


Storytelling as a Didactic Proposal to Approach Culture Topics in a Fifth Graders' Classroom*

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Abstract

This research study was developed with ten fifth graders in the primary School Inem Carlos Arturo Torres, headquarters Las Américas, in Tunja, Colombia. The objectives of this study were to guide students to gain more knowledge about other cultures as well as their own one, to become aware of cultural differences and to develop more positive and accepting perceptions of different cultures. In this regard, some stories were narrated using big-books which were designed into the English language classroom. The instruments used in this action research to collect data were student's artifacts, group discussions, and two surveys. Findings revealed that the stories impacted directly on students' knowledge and understanding of other cultures as well as of the Colombian one. This strategy also helped them to build their vocabulary and to transform the way these kids were used to develop the English classes. With this activity they found their classes more interesting and dynamic.

Keywords: culture, culture awareness, stories, big-books.

Narración de cuentos como propuesta didáctica para abordar temas culturales en un salón de clase de alumnos de quinto grado

Resumen

Esta investigación se desarrolló con diez alumnos de quinto grado en el Colegio Inem Carlos Arturo Torres, sede Las Américas, en Tunja, Colombia. Los objetivos de este estudio fueron guiar a los estudiantes para que adquirieran más conocimientos sobre otras culturas así como también de la propia, tomaran conciencia de las diferencias culturales y desarrollaran percepciones más positivas y aceptables de diferentes culturas. En este sentido, algunas historias fueron presentadas utilizando grandes libros que fueron diseñados e implementados en el aula de inglés. Los instrumentos empleados en esta investigación-acción para recolectar datos fueron artefactos del estudiante, discusiones de grupo y dos encuestas. Los resultados revelaron que las historias impactaron directamente en el conocimiento de los estudiantes y en su comprensión de otras culturas, así como de la colombiana. Esta estrategia también les ayudó a construir su vocabulario y a transformar la manera en que estaban acostumbrados a desarrollar las clases de inglés. Con esta actividad ellos encontraron sus clases más interesantes y dinámicas.

Palabras clave: cultura, conocimiento de la cultura, historias, libros grandes.

La narration comme un propos didactique pour approcher des sujets culturels dans la classe de cm2

Résumé

Cette étude de recherche a été développée avec 10 élèves de CM2 de l'école Inem Carlos Arturo Torres, siège Las Américas, à Tunja, en Colombie. Les objectifs de cette étude ont été guider les apprenants pour qu'ils acquissent plus de connaissances sur d'autres cultures et la leur, prissent conscience des différences culturelles et créassent des perceptions plus positives et acceptables de différentes cultures. À cet égard, quelques histoires ont été présentées en utilisant de grands livres conçus et mis en œuvre dans la salle de classe d'anglais. Les instruments utilisés dans cette recherche action pour collecter des données, ont été des outils de l'élève, des discussions de groupe et deux enquêtes. Les résultats ont révélé que les histoires ont eu un impact direct sur la connaissance des élèves et sur leur compréhension d'autres cultures, ainsi que de la culture colombienne. Cette stratégie leur a aussi aidé à construire leur vocabulaire et à transformer la manière dont ces enfants étaient habitués à développer les cours d'anglais. Avec cette activité, ils ont trouvé que leurs cours étaient plus intéressants et dynamiques.

Mots clés: Culture, Connaissance de la culture, Histoires, Livres grands

Narração de histórias como proposta didática para abordar temas culturais em uma sala de aula de estudantes de quinto de ensino primario

Resumo

Esta pesquisa foi desenvolvida com dez alunos do quinto ano da Escola Inem Carlos Arturo Torres, Las Américas, em Tunja, Colômbia. Os objetivos deste estudo foram orientar os alunos para adquirir mais conhecimento sobre outras culturas, bem como os seus próprios, para se conscientizar das diferenças culturais e desenvolver percepções mais positivas e aceitáveis de diferentes culturas. Nesse sentido, algumas histórias foram apresentadas usando grandes livros que foram projetados e implementados na sala de aula de inglês. Os instrumentos utilizados na pesquisa-ação para coleta de dados foram artefatos de estudante, discussões em grupo e dois inquéritos. Os resultados revelaram que as histórias impactaram diretamente o conhecimento dos alunos e sua compreensão de outras culturas, assim como do colombiano. Essa estratégia também os ajudou a construir seu vocabulário e a transformar a maneira como estavam acostumados a desenvolver aulas de inglês. Com essa atividade, eles acharam as aulas mais interessantes e dinâmicas.

Palavras-chave: competência comunicativa, materiais para o ensino de inglês, habilidade oral.

Introducción

Thanasoulas (2001) argues that “the knowledge of customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country, is indisputably an integral part of foreign language learning” (p.1). However, approaching these issues related to culture is a complex and at-risk instructional activity that many teachers feel uncomfortable doing and the reasons are multiple, among them it can be stated that some teachers do not have enough information, or simply they do not feel motivated to deal with them in their classes.

Based on informal observations and on a diagnosis survey, we could identify that primary teachers in our context continue using a textbook to develop mainly grammar topics that are not really connected to students' likes and interests. This type of material does not allow children to imagine, interact and learn about other cultures as well as their own culture

Situations like the previously mentioned have limited the possibility of apprentices to learn about other aspects connected directly with learning a language as it is the case of culture. It is not possible to separate language and culture, that situation only perpetuates the static view of culture. In this regard, Liddicoat (2002) states that “the static view of culture does not recognize the link between language and culture” (p.8). This view limits the possibility of involving learners in activities where they can learn about other cultures while learning the language under study. The same author claims for an active engagement of learners in culture learning, making language and culture more dynamic and relevant for students' lives and interests.

Thus, language teachers are called to guide students into the exploration of specific cultural facts and meanings from cultures different from theirs while reflecting on their own one. At the beginning of this study a survey was applied to fifth graders in order to identify their knowledge about some tribes or some cultures around the world and they were not able to provide and answer or simply they wrote they did not know anything about it. We could identify that our students hold certain stereotypes and misunderstandings about people from other countries or from other places from their same country.

Based on the previous concerns, we decided to involve on the exploration of some issues related to culture. Those issues included culture information that we presented through big-books designed to represent stories taken from different places around the world. This strategy was implemented with the intention of providing fifth graders with a different scenario to continue developing their linguistic competence, but also to enhance their culture knowledge by learning about religious traditions, sacred foods, body gestures

and other issues related to different cultures from other countries and places around the world.

That strategy was constructed towards the implementation of some reading activities where students were exposed to short stories containing cultural information. In this part some big books were created to present the stories and make them more attractive to fifth graders. The stories presented intentionally information about the issues mentioned previously with the objective of identifying children's vision of cultural traditions and beliefs from different parts of the world, as well as to observe whether the cultural information contained in those short-stories led or not them to empathy and respect towards different cultures.

The question that guided this research was: What happens to fifth graders' cultural knowledge, when they are involved in the reading of stories containing cultural issues from different countries?

1. Theoretical Framework

Since 1994, the government of Colombia established that all public and private schools should teach English in elementary and high schools (Law 115 of 1994). By 2006, with the implementation of the Basic Standards of Competencies in Foreign Languages (2006) the Ministry of Education of Colombia established that students in fifth grade should be able of:

- Identifying cultural elements such as names and places, in simple texts.
- Reading and understanding, simple authentic texts on specific events related to cultural traditions (birthdays, Christmas, etc.).
- Writing simple texts on [cultural] subjects (p.20).

Students are required to acquire certain specific culture knowledge, however the standards do not approach other activities that learners can do while studying and learning about a different culture or their own one. These standards do not account for discussions and reflections learners can do with the information they are receiving or exploring. That is one of the goals this research study wanted to achieve.

In the next paragraphs, two main constructs will be discussed regarding the objectives of the research study: first, culture and second, stories and their relationship with the construction of culture knowledge.

1.1 Defining Culture

Kramsh (2013) states the difference between culture with capital “C” and culture with small “c”. The first one refers to “the geography, history, literature and great achievements of a country and its people” whereas the latter refers to different “facts having to do with custom, manners, and way of life or life-style” (Bueno, 1996, p. 362). The previous view of culture was also proposed by Tylor (1871). This last author defines culture as: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other abilities and habits acquired by a [person] as a member of society” (Tylor, 1871, p.1). His definition includes three of the most important characteristics of culture:

- (1) Culture is acquired by people.
- (2) A person acquires culture as a member of society.
- (3) Culture is a complex whole (p.1).

Regarding these characteristics, it is possible to consider Butties’ reasons (1990) why he considers language and culture are from the start inseparably connected:

- i. Language acquisition does not follow a universal sequence, but differs across cultures;
- ii. The process of becoming a competent member of society is carried out through exchanges of language in particular social situations;
- iii. Every society organizes the ways in which children participate in particular situations, and this, in turn, affects the form, the function and the content of children’s utterances;
- iv. Caregivers’ primary concern is not with grammatical input, but with the transmission of sociocultural knowledge;
- v. The native learner, in addition to language, acquires also the paralinguistic patterns and the kinesics of his or her culture (p. 55).

Regarding the previous concepts, language teachers then are called to focus their attention on the exploration of culture as part of their language classes where cultures are represented. In this sense, Derenowsky (2016) views culture in a more language teacher-oriented way. For this author: “Culture isn’t just a list of holidays or shared

recipes, religious traditions, or language; [instead] it is a lived experience unique to each individual” (p.55).

Teaching culture is a key element in the teaching of a second or foreign language, and it may serve as a bridge between two cultures: the culture of origin (Colombian) and the culture under study (Foreign one). However, teaching culture as Kramsh (1993) asserts cannot rely on the transmission of statistical information, or a list of customs, habits, and folklore of everyday life in different parts of the world. This author highlights that a list of facts does not provide a reason why people behave, say, or do the things they do. The lack of meaning is what creates misunderstandings and stereotypes.

For this reason, in this study the culture information presented to fifth graders was done under an interpretative framework. In other words, the stories did not only present the facts but they were connected to explanations, discussions and reflection processes where learners were able to gain knowledge and develop meanings to establish connections between their own culture and that of the target country.

1.2 Stories and Culture

Stories are very important for children in learning their mother tongue, and they are important in learning any foreign language as well. In primary schools

Children enjoy listening to stories over and over again. This frequent repetition allows certain language items to be acquired while others are being overtly reinforced. Many stories contain natural repetition of key vocabulary and structures. This helps children to remember every detail [...]. Repetition also encourages participation in the narrative [and help children become aware of the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of language. (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 7)

The same authors further express that stories are also a great tool because they provide “ideal opportunities for presenting cultural information and encouraging cross-cultural comparison” (2014, p.46) without telling the students what is what they are learning. While students listen, read, and repeat, they are learning aspects of culture that they can discuss later and compare to their own life style.

Ellis and Brewster (2014) also suggest that by listening to stories, children can develop some learning strategies such as:

listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing. In particular, they can develop the child’s listening skills and concentration via:

- a. visual clues (high-quality pictures and illustrations that support children's understanding)
- b. audio clues (sound effects, onomatopoeia)
- c. their prior knowledge of how language works
- d. their prior knowledge of the world. (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p.7)

The previous information was taken into account to conduct the study. First, because stories help students to become aware of the reasons why people in other countries behave or have different traditions in comparison with what Colombian people do in their daily life. Second, children could develop more sophisticated language structures, accumulate more background information, and have more interest in learning to read. Third, children's active participation in literary experiences can enhance the development of comprehension, oral language, and a sense of story structure.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Type of Research

This study was conducted under a qualitative paradigm through a teacher-developed action research study designed to gain insights into our teaching and learning practices. Stremmel (2002) states that: "teacher research provides an insider perspective that allows teachers to address the important question: What does teaching mean?" (p. 66).

Regarding the action research cycle, Marshall (2004) states some stages that we followed to conduct the study: identify a question, create an action plan, action and evaluation. The first stage related to identify a question based on approaching an important and practical problem was approached while we observed that children did not have much knowledge about other cultures and they accounted for some misunderstandings and stereotypes. A survey was applied to approach this first stage.

Second, in the action plan stage it was necessary to design a new strategy to address the question. Thus, eight workshops around some short stories were designed to approach the question and to develop some other reading activities to learn the vocabulary and some useful expressions used in storytelling.

The next stage action was approached in the classroom when students were involved in the workshops with the intention of moving them into the recognition of other

cultures. Each story was made into a big book. In this sense, children could observe the drawings and understood better the story.

The last stage is related to evaluation: this evaluation process was done at the end of each workshop and some decisions about the next workshop were taken. It was possible to observe the interest and enthusiasm children were having towards the development of each workshop.

2.2 Population

The population involved in the study was ten children: four boys and six girls, of a fifth primary grade. The ages range from nine to ten years old. All the children attended the Inem Carlos Arturo Torres School headquarters Las Américas, in Tunja, Colombia.

The ten children were chosen based on the answers provided by them in the first survey. They were who we identified hold little culture knowledge about other cultures and we could also evidence some misunderstanding or stereotypes in the answers they provided to the different questions. As a way to identify them, we decided to use letters as it is presented in the next table:

Table 1. Population

Identification Letter	Gender	Age
N.	Girl	10 years old
Y.	Girl	10 years old
S.	Boy	9 years old
E.	Girl	9 years old
L.	Girl	10 years old
C.	Boy	10 years old
K.	Girl	10 years old
Z.	Girl	10 years old
R.	Boy	10 years old

3. Pedagogical Implementation

In order to grab the students' attention one giant book per story was created: each story was kept short and with interesting pictures. It was designed to present the story in the classroom. Each story contained a brief section of vocabulary before presenting the actual story and some general comprehension questions after the story. The stories included

appropriated vocabulary for a fifth grade class and the importance of the vocabulary and the basic grammar structures were repeated as a part of the teaching strategy.

To re-create these stories some traditions from different places around the world were approached as a relevant opportunity for fifth graders to learn about those places and their culture. The stories were created with a specific purpose to provide students with information to guide them to gain knowledge about those places as well as to show respect for those traditions, beliefs and customs that could be very different from the Colombian ones.

These are the stories that were approached in the English classes:

- Brass coils, a story that reveals why women of the Kayan group from northern of Thailandia wear brass coils on their necks.
- The importance of clothes in the world (India, USA, etc.)
- The meaning of different customs in eating: China vs. Colombia.
- The meaning of the different greetings.
- The meaning of placing a small disk on lower lip of the Zurma group in Africa.
- The importance of knowing about Colombian carnivals and festivals.
- The traditional Pasto carnival.
- Saudi Arabia`s traditions.

All the workshops were designed taking into account the following stages:

Stage 1: Class introduction. The teachers presented the vocabulary that was going to be included in the story and that we supposed children did not know. Each vocabulary activity included an extra activity for students to comprehend and learn the words. Some of the activities included crossword puzzles with pictures, matching words with pictures, and associations of words with the definitions.

Stage 2: The teachers presented the story in a giant book and read it aloud to the class. Because the story had pictures children could easily associate what they were hearing to the drawings and therefore understand the story. The story was read twice. It was crucial to avoid translation because we wanted children to understand what it was said.

Stage 3: Students developed some comprehension questions about what they understood. The students worked in groups of four people and answered the questions to present to the rest of the class. The comprehension questions were designed in Spanish as the purpose of the study was to comprehend whether they understood the reading and not whether they could answer in the target language.

Stage 4: An open discussion was conducted. Children were involved into discussions based on some questions approached to compare and reflect on the cultural information from the studied country with their own traditions and cultural values. This was an open and oral discussion where students could express whatever they thought about cultural information they have learned about.

4. Findings

With the purpose of validating the findings obtained we applied a methodological triangulation which combines dissimilar methods as surveys, observation and physical evidence to study the same unit (Merriam, 1988). The instruments used to collect data were student's artifacts, group discussions, and two surveys. Regarding this last instrument, we applied one survey at the beginning and one at the end of the study.

In order to identify and establish the categories to answer the research question and to evidence the objectives proposed for this study, we based our findings on the Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). First we analyzed each instrument in isolation to identify some common patterns. Then, we organized and encoded them by highlighting using different colors. Later we compared these patterns in the three instruments and we proceeded to establish the next categories.

Table 2. Categories

Research question	Categories
What happens to fifth graders cultural knowledge when they are involved in the reading of some cultural issues from different countries?	We are black, so what?
	A story means a world.

4.1 We Are Black, So What?

The name of this category emerged from one of the student's artifact. In this artifact it was possible to observe that this student identified the existence of different races in Colombia and that he respected the differences that Colombian people have considering the mixture of races that coexist in the country and around the world.

In one of the workshops about the Festival of Black and White, one of the students wrote:

“Somos Negros y qué” [*We are black.so what?*] (Students' artifact N° 4 .Y)

Similarly another participant wrote:

“Todos somos iguales así seamos negros o blancos” [*black or white we are all equal*] (Group discussion N° 4. D).

A different participant in the same question wrote:

“Todos somos importantes, no importa el color de la piel” [*We are all important, it doesn't matter our skin color*] (Group discussion N° 4. L).

These previous comments expressed by the children can be considered as the evidence that they identified and respected other races. We could affirm that for Y, D and L to be black is not a situation to feel different. In L case, she expressed the importance any human being deserves no matter the skin color. It can be understood as an early evidence of understanding and respect for the others' differences.

This situation was also observed in the student's survey, where some children expressed that all people are equal and that we should not judge people because of their beliefs, customs or again skin color.

In this survey the student C wrote:

“Que no hay que juzgar a las personas sin importar lo que son” [*People shouldn't be judged no matter what they are*] (Students' survey, C)

In the same question another participant wrote:

“[...] respetarnos unos a otros, porque todos somos iguales no importa el color”

[...*respect each other, because we are all the same no matter the skin color*]
(Students' survey. N)

Descriptions like the previously mentioned showed that these children: C and N, identified the respect for other people as a key issue in any social relation. These kids perceived that black and white people have to respect each other as a way to understand that human beings are equal and this should be a characteristic of people to belong to a society.

In the same category we placed a stereotype observed during the introductory activity of the story about the meaning of different customs in eating. During the workshop where we were talking about Chinese food vs. Colombian food, we could identify that some children started to say nasty things about the food consumed by Chinese people. They criticized the way Chinese people consume certain products that in Colombia people do not eat. However, after telling them the story and carried out the workshop prepared to approach this topic, it was possible to identify how they changed their opinions and how they began to compare food from Colombia and China.

We could observe that they liked the story and how they started to express their respect for others' eating habits. Regarding this aspect, we as language teachers consider that in life, it is necessary to learn values that serve us in everyday life; moreover the schools are the second places where students reinforce attitudes as respect and where they are formed to be integral people. We realized that children became interested in eating the typical china food. They understood that no matter what kind of food we eat, the important thing is to respect all people. Also they started to propose combinations of Colombian food with the Chinese one. This issue was observed during the workshop number 3.

“A mí me gustaría comer patas de sapo porque es muy interesante”

[*I would like to eat toad legs because it is very interesting*] (Students' artifact N° 2. N)

Another participant wrote:

“sopa de caballos de mar porque me parece rica”

[*sea horse soup because I think it's delicious*] (Students' artifact N° 2. Y)

In the same workshop other participant wrote, he'd like to try:

“Arañas con papas” [*spiders with potatoes*] (Students' artifact N° 2. J).

According to what N, Y and J expressed we could evidence that they were on the road to accept and understand eating habits from a different culture and that they started to be motivated to know more from other people and we could see that this change happened because of the reading and discussions done in each workshop. We could see that these kids were making contrasts between their own typical food and the foreign one. That situation could be understood as a sign of acceptance and recognition of their own culture in front of the foreign ones.

We could identify that with this study we were not only teaching English or culture, we were also teaching respect for other cultures, and helping students to understand that although we have different beliefs, traditions, eating habits and so on, all human beings are equal and deserve respect.

5.2 A Story Means a World

The name of this category emerged from the answers fifth graders expressed in the different instruments when they talked about the stories and the workshops we had carried out. By reading their answers we could identify that the workshops and their implementation was very fun for children and they enjoyed drawing the stories and carrying out the proposed activities. With the stories they were exploring a different way of learning and they were identifying the existence of others people and therefore of other cultures. Then, we decided to name this category: "A story means a world".

In the survey we asked about their opinions on the workshops and some of their answers were:

"Me gustó, porque aprendí más y fue muy divertido" (Final survey, J.)

[I liked it, because I learned more and it was fun]

Another participant wrote:

"[...] es muy bonito y hermoso y aprendí cosas" *[It is beautiful and I learned things]* (Final survey, L.)

Similarly it was possible to identify other answers pointing towards the same situation. When we asked whether the material used in the workshops liked them, they said that they liked it and that through the game and fun activities, they had learned. Regarding this aspect, one of the participants answered;

"[...] aprendí mucho y me divertí" *[I learned a lot and I had fun]* (Final survey, J.)

Another participant wrote:

"[...] estuvo muy interesante" *[It was very interesting]* (Final survey, M.)

We could identify that after our pedagogical implementation children considered they have learned about some cultures they didn't know that existed. It was possible to contrast their answers in the first survey at the beginning of the study where we could identify that children did not have enough information about culture from other countries,

and we could see they considered they have gained certain knowledge about some other cultures as it was evidenced in the last survey, when it was asked about the relevance of knowing about other cultures and they answered:

“[...] nunca había escuchado lo que hacían allá en esas culturas” [*I had never heard what they did in those cultures*] (Final survey, Y.)

This participant recognized that he had never heard about other cultures and what people did in other countries.

Other answers about this question were:

“porque no sabía y fue importante saber” [*because I did not know and it was important to know*] (Final survey, M.)

“porque yo no conocía sobre ellos y es muy interesante” [*because I did not know about them and it is very interesting*] (Final survey, L.)

Short stories have been a good strategy to teach children. Children usually like to listen to stories; for this reason, the idea of stories involving both English and culture was relevant for the participants and it was noted that they liked the idea of changing the typical English class and began to learn about language and culture at the same time and in a fun way. For this reason, when we asked children about the English class they answered that it was developed in a different way, and that it seemed they were in a different world.

We also asked them about the material used in the workshops, some participants wrote in the last survey:

“a mí me gustó mucho porque los cuentos son divertidos y a mí me gustan”

[*I liked it a lot because the stories are fun and I like them*] (Final survey, Y.)

Other participant wrote:

“porque esos cuentos son chéveres y enseñan mucho” [*because those stories are cool and they are full of teaching*] (Final survey, A.)

These participants expressed that they had liked the class because of the stories, because they were having fun while they were learning about the English language and culture.

This category exemplified how children considered that what they were learning could be interesting for other people. Thus, they considered they could teach the new information obtained during the workshops. It was interesting to see how the participants considered they could transmit what they have learned to others.

When we asked about the importance of knowing about other cultures and other countries, one of the participants answered that it was really important because he could teach other people or friends. In this sense C answered:

“[...] podemos enseñarles a otras personas o amigos”

[we could teach other people or friends]

R also wrote:

“porque podemos aprender y enseñar a otros que no saben de cultura”

[because we could learn and teach others who do not know about our culture]

A similar situation was presented when children were asked to think about their future and how this topic could serve them in their futures lives. This participant answered:

“sí, porque podemos aprender mucho para decirlo cuando seamos profesionales”

[yes, because we could learn a lot so that when we are professional people to tell about it] (First survey, Z.)

A different participant wrote:

“sí, porque me ayudan a ser alguien importante en la vida y puedo aprender otros idiomas y culturas”

[yes, because they help me to be someone important in life and I can learn other languages and cultures] (First survey, Y.)

These answers went beyond the current context in which this study was developed. For these participants learning about culture issues could also be useful for their professional life.

Another participant wrote:

“porque nos ayudan a desarrollar la mente”

[because they helps us to develop our thoughts] (First survey, J.)

Based on J answer we could affirm that this kid recognized that he was more open minded after our implementation, and that is the evidence of how they were moving into different learning processes that could go further the common grammar classes they used to have. Thus, we could establish that teaching culture with stories was a good way to teach children the importance of knowing language and that there are a lot of ways to learn English and at the same time to learn new things.

In terms of the English language we could see that the participants enjoyed the classes because they were not only writing or developing exercises on a piece of paper, they were listening to a story and they were focused on understanding the story by means of a big book with images and information about cultural issues from different countries.

While the teacher was telling the story, we realized that they were attentive and we could see that it was one of the few times in which students listened to a story in English. Another skill reinforced in this study was reading because in each story, the students had the opportunity to read the big book. For this activity most students wanted to participate, and we observed that when one student read the story and he or she made some mistakes the classmates corrected it. In this way, we could see that the students were paying attention when we told them the story, because they could identify some pronunciation mistakes and when they read they performed a good reading.

5. Conclusions

Every human society has its own particular culture or socio-cultural system, therefore it is necessary to introduce culture into the language classroom with the intention of providing children with more possibilities to learn about other people and at the same time they can value, respect and accept their own culture.

With this study students became aware of cultural differences by perceiving them in a more positive and acceptable way. These kids were able to state that people are all equal no matter the culture they belong to.

By using the stories, students gradually built their vocabulary and enhanced their English language skills. It was evidenced when children expressed they felt very happy, when they were in the workshops and they said they could learn using fun and colorful material with the big books.

The use of stories was a good strategy and a new way to introduce culture within English classes, because children love listening to stories and learning about cultures that they did not know. The readings about culture showed to be a good way to teach the English language. In this study, we could evidence that the stories were motivating and that they can be used to approach culture in the primary classroom.

With this study we could demonstrate that it is very important to implement culture as part of the language classes. Moreover it can be a useful tool to encourage English in fifth level, since these students could be motivated to learn English. Teachers of the school were interested in continuing with this implementation, so the children could improve and have a good time using this kind of information and the teachers will also have another material to work in English classes.

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