living in a globalized world. They express their worries about not being able to represent their own country as most of them (8 out of 9 students) have plans to study abroad. They consider the issue of extreme importance, particularly with the fact of knowing who they are and their ancestral roots. Participants fear not to be prepared enough to talk about their country, traditions and customs. The researcher then finds the accurate moment as to inquire:

Do you think is it interesting or is it possible to find a link between all this cultural identity reading and English? Do you think we can find a link there, a connection?



Students pose the importance of English as the universal language. Being able to communicate their thoughts in this language they could let others know about Ecuador, and this would make them feel proud of it. They also mention that this way, they could contribute other cultures with their own. The researcher agrees as she comments about it as well. She is now searching for some information related to the educational material students use in the English Class. Students recognize that there is nothing related to Ecuador in their English textbooks and that something related to culture, ethnics and places to visit should be included.

The focus group interview moves on to reading Crespo's books. Students are told to pick the story they like as well as some candy. A reflection after reading is what follows next.

A dialogue about the reading flows, participants share a brief summary of each of the stories they just read, the exchanges flow in a familiar environment. Same as in the first group, most of the girls admit that they were not familiar with the stories, places and legends that were presented. Participants seem to be satisfied with the books as they remark about the richness of our legends, people and places. They look excited while they describe the stories they read which shows that they felt engaged in them. Rich contributions, expressions and ideas progress as the investigation is about to come to an end.

To conclude, and similar of the group previously interviewed, students suggest ideas and activities that could be done with the books. These also include acting out, role playing, sculpting the stories in dough or clay and also drawing and painting.

Participants are released.



4.5 Cultural Identity Interviews to a specialized informant:

The Ecuadorian writer and journalist Eliécer Cárdenas Espinoza contributed with an interview for the present paper. His ideas and reflections about the matter of Identity and Language were advisory and enriching. A deep but concise dialogue took place at his office in the Municipality Library of the city.

We started the interview by asking Eliécer his definition of identity. He told us:

Bueno, pues realmente se han dado una serie de debates acerca de la identidad. Yo creo que en realidad la identidad es ese acervo de conocimientos, de destrezas, de tradiciones que dan la personalidad a una persona y a una comunidad humana, es decir es lo específico, los rasgos específicos en su forma de actuar e interactuar con el mundo y de interactuar con los demás.

Well, there have been many debates regarding the issue of Identity. I think that identity is the sum of knowledge, skills and traditions that provide personality to a person as well as to a human community. That is to say, it is the specific. The specific features of behavior and interaction with the world and with others. (My translation)

Thus, Cárdenas relates the term identity with something so susceptible such as personality. The notion of identity turns into an inner matter, somewhat internal, private and personal.

The informant is then asked about the validity of Cultural identity nowadays, in a globalized world, where nomadity seems to be a common concept, in a world where entire populations tend to move from one place to another. The writer answers:



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Bueno creo yo que más bien ahora vamos viendo que la identidad cultural nos hermana, por ejemplo la revuelta del mundo árabe en muchos casos es una revuelta de identidad cultural, no? Eh..los cambios que se han producido en América Latina, pues sin analizar los componentes políticos, pero todos ellos en general apuntan a rescatar un perfil, un perfil cultural, ideológico humano Latinoamericano. Y también en África, en Asia se ven parecida reivindicación. Obviamente que la globalización pues cada vez está moviendo mucho más a la sociedad a tal punto que dentro de unas décadas se anuncia que habrá un trasvase global desde el llamado tercer mundo hacia el mundo desarrollado. Cosas que ya están produciéndose, por ejemplo en Francia, el Islam va a ser la primera religión de Francia respecto al cristianismo que va reduciéndose cada vez más y así otros aspectos.

Well, I think that we can see now how cultural identities bond us in brotherhood. For instance, the recent Arabic revolt is in many cases, a cultural identity revolt.



CONCLUSION

Ethical Considerations

The development of the present paper has been a long yet exciting journey: Starting from the early analysis of the problem, the self questioning of reality, the search and investigation of the existing literature, to the findings achieved throughout the field work.

The research questions were established at the beginning of the present investigation as follows:

- Are Cultural Identity and Folktales meaningful as to be included as part of the material for Reading and Storytelling in the EFL classroom?
- Is there a relationship between Reading, Storytelling and Cultural Identity in the EFL classroom?
- Are Reading and Storytelling useful tools for EFL?
- Does reading material related to Cultural Identity engage students' interest?
- Could folktales Reading and Storytelling affirm students' cultural identity and self awareness in the EFL classroom?

The research motivation was primarily based on two main perceptions: The first one, people do not read anymore. The second one, Globalization is destroying Cultural Identity. Therefore, an urge to develop not only reading habits but also, and being ambitious, the necessity to build awareness of self cultural identity was seen.

The proposal of the present thesis intended to use Extensive Reading as a useful practice in benefit of enlarging the idea of Cultural Identity. Reading as a tool for learning a second language was understood as a matter of extreme



relevance. The Extensive Reading techniques state that through reading interesting and comprehensible material, the reader will increase the process of learning a second language. The results presented both in the focus groups as well as in the questionnaires applied to the participants show that there is a serious concern in this issue.

Culture, on the other hand refers to the traditions, practices, languages, ethics and the interpretation of the world that define social groups. These concepts are intrinsically linked to others such as nationality, ethnicity, region and common interests. Contrary to the first idea of the researcher, participants seemed to be eager to learn more about their culture. They demonstrated to be engaged while putting into practice the reading activities on the subject of Ecuadorian legends and tales. The contribution of the present paper seems to be the one to encourage reading and to propose and suggest material based on our own cultural background

Reflective and constant questioning about the core of the research helped the author clarify important concepts such as Ethics, Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability. In this sense several questions were permanently asked. They included inquiring things such as if was it possible to apply this research proposal with the target group? Was the research going to be open to scrutiny? Was it going to be trustworthy? Besides, knowing that there are no absolutes and that mankind is condemned to freedom has helped the researcher realize that dealing with human race, no exact results were to be found. Even more, she had to be aware that she might not find results at all, at least the ones she expected. The researcher needed to be open, always keeping in mind the ethical principles of a good research.

The idea of identifying the authors' role as part of the research has given interesting insights on where to fit. The researcher is an insider but also a part of the group to be studied, that is to say, the researcher is part of the narrative of the research. The researcher belongs to the dichotomies that needed to be



challenged, de-constructed and re-analyzed. The researchers' role as a teacher, being both an insider and an outsider gave her a privileged position for the research. She felt that the sociable nature of the research gave her the unique possibility to be close to her stakeholders in a friendly and comfortable spot. However, she had to be careful of not disturbing the school environment which has certain discipline rules that had to be observed.

To have a credible study means that certain features are being observed such as prolonged engagement (interviews, focus groups), persistent observation (participants observing events over a period of time), triangulation (multiple sources to get data), member checking (participants are given the chance to review data), participant debriefing (feelings and responses to the research), diverse case analysis (inclusion), referential adequacy (proper terminology).

All these parameters have been taken into consideration in the present research on Extensive Reading and Cultural Identity. The researcher needed to make sure that the study was going to be trustworthy from a credible point of view. The investigator had to apply the principle of prolonged engagement through the use of techniques such as interviews and focus groups and not rely only on brief conversations that may bring not enough information. Triangulation has also been taken into consideration for the present study. Diverse sources were tested such as interviews, surveys and observation.

Every person deserves to be respected. In this case, the study involved a delicate sector of society: teenagers. Therefore, the ethical aspects of the research needed to be dealt with extreme care. Parents and teachers were somehow involved as part of the research. Transparency and honesty along with the principles of confidentiality, and rational judgment helped avoid difficult situations. Therefore, it was important to make sure that no harm was done in the name of investigation.



The issue of personal bias was something worth to be taken into account. Since the present research was seen as an intimate activity, it was difficult to be objective. There were times in which it turned to be easier to maintain things the way they were, to maintain the establishment and the status quo. The challenge of this research was to seek for answers, to find relevant issues through the biased data collection. The investigator had to change the initial questions radically. After feelings of frustration, disappointment and anguish, finally, a better shape was given to the questions. It was as playing with clay, molding it to give it the right appearance. Also the data collection techniques had to be reviewed. Even though it has been somewhat painful and hard, the process of deconstructing previous knowledge in order to construct it again in better shape has been an enjoyable experience.

The Findings

I like to read interesting books, Karen, 15

There is a constant tendency to underestimate the value of the youngsters. Although the idea that students do not like to read anymore was stuck in the researcher's mind, the results showed the contrary. They repeatedly demonstrated in various moments of the research that they were willing to read the material that resulted interesting to them. There was a crescent interest towards reading as far as the texts were relevant to the participants.

The participants also established the idea that they need to be somehow pushed to read in class; otherwise they will not read at all. They suggested a combined methodology of having the chance of choosing what to read and still being graded for that. Their contribution was a large one, they provided evidence on being interested in reading.

Thus, the research showed that there is an open door towards Extensive Reading and to the activities that this practice involves. That is the reason why



teachers should reconsider including folktales as part of the literary text to be read in Foreign Language classrooms

I think culture is how you act, Elisa, 15

The issue related to Cultural Identity also carried out major findings. The participants seemed to be engaged with the notion of learning more about their own culture as a way of keeping and maintaining their identity. They remarked the importance of being part of the culture and revaluing it. At the moment of reading Nancy Crespo's stories, the participants admitted that they had not heard the stories before, but they also reckoned that the stories were likeable and appealing.

Finally, the participants contributed with the research by stating the importance of including Ecuadorian topics in their English textbooks as a useful tool to reinforce main concepts related to identity. The contestants used the term "ambassadors of our culture" to conclude with the relevance of the topic. Utterances of such relevant significance let us see that there is, indeed, a hope towards the theory of Cultural Identity as a means of resistance in a globalized world.

When the participants were asked about the practice of Storytelling, most of them stated that they do not like to have someone reading to them. The answers were varied, and they included concepts such as lack of concentration, preference to read by themselves, and the boredom of this kind of activity. This result was totally unexpected for the researcher. Perhaps, the question in the survey was not well enough structured.

Final considerations:



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Language learners use the foreign language for multiple purposes that often challenge the established educational canons of both the native and the target cultures. Foreign language learners around the world have to grapple with the paradox of discovering their own national, ethnic and personal identity through a language that is not the one they grew up with. Their teachers have to deal with the dilemma of both representing an institution that imposes its own educational values and initiating learners to the values of a foreign culture, while at the same time helping them not to be bound by either one. At every step of this complex process, the educational challenge requires both action and reflection. (Kramsch, Context and Culture in Language Teaching 257)

An ethical compromise towards the act of teaching rises after the analysis of the present paper. The dual role of teachers of a Foreign Language defies our everyday actions. On the one hand, the commitment to an educational institution and its principles is a mandatory rule for teachers, and on the other hand, the idea of transmitting the values and concepts of the foreign culture is something that has to be put into practice. Therefore, we as teachers must look for third places, particular ones that are built in each individual. These places have to deeply respect the very particular inner voice of each learner.

The Ecuadorian writer and journalist, Catalina Sojos declares in her Blog Spot:

El lenguaje traspasa las barreras antes expuestas. Estamos conscientes de que la diversidad cultural es una realidad y la tendencia a disminuirla también; por ello un factor de supervivencia de una cultura se halla en su apertura al mundo, sin perder su propia capacidad de creación, su autenticidad, su



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sensibilidad y fortaleza espiritual. Visto de esa manera, solamente nosotros podremos evitar que una cultura se pierda o sea asimilada por otras. (Sojos)

Language surpasses boundaries and frontiers. We have to be aware that cultural identity is a truth as well as the trend to diminish it; therefore it is a survival factor for a culture to be open wide to the world, without losing its own creativity, authenticity, sensibility and spiritual strength. From that perspective, it is only us who can help avoid a culture to disappear or to be assimilated by other cultures (Translation: M.M.)

The idea of preserving our cultural diversity turns to be a concern of extreme importance since the dominant cultures patterns are constantly being empowered. Today's scheme of a "mass culture" reinforces the growing homogenization towards a standardized group of people seeking only for fun and a good standard of living. Nevertheless and as seen in the present study, there is, in fact, awareness born in the hearts and minds of the young people towards a change.

A space for creations of new meaningful learning as well as cultural exchanges is tremendously significant. The term *identity* not only refers to a specific geographical region; it mainly refers to a living creature, an immense code where diverse cultures live and co exist. Therefore, the constructions of new policies in education that search for alterability are fundamental. It is essential that educational policies are based on tolerance, respect to sex, gender and race. In no case these policies must obey occasional political governments. Only in this way, educators and scholars will recover freedom, resistance, questioning and identity.

Reading is an open door to imagination, freedom and questioning. A book is a shelter where you can hide from yourself. It is a cozy blanket that



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comforts your soul. It is an armor which protects you from the outside world. A book could also be a dark pond where despair and loneliness can be felt. It is an invisible hand that takes you for a walk along the path of fantasy, knowledge, sensation and feeling. Reading is a mirror where the reflection of your dreams is painted. Reading sets you free and for a brief moment, it allows you to fly beyond the stars. This study was attempted to surpass and share this emotion and recommend students to become involved in the magical world of learning through reading.

The outcomes of this research constitute a first contribution to the educational community and are applicable to other (similar) contexts. The results prove to be transferable to other educational situations and institutions interested in improving learning in a Foreign Language reading related to cultural identity as part of their curriculum. Cultural Identity demonstrated to be meaningful and important as to be used as part of the material for the Extensive Reading approaches. The contribution of this research is the one of proposing reading material related to our identity as well as leaving an open door for future and further studies on the topic.



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APPENDIXES

Appendix # 1 Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: READING IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Questionnaire 1

Reading in your Native language: Spanish

For each statement, write T (true) or F (false)

1. It is always necessary to read every word of a passage
2. It is a good idea to say the words aloud when you read
3. Reading more slowly improves comprehension
4. Knowing every word is necessary for comprehension
5. As you read, you should always look up the meaning of words you do not know
6. To read well, you need to know the pronunciation of every word
7. Learning vocabulary is the only way to improve reading ability
8. Learning grammar is the only way to improve reading ability
9. You can read all kind of texts (books, newspapers, etc) the same way
10. Reading in different languages requires different reading methods

Questionnaire 2

Reading in English

1. It is always necessary to read every word of a passage
2. It is a good idea to say the words aloud when you read
3. Reading more slowly improves comprehension
4. Knowing every word is necessary for comprehension
5. As you read, you should always look up the meaning of words you do not know
6. To read well, you need to know the pronunciation of every word
7. Learning vocabulary is the only way to improve reading ability



8. Learning grammar is the only way to improve reading ability
9. You can read all kind of texts (books, newspapers, etc) the same way
10. Reading in different languages requires different reading methods

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: INTRODUCTION TO EXTENSIVE READING

1. Looking back at your childhood, what do you remember as your first reading experiences?
2. What kind of reading material did your parents have in the house when you were young?
3. Do you remember having books or other materials read to you as a child? If so, what did you like best?
4. When you were able to read on your own, what did you enjoy reading?
5. Did your parents or other members of the family like to read? If so, what did they read?
6. What kind of reading is important for your life today? For example, do you read a lot for school or for your job?
7. About how many hours a week do you usually read materials of your own choice (magazines, novels, newspapers, nonfiction)?
8. Do you have a favorite writer in your first language? A favorite book?
9. What books have you read in English?
10. If you could easily read anything in English, what would you like to read?



Appendix # 2 Results to questionnaires

Survey Results

The following survey intends to collect information related to Cultural Identity, folktales and reading in the EFL classroom. The results will be used as basis for a thesis investigation.

Age _____ Class _____

1. Do you like reading?

Yes 14 No 3

Why? Fun, interesting, relaxing, imagination, knowledge, learn

2. Do you think reading is important to enlarge cultural knowledge?

Yes 17 No 0

Why? To learn

3. If you are asked to read in English, what kind of material do you prefer to read?

f. Science fiction 1

g. Novels 9

h. Legends 1

i. Magazines 10

j. Others : love stories, funny stuff, historic fiction

4. Do you consider reading a useful tool to be used and applied in the English class?

Yes 13 No 4

Why? Yes because: new vocabulary, grammar, expressions, words, writing, other cultures, fluency.

No because: boring, not interesting, and only textbook.

5. Do you like having someone read to you?

Yes 4 no 13

Why? Yes: other voices, fun, I'm tired

No: I don't understand, it's not interesting, it's boring, I prefer to read myself, lack of concentration.

6. Who and when was the last time someone read a story to you?



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Mom and dad 8 Teachers 3 Don't remember 6

From 5 to 10 years old

7. Do you have an idea of what the term Cultural Identity refers to?

Yes 10 No 7

What is it? Knowing the culture, costumes, legends, ethnic groups, belonging to a group, identify yourself, pride.

8. Do you think it is important to be aware of self identity, values, culture?

Yes 17 No 0

Why? Life, future, to be good people, to know about history, ancestry, who you are, talk good about your country, belong, culture.

9. Mention three Ecuadorian Legends that you recall.

María la guagua 5, el Cura sin cabeza 16, el Perro encadenado 6,

Mariangula 10, la Caja Ronca 5, el Coco 2, el Padre Almeida 1, Cantuña

1, el suco del Senáculo a.

b.

c.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRES: INTRODUCTION TO EXTENSIVE READING SPANISH AND ENGLISH

	Questionnaire 1(Spanish)		Questionnaire 2 (English)	
	True	False	True	False
1	11	3	13	1
2	6	8	12	2
3	14	0	14	0
4	3	11	12	2
5	10	4	13	1
6	11	3	13	1
7	14	0	13	0
8	9	5	12	2
9	10	4	8	6
10	9	5	7	8



1. Princesses, fantasy tales (x2), colorful, sofa, teacher told me to, don't remember I hate reading, first grade journal(x2), with a cousin, don't remember(x2), afraid to make mistakes in English, happiness, I thought I pronounced well and everyone laughed,
2. All kinds of books(x4), children books (x5), newspaper, magazines (x3), books to color,
3. My dad told me fairy tales, my mom(x3) used to read me a book about a princess, legends, don't remember, my parents, animals, princesses Cinderella (x2), bible
4. Fantasy stories(x4), love stories (x2), magazines with advices, short stories, mystery(x2)
5. History, classical, novels, reflection books, my mom(x3) drama books, my grandfather(x3), parents(x3), grandparents, my grandmother, my dad
6. Novels. We read some books for school but they are not interesting, reading is culture. Love stories. Improves vocabulary and speech, English, Social Studies(x), Literature, information to learn what is happening around the world
7. 6 hours, when I have time, 4 hours(x2), 10 hours, 2 hours, 1hour, 3 hours, 5 hours, 2 hours daily, 9 hours
8. La biblioteca secreta en la escondida(x) by Leonor Bravo, The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho(x2), María Fernanda Heredia, Lágrimas de ángel, Almas Gemelas, El amor es un no sé qué, El día de ayer,
9. Tom Riddle, I'd tell you that I love you but then I'd had to kill you, fairytales, no book(x5), The talented Mr. Ripley, Dan Brown, J.K. Rowling, Nicolas Sparks, Tuck Everlasting, the Giver, Tuesdays with Morrie, Romeo and Juliet(x2), Judy B. Jones, New Moon, Hostile love, Stephanie Meyer in Twilight(x2), The Ghost, Among the Hidden, the outsiders, lovely bones
10. Novels, love stories (x4), dramas(x2), comedy, scary, history, about Ecuador, psychology, magazines (x3),



Appendix # 3 Outline focus groups

Outline focus groups

Introduction:

Simple, funny, ice breaking, talk in the teens language, ask them for help, be sincere and clear about the goals of the interview....

Explain students the procedure to be followed. Ask them to introduce themselves, names, ages, interests.

Establish affinity

Put in practice story reading: students sit in a circle, the facilitator reads one of the stories, in good intonation, in a dramatic and theatric way, clear and slow as to grab students´ attention. After this activity, go on with a question like: Do you like to read? Did you like what I just read?...

Deep conversation

- What do you think about reading?, is it interesting? Do you learn anything when you read?
- Tell me, what do you read? Why do you read that stuff? What kind of stuff do you prefer to read?
- What do you think is the main problem of reading in school? Do you find it boring?
- Does anyone here like to write? What kind of texts do you write?
- What do you think terms such as cultural identity, folklore, storytelling, and globalization mean?
- Do you know anything about legends, folktales, and myths? Which ones do you recall?
- In your opinion is it possible to find a link between cultural identity, reading and English?
- Is it important to know about ones culture, roots and past? Why, why not?
- Do you think reading increases your cultural knowledge?



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- How would you include topics related to our culture in the English class?

Ending:

- Before we finish, I would like you to revise this material, read anything that you want and let me know what you think about the readings and the follow up activities. Write a journal of 120 words about the experience you just had.
- Is there anything else you would like to say?
- Express thanks and give each one of them a lollypop for their participation and cooperation.



Appendix # 4 Transcripts focus groups

TRANSCRIPTS FOCUS GROUPS

MAY 18TH 2010

GROUP 1

...In a very noisy environment...students sitting in a circle on the floor, they feel free and comfortable talking about guys....Sabías del Xavier? A ver,...quién, quién, quien de nuevo? a ver con quién...con el Mario?

Researcher : are you there? Are you there girls? You know? I am recording everything...everything is recorded...As you know this was supposed to be a very nice introduction, ice breaking, funny, friendly, and I think it was very very friendly with all the information that Claudia just gave us (laughs) with all these personal and private details and so....Thanks God she didn't tell any further details.....

This is going to be the basis for my thesis. What we are doing is called a focus group. So, it's just a deep conversation, so as I told you my thesis will be on extensive reading, storytelling, legends, folklore and folktales. So, I want to search for some information, so, thank you for being here, you are allowed to not participate if you don't want to. So, let's start with your names, your age, and a brief introduction of yourselves.

1. My name is Johanna, I'm sixteen years old, I like music, I take my time for piano, I spend most of my time writing songs, when I grow up I want to be a musician, I have two brothers, they both play guitar, I like arts.

2. My name is Tatiana, I am fifteen years old, when I grow up I want to be a doctor, and I have a brother and a sister.

3. My name is Belén, I am sixteen years old, I like sports, and maths, so I think I will be maybe an architect or an engineer, I like the construction of things and that stuff, I have two sisters.

4. I am Cristina, I am fifteen years old, I am going to study design in the university, I have two sisters and one brother, and one boyfriend (teacher says at least it is only one, laughs)



5. My name is Sharon, I am fifteen years old, I live with my parents, they are doctors, I have two brothers, older than me, I like music, we travel in our car.

6. Hi my name is Viviana, I am sixteen years old, I love music, I couldn't live without it, I like playing guitar and piano and singing...and I like to draw and to read too, and I am a teacher at a dancing school and that's it.

7. My name is Andrea, I am sixteen years old, I like all kinds of sports, in the future I want to be a doctor.

8. My name is Clau Muñoz, and I am sixteen years old, I love football, I spend my time playing guitar (she jokes about talking the guitar)...

9. My name is Gaby, I am fifteen years old, I love sports, in the future I want to be a math teacher, in my free time I practice sports.

Researcher: Well, as you know my name is Monica, and as I told you I am fifteen years old as well, and I don't have a boyfriend, because my plans are other, I want to have a life in calm, and keep quiet, because I want to become a nun. And in the future I hope the nuns accept me.(laughs)

So, my girls as I told you, I am going to read to you. Pretend you are little girls, because that's what you are, (laughs) and I am going to read a story, and I want you to listen to it, go on with the story, and then we will talk about it, and your impression on whether you liked it or not...

The title of my story is "The sad princess of Santa Ana"

The researcher starts reading the story and asks the girls *have you been to Guayaquil?* The girls answer and do some comments about the city...as the teacher reads; she explains some key words and emphasizes the story events. Students listen carefully.(ojo 1727)

After reading, the teacher elicits some impressions about the story.

Researcher: so what do you think about the story?...it's a love story...what do you think?, let me know...

One of the girls says: I love *love* stories....

Johana: I think it is a really cool story because it's different, it's not the typical princess that found Prince Charming and she's free. But, she's waiting for true love, and it's a story that tries to teach people that the most important



things not loving the material things that you have but loving people because yeah, you can have million houses, and millions of everything but that's not going to go, though people loving people or loving someone is going to remain in your heart.

Researcher says: treasures are from the heart... right. What else (as she elicits more answers) What do you think is different from the story?

Viviana: Oh, I liked it, and I was going to say almost the same things as she said so...

Researcher: didn't you find anything extra in the story? Have you heard the story before? Students answer no. The researcher explains that it is an Ecuadorian legend from the coastal region of the country. She says:

There are lots of stories, beautiful stories from our own land that we don't even know. To be honest, I didn't even know that we have these wonderful stories. So, now let's get a little bit deeper in our conversation. Let's talk about reading... Do you like to read? Why? Why not? What do you think about it?

Claudia: boring. It's boring

Researcher: boring? (the rest of girls say

-no, I like it

-sometimes,

-well it depends on the book...

-on what you like

- I love police stories, suspense... (they start talking about the twilight saga books)

- I like love stories, and I prefer the movie than the book

- Belén: I read the books first and then I watched the movie, and I don't like it because it was so different from the book, in the book you create your own version, your own scenario. Like in the movie Da Vinci Code, it was Tom Hanks in the movie, and I didn't imagine him in the story. No, he's old! And I imagine the man with another personality...

Johana: I hate to read the book before watching the movie, because when I watch the movie I know.... (?)



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Researcher: Does it work the other way around? I mean watching the movie first and then reading the book?... Don't you think it is kind of boring because you already know the story?

Johana: It's better...

Vivi: Sometimes you enjoy watching the movie, and then you read the book and you enjoy it even more. And then you can say: ah...the book is much better...

Johana: I hate it when you watch the movie first, like for example, I watched twilight and then I started to read the book, and I couldn't picture the book in the movie and it was such a mess because I was like, ok this happens in the movie but it is not as the book says...and it's pretty confusing, and I think that when people make a movie, they shouldn't erase so much parts and characters of the book.

Vivi: they should make two movies of a book....

Researcher: What is this "Twilight thing" ? Raise your hand if you have read the book...(4 girls raise their hands)

Jo: I have read half of it, because the book wasn't mine and I had to give it back fast.

Researcher: OK girls, when do you read?, What do you read?

Sharon: Love stories

Researcher: ok love stories...

Claudia: What the language teacher asks...

Researcher: What the language teacher pushes you to read?

Claudia: Oh, yeah...

Researcher (smiling): Forces you....So, Claudia...Reading for you is sort of an obligation...something that you have to...

Claudia: yes...

Researcher: Have you ever read a book because you wanted to?

Claudia: No, never

Researcher: So you have never felt attracted to reading...What about you Andrea?



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Andrea: Well I think that it is a good thing because if the language teacher asks us to read a book we will never read.

Researcher: So, you think it is ok.

Andrea: I think so, I don't really love it but I think reading teaches you a lot

Researcher: what...? What do you get through reading? Why do you think reading is important?

Vivi: a lot of imagination

Sharon: You increase your vocabulary

Researcher: Good! What else?

Joa: Your grammar

Researcher: What about spelling?

Students: yes...spelling improves

Researcher: What else?

Joa: You find a lot of things that give you a message, if you actually read you will find a lot of useful things

Researcher: so girls, we all agree that reading is somehow a forced activity, a must that you have to do, of course, there are some of you who enjoy reading, but...what do you think the problem is?

Vivi: We are used to the easy way; we prefer to watch the movie instead of reading the whole book. People watch the book and say: oh, no. That is not for me, I better watch the movie. I think if they start reading they should read a topic that is interesting for them. Like if she likes love stories, she should read them.

Joa: People should be given to read if they want to read, because if you don't want to read, you are not going to enjoy it. You are going to waste your time. It is going to be a mess.

Researcher: That is what extensive reading is about: this thesis that I am planning is giving you the chance to choose what you want to read. Of course you need a huge amount of books, a huge list of books, of material to read. But it is you choosing the book that you want according to your interests. (1728 10min40sec)



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Ok...now, I want to change a little bit the topic in order to investigate about Cultural Identity...Do you have any idea of what Cultural Identity is about? Terms such as folklore, legends, myths....what do you think...

Joa: It's when you identify yourself with your country.

Belén: Traditions that you have...?

Researcher: very good...what else, Tati, what do you think?

Tati: mmm...maybe with traditions, customs, mmm...what identifies a group of people...

Researcher: very good, what do you think, Gaby?

Gaby: mm..things that you want to say....mmm.. I don't know

Andrea: Folklore is when you have a group, and they act and do things....

Researcher: Ok, girls I want you to be very profound now...Is there any connection between Cultural Identity and learning English? Is it important for you, you all have this very good level of English, is it important for you to know things about your own culture? Why?

Joa: I think it is very important. Even though we are speaking other languages and learning about it, if we don't know about our country, then it makes no sense. Like, if I don't know about Ecuador, then I wouldn't call myself Ecuadorian, when other people ask you about it and you are going to be like...oh, yeah, right...whatever you say....then, it makes no sense, you have to know and it is very interesting, you can find many things that are just going to wake up your attention to it, and it is really cool to know about them.

Vivi: I think you need to know your roots and to know yourself, if you don't know your roots, then you don't know yourself...

Researcher: of course, of course....do you think that roots are important? Why?

Sharon: you can know where you come from, where you from.

Researcher: Think about your books, your textbooks, I am not going to give the name of the English book that you use here, but... have you seen anything related to your own cultural identity in your readings?

Students: No, nothing.



Researcher: And how many of you would like to travel abroad? (They all raise their hands). Do you plan to go outside I mean when you finish school? (students answer yes)... When you are, let's say in Germany, people are going to ask where do you come from? And how do people live back there? Do you know? Do you think you are prepared enough to talk about your cultural identity? And to be sort of "ambassadors" of your country?

Vivi: Well, just the basic things

Joa: Well, I could tell them about the poor economy we have, and I could tell them the most important things to catch them to come and visit

Researcher: To make it attractive to come

Joa: I happened the situation, I had to explain how the situation is here, and how do we live in Ecuador, and he said that he read that there is a lot of poverty here, and I said: well, there is but there isn't. So I had to explain why is there and why there is not....so, if you don't know about your country, you cannot tell someone where do you come from, then you are lost.

Researcher: so that's the main point of this project, to establish a link between our cultural identity like the story that I read, which we didn't know, so I think it is very important to know about our culture and the roots that we have, so you can be able to talk about your own country and to know more about your country.

Before we finish, I would like you to stand up, you have a broad variety of stories there, the material that I used is called Ecuador land of legends, and also Ecuador, people and places. Both books have been written by Ecuadorian writer Nancy Crespo, she collected all these legends. So, want you to go to the table, choose whatever you want and pick a lollypop (students: yes, yupi...) and thank you so much for your cooperation. So, go, pick a lollypop, pick a story and read. I want you to read here, and I will give you, let's say 10 minutes to read, ok? And then we talk again. (Students stand up and reach the table and start choosing their stories to read, they pick up their stories and lie down on the floor and read...)

Researcher: So, how did it go, girls? I want you to tell me something really short, like a brief summary of the story that you picked and your first



impressions of the story and also about the activities, because I included in your copies some activities of the book. So I want you to give me a short explanation about what your story is about, why did you choose that story and what do you think about the activities? So, let's start with you Claudia:

Claudia: Ok, my story is about some men that were in a party (body language) so came a mancito, a man that had a good appearance, and everybody wants to dance with him, but he put a condition to dance and he said that all the children have to go to sleep, so they go and they were dancing like crazy, and they start to listen "pull and pull", "pull and pull" and the distinguished man starts to transform into a goat, with horns, and tail. (Laughter when she says corns instead of horns) and a child woke up and watched all the scene and ran to his parents and tell all what was happened and they called to a priest (curita?) and said stop, stop, and it was in the shore of a river and this man was the devil and they want to pull the house down the river.

Researcher: So, did you like the story?

Claudia: Yes, I knew the story

Researcher: Have you heard the story before?

Claudia: Yes, and I think it is interesting.

Researcher: What about the activities here at the back...did you take a look at them?

Claudia: No, I don't

Researcher: ok, never mind. Ok, girls I am going to ask you to be very short with your explanation of the story....thank you Claudia.

Belén: My story is the lake...from the Isabella Island, from the Galapagos Islands, so it is about when they prisoners to the Galapagos Islands, and they were so sick, and didn't have any food or anything, so they had to work with stones to make a wall, and that's why the story is called the wailing wall, because they were building it. And now, sometimes in the night some people hear them and see the prisoners that put stones...

Researcher: did you like the story?

Belen: Yes, it was great.

Researcher: What about you, Tati?



Taty: I chose the Galapagos Islands, and it was discovered by Berlanga and then it was used as a shelter for the pirates and then, lots of scientists came to the islands to investigate because there is some unique animals that are there, and the UNESCO declared it a National Park, but it is endangered because we are not taking good care of it, and...yeah....

Researcher: Why did you choose that? Do you like Galapagos? Have you been there?

Taty: Yeah, and I like it.

Researcher: Thank you

Vivi: Ok. I chose the Guagua Auca , it is a story from Loja, and it's and it says that there was a father called Guillermo and he was in a big rich house and had a party, and after everyone got drunk he tried to calm them down but he couldn't so he left home. It was dark and he rode his horse and he heard a crying of a baby and he stopped and he saw a baby covered by a blanket, so he took him and he was carrying him on his horse and then heard a voice that said "daddy look at me I have teeth" and he heard it from the little baby that was covered in the blankets and suddenly his cloths were on fire and so was the baby, so he tried to pull out his clothes, and then he heard the baby say "daddy, I have a tail and two horns" (Teacher: Oh, my God...) and he just left him in the woods and started running with the horse, and the baby was saying "Daddy please don't leave me!"and he said that he was saved by his faith but he will catch him next time, and since then people in Loja don't go out at night because they are afraid of the Guagua Auca.

Researcher: Really good!

Andrea: the story I read is from the coast and it is called the Goblin, and he lives in the forest, he looks for the girls' attention to fall in love and there's a story with a girl named Tania, and yeah...

Researcher: Do you think it is interesting?

Andrea: Yeah, I think it is very interesting.

Researcher: What about the extra activities, did you take a look at them?

Andrea: Yeah, well the new words...mmmh...(and she stares at the teacher with a disapproval look and she laughs) but, there is something else like



a conversation between Tania and the Goblin, and I think that is very interesting because I can make the conversation between the characters.

Researcher: So that is a very good activity, because it gives you freedom of imagination.

Sharon: My story is The Lighthouse of Santana, and this story is about a soldier, who was afraid because he was in danger, and he said “Santa Ana” and that is the main idea why they called it the Lighthouse of Santa Ana.

Researcher: So, he was praying and asking Santa Ana for help? So...did you find it interesting?

Sharon: Yeah I think it is really interesting.

Researcher: What about the activities?

Sharon: I take a look at the vocabulary and they are very interesting and it is creative.

Estefanía: My story is about places where to hide treasures, “huacas”, and if the owner of the treasure suddenly dies, his soul had to find another person to discover his treasure. So, that’s pretty much it.

Researcher: And that is actually true you know, I mean, because long time ago people used to hide their treasures in their houses and in their gardens, and in the walls... There is a very interesting story here in Cuenca, with a woman; she is very rich now, she bought a house and they were doing some kind of work, electricity with wires or something and they were knocking on the walls and lots of money, gold coins appeared. Now she is very rich because she found a huaca.

Joa: My story is Cantuña and his pact with the devil, and it is about this guy they chose to build the atrium for a church, but he was really worried because he knew he wasn’t going to finish on time, so he offered his soul to the devil, for him to make it, and they were about to finish and Cantuña took a stone and wrote an inscription in which he claim that the first person to touch that stone, there was only one god, so the little devils who were building the atrium, they could finish on time, because they couldn’t touch the last stone. So he saved his soul like that.

Researcher: Wow! He was very wise... What do you think?



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Joa: I think it is a pretty cool story. I haven't heard of it before.

Researcher: Really? About Cantuña? Never?

Joa: No, never. I have heard different and really awkward stories but never this one.

Gaby: My story is about our national treasure Jefferson Perez. First, I chose this story because I love stories about athletes. It is about Jefferson Perez, he is a very nice athlete and he has two brothers and he wants to be an athlete, and Jefferson Perez won medals and he is very famous.

Researcher: It's a very interesting story. Thank you, Gaby. Ok my girls, I think with this we finish. I am going to give these papers to you, please complete them at home and give them back to me tomorrow. And please, also write a short journal of the experience we just had. I just want you to write, "I like it", "I don't think it is interesting"...whatever you want, you know this won't be graded. Ok? Thank you very much for your cooperation. Do you have any other idea, something to say? Something you would like to add?

Vivi: we should watch a movie...hahaha

Researcher: Ok next time.

Joa: I think we could add more activities to the stories, so they won't be boring

Researcher: Are these activities boring?

Joa: No, not at all

Vivi: we could act the stories out.

Researcher: We could do role plays, great.

Belen: Maybe the English books should have things that are more cultural from here not only from other places

Researcher: So, do you think we should include more material related to Cultural Identity?

Students: Yes.

Researcher: So what would you do with the stories? She says role plays

Joa: sculptures? We love working with our hands.

Researcher: Thank you so much my girls, I love you.

GROUP 2



Researcher: First of all, thank you for being here. We are going to have a little conversation. This technique is called “focus groups” and we are just going to talk some topics that I want to get some information about. I’m planning to work in my thesis, so that’s why I need your cooperation for. If you don’t want to be here you are allowed to leave. It is not that you have to stay here. You are totally allowed to refuse. If you don’t want to participate, it is totally open. My thesis is going to be about reading, so little by little we will be getting into the topic and talking about the main ideas, and it is also related to cultural identity, so we will be getting some ideas. Don’t feel intimidated because you are being recorded. She’s filming just because I need to write down all the information I get. So, don’t be so scared, and don’t be so quiet. We are just going to have a conversation. So before we start, I would like you to introduce yourselves, tell me what’s your name, how old are you and what your interests are. Things that you like to do in your spare time and that....okay? So, who wants to start?

Student: Does it have to be in English or Spanish?

Researcher: In English....it doesn’t matter if you don’t have fluent English. It’s ok.

Emilia: My name is Emilia Peña, I have sixteen years old, I like to listen music, I like a variety of sports and...

Researcher: ok, do you have a boyfriend?

Emilia: Nop.

Researcher: That’s part of the hobbies or not?

Emilia: No....hahaha (laughter)

Researcher: ok, thank you who else? You, Denisse?

Denisse: My name is Denisse Heimbach, I like to draw things, paint things, and I think I want to be a psychologist, I don’t know, I also like design, I like sports, tennis.

Researcher: and that’s it?

Denisse: Yeah, and I have a boyfriend.

Ana Maria: My name is Ana Maria, I am sixteen years old, I like to climb, and I also like to spend time with my friends, have fun with them, joke, and spend lot of time with them, and I have a pretty family.



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Paulina: My name is Paulina Ugalde, I am sixteen years old, and I love tennis.

Researcher: are you a professional?

Paulina: no, no, no.

Ana María Carrasco: My name is Ana María, I am sixteen, I like photography and theatre, and I don't know what I want to be when I grow up. I have a pretty family too....and I don't have a boyfriend.

Camila: My name is Camila Pauta, I am fifteen years old, I like to listen music and ...

Karen: My name is Karen, I'm going to be fifteen in like a month, I'm really shy.

Researcher: are you?

Karen: yeah, I'm getting shy right now. I like to paint, I want to be an architect and have a car....no, I'm just kidding....that's it.

Researcher: thanks

Elisa: My name is Elisa, I'm sixteen years old, I like to listen music, spend time with my friends, I don't have a boyfriend and that's it...

Researcher: what do you like to do besides spending time with your friends?

Elisa: Some sports with my cousins, like basketball, tennis.

Researcher: ok, very nice.... And... (there is one girl in the class with special abilities)

María Jose: My name is María José, tengo dieciséis años y me gusta la danza.

Researcher: la danza? Muchas gracias.

Ok, as you know, my name is Mónica I am also fifteen years old, I don't have a boyfriend, because I am planning to become a nun (girls laugh) I hope to devote myself to the Lord, and I hope you respect that. (girls laugh)

So, my girls, let's get a little into this....(as she grabs the book) I told you this was going to be about reading, pretend you are little girls, go back in time, I'm going to read a story to you, pay attention and then we will talk about the first impressions that you have about the story that I am going to read, ok?



The title of the story is The Sad Princess of Santa Ana. (Researcher reads the story, as she reads, she scans information from the girls and she emphasizes intonation)

Researcher: ok, so what do you think? (girls are quiet) help me please. Did you like the story of the princess? Do you find it interesting, boring? What do you think?

Girls: yes

Researcher: could you help me, please?

Karen: like the meaning? The message is that you should choose to love someone instead of material things because at the end is like love is what you need.

Researcher: so you need treasures from your heart, not treasures in money, or jewelry ...

Karen: yes, because at the end of the day what is it?

Ana María Carrasco: There's this quote from Jimmy Hendrix that says when the power of love overcomes the love for power then humanity will be one. So, when we stop needing power and loving it and desperately wanting it, and we just want that instead of power, and treasures and money and things like that and we actually want love, then we will actually be one and we will be all together.

Researcher: ok, thanks a lot.

So, what do you think about the story. Did you know about it? Have you heard about it before? Let's talk a bit about reading. Do you like to read? What do you think about reading? Does anyone here like to read?

Karen: I like to read interesting books.

Other girls: yeah, me too.

Researcher: interesting books, like what...

Ana Maria C: interesting books that catch your attention. It is motivating.

Karen: yeah, I can read as far as they are not boring, but if the first sentence is boring, I don't like it. It has to be very good.

Denise: you choose what you want to read.



Researcher: it depends on your wants? You choose your book according to what?

Denise: the title, images,

Researcher: images are important too, ok?

Karen: like the summary they give at the back.

Researcher: the synopsis, yeah...

Denise: and sometimes your friends say I love this book, and you buy the book.

Researcher: so it is very important what your friends say. You choose it if it is a recommended book. Aha, very good. What else?

Paulina: I like romantic books.

Researcher: ok...let's go there...What kind of material do you read? What do you like to read?

Ana Maria C: I like reading books that involve psychology, like there is this book that I read, Two days with Marian and it's about a teacher who teaches this kid every Tuesday, and gives an hour of like life lessons so really get all your concentration on what he tried to teach him in life you just get it from the book, and things like that, teaching how to live, and things like that psychology and theology and historical....and I like historic fiction? I think it is? Which are thing that actually happened but new stories are made up, I love those things, because you get the cultural

Researcher: Biographies, true stories but you also have fiction.

Ana Maria C: yeah, you get the culture, but you also have imagination. So I think it is the perfect combination.

Researcher: Great! So, what else...? What do you think Elisa?

Elisa: I like to read if the book is interesting, and magazines that have advices about life.

Researcher: Thank you. What about you Ana Maria. Do you like to read?

Ana Maria: Yes, I like to read mysterious stories because they are like...you want to read more about it, and it makes you want to get to the end, so...that's the thing that makes you want to read



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Researcher: So, there's something that is grabbing your attention, you are so eager to read more and more to find out...Ok. What about you?

Emilia: Me? I don't really read so much but I like the mysterious, important people.

Researcher: Ok. It's ok (the student has difficulty trying to express herself).Thank you...Cami, what do you read?

Cami: I don't like to read.

Researcher: at all? Nothing, nothing? Not even magazines or entertainment stuff?

Cami: Magazines yes but books no.

Researcher: You don't like to read stories, books, no?

Cami: No

Researcher: ok, why do you think it is like that? Why?

Cami: because I prefer the movies that you can see and not to read-

Researcher: Ok, so you prefer watching movies and things like that, ok

Denise: I think that now we don't read book because we have lots of movies and you go: the book or the movie? Oh, the movie! It's one time or one moment, so it's one hour...

Researcher: Ok, I think that's a good point.

Denise: people go to the movies, but the book is better.

Researcher: I want you to think a little bit deeper on that. Camila hates reading, she doesn't like it, the first word that came when I asked the question about reading was the word BORING.(students reply: yeah, yes...) Why is reading boring?

Karen: there are so many thing we can do, like we have computers, we have phones...places to go...(students reply: yes...murmurs)

Researcher: the cinema...

Emilia: we have many things.

Researcher: So you have many things to do, right? Ok. But what about twilight? Raise your hand if you have read something about twilight. (lots of them raise their hands including Camila) Do you see? The one that doesn't like to read? (laughs) Harry Potter?...have you read Harry Potter?



Camila: I love Harry Potter, I love the movies but not the books!

Researcher: And you don't like to read.... Ok, I want you to go deeper, why do you think people don't like to read any more?

Ana María C: I think it is like we are losing our imagination, it's like they give us everything, they give us our imagination, for example Avatar, it's like the wildest thing you can imagine, but they serve it to you, in the movie, so you just sit there and watch and that is it. And then with books you are forced to think about it, and imagine a house, imagine a character, but since everything is given to us, we are too lazy to think anymore, but when we have to sit down, concentrate and read a book, we say: no, let's just watch the movie

Researcher: What about the role of school, the approach of reading in the school? Do you think you feel forced to read sometimes? You have to read these boring books?

Paulina: All the time!

Researcher: All the time Paulina?

Paulina: Yes. Well, "El amor es un no sé qué" I loved, but the others...mmmh

Ana Torres: That book?

Researcher: Just go on, let's not talk about that specific book, but reading in general.

Ana Marie Torres: I think they force us, because they make us read because we have to take a test, only because of that, it's not because we want to read, and we don't get interested in it.

Researcher: So are not reading for pleasure but only because you have to.

Denise: If you start reading and you don't like it, you don't enjoy it, you just read because the test, not for reading. Sometimes you read and you enjoy it, so you read and do the all the test, but if the teacher doesn't give us to read, then we will never read.

Researcher: Like, on one hand you wouldn't read at all, if the teacher wouldn't ask you. Right? (Students agree) But on the other hand you feel forced



because they choose the books that you have to read, they choose the topic, probably they're boring for you. (students agree)

Karen: Yeah, that's totally right. In my school what they used to do, there was a choice of three books, you choose the one you like to read and you give a summary, and I think that's better because you get the one that mostly interests you, and I think that's better. Cause the book that we are reading now, I don't like it, it's so boring.

Researcher: That is the main approach of my theses. This approach is called extensive reading and I want to link this extensive reading with Cultural Identity, which we will talk later. But this approach gives you the chance to choose whatever you want, so it gives you a wide variety of books fiction, nonfiction, historical, biographies, drama, love, whatever...so, it will give you a broad variety as I said before, of books and titles that you can choose, because you are interested in. So I think it's much better because you feel pleasure on what you are doing and you don't feel forced. What do you think? Would you like to have that here?

Ana Maria Carrasco: Yeah, I think it's a great idea. In my school, you had to read twenty books, in the total of the year, so that's four every quarter, so I think that's a good idea, because you had to read because we had to do it, but it could be whatever book of your choice. So, sometimes you felt like "I should go to the library and have a look" and you go, "I like this book, and this book, and this book", and you just read them because you liked them, and in the end, there was worth a grade, so I think maybe pushing us a little bit but also giving us freedom works.

Researcher: yeah. Because, this approach says that you are not supposed to grade anything, so there are no extra activities or there are very little further activities after reading the book, so, I think it is really worth because you will read because you like it, so you start to like reading because you don't feel forced to, you just choose something, right? ...

Denise: Sometimes you choose a book and... I have ten books and have to read one and I have to give the summary, but we are lazy, our society is lazy,



I can get the summary from the internet and I can give it to the teacher and that's all, that's why it's better to make a test...

Researcher: Maybe you shouldn't be forced to do things, because that's what happens, right? You just download it from the internet, you know? There's no interest, that's not real.

Denise: You can find everything in the internet

Researcher: Yeah, that's right.

Do you like to write? I mean your own things, it's not like you WRITE....
Do you ever write?

Karen: I used to write some poems when I was at school

Researcher: Poems? Wow! Don't you think it's a very nice way to express yourself?

Karen: yeah, it helps you let go your anxiety, sadness and things if you are worried

Researcher: very good, what do you think?

Emilia: I write a little bit but I write to express myself when I write, because when you have pains they are not there, I can express all things that I feel.

Researcher: ok...that's great! Ok...what do you think are the benefits of reading? What do you get out of that?

Students: grammar, vocabulary, you learn more, common knowledge...

Researcher: grammar, vocabulary, you learn, common knowledge, great.

Emilia: In Spanish...

Researcher: Only in Spanish? What about English? Nothing?

Emilia: Soy medio mediocre en ingles, le digo sinceramente.

Researcher laughs. Ok, there are lots of benefits. The first one should be to have fun, right? But also as you say, your reading comprehension skills increase, your vocabulary, your spelling... right? Have you heard that the most you read the better writer you are? So, if you want to write, read, read and read a lot.

Denise: If you want to learn a language, you have to read.



Ana Maria Carrasco: Read, all that I can tell you is read....like sooner or later you will start picking up on the words and how to spell, sometimes variations in spell...after you read so much.

Researcher: That's right....you were talking about the movies, I think –I don't know your opinion-but I think the book is in a way richer, much richer than the movie, because sometimes when you read the book and then later you watch the movie, you go like you killed the book...or you killed the story, 'cause in your imagination...(Emilia interrupts and says...that's what I was going to say)

Researcher: Ok...Denise?

Denise: the book has all the details, the movie is just a summary, so, if you read a book, you get more information and you are more(como se dice?)

Researcher: engaged, linked?

Denise: Yes!

Ana Marie Torres: in the books you imagine something and then when you watch the movie you see a totally different thing

Karen: that's what happened to me with twilight, I saw the movie and then I read the book, and I think the book is totally different

Ana Maria Carrasco: I did the opposite; I made the promise to myself to read the four books before seeing the movie, everybody told me the movie is boring, and then after reading the second book when I started to see trailers, I watched the movie, and I stopped reading, but I was let down, because in the book you have so many details, you imagine things so differently, the characters are so different, or even when the movie was coming out, and the characters went out, and the people who act were shown, I just thought: "that's not how I pictured Edward" so I felt really...

Researcher: As you say, it's disappointing.... "Is this Edward?" Yuk!

Ok. Let's talk a little bit about Cultural Identity, what do you think Cultural Identity refers to? Things like folklore, myths, legends, storytelling, is it important? What is it? What is it about? What is Cultural Identity to you?

Ana Maria Carrasco: It's important, all the stories you have been told inside your country and inside your culture, because it takes you back to how



were people living back then, So, it's like the Gods and myths and things like that, so you really get a real sense of the ideas they were thinking about, and it shows a lot of your culture, how you feel, and what you believe in, and things like that, and shows a lot about your culture, what you believe in, and it says a lot about the people. I think we've lost cultural identity now, like let's say I have no answer, this is not a relevant country, I think we should be proud of ourselves and show that to everyone else.

Researcher: Could we include the term "globalization" there? Is it a globalized world? So we are losing identity?

Ana María Carrasco: Yeah, we have nothing.

Researcher: so what do you think Cultural Identity is? Elisa...

Elisa: I think culture is how you act, the costumes that you have in your life, and I think people have many different cultures and culture is what you learn in your house.

Researcher: so, probably, your roots. Ok, very good, so is it important for you to know anything about your own culture? Why?

Karen: Yes, because you know where you come from

Researcher: and why is it important to know where you come from?

Ana María Carrasco: Because when you go to other countries and you travel, and you feel you have to represent yourself, if you know where you came from, you know who you are and what you believe in, and then you can show that to the people and you leave an impression but if you are just lost, like "yeah...I can't remember but I don't know, and I don't understand what these people believe in and I don't believe in those things, and I like this country better" like if you don't really represent your country, then you'll get lost.

Vivi: aha, you have to...

Researcher: ok, this is very important, raise your hands if you plan to travel, if you plan to go when you graduate or something

(Most of the students raise their hands -8 out of nine)

One girl says: I want to go to Italy.

Researcher: Oh, Ok...let's say you go, let's pretend to Germany, the main thing that people there will ask you is "where do you come from" and "what



costumes do you have there?” and ”what stories do you have there? “, do you think you are prepared enough to talk about your country, in English?

Students say no as they nod their heads

Researcher: No?...ok so do you think is it interesting or is it possible to find a link between all this cultural identity reading and English? Do you think we can find a link there, a connection?

Ana María Carrasco: I think that if you know, if you have cultural identity and you know English, since English is the universal language, if you go anywhere and you know how to express your thoughts in English, and you know that you are compelled to talk about it, then you can make your country proud, like you can be proud of your country and you can give them something to remember like, let´s say the presentations in the US when we talk about Ecuador everybody had its own cultures and you get used to the ideas in every country, let´s say in holidays like Easter and Christmas we all had the same things in Latin America but you had to find something that made it more special ,and it was kind of hard because, I don´t know, I think our parents have lost pride, and I think we have to show it.

Researcher: yeah, I think you are very right, I think we have lost pride. We feel, and this is awful to say, sometimes we feel ashamed to be Ecuadorian, but you don´t want to say it, right? And it´s because of this globalized world, because with globalization we have lost values, roots, customs, identity, so, it is important to be who you are, right? Each one of us is a very different and a very rich world, right? And the same thing happens with countries and nationalities, so that´s why I think it is important for you to read a little bit about Cultural Identity. Now, I want you to answer this: in your textbooks, your English textbooks, is there anything related to Ecuador?

Students say no...

Researcher: No? Nothing? Not at all? Do you think we should include something? What? Tell me...

Vivi: Culture

Researcher: something about the culture? Good

Karen: ethnics



Researcher: The ethnics? Wow! That's a good thing

Karen: places

Researcher: places where you can go?

Karen: that you can visit and recommend

Researcher: so, people can feel attracted to visit the country! And people can feel attracted because you are kind of ambassadors of your own country and you are talking about the beautiful places that they can visit, the beautiful stories, the customs, you talk about Carnival, and you talk about El Pase del Niño, and you talk about buñuelos (students go: mmm qué rico!) and you talk about all these things that belong to our culture.

...ok, so you do think we can find a link here, right? Would it be interesting for you to have a book that includes things that belong, not only about Ecuador, of course it is important to have a broad view of the world and not only talk about Quito and El Guagua Pichincha, and things like that right?

Ok, before we finish, I would like you to help me reading some stories that are right over there, I want you to choose a story, you go and choose the one that you like and pick a lollypop because that's thank you so much for your cooperation. So I want you to read, I will give you 10 minutes, please analyze the images and also the extra activities.

(POLLA:1748 es el momento en que las chicas eligen el material para leer)

Researcher: So, how did it go? What do you think about the extra activities? Let's talk about that...what did you read about?

Ana María Carrasco: I read about National Treasures, about the lakes of Ecuador, and I think it's really interesting, especially because you can get stuff for people that are not from here, or even people that are from here and we can inform them what we have here in the country. I actually didn't know about the trail of lakes that we have here, the believes and the all the myths that they have about all the lakes. I think we should give it up to more people, and we can have this knowledge and we can go out.

Researcher: what about the extra activities there?



Ana Maria Carrasco: er..mmm , I really liked this activity: “How can I be a better tourist”? and they give ten things you should do as a tourist, and I think that is a very good idea, because I think that, sometimes when we travel we disrespect the culture, we just do things that don't really go with them, so we should have these ten common rules for the whole world so we can understand what is respected and then, each culture has its different rules...so...

Researcher: so, it's like a manual to travel. Good, great!

Elisa: I read about Jefferson Perez and I think it is so interesting, at the start he had nothing, and it's like he put like a “meta?” (Researcher: a goal?) yeah. And he is forced to win and all the time he'll think he have to win and he prepared to participate. And about the extra activities it is “How I can be better” and you think about your life, and you have all the things to be a good person, a better person, and you have to put ...

Researcher: so you have to take advantage of that...thank you very much Elisa, really interesting about Jefferson. What about you, Denise?

Denise: I read about Our National Treasures of the Galapagos Islands, I think that if we look at treasures from other countries and we don't see that we have in Galapagos a National Treasure, and we can show to the world that Galapagos is too a National Park and is a place where all the people from other countries can see. And they would love to see that, it's something that you can see animals, fauna, flora...and all of that is a treasure

Researcher: Sure! It is the most important treasure that we have in Ecuador

Denise: Yes, in Ecuador and we don't see that we have that and we look around the world for other treasures

Researcher: What about the activities?

Denise: Well, it says that the Galapagos are protected by Ecuador, and I really don't know because I haven't gone to Galapagos, but I think so. That if we don't protect the treasure of Galapagos we are nothing, because that is the most important thing that we have in Ecuador.

Researcher: Very good! Anita, what did you read?



Ana Marie Torres: I read about the Goblin, it's a mystical character in Ecuador, there says that he wants to get the girls attention, he lives next to the river, and one day he gets a girl's attention and he makes her ugly (she smiles) and it says there that we have to be aware in Esmeraldas river and about the activities I like it because it says that you can make a conversation between this girl and the Goblin and you can put something you liked in the story to get more interested...

Researcher: Your creativity, your imagination, right?

Ana Marie Torres: Aha.

Researcher: Very good! Thank you.

Paulina: I read of Manuela Saenz, I like it because she was a (how do you say una mujer, o sea...) a model of woman because she saved the life of Simón Bolívar and at the same time she was (how do you say "amante"? Researcher replies: lover or mistress) aha, and she got married with James Thorn who was twenty seven years old, but she start a relationship with Simon Bolívar and they are in love and she was nice...

Researcher: What about the extra activities?

Paulina: I don't like them too much

Researcher: No? Why not? Are they boring?

Paulina: Aha (as she nods her head)

Researcher: Why not? Tell me

Paulina: Because you have to imagine and write and I don't like that! (The rest of students laugh)

Researcher: All right, ok, thank you.

Emilia: I read about the Heart of the Inca Empire and it's about the ruins of Pumapungo, and I think it's very interesting, I chose it because the ruins are of the Culture of Incas and I like the activities because (cómo se dice: que averigüe? Researcher: to find out?) Yes, about the incas culture and the Pumapungo ruins and all that.

Researcher: Thank you. What about you, Cami?

Camila: Er...mmm...my story is about the Ravine Devil, and it's about a devil, and in a party he...(cómo se dice "aparecer"? Researcher:



appears?)y...mmm..espérese, mm, no me acuerdo (she starts laughing and so the rest of girls)

Researcher: Oh, my God....

Camila: Es que ahí decía que como que, es que no puedo decir...

Researcher: yeah, go ahead in Spanish.

Camila: Ya, osea, I don't know what is a cliff (Researcher: abismo, arrecife)...que buscaba gente para empujarles a los cliffs and the activities are all right (and she laughs again...Bad attitude)

Researcher: Thank you. That was the first story that I read, I also picked that one first. Because I thought that was very interesting, yeah, this guy goes to a party and becomes a devil, he was the devil, and he has these little tiny devils building, and pulling the houses and the people down the cliff, to the river. So, it's interesting...

Camila: (in a serious way now) Pero dice que se veía como un hombre normal

Researcher: Yeah, at the beginning, but the little boy, who was hiding, he could see him, you know, little kids were able to see him as a devil but adults were not able to see him, yeah, nice, thank you...

Emilia: er...mmm this story...is it real?

Researcher: mmm...no! They're legends,, you know, well they're kind of myths, right? So, they're based on a historical basis but, they're fiction.

Researcher to the girl with special abilities: y usted hija, qué leyo?

María José: (Shy, she looks at her tutor) de Pumapungo

Researcher: Estaba bonita? Le gustó la historia?

María José nods her head in agreement.

Researcher: qué bueno. What about you, Karen?

Karen: I read about the first Ecuadorian female teacher, and I found this interesting, because she was the first one to actually do something and have more education than the rest of the women here. She was also one of the first to graduate in high school which is something big, because before, back then, my grandma used to tell me that they would go to school till sixth grade.

Researcher: yeah, women were not allowed to study...



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Karen: yeah, but she finished high school and she struggled to get into college and she graduated college and she became a doctor, and then she was the first one to vote for a... let's see (she opens her papers and tries to find out)..

Researcher: Ok, she voted....

Karen: Yeah, she voted and she was the first one to vote, so she opened many doors for women and...

Researcher: so she was very brave...

Karen: Yes, she was

Researcher: what about the activities?

Karen: The activities? I found this one interesting: write the names of five important women in your life and to an important value in each one. Like, I found that interesting because I think we should value more people, like value women because they can do a lot.

Researcher: you don't need to be a hero, you don't need to be famous, it can be important people for YOU, they are important women for you, they are your own personal heroes....

Karen: yeah, my mom, my grandma, and that...

Researcher: Yeah! Nice...thank you...

Researcher: So, girls, just to finish do you have anything else to say about reading? Or any ideas about what else can we do with these stories? What would you like to do with these?

AnaMarie Torres: I think they should ask us what we want to get us more interested in reading....

Researcher: Yeah...very good

Ana María Carrasco: I guess they should give us common knowledge about our country and our cultures and not just teaching us in class, sitting us down and making us take notes, maybe something like just make a play about it, or teach us in different ways so we can capture.

Researcher: Great! What else? What else can we do with these activities?



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Denise: I really don't like the vocabulary to look in the dictionary, the words, the meanings, and it's boring, here we have true or false, and that is interesting....

Researcher: The last group that I interviewed they said that they would do sort of like role play, you know, acting out, acting out the stories...

Students: Aha....yes...

Researcher: And some other girl said we could do something like...because many of you said that you like drawing and doing these creative things, so probably working with clay, that would be amazing, you know? Or use play dough or something like that...just imagine creating the little devils...

Students agree by nodding their heads and replying "yeah" "nice"...

Researcher: My girls thank you so much, I'm so sorry that I kept you trapped here. Love you much...you can go now.



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Appendix # 5 Questionnaire about cultural identity

CUESTIONARIO SOBRE IDENTIDAD CULTURAL, CUENTOS Y LEYENDAS POPULARES:

1. Empecemos por definir ¿Qué es identidad cultural?
2. ¿Tiene validez hoy en día? Algunos autores consideran lo contrario.
3. ¿Cuál es el objetivo principal de valorar la identidad cultural? ¿Para qué?
4. ¿Cuentos, mitos, leyendas, folklore? ¿Versus Harry Potter, Crepúsculo, Hanna Montana, además de Facebook, Twitter, tv cable?
5. En el ámbito educativo, específicamente en la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera, existe un vacío en lo que se refiere a identidad. La mayoría de textos son enfocados hacia culturas angloparlantes. ¿Considera que existe la posibilidad de utilizar un Segundo Idioma (Inglés por ejemplo) con la finalidad de difundir y rescatar nuestros cuentos populares, leyendas, mitos?



Appendix # 6 Transcript interview Eliécer Cárdenas

MAY 24, 2011

Mónica:

Bueno, Eliécer, muchísimas gracias por colaborar con esta entrevista, para mí es un gran honor contar con semejante personaje que colabore para mi tesis. Le había comentado que el asunto mío es sobre Identidad Cultural. Estoy yo buscando una especie de link, un nexo entre lo que es la Identidad Cultural y el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera, a fin de que los estudiantes de la lengua extranjera no sean capaces de hablar solamente de cuestiones globalizantes, de ideas estandarizadas sobre la cultura, sino más bien que tenga la herramienta del inglés para ser capaces de comunicar asuntos relacionados con la Identidad Cultural. Yo quisiera empezar por definir lo que es la identidad.

Eliécer: bueno, pues realmente se han dado una serie de debates acerca de la identidad. Yo creo que en realidad la identidad es ese acervo de conocimientos, de destrezas, de tradiciones que dan la personalidad a una persona y a una comunidad humana, es decir es lo específico, los rasgos específicos en su forma de actuar e interactuar con el mundo y de interactuar con los demás.

Mónica: ahora, tiene validez la identidad hoy en día? O hasta qué punto es un concepto más bien romántico, un concepto un poco arcaico el asunto de la identidad, si es que consideramos que las poblaciones son nómadas, la humanidad misma tiende a la movilidad, a este moverse de un lugar a otro y ya identidad...qué identidad? Hasta qué punto tiene validez?

Eliécer: Bueno creo yo que más bien ahora vamos viendo que la identidad cultural nos hermana, por ejemplo la revuelta del mundo árabe en muchos casos es una revuelta de identidad cultural, no? Eh..los cambios que se han producido en América Latina, pues sin analizar los componentes



políticos, pero todos ellos en general apuntan a rescatar un perfil, un perfil cultural, ideológico humano Latinoamericano. Y también en África, en Asia se ven parecida reivindicación. Obviamente que la globalización pues cada vez está moviendo mucho más a la sociedad a tal punto que dentro de unas décadas se anuncia que habrá un trasvase global desde el llamado tercer mundo hacia el mundo desarrollado. Cosas que ya están produciéndose, por ejemplo en Francia, el Islam va a ser la primera religión de Francia respecto al cristianismo que va reduciéndose cada vez más y así otros aspectos.

Pero yo creo que la identidad cultural es móvil no es algo dado de una vez por todas, sino es algo que va cambiando, cada pueblo va asimilando, va enriqueciéndose, con el contacto de otros pueblos, por ejemplo el caso de los latinos o los hispanos en los Estados Unidos que pese al impacto de la cultura anglosajona conservan y han logrado por algunas generaciones inclusive conservar de alguna manera, su identidad, aunque ya no es la misma identidad de los que salieron. Entonces sí, la identidad siempre es un patrimonio cambiante y un patrimonio que pese a la globalización tiene un peso, y se ha demostrado que el peso de la identidad es muy importante a la hora de tomar decisiones de otro tipo.

Mónica: La idea de la tesis mía va enfocada al asunto de los cuentos, los mitos, las leyendas versus Harry Potter, Crepúsculo, Hanna Montana, Twilight, todas esas nuevas cosas. Podemos competir, primero, con ese equipo enorme de marketing que existe y luego pues que está tan posesionado en los jóvenes este rato eso es lo que ellos viven, no? ..el TWitter, el Facebook?

Eliécer: Si, realmente en ese sentido es imposible competir. Cómo puede competir una tradición oral contra toda esa parafernalia de la tecnología. Sin embargo, hay formas, hay formas y de hecho se dan formas de resistencia cultural en donde no todo es tan sencillo, claro evidentemente están formándose unas nuevas generaciones muy apegadas a las tecnologías, pero



también se puede utilizar la tecnología, pues por supuesto eso sería responsabilidad de los organismos educativos y los organismos culturales a fin de reforzar también los contenidos de identidad. Es decir, pues, dar un espacio dentro de Twitter, de Facebook, de toda esa tecnología, y de las redes sociales que utilizan los jóvenes sobre todo, para de alguna manera, sin competir, por supuesto, no se trata de sustituir Harry Potter por “El farol de la viuda” o por algún cuento tradicional, no, no, sino simplemente, darles contenidos de identidad, de decirle de dónde somos, de dónde procedemos y cuál ha sido nuestra tradición cultural. Por ejemplo lo que inclusive sucede en Inglaterra, en los Estados Unidos, donde sus tradiciones son promocionadas en la educación, en el campo cultural. Yo creo que el inglés por estar tan tecnologizado, tan avanzado en tecnología, no ha olvidado sus raíces. Al igual que el Japonés, pese a que el Japón ha sufrido obviamente una mutación impresionante en su campo cultural, el Japonés medio, sabe sus tradiciones, conoce y sobre todo valora. Y eso es lo que nos falta a nosotros, la valoración de nuestras propias tradiciones, aquí como que tenemos la costumbre de despreciar y de decir “ah, no lo de afuera es bueno y lo de acá no sirve, es anticuado, no tiene sentido” Entonces eso es justamente un proceso educativo y la afirmación de la identidad es muy a mediano plazo, diríamos. No se puede hacer además burocráticamente las cosas sino con el concurso incluso de la población de manera activa.

The researcher explains some aspects of the results applied

Mónica: En el ámbito educativo, específicamente en la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera, existe un vacío en lo que se refiere a identidad. La mayoría de textos son enfocados hacia culturas angloparlantes. ¿Considera que existe la posibilidad de utilizar un Segundo Idioma (Inglés por ejemplo) con la finalidad de difundir y rescatar nuestros cuentos populares, leyendas, mitos?

Eliécer: Yo pienso que sí. Realmente el problema es que nosotros hemos tomado al aprendizaje de un segundo idioma como una simple



herramienta para aprender superficialmente una lengua e introducirnos al marketing o en el lenguaje técnico o en el lenguaje de ciertas especializaciones cuando en realidad aprender una lengua es adquirir una segunda cultura, realmente una lengua es una herramienta de primera importancia para una cultura. Pero creo que lamentablemente, nuestros sistemas de estudios están enfocados a tomarle tan rudimentariamente a la lengua. Es decir, hablar para ir a los Estados Unidos de compras, hablar para ir a los Estados Unidos y de pronto pues si voy a residir allá, tener un mejor trabajo. Pero todo la riqueza del idioma Inglés, que un idioma tan dúctil, tan maravilloso en el sentido de su riqueza literaria, de su riqueza cultural, de la riqueza de sus tradiciones, eso, prácticamente el 99% creo yo de quienes aprenden, o aprendemos el Inglés lo pasamos por alto, decimos” no, no, no pues eso no me interesa, o lo pasamos por alto, pues lo que yo quiero es lo inmediato. Es decir, yo creo que lo utilitario no debería de esa manera pues, romper alguna visión, a largo plazo, una visión más completa en el aspecto cultural.

(A phone call interrupts the dialogue for a brief moment)

Mónica: Entonces, usted piensa que si existe una posibilidad de utilizarle al Inglés...porque mucho se nos deprecia, mucho hay esta idea de “el Inglés para ir a trabajar en los Estados Unidos, el inglés para los migrantes, buenazo, aprende una segunda lengua de tal manera que puedas irte y encajar en la sociedad, y mientras más aprendas de la cultura, en este caso, gringa, americana, mejor vas a encajar, entonces, mientras menos te acuerdes de quien eres, vas a estar mejor...

Eliécer: Claro, lo que usted apunta lamentablemente, justamente es un objetivo de aculturación y de inferioridad cultural, le hemos tomado al Inglés como una lengua superior, lo cual no es así, el Español, pues es una lengua perfectamente preparada inclusive para asumir los nuevos términos, pero, lamentablemente y en ese sentido tenemos un error de por ejemplo, a muchas palabras que tienen traducción “twitter”, etc, las tomamos directamente, sin ninguna modificación cuando podríamos traducirlas, justamente porque existen



en español muchas palabras, pero aparte de ello, pues ya, es inevitable que ese tipo de términos hayan ingresado ya, y forman parte del lenguaje común y sería retrógrado y hasta utópico tratar de cambiar, no? Pero yo creo que en ese sentido deberíamos ampliar la enseñanza del idioma, del segundo idioma y del inglés en este caso, deberíamos realmente a los profesores prepararlos, darles una visión menos utilitaria, es decir, no solo “Ah, el inglés te va a servir” por supuesto que el Inglés nos va a servir para tantas cosas, pero también, al tiempo que adquirimos una visión de otra cultura, reafirmamos también nuestros valores y además utilizar el inglés sin complejos, no como un lenguaje superior, pues no hay lenguas superiores ni inferiores, ya la antropología hace más de cien años que debatió ese tema, y no es que una lengua sea más primitiva que otra, toda lengua está destinada a comunicarnos de la manera más eficaz, por ejemplo, una lengua amazónica tiene 200 palabras para la preparación del pescado, pero, es obvio, esos pueblos vivían justamente de eso y dentro de sus actividades primordiales estaban justamente, la preparación del pescado, entonces, el Inglés tiene solamente doce o quince términos, entonces cada lengua está adaptada a su medio, obviamente la sociedad contemporánea está cambiando impresionantemente, sin embargo, pues la lengua misma, la lengua como vehículo de identidad, creo que puede y debe en vez de empobrecerse, enriquecerse con nuestro contacto, es decir puede no tener este tipo de complejos, y no utilizar únicamente a la lengua como una herramienta para un futuro inmediato, para conseguir un mejor trabajo, o para ir de compras a los Estados Unidos.

Mónica: Eliécer, muchísimas gracias, gracias por este aporte.

Eliécer: A usted, estoy a las órdenes.