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## Cuentos e historias populares para mejorar las habilidades de lectura en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera

*Folk Tales and Stories to Enhance Reading Skills in EFL Learners*

*Histórias populares e histórias para melhorar as habilidades de leitura em alunos de inglês como língua estrangeira*

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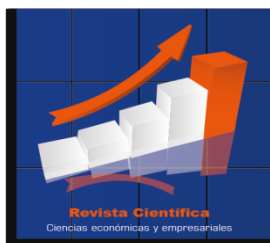
## Resumen

La lectura de historias y cuentos populares beneficia a los estudiantes de múltiples maneras, incluida la mejora de sus habilidades de lectura en inglés, dominio del lenguaje oral y escrito, imaginación y socialización. También mejora sus conocimientos y contribuye a preservar la cultura ecuatoriana, alineándose con los esfuerzos para mejorar la calidad de la educación a nivel global. Un problema común en las unidades educativas es el uso insuficiente de metodologías de enseñanza efectivas para mejorar la comprensión lectora en inglés. La lectura de cuentos ecuatorianos y cuentos en inglés sirve como una valiosa herramienta para el desarrollo educativo. En este estudio, se plantearon tres preguntas clave para recopilar datos, principalmente a través de un cuestionario distribuido a profesores de inglés. Las preguntas giraban en torno a las habilidades de lectura, la implementación de un nuevo enfoque educativo y el uso de cuentos e historias locales para reforzar la motivación de lectura y el desarrollo de habilidades. Las historias locales y los cuentos populares mejoran las habilidades de comprensión lectora de los estudiantes jóvenes por varias razones. A menudo se desarrollan en un contexto cultural familiar, lo que atrae y motiva a los estudiantes a leer. Estas historias están escritas en lengua y dialectos comunes a la región, lo que las hace lingüísticamente accesibles. Proporcionan conocimientos culturales y contienen pistas específicas del contexto, lo que anima a los estudiantes a hacer inferencias. Estas historias también promueven la empatía y la toma de perspectiva, ya que presentan personajes y situaciones identificables. La exposición a diversas culturas y tradiciones orales amplía la visión del mundo de los estudiantes y fomenta el pensamiento crítico, al tiempo que inculca un sentido de identidad cultural y orgullo. La incorporación de estas historias al plan de estudios es una estrategia valiosa para que los educadores mejoren las habilidades de comprensión lectora y la alfabetización general de los estudiantes jóvenes.

**Palabras Claves:** Cuentos populares ecuatorianos; habilidades lectoras; calidad; identidad cultural.

## Abstract

Reading stories and folktales benefits students in multiple ways, including improving their English reading skills, oral and written language proficiency, imagination, and socialization. It also improves your knowledge and contributes to preserving Ecuadorian culture, aligning with efforts



to improve the quality of education globally. A common problem in educational units is the insufficient use of effective teaching methodologies to improve reading comprehension in English. Reading Ecuadorian stories and stories in English serves as a valuable tool for educational development. In this study, three key questions were posed to collect data, primarily through a questionnaire distributed to English teachers. The questions revolved around reading skills, implementing a new educational approach, and using local stories and stories to reinforce reading motivation and skill development. Local stories and folk tales improve young students' reading comprehension skills for several reasons. They often take place in a familiar cultural context, which attracts and motivates students to read. These stories are written in the language and dialects common to the region, which makes them linguistically accessible. They provide cultural knowledge and contain context-specific clues, encouraging students to make inferences. These stories also promote empathy and perspective taking as they feature relatable characters and situations. Exposure to diverse cultures and oral traditions broadens students' worldview and encourages critical thinking, while instilling a sense of cultural identity and pride. Incorporating these stories into the curriculum is a valuable strategy for educators to improve the reading comprehension skills and general literacy of young students.

**Key Words:** Ecuadorian popular stories; reading skills; quality; cultural identity.

## Resumo

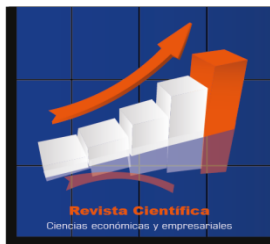
Ler histórias e contos populares beneficia os alunos de várias maneiras, incluindo melhorar suas habilidades de leitura em inglês, proficiência na linguagem oral e escrita, imaginação e socialização. Também melhora o seu conhecimento e contribui para a preservação da cultura equatoriana, alinhando-se aos esforços para melhorar a qualidade da educação globalmente. Um problema comum nas unidades educacionais é o uso insuficiente de metodologias de ensino eficazes para melhorar a compreensão da leitura em inglês. Ler histórias e histórias equatorianas em inglês serve como uma ferramenta valiosa para o desenvolvimento educacional. Neste estudo, foram colocadas três questões-chave para a recolha de dados, principalmente através de um questionário distribuído aos professores de inglês. As questões giravam em torno das habilidades de leitura, da implementação de uma nova abordagem educacional e do uso de histórias e histórias

locais para reforçar a motivação para a leitura e o desenvolvimento de habilidades. Histórias locais e contos populares melhoram as habilidades de compreensão de leitura dos jovens estudantes por vários motivos. Muitas vezes acontecem em um contexto cultural familiar, que atrai e motiva os alunos a ler. Estas histórias são escritas na língua e nos dialetos comuns da região, o que as torna linguisticamente acessíveis. Eles fornecem conhecimento cultural e contêm pistas específicas do contexto, incentivando os alunos a fazer inferências. Essas histórias também promovem empatia e tomada de perspectiva, pois apresentam personagens e situações relacionáveis. A exposição a diversas culturas e tradições orais amplia a visão de mundo dos alunos e incentiva o pensamento crítico, ao mesmo tempo que incute um sentimento de identidade cultural e orgulho. Incorporar essas histórias no currículo é uma estratégia valiosa para os educadores melhorarem as habilidades de compreensão de leitura e a alfabetização geral dos jovens estudantes.

**Palavras-chave:** histórias populares equatorianas; habilidades de leitura; qualidade; identidade cultural.

## Introduction

The purpose of this research is to promote reading skills through Ecuadorian stories with the aim of innovating the traditional educational process and making a transcendent change in teaching. Education has continuously improved over the years, although it has also excluded resources and methods, today's traditional education requires diversity of knowledge, content, and methods to promote experimentation and educational innovation. Reading Ecuadorian stories and folk tales contributes to students' motivation, improvement in their English reading skills, oral and written language, imagination, socialization, improve knowledge and contribute to current education preserving Ecuadorian culture, also seeking to improve the action of the sector educational within the framework of global quality. A common problem in schools is the insufficient use of methodologies in the classrooms that help reading comprehension of the English language, it is necessary to explain that reading Ecuadorian stories and stories in English is a useful tool for the development of education. The activities carried out by teachers and students in the classroom help to deepen learning in the field of the foreign language and to a certain extent the incidence of reading.



Within the theoretical framework there are considerable contributions that provide positive perspectives on the use of local stories and folk tales when teaching English:

<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>
<b>TAQWA ET AL.</b>	2019	Teaching methods include not just traditional teacher-centered instruction but also the development of activities and exercises that include students in the learning process
<b>CHUKWULOO</b>	2019	If a learner of English as a second language is taught to communicate effectively in the English language using tales that he is familiar with, that student will learn in a more effective way.
<b>PULIMENO ET AL.</b>	2020	Folk tales and stories are an important part of children's intellectual life and provide an indispensable part in the process of growing up
<b>VICTORIA</b>	2015	They bring a holistic approach to foreign language teaching and learning, and learners acquire more than just language knowledge and usage.
<b>SYAFI'I</b>	2018	On-line tales are a viable option that, when executed properly because they offer the potential to be very successful in the academic field.

## Methodology

Exploratory research is an essential phase in the research process as it lays the foundation for more structured and targeted research in the future. It helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of their subject and make informed decisions about the direction and methodology of their research. It is about initiating contact in order to thoroughly investigate the parts of the inquiry. This sort of study is accurate for this research because is quite similar to other types of research in that it begins with a review of the bibliography or systematization of existing research to solve the issue, as established before there are some opinions about how useful is to use stories to enhance reading skills.

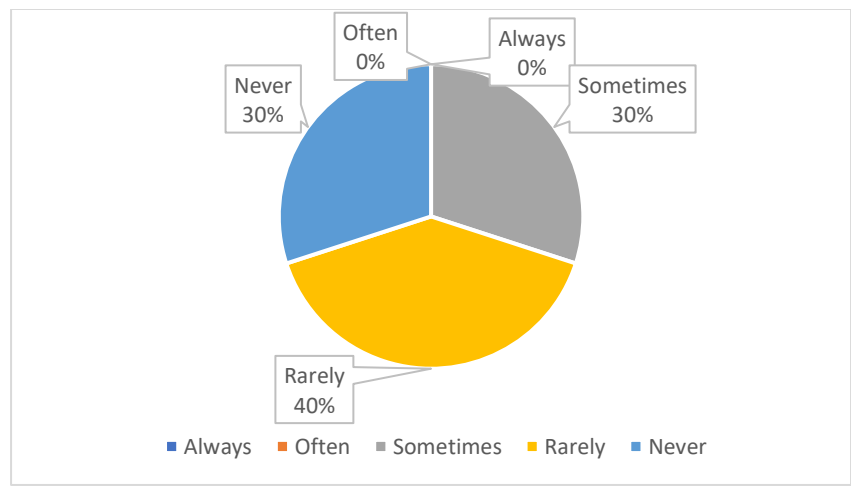
Researchers conducted pilot studies as part of this exploratory research. These small-scale studies help refine research methods, assess the feasibility of data collection, and identify potential challenges before a larger-scale study is initiated. Three questions were selected as part of this study with the intention of sharing the data obtained. The questionnaire was applied to English teachers in order to understand what they think about issues such as reading skills, the application of a new educational proposal, the use of tales and local stories to reinforce reading motivation and skills development.

## Results

The datum analysis resulted in characteristics shared by interviewees, which were related with the poor interest in Reading classes. Also, teachers pointed out that while they are working on this skill, students request clarification and meaning for new vocabulary words. This can be implied that even though students do not feel self-motivated to read in English language, when they are working on this skill in class, they want to know about specific vocabulary of their interest. Futhermore, teachers declared that a topic of student's interest in their Reading classes would be the use of Ecuadorian folk tales as they feel familiarized with them and would increase students' motivation.

**Figure 1**

*Question 1: How often do the students read or feel interested in the class readings?*

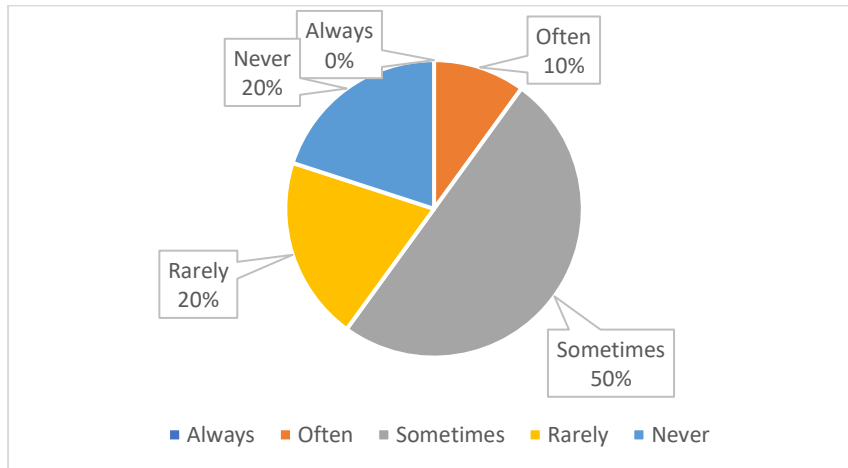


*Note.* This figure reveals that four teachers (40%) believed that rarely is how often the students read and feel interested in the class readings; this demonstrates how indispensable is to apply something new to catch students' attention in order to work on reading skills to enhance it. Three teachers (30%) believed that never and sometimes (30%) students feel not attracted to what they are reading, and this is the cause for the lack of attention in classes.

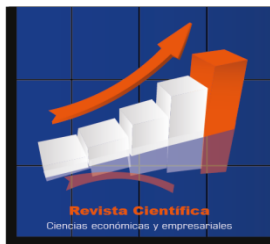


**Figure 2**

*Question 3: How often do students ask you about a word or phrase they do not understand while they are reading?*

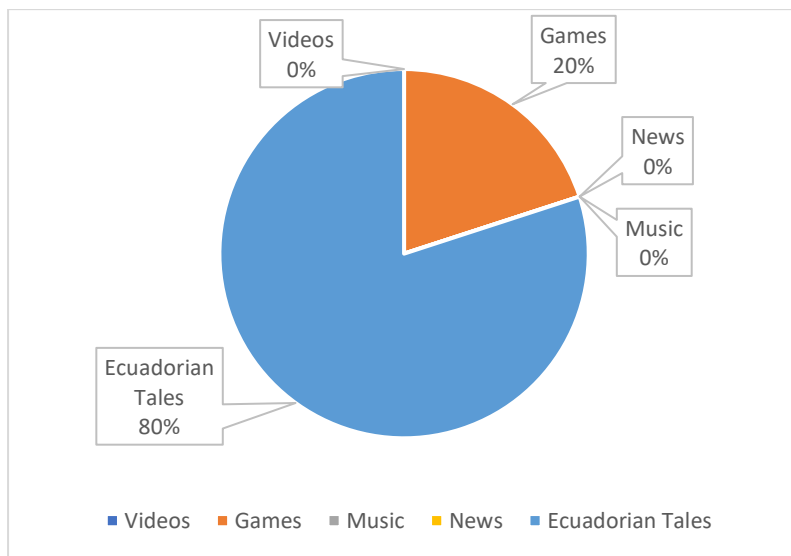


*Note.* This figure reveals that five teachers (50%) think that the option “Sometimes” is the frequency of how often students ask the teacher about a word or phrase they do not understand while they are reading. Two teachers (20%) evidence that their students rarely ask for the meaning or the context of an unknown word or phrase. In addition, two teachers (20%) reveal that students “Never” ask for help while they are reading an English text and one teacher (10%) answered with the option “Often”.



**Figure 3**

*Question 5: What activities would you like to use to motivate your students during the English reading lessons?*



*Note.* This figure reveals that eight teachers (80%) believe that the activity that would motivate students during an English reading lesson is Ecuadorian tales. This quantity of answers discloses the fact that this kind of reading would motivate students and would encourage them to practice more thus achieving better learning. Two teachers (20%) think that games would be an option to make students feel motivated during English reading lessons.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this research is to provide adequate knowledge to improve reading skills in English language students through the reading of Ecuadorian stories and stories, with the goal of innovating the traditional educational process and bringing about a paradigm shift in teaching and learning in order to achieve a quality education.

The design of this research was based on a survey to obtain the data that was used to interpret it in order to get the results of what teachers think about the use of a blog with Ecuadorian tales and stories to enhance reading skills.

The present research was carried out and was satisfactory because 90% of the teachers answered the survey results that an online blog is recommended to enhance students' reading skills. This is a proposal for the creation of something new to enhance education in English language and help the students to understand better the topics when they read an English text.

This study was created for the benefit of teachers and students that want to complement their classes with Ecuadorian tales and stories and comprehension activities to enhance their reading skills. For instance, it is recommended to apply this study because this is the beginning for future research based on an online blog with Ecuadorian tales and stories that allow students to enhance their English reading skills.

Local stories and folk tales can enhance reading comprehension skills in young learners for several reasons:

**Familiar Cultural Context.**- Local stories and folk tales are often set in a familiar cultural context that young learners can relate to. This familiarity can make it easier for them to understand the characters, settings, and cultural nuances, which can improve their comprehension.

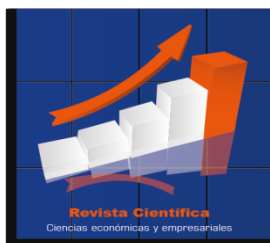
**Engagement and Motivation.**- Stories that are relevant to a child's own culture or surroundings are more likely to engage and motivate them to read. When children are interested in the content, they are more likely to put in the effort to comprehend and enjoy the story.

**Language Familiarity.**- Local stories are often written in the language or dialect commonly spoken in the region, which means the language is more familiar to young readers. This familiarity with language and dialect can facilitate comprehension because they encounter words and phrases they hear in everyday conversations.

**Cultural Insights.**- Folk tales and local stories often contain cultural and moral lessons. As young readers engage with these stories, they not only improve their reading comprehension but also gain insights into the values, traditions, and customs of their own culture, which can deepen their understanding of the story.

**Contextual Clues.**- Stories rooted in local culture may contain context-specific clues and references that are easier for local children to understand. This allows young learners to use their background knowledge to make inferences and better comprehend the text.

**Empathy and Perspective.**- Local stories often feature characters and situations that young readers can easily empathize with. This encourages them to step into the shoes of the characters and



understand their feelings, motivations, and actions, which is a critical aspect of reading comprehension.

**Cultural Diversity and Global Awareness.**- Exposure to local stories and folk tales can also expand a young learner's understanding of different cultures and perspectives. This broadens their worldview and encourages them to think critically and make connections between their own culture and others, thereby enhancing comprehension.

**Oral Tradition.**- Folk tales and local stories are often part of the oral tradition, passed down from generation to generation. When young learners encounter these stories in written form, it can be a valuable opportunity to bridge the gap between oral and written language, improving their overall literacy skills.

**Critical Thinking and Analysis.**- Many local stories and folk tales are rich in symbolism and metaphor. Analyzing these elements in the context of familiar stories can promote critical thinking skills and deeper comprehension.

**Cultural Identity and Pride.**- Reading stories from one's own culture can instill a sense of cultural identity and pride in young learners. This emotional connection to the material can make them more invested in understanding and interpreting the story.

Incorporating local stories and folk tales into the curriculum can be a valuable strategy for educators to promote reading comprehension skills in young learners. These stories not only make reading more enjoyable but also provide a bridge to understanding complex texts and improving overall literacy.

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