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LICENCIATURA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLES

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO OBTAIN THE LICENTIATE
DEGREE IN ENGLISH TEACHING**

**THE USE OF AUTHENTIC READING PASSAGES AS
A RESOURCE TO IMPROVE READING
COMPREHENSION OF THE FIFTH GRADE
STUDENTS AT ESCUELA CENTRO AMÉRICA
DURING THE THIRD PERIOD OF THE YEAR 2017**

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DECLARACION JURADA

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Yo Claudia Margarita García Zapata, mayor de edad, portadora de la cédula de identidad número 800710447 egresado de la carrera de Licenciatura Enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad Hispanoamericana, hago constar por medio de éste acto y debidamente percibido y entendido de las penas y consecuencias con las que se castiga en el Código Penal el delito de perjurio, ante quienes se constituyen en el Tribunal Examinador de mi trabajo de tesis para optar por el título de Licenciatura Enseñanza del Inglés, juro solemnemente que mi trabajo de investigación titulado: ***The use of Authentic Reading Passages as a Resource to Improve Reading Comprehension of the Fifth Grade Students at Escuela Centro América During the Third Period of the Year 2017***, es una obra original que ha respetado todo lo preceptuado por las Leyes Penales, así como la Ley de Derecho de Autor y Derecho Conexos número 6683 del 14 de octubre de 1982 y sus reformas, publicada en la Gaceta número 226 del 25 de noviembre de 1982; incluyendo el numeral 70 de dicha ley que advierte; artículo 70. Es permitido citar a un autor, transcribiendo los pasajes pertinentes siempre que éstos no sean tantos y seguidos, que puedan considerarse como una producción simulada y sustancial, que redunde en perjuicio del autor de la obra original. Asimismo, quedo advertido que la Universidad se reserva el derecho de protocolizar este documento ante Notario Público.

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En mi calidad de tutor, he verificado que se han hecho las correcciones indicadas durante el proceso de tutoría y he evaluado los aspectos relacionados a la elaboración del problema, objetivos, justificación, antecedentes, marco teórico y metodológico, tabulación y análisis de datos, así como también las conclusiones y recomendaciones.

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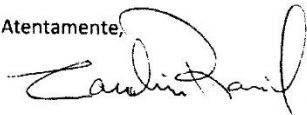
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He revisado y hecho las observaciones relativas al contenido analizado, particularmente lo relativo a la coherencia entre el marco teórico y el análisis de datos, la consistencia de los datos recopilados y la coherencia entre éstos y las conclusiones; asimismo, la aplicabilidad y originalidad de las recomendaciones en términos de aporte de la investigación. He verificado que se han hecho las modificaciones correspondientes a las observaciones indicadas.

Por consiguiente, este trabajo cuenta con mi aval para ser presentado en la defensa pública posterior a la revisión del filólogo.

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Atentamente,



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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to God, my biggest inspiration, my family who encouraged me to continue studying to improve myself, my friends and finally to the fifth graders students of Escuela Centro America.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACNS	Adecuación Curricular no significativa.
AI	Aula Integrada.
BETA	Bulgarian English Teachers' Association
ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
INEC	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos
MEP	Ministerio de Educación Pública
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
UCR	University of Costa Rica
UNA	Nacional University
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

EPIGRAPH

The true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual.

Lev. S. Vygotsky

CHAPTER I
STATE OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

English is treated as the language of the world because of its presence worldwide. It is the language used for many purposes such as economic trades, technological issues, as well as for academic purposes. As in many non-English speaking countries, the use of English has become very important in Costa Rica because of the amount of opportunities students have to get a job or a scholarship once they finish their high school. To help students to reach the objective to become proficient in the use of the target language, teachers must face a challenge when they have to look for the most suitable methods and strategies they should use in the class in order to reach the standards the Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP) suggests in the new English syllabus. As a way to help learners to achieve the required linguistic goals, the researcher decided to develop the current project which main purpose was to find out to what extent the use of Costa Rican's authentic reading passages helped students of fifth grade to improve reading comprehension in the target language.

1.1.1 General Background

Since many years ago English has been considered one of the most spoken languages in the world because of its use in different activities such as commercial trades or teaching and learning abroad among others. In Costa Rica, the records of English instruction in primary schools go back to the 1940s, but “English classes were already included in academic programs upon the founding of the ‘colegios primario-secundarios’ in 1887” (Solano, 2013, p.4). It was until 1954 when English began to be taught at the University of Costa Rica (UCR) and in 1973 at the Nacional University (UNA). Bonilla and Rojas in the paper *Teaching and Learning English in Costa Rica: A Critical Approach* mentioned that “by the late 1980s, the construction of the railroad and the growth of the United Fruit Company promoted a stronger support of English instruction” (Solano, 2013, p.5). However, it was until 1996 during the government of Jose Maria Figueres Olsen (1994-1998) that the Ministerio de Educaciòn Pùblica (MEP), included English teaching in the curriculum of primary public institutions to offer students a language, different from their native that might not only help them to have access to scientific, technological and humanistic knowledge but also help them to compete with private institutions when using the target language at any context. With the development of the English program, students would have five lessons of forty minutes per week. In the first cycle (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade), students could only develop the listening and speaking skills and once they were in the second cycle (4th, 5th and 6th grade), they could start reading and writing.

With the implementation of the new English syllabus in Costa Rica, “The

purpose of studying English in the Educational System is the development of the learner's communicative competence as well as the knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and competences of a 21st century citizen" (MEP, 2016, p.24). The new English program gives some information of how to teach any of the four linguistic skills in the class.

For the purpose of this project, more emphasis was given to the reading section of the program because it was important to find out the way reading should be taught in public institutions in Costa Rica to guarantee comprehension and communication in the target language in the classroom.

As previously mentioned, the English program in primary public institutions was implemented for the first time in Costa Rica in 1996 and since that time, very few modifications in some areas of the program or no modifications at all were done. It was until 2016 when the MEP decided to change the new curriculum and called it "Educating for a new Citizenship". This concept is sustained by three axes:

- Sustainable Development: It refers to the desire for a new relationship among human beings and all forms of life in general with the environment.
- Digital Citizenship: It is about the implication and understanding of human, cultural, and social issues related to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), supporting the use of the internet, social networks and technologies available.
- Global Citizen: This concept the MEP describes it as "global citizenship is related to the growing interdependence and interconnectedness of people

and places thanks to advances made by information and communication technologies, which enable connection and immediate interaction among people around the world” (MEP, 2016, p.17).

The dimensions of these three axes are four: ways of thinking, ways of living in the world, tools for interacting with the world and ways of relating with others. Also, Education for a New Citizenship envisions public institutions as places of opportunity for students, in terms of equity, diversity, relevance and quality of education (as established in the Law 7600, which provides the legal foundation for the fulfillment of the student with special needs’ rights as human beings).

According to the new curriculum, the learner’s role is being an agent with intercultural awareness skills, autonomous, works cooperatively, interacts with others, investigates and solves problems using the tools at his/her disposal. On the other hand, teacher should be seen as a facilitator, guide, observer, who helps the learner become autonomous, providing effective feedback in the process of learning.

The program also establishes the amount of English lessons students should receive and based on the document; *“Lineamientos sobre horarios para las diferentes ramas, niveles y ciclos del sistema educativo costarricense”* (MEP, 2016), it is established as follows:

For a Foreign Language 5 lessons (40 minutes each) weekly, with three daily lessons as maximum per day. Although the infrastructure of the public institution

does not allow giving the five lessons, the minimum for this subject should be three.

Regarding general mediation principles from preschool to first and second cycle, the Ministry of Education establishes among others:

- ✓ The teacher prepares task for students to develop their communicative competence. One of these tasks takes the form of a mini-project (for instance, writing a class book based on a story with each student producing one page of the book with drawings and sentence frames) at the end of each unit;
- ✓ During the Second Cycle, students are exposed to more complex tasks that gradually demand them to produce longer chunks of language in oral and written forms;
- ✓ Teachers can select three of four goals per week from the units. They can combine oral or written comprehension goals with oral and written production ones, depending on the stage of the lesson, so that an integrated skills approach is developed;
- ✓ Teachers start each theme with a warm-up activity as a part of the pre-teaching phase. After that, he/she introduces the sentence frames, vocabulary, sounds and socio cultural aspects of the unit, which are the focus of the lesson.

The enduring understanding an essential question is central to articulate the three learnings: learn to know, learn to do and learn to be and to live in community.

The mini-project is an opportunity for students to integrate these three learnings and linguistic skills in a single task. (MEP, 2016)

According to what could be read above, the new program for public institutions in Costa Rica, sees English language learning as a wide process that requires educators to be aware about the most appropriate methodology, strategies and sources that might help the students to reach the expected goal at the end of each scholar period.

As the purpose of the current project is to analyze how the use of authentic reading passages may help students to improve reading understanding and oral communication, it is necessary to give a brief explanation about the term.

When reading articles about materials teachers of a second or foreign language can use in class, a lot of emphasis is given to the use of authentic materials which have been defined as those materials that were designed for native speakers and not for language students (Harmer, 1991). However, a new definition, which is the one that has to be considered in the current project, has come up and authentic materials should not be based on who designs the material and to whom is addressed, but on whether the language used sounds authentic in part or in its entirety, and on whether students are likely to hear or read it in real situations.

1.1.2 Description of the Problem

According to the paper “*Costa Rica a la luz del Censo 2011*”, the district of Tirrases in Curridabat, despite of being an urban zone (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos [INEC] 2014) it has also been known as a “high risk zone” because for its location, precarious houses, the level of crime, the existence of people who immigrate from other countries and the low school level of the inhabitants among other characteristics (INEC, 2014)

Centro America School is a public institution, located in Tirrases, Curridabat. It belongs to the circuit 04 of East San Jose. “The principal T. Jose Matarrita mentioned (register of Escuela Centro América, 2002) that the school was founded in 1966 and there are around a thousand students between kindergarten and primary school (group’s lists of students, February 2017)”. The population of fifth graders for the year 2017 was around one hundred seven students, divided into four groups.

This institution was selected for the development of this project which main interest is to study the possibility to obtain a better scope in the English learning process of fifth graders using some authentic reading passages in the class because it was a population already known by the researcher.

In relation to the use of authentic materials in the language class, which was the main concern for the current project, authors such as Harmer in *The Practice of English Language Teaching* states that even when the materials were not done in an authentic situation, but it is appropriately presented and used by both students

and teachers, there are many reasons to use this type of resources in the language class.

When making reference to the type of resources or materials teachers should use in their classes to reach the different objectives, MEP also refers as learning resources as authentic, with real world significance. They must be related to learner’s needs, interests and culture and it should provide as much comprehensible input as possible (MEP’s syllabus, 2016).

Some experts have done research and have written articles about the role of input when acquiring a second language. One of those experts has been Stephen Krashen, a second language acquisition (SLA) specialist, who stated that students have two different ways of developing skills in a second language: learning and acquisition (see table 1). Learning is defined as the conscious process that focuses on students’ attention on language structures. On the other hand, acquisition is a process similar to the one a person follows when acquiring the mother tongue (Abukhattala, 2013).

Learning	Acquisition
Conscious process	Subconscious process
Knowing the rules	Picking up the learning
Results in accuracy	Results in accuracy and fluency
Formal, traditional teaching helps	Formal, traditional teaching does not help
Available for correction	Available for Automatic production

Table 1. Learning/Acquisition Differences (Abukhattala, 2013)

Krashen presented a Second Language Acquisition Theory (Krashen, 1985), in which it is stated that the acquisition process consists of five hypotheses:

- a) acquisition/learning hypothesis;
- b) the natural order hypothesis;
- c) the monitor hypothesis;
- d) the input hypothesis;
- e) the affective filter hypothesis.

For the current project, it was important to understand the role of the input hypothesis in the learning process. When referring to this hypothesis, Krashen claims that anyone would acquire a language when there is an understanding of the written or spoken message, or by receiving comprehensible input. "If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided" (Krashen, 1985, p.2).

Moreover, the importance that Krashen gives to the input as the most important source of second language learning, it is connected with social interaction where learners interact with the input and their interlocutors creating conditions to cope with communication. Ortega in her book *Understanding Second Language Acquisition* presented *Interaction and Negotiation for Meaning* "Much in the linguistic environment, particularly in naturalistic settings, but also in today's communicative classrooms, comes to learners in the midst of oral interaction with one or more interlocutors, rather than as exposure to monolog spoken or written discourse" (Ortega, 2013, p.60).

Some experts have done research and have written articles about the importance of social interaction among people while doing an activity. One of those experts is Lev Vygotsky, a famous psychologist, who presented the socio-cultural theory of learning which describes it as a social process in society and culture. This social interaction may play an important role in the development of cognition.

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level: first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationship between individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57)

Vygotsky's theory can be seen in MEP's syllabus when it is mentioned that learners should be seen as "social agents, i.e. members of society who have task (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action". (MEP's syllabus 2016, p32)

Likewise, the teacher as facilitator plays an important role to achieve social interaction in English process. However, some conditions such as economic level of students, as well as their precarious conditions, make this task harder. Being specific in this case, an English teacher must use strategies and methods to improve the development of the educational process. Teachers are keys for knowing or understanding a nation; therefore, their role within society should be seen fundamental for its development. They may be considered the builders of a country whose personality may have a positive or negative effect within society, building peace, tolerance, socio conduct and justice. Part of the development of a

country may depend on their commercial relationship with other countries through the commercial trades that may require a common language to get into important agreements. As in many other countries worldwide, English learning is becoming a vehicle to get in contact with different people around the world for commerce, education or pleasure. For this reason, this language has been a relevant subject within the educational system offering a window to lance from individual to the social, allowing people over the world with the most diverse languages and cultural backgrounds interacting both, in person and digitally.

1.1.3 Justification

According to Oscar Rojas (2008) the use of authentic materials in the class is addressed to teach reading comprehension to improve the teaching-learning process of this skill. As Beatrice Mikulecky presented in her article about teaching reading in a second language, reading as an essential source to use when acquiring a second language (Mikulecky, 2008). Through reading, the learners can compare the information in the text to his or her background knowledge and prior experience. Likewise, Tuğrul agrees that there is a significant relationship between reading and speaking when learning a second language (Tuğrul, 2012). People who have acquired a lot of vocabulary tend to develop large amount of vocabulary which can be applied when speaking. Therefore, if someone has a wide word knowledge because all input got from reading, s/he has the potential to have some improvement in speaking skills (Tuğrul, 2012). Some other specialists such as

Davies & Pearse, (Davies and Pearse, 2000) have talked about the importance of communication as: “real success in English teaching and learning is when the learners can actually communicate in English inside and outside the classroom.” (Tuğrul, 2012, p.91)

In regard to the use of authentic material in the class, after interviewing some teachers who work for MEP, they all agreed that the results in terms of how much students read and comprehend a text have been quite negative especially for the lack of written materials in English. Besides, the interviewers believed that when students have the chance to read an English passage, they most of the time have difficulties to understand the content because of the unknown vocabulary and structures in the text.

Unfortunately, there is not a specific book that can achieve each population goals. In Costa Rica for example, there is a lack of reading passages that contain topics about Costa Rican culture. If students encounter a reading text in which they find familiar vocabulary related to traditional food, festivals, celebrations, customs or sports, it would be easier for them to participate in class discussions about the passages to encourage communication in the target language. Some teachers must create their own short paragraphs or chunks of texts to deal with the situation of covering those topics from the curriculum of the MEP that deal with Costa Rica traditions or customs.

Consequently, this research pretends to demonstrate how the use of authentic reading passages can be used as a tool to facilitate the process of the acquisition of a second language.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

How effective is to use authentic reading passages as a resource to improve reading comprehension of the fifth-grade students at Escuela Centro America during the third period of 2017?

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General Objective

- ✓ To determine the effectiveness of the use of authentic reading passages as a resource to improve students' reading comprehension in the English class at Escuela Centro America, during the third period of 2017.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- ✓ To analyze the advantages of using authentic written materials as a resource to improve reading comprehension in students at Escuela Centro America.
- ✓ To compare the use of authentic reading passages which contain Costa Rican topics and reading passages from England.
- ✓ To determine how useful authentic reading passages with some Costa Rica contents can be for learning English.

1.4 ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

1.4.1 Achievements

As it was seen through the project, the use of English in the primary school in Costa Rica has had changes in order to improve students' communicative skills. Educators are constantly looking for new methods, strategies and materials that can help students to not only reach the objectives of the English program, but also to use the target language in the classroom and outside of it. To learn a language means to learn about both a foreign culture and own. To separate culture and language might be difficult because language and cultures are closely related and this relationship is necessary to learn a new language integrally. This research then, would be for English teachers in Costa Rica, a way to determine how the use of authentic reading passages with Costa Rican topics could be convenient for fifth graders when learning English.

The sample of this investigation is a group of twenty-four students of fifth grade, ages between eleven years and thirteen years, in a public school located in Tirrasas of Curridabat during the third period of 2017.

1.4.2 Limitations

Eventually, there are some limitations to take into account in the research. First, the group for the investigation started with twenty-three students. By the end of September, a new student joined the group; therefore, the real sample for the research project was the twenty-four scholars.

Second, when the scholar year started, all the groups received five lessons per week, but during the second period, one of the three English teachers got retired. For this reason, the principal of the institution made the decision to reduce the quantity of lessons of all the levels. From that moment to the end of the scholar year, students had three lessons of English per week in order to cover the groups of the teacher who got retired. This situation represented a real problem because there was less time to cover the syllabus of the MEP, and the time for observations of the studied group was limited as well.

Third, the lack of economic resources for acquiring books, photocopies and many other materials was an important fact in this school. In addition, MEP forbids teachers to ask or collect money which is another restraint for developing the English class with diverse materials. Unfortunately, students must deal with the difficulties every day.

In addition, within the group of students who participated in the project, there were three of them with a curricular adaptation (Adecuación curricular no significativa) since they have some special learning needs. Therefore, the teacher must find how to ease the English learning process to help them to reach the objectives as the rest of the class. So, the English teacher must use the materials they have got or created to evolve and facilitate the English learning process of every student in the group.

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 HISTORY BACKGROUND

2.1.1. Historical Context of Centro America School

The institution where this research took place is located in the county of San Jose, Curridabat. It is the canton number eighteen of the capital city and the district number four of Tirrases (Municipalidad de Curridabat, w.d.). It consists in a public school divided into pre-school and elementary with a population of around one thousand students.

The mission of the school is to facilitate the tools and instruments needed for developing an integral student in Costa Rica educational system, reinforcing ethics and values that allow students to reach personal achievements to become integral human beings.

The vision of the institution is to create a useful environment, competent, involved, creative, innovative based on spiritual and moral aspects, allowing empowerment and engaging him/herself and with other people, in order to contribute to the community development.

The selected school has had strengths and weaknesses in different areas which are portrayed in the following chart.

AREAS	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Innovation and identity	➤ Vision and vision establish clearly.	➤ Socioeconomic status of the community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support for teachers, administrative personal and parents working as a team. ➤ Extracurricular support. ➤ Education board support. ➤ Projection to the community. ➤ Adapted curriculum to the student population needs. ➤ Technology update. ➤ Renewal of infrastructure and equipment of technological material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low level of scholar 'parents. ➤ Population fluctuation. ➤ Emotional and learning difficulties. ➤ Resistance to the change. ➤ Lack of interest in the pedagogical mediation. ➤ Restricted access to technology advances in poverty families.
<p>Didactic plan and pedagogical mediation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teachers' planning improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overuse of books and photocopies ➤ Resistance to the technology like

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Access to the administrative information. ➤ Digital planning. ➤ Implementation of digital planning. ➤ Constructivism teaching. ➤ Development of values. 	<p>pedagogical support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A detected weakness in the MEP's planning. ➤ Use of two different programs for the same scholar population.
Places for sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student community's disposition for involving in official activities in and out of school. ➤ Good relationship between the staff and administration. ➤ Pleasant work environment. ➤ Getting conflicts resolutions. ➤ Communication between the institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Socio economic status of the community. ➤ High-risk community. ➤ Time limitation for assisting to workshops and meetings. ➤ Outside equipment for allowing to share among students.

	<p>and the community, for successful learning process. Involving the parents to be active part of the process.</p>	
<p>Training for teachers and administrative staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff disposition. ➤ Principal support. ➤ Digital and present communication. ➤ Lack of audiovisual equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shoestring budget by MEP for training. ➤ Lack of workshops to implement the new syllabus ➤ Lack of time to plan with the teachers from the same level.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. State of the Art. English Learning in Costa Rica.

Although for some people English was not important in the past, currently there are plenty of good reasons to learn a second language. One of those reasons may be because learning English opens up opportunities in different kind jobs worldwide.

People have been studying languages to increase their potential and feel good when achieving their goals. The satisfaction is not just to learn, it is the idea of being an integral person and possessing a second language for expanding their minds to new cultures, countries, and new people.

In Costa Rica, English language learning has been considered a national priority in the economical field, and late in the education area. With the implementation of a new syllabus to strength English classes, the MEP organized seminars and workshops educators had to attend for understanding how to apply the new syllabus and guarantee the improvement of students' language proficiency once they leave primary school.

Different region advisors as well as national and international specialists in the field of teaching English have been part of the seminars and workshops which main purpose have been to make educators to be aware about the importance of encouraging written and oral communication among students as well as improving students' reading and listening understanding.

If students could reach the objective of being able to communicate in the target language, it might represent a benefit not only for the student, but also for

the country since there would be more companies that would like to invest. Therefore, it can be said that the national curriculum has been adapted to satisfy the needs of a global economic system. "...bilingualism facilitates access to economic opportunities, both for the nation and the individual ..." (Crawford, 2007, p.101). The *Informe Nacional del MEP* in the policy 17, *curricular proposal for the appropriate technical formation with the necessities of the productive and labor system in the national and local environment which refers as:*

The challenge that impose the globalize world, for the competitiveness of the productive and labor sector of the country, forces to a revision of the relevancy and quality of this educational offer, as well as to respond to the possibilities and necessities of economic and social development in the local environment. (MEP-National Inform, 2016)

As Crawford affirms, the English learning helps to broaden economic possibilities. That is the reason why the MEP's policies mentioned in the National Report remark issues about the English learning as well as respond to the possibilities and necessities of economic and social development in the local environment.

2.2.2. Theoretical Foundations that support English learning process.

First, it is necessary to establish some factors that have affected the English learning process. Since a long time ago, English teachers wanted to be successful in the process of teaching, "to be successful in education, one needs a knowledge of English as it is main medium in which education is carried out". (Facatava, 1996, p.2). In English language proficiency, the output profile of the students can be

improved and overcome if strategies, techniques, procedures and practices promote and invite learners to the learning process and enjoy the use of a second language.

The achievement of the use of authentic reading passages in the English class can help the English learning process in different ways. First, reading comprehension is basic to obtain this goal. Through reading, students can learn and practice vocabulary and structures that might help them when using the language in different contexts. Some strategies for reading comprehension can be taught to students during the process. According to West Virginia Department of Education, comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension.

1. Monitoring comprehension.

- Be aware of what they do understand;
- Identify what they do not understand;
- Use appropriate strategies to resolve problems in comprehension.

2. Metacognition.

- Identify where the difficulty occurs. (“I do not understand the second paragraph on page76”);
- Identify what the difficulty is. (I do not get what the author means when she says, “arriving in America was a milestone in my grandmother’s life”);
- Look back through the text. (reread a chapter, or paragraph)

3. Graphic and semantic organizers.

- Provide students with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text;
- Help students write well-organized summary of a text.

4. Answering questions.

- Give students a purpose for reading;
- Focus students 'attention on what they want to learn;
- Help students to think actively as they read;
- Encourage students to monitor their comprehension;

5. Generating questions.

Students learn to ask themselves questions that require them to combine information from different segments of text.

6. Summarizing.

- Identify or generate main ideas;
- Connect the main or central ideas;
- Eliminate unnecessary information;
- Remember what they read. (West Virginia, Department of Education, w.d.)

In addition, to these strategies, it is important to mention that when the teacher reads aloud, students listen at a higher level than they read. Listening to the teacher while she reads aloud exposes them to new vocabulary, language patterns and pronunciation. As result, it is possible to feat the English learning performance.

In countries like Costa Rica where English is taught as a foreign language, reading has become a great source to prepare students to speak using the target language because most of the time students do not feel confident enough to talk or interact with others for their lack of vocabulary or structures to use in a specific context in the target language.

The amount of comprehensible input a student can obtain by reading a passage can be used in real situations like class discussions or giving opinions encouraging in this way interaction. As stated by Wang “fluency in speaking or writing in a second language naturally happen after learners have built up sufficient competence through comprehending input” (Wang, 2010, p. 175)

2.2.3. Vygotsky’s Theory

Specialists in the field of human interaction have presented theories to explain the importance of social interaction at any context. Since the purpose of the present project is the use of authentic reading passages to improve reading comprehension that at the same time may help students to interact in the class through discussions or any other speaking activity, to know about these theories is important.

Vygotsky’s theory describes learning as a product of interaction of children with society, and every human starts the process of cognitive development through their own experiences, that is why this theory is called socio-cultural because the relationship between society and every single bearing.

The developmental process is driven by the urge to communicate, as a part of each child's biological inheritance, from birth, the babies seek exchange with the people in the immediate environment, using gaze, eye contact, gesture, among others.

According to the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, the higher cognitive functions do not develop spontaneously but are internalization: social speech (communication between two or more people) becomes egocentric speech (talking to oneself), which in turn becomes inner speech (thought). (Vygotsky, 1978)

Inner speech is the basis for all forms of discursive thinking, including education. The theory emphasizes the importance of what the learner brings to any learning situation as an active meaning maker and problem solver.

Vygotsky introduced the notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which helps in determining a child's mental functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation. (Vygotsky, 1978)...

In *Mind and Society* Vygotsky considers the learning process not as a solitary event child face to explore their surroundings but as a process to find out the methods that may help them to understand their culture (Vygotsky, 1978). Besides, his theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition, and everything is learned on two levels; first, through interaction with other, and then integrated into individual's mental structure.

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of

concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationship between individual. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57)

Summarizing, Vygotsky remarked the essential role of social interaction as he believed that community plays an important part in the process of making meaning.

2.2.4. The Role of Reading in the Foreign Language Class

According to Krashen's theory of Natural Approach "reading may contribute significantly to competence in a second language. There is a good reason; in fact, to hypothesize that reading makes a contribution to overall competence, to all four skills." (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 131)

In the article, *the importance of reading in foreign language teaching*, the author summarized with three reasons why reading is important to include it in a foreign language teaching planning, those are reading techniques, language acquisition and motivation. (Sweeney, 1993),

- Relating with reading techniques Sweeney emphasized that reading must "focus on meaning and on solving relevant problems and not solely on interpreting individual words one after another." (Sweeney, 1993);
- Language acquisition refers to benefiting grammatical knowledge and the acquisition of vocabulary, Sweeney has observed that the learners, who used to read, make the fewest mistakes. (Sweeney, 1993);
- Motivation concerns when texts have been carefully selected, it contributes that students enjoy reading; they feel motivated consequently they read

well. “Language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning” (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p.53).

2.2.5. The Selection of Reading Materials.

After analyzing the information about the importance of reading as a way to provide input to students in the language class, the next step is to give educators some advice about the aspects that should be considered to select the most appropriate material to work with the students.

Jiménez in her article “Selecting Reading Materials Wisely” states that the selection of a reading can become a thoughtful process rather than a random one because there would be some important aspects to be considered. If the selection of the reading materials is appropriate, the percentage for success of the reading lesson would be high since students would perceive reading as an interesting and valuable activity (Jimenez, 2007). Jiménez suggests two different kind of factors that should be considered when selecting a suitable passage for the learners. One of the factors is related to the students and the other one is related to the text.

Aspects related to the students

Students’ level of proficiency.

One important aspect a teacher should consider when selecting a reading passage is the level of proficiency the students have in the target language. As Jiménez states in her article “asking the students to read material that goes beyond their level might be counterproductive since learners may feel that they are simply

incapable of reading in the target language” (Jimenez, 2007, p. 133). Teachers should do is to simplify the reading process rather than the reading passages. Therefore, the use of local newspaper as well as local magazine help students to get texts with familiar vocabulary that would make the reading process easier to follow.

Students’ interests

Researchers in the field of selection of materials state that no matter how difficult or easy a text might be, it would be boring or difficult to read if it is not interesting to the learner (Jiménez, 2007). Just to find out about students’ interests, the educator can prepare a survey at the beginning of the scholar year and make a list of topics students like. Interest is closely related to motivation; therefore, if students are motivated to read, the reading process becomes easier.

Students’ Needs

One of the roles of any educator is to be aware about what the students need to accomplish the objectives of either the class or the program. In the case of reading classes, teachers should identify the weaknesses students face when understanding a text. For Gebhard’s, teachers should be aware of students’ needs to select those materials that might help them to fulfill the class objectives (Jiménez, 2007).

Students’ Background Knowledge

It is known that it is not common to expect students to understand every word from

a foreign language reading passage especially because for some of them the exposure to this kind of materials is limited and as a consequence their opportunity to have reading practices is very few. For this reason, educators should be clear about the type of reading passage as well as its content based on students' previous knowledge. As presented Ivannia Jiménez (Jimenez, 2007) authors such as Lotherington-Woloszing and Nunan agree that the lack of students' background knowledge may cause more difficulties reader than the complexity of the text. Likewise, Fox believes that students' background is a fundamental part of the students 'ability to read and understand the passage (Jimenez, 2007).

Aspects related to the text

- Relevance

To guarantee reading understanding, texts need to be relevant to students. They should contain topics and vocabulary that may be useful for students to use in their context. If pertinent material is selected, the students are more likely to participate in class and be anxious to learn about strategies to understand the material.

- Content

If the content of the reading passage is interesting for the pupils, they would be successful in the reading process even when the text is difficult for them. When the content of the text can be used outside the class or even in other subjects, the students make more effort to understand and they probably use different strategies to get their purpose (Jiménez, 2007).

- Authenticity

Researchers have been done to find out the advantages for using authentic materials in the class. Gebhart in Jiménez's article about the selection of materials presents a list of features justifying why it is important to use real materials in the class. Some of them are the following described:

- Students need to understand real-life issues;
- The grammatical structures within the text can be taken as an advantage for the teacher;
- Students are ready to read any type of text;
- If language is simplified, comprehension is not ensured;
- It is better to simplify the reading process than the reading passage (Jimenez, 2007, p.141)

2.2.6. The Use of Authentic Materials in the Classroom

Experts such as William Guariento and John Morley describe an authentic text as the one that have been created to fulfill a social purpose in the community it was produced (Şaraplı, 2011). Both academics believe that when using authentic materials in the class, the educator is providing students the opportunity to narrow the gap between classroom knowledge and real life.

When questioning about the importance to use authentic materials in the class, Jeannette McGregor, a lecturer in the field of English Language Teaching

Department at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, thinks that text types would make sense if they exist in a cultural context because they are the cultural forms of beliefs and social practices (Şaraplı, 2011).

Some other authors like Larimer and Schleicher experienced that students need exposure to samples of everyday authentic culture. They referred to written passages from newspapers and magazines as ideal sources for students to have discussions about current issues while they are broadening their vocabulary limits (Şaraplı, 2011)

Advantages of authentic materials

To use authentic materials in the class has its advantages. Some of them are presented below:

- Authentic written materials give examples of language as it is used in a real context;
- Authentic materials keep students informed about what is happening in their country and the world;
- They can produce a sense of achievement, because students get real satisfaction from having made some sense out of real life language;
- The same piece of material can be used under different contexts if the task is different;

- Language change is reflected in the materials so that both students and teachers can keep aware of such changes;
- Reading texts are ideal to teach and practice mini-skills such as scanning or skimming;
- Written materials such as books, articles and newspapers contain a wide variety of language styles that are not easily found in conventional teaching materials;
- Authentic materials can encourage reading for pleasure because they are likely to contain topics that are interesting for learners;
- Students who read and listen a lot seem to have less difficulties to acquire the new language. (Sarapli, 2011)

2.2.7. Costa Rican authentic reading passages (Carrusel, Cyberl@bkids)

Carrusel Magazine (Bee Version)

Carrusel is a magazine that provides primary school teachers from Costa Rica sources about different topics that can be used in daily lessons. The magazine contains reading passages with topics such as holidays, traditions and other contents from the MEP syllabus. Some years after the creation of the magazine, the same editorial designed an English version of it and was named “Bee” which contains topics from the English MEP syllabus. As in the Spanish version, it has reading passages, posters, written activities and games in English that teachers and students can develop in the class.

Cyberl@bkids

Allen Quesada, professor from the University of Costa Rica, is another of the specialists in the field of education who has worked on a project for kids' materials especially designed for Costa Rican students since their content is based on the syllabus form of the MEP.

According to Quesada (2013) the best practices in teaching children is to bring meaning to the classroom; consequently, the class would become an extension of the kids' personal life and experiences (p.2). Quesada presents a computing platform student from primary schools can use to practice contents from the MEP syllabus. Each unit in Cyberl@kids develops the four linguistic skills and as mentioning before, they all are designed to encompass the topics for primary students in Costa Rica public institutions.

2.3 HYPOTHESIS

To greater use of authentic reading passages to improve reading comprehension of the students in the English class.

2.3.1. Definition of Variables

The research has two variables to consider; the independent variable that determine the value of a dependent variable: ***The use of authentic reading***

passages, and the dependent variable that is being measured in an observation and analysis; ***to improve reading comprehension.***

2.3.2. Independent Variable: The use of authentic reading passages.

Authentic reading passages were defined as the real texts, “those which are designed for native speakers” (Harmer, 1991, p.185).

In addition, it is not only based on who designs the material and to whom is addressed, how the language used sounds authentic in part or in its entirety. So, anything a native speaker of English would hear or read, or use can be categorized as authentic: recipes, brochures, theatre programs, articles in the newspapers, magazine among others. (MABC & LLG, w.d.)

2.3.3 Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension.

Maria Neikova from Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association (BETA) in her article mentioned that reading comprehension is “Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible.” (Grellet, 1981, p. 3). So, the achievement of reading is the realization and complete understanding of what has been read it.

2.4 OPERATIONAL HYPOTHESIS

An operation hypothesis defines the interest of the variables and how they are related to each other. (Nunez, 2007). As a result, the variable should be divided

into indicators through logical deductive process, the interest of this segmentation is to analyze one by one in order to guide to the indicators. Those indicators measure the variables using some instruments.

Hypothesis	Concepts	Variables	Indicators
To greater use of authentic reading passages	Authentic reading passages are those which are designed for native speakers	Authentic reading passages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Attitudes ❖ Language ❖ Customs ❖ Traditions
To improve reading comprehension.	Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible.	Reading comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Methodologies ❖ Strategies ❖ Techniques ❖ Planning ❖ Training ❖ Empowered

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 TYPE OF APPROACH OF THE INVESTIGATION

3.1.1. Research Approach

According with the researcher John Elliot in *Relevant European Research*, “Applied research in education is best characterized by the intention to link research with

action in form that generates actionable knowledge” (Elliot, 2002). That is the reason why this project is considered an applied investigation.

The aim of this research is to determine the effectiveness of the use of authentic reading passages to improve students’ reading comprehension in the English class at Escuela Centro America.

The research looks for the connection of these factors and recall in memory, any information about particular aspects of the world, such as people, events, and actions are stored in a person’s brain in the form of schema. These schemas are cognitive structures that organize knowledge stored in the memory, in other words they are mental representation of categories from our knowledge, beliefs, etc. “In this process, the subjects and the object interact to build the knowledge, penetrating into the subjects’ world.” (Barrantes, 2006, p. 61).

3.1.2. Chronological Dimensions

This study involves an investigation into chronological dimensions of reflection and in particular, it considers the perspective of reflecting on the future. This research is transversal, which is mean that, it studies some aspects of subjects’ development and topics in a specific time (Barrantes, 2013, p.64). In other words, “shorten” the time, in a metaphorical way, to investigate a specific subject in a specific period of time.

The most important aspect is to analyze and understand the research project in a very detailed way more than to analyze the behavior of the topic in a longitudinal dimensions.

3.1.3. **Framework**

This project is applied to a group of learners where the investigation is related with the English learning process. It could be analyzed through the instruments applied where all students have similar conditions. According to Patrick Blessinger from St. John's University, macro framework in education concerns "to the high level (macro) educational research process is depicted using high process flowcharts or similar diagrammatic representations which are helpful in understanding the macro level view of the basic research process" (Blessinger, 2015).

In the case of this investigation, it can be categorized into a macro framework because it covers fifth grade students at Centro America School. Based on school registers, it is around one hundred ten students divided in four groups or sections. The total population of school is around one thousand students which include kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades.

3.1.4. **Nature**

The nature of this research is qualitative because as Erickson mentions in his article

When the nature of the study is qualitative, the centrality of interpretation is given by intense interaction of researcher with persons in the field and elsewhere. In addition, a constructivist orientation to knowledge, given attention to participant intentionality and sense of self, the researcher comes to share a personal view, in this case many facts depend on the environment and population' behavior. (Erickson, 1986)

This kind of approach allows to establish the use of authentic reading passages, the reality of its impact for using it in elementary students, for helping to improve reading comprehension in the learning process.

The cause and effect explanation as well as the personal interpretation and understanding requires, is developed as a wide sweep of contexts, such as temporal, spatial, historical, political, economic, social, personal, among others.

A preliminary qualitative component may serve to generate hypotheses or to develop the content for a questionnaire.

3.1.5. **Type of Research**

The purpose of this study is to present the situation of a group students of fifth grade in a community with low economic resources, lack of material for studying and some cases without family support. The intention of this research is answer questions such as; why may be significant to use of authentic reading passages in

students at Escuela Centro America? Or How to improve reading comprehension in the learning process?

According to Ethridge, “descriptive research may be characterized as simply the attempt to determine, describe or identify what is, while analytical research attempts to establish why it is that way or how it came to be” (Ethridge, 2004, p.24). So, descriptive studies are closely associated with observational studies and it is used to describe various aspects, characteristics and/ or behavior of sample population. Subsequently, the type of this research is descriptive because aimed at casting light on current issues through a process of data collection that enables them to describe the situation more completely.

3.2 SUBJECTS AND RESEARCH SOURCES

3.2.1. Primary Sources

The document uses as primary sources some thesis, books, academic documents to support the theory of this research. The needs of the investigation cover five Costa Rican thesis most of them from graduates of Universidad Hispanoamericana. In addition, twelve theses from authors from other countries such as Africa, Japan, Australia, United States, Canada and Norway whose work include at least one topic related with the current research.

3.2.2. **Secondary Sources**

Scientific articles, known magazines, and expertise articles are included as secondary sources. This paper contains some expertise articles related with English learning process as a second language such as Piaget and Vygotsky's Theory who were pioneers in theoretical fundamentals of education which has made scope to the topic of this investigation.

For secondary sources, often the best sources are those that have been published most recently. If you use a secondary source that was published decades ago, it is important to know what subsequent scholars have written on the topic and what criticism they have made about the earlier work or its approach to the topic. (University of Illinois, 2006)

3.2.3. **Tertiary Sources**

Tertiary sources provide third hand information by reporting ideas and details from secondary sources. This does not mean that tertiary sources have no value, merely that they include the potential for an additional layer of bias.

Tertiary Sources – Books and articles based exclusively on secondary sources – i.e., on the research of others. Tertiary sources are usually synthetic in nature – i.e., they pull together a number of separate but related accounts of a particular event, issue, body of scholarship, etc. Tertiary sources are good starting points for research projects, as they help distill large amounts of information. Often tertiary sources contain footnotes that point researchers in promising directions with respect to the secondary sources. (Brilliant, 2016)

3.3 SAMPLE SELECTION

3.3.1. Population

The population chose for this investigation belonged to Escuela Centro America an educative institution located in Tirrases, Curridabat, with approximately a thousand students, divided into school and kindergarten. The selected population was fifth graders with twenty-five students per group approximately.

3.3.2. Sample

The sample selected was the group 5-3 with twenty-four students. They were observed during the third period of the year 2017.

3.3.3. Probabilistic Sample

The research project was done with twenty-four students of 5-3; however, any of the other groups could be selected because they had very similar characteristics in their English proficiency level.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

When the method of investigation was selected and established the sample of the search according to the problem of the study and hypothesis, (Sampieri, 2014), the following step was to collect information by using different techniques and instruments, such as questionnaires, measurement scales, checking list and techniques like observation and graphics analysis.

3.4.1. Questionnaires

“A questionnaire consists in a set of questions in relationship to one or more variables for measuring. It must be congruent with the problem question and hypothesis”. (Sampieri, 2014). There are two kinds of question for searching: opened and closed questions. Closed questions have limited options of answers; many times, the answer are yes or no.

On the other hand, opened answers are very useful when the researcher does not have enough information about possible answers of the people because there are not limited answers.

This study uses questionnaires as complementation for collecting information, through interviews done to students and English teachers.

3.4.2. Measurement Scale of Attitudes

Likert’s scale is a set of items presenting in affirmative way for measuring the reaction of the subject in three, five or seven categories. (Sampieri, 2004).

E.g., “Visiting school is a duty for any responsible parent”



These affirmations qualify attitudes 'object. The object could be a thing, a person, a concept, symbol, a brand, an activity, occupation, building, etc. Expertise say to avoid more than twenty words by item and prepare this instrument in logical order.

3.4.3. Checklist (Lista de cotejo)

This is another way to collect information. "It is a double entry matrix where the researcher writes into two rows some concepts or aspects for observing, and into the columns the qualification given to the observation". (Barrantes, 2002).

This investigation used checklist because there were several possibilities for recording information to help guided observations and to make sure that the observations were consistent for all the students involved.

3.4.4. Observation

Observations can take place in a variety of settings. They can focus on student's performance during a single activity or during routine classroom activities.

The observation sheet would corroborate the type of materials and procedures used by the English teacher in her classroom when it came to teach oral expression. The participation of the students of fifth grade in speaking English was considered. The investigator also used observation sheets to make notes about specific materials used by the teacher in a lesson.

This method collects the data in a systematic register, valid and reliable based through a set of categories and subcategories, (Sampieri, 2004). It is very useful for massive events.

3.5 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION, OPERATIVE AND INSTRUMENTAL OF THE VARIABLES

3.5.1. Conceptual

The variable drives from an abstract level to a concrete one, which is called “operationalization” for observing the meaning given to the variable of the study.

There are two parts of this operationalization:

- Conceptual definition is about the variable extracted from theoretical framework in a summarizing form. In this study is English learning which the dependent variable is. “It is ‘the result’ or ‘effect’ produced by independent variable’s action”. (Bernal, 2010, p.140)
- Dimensions are related with the categories of analysis to the variables of interest, there are more specific variables, and there are extracted from specific objectives.

The study analyzed elements that facilitated reading comprehension for the learning of English language in fifth grade students at Centro America School. Therefore, to what extend the use of authentic reading passages, which is the independent variable, must be measured by the assessment of some topics that had those factors, at the end the result is reflected in academic performance.

3.5.2. Operational

Operational definition refers to indicators which allow to recognize through observation the variable, in concrete aspects. In the case of this project, the variable *authentic reading passages* and the indicators are *attitudes* of students when they used this kind of language in the text that they were exposed. Also, *language* is a crucial indicator to observe because the authentic material contains the vocabulary that distinguishes the populisms of Costa Rica' country and through its identification could ease the educational performance.

Finally, *customs* and *traditions* are remarkable characteristics to take into account in this research; culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, social habits, music and arts. These aspects are basically linking with customs and traditions. Thus, culture finds its expression in language; so, learning a new language with familiarity with its culture remains could complete the learning development. So, the relationship between Costa Rican cultures with learning English as a second language offers a huge opportunity to widen the vision of the learning process.

3.5.3. Instrumental

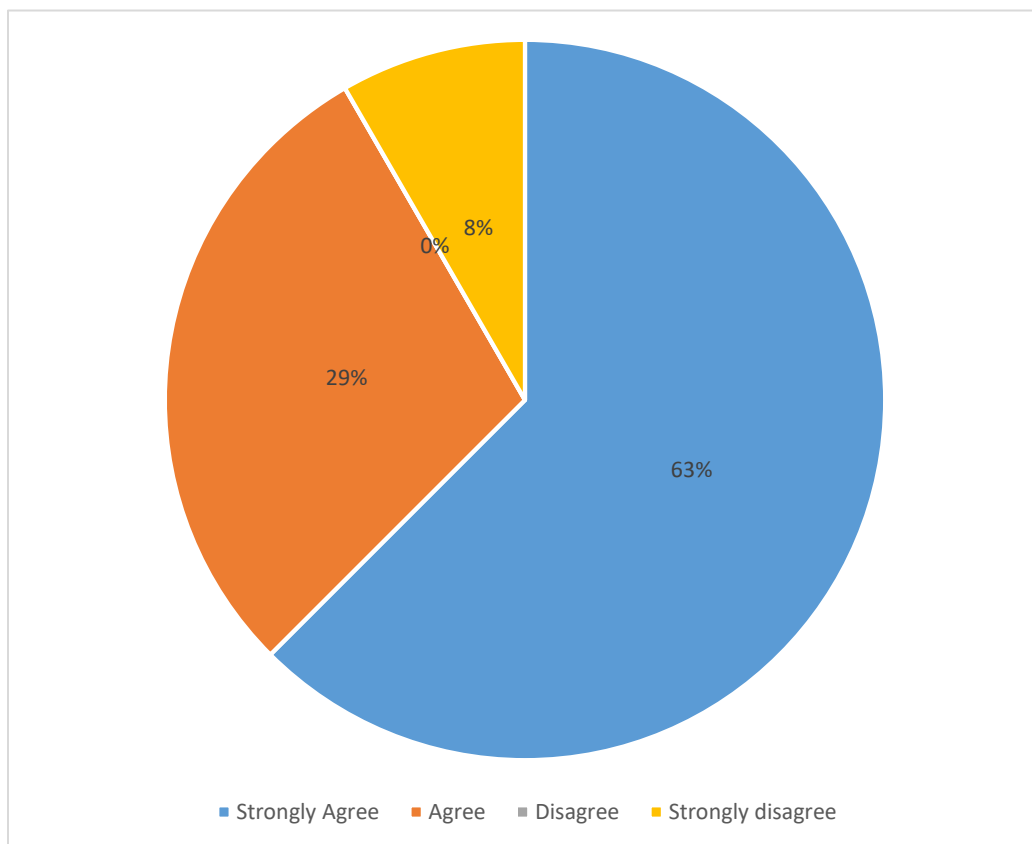
It refers with the specification of techniques and instruments for using to collect the information, according to the variables and expected results; it indicates the questions for measuring the indicators of the variables.

Among instruments there were interviews with opened questions, where students and teachers could give their opinions. In addition, there was a checklist to observe students' performance while working or doing exercises with the authentic reading passages. The text selected for the research project was about Holidays and Celebrations in Costa Rica, which is part of unit number six from the MEP syllabus.

CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 GRAPHICS AND CHARTS

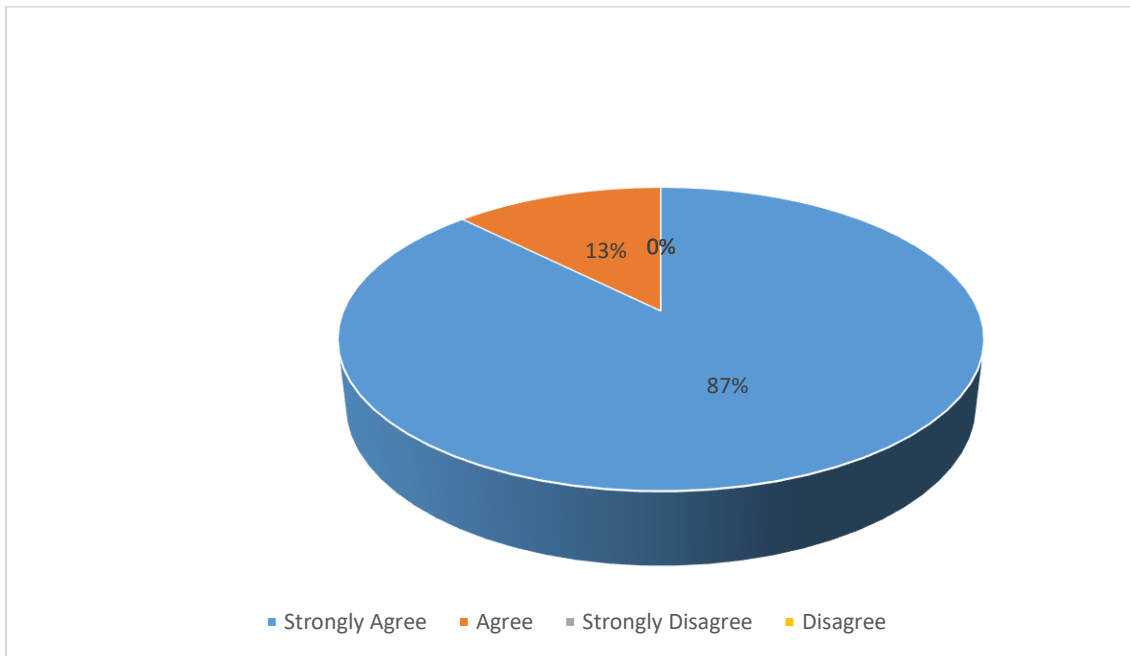
4.1.1. Graph 1. Instrument 2 – The teacher uses authentic reading passage for reading comprehension.



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 1, the 63% of the surveyed students strongly agree that the teacher uses literature with authentic reading passages in the class. The 29 % of students agree about teacher uses authentic material and the 8% of the surveyed students strongly disagree that teacher uses it in the class.

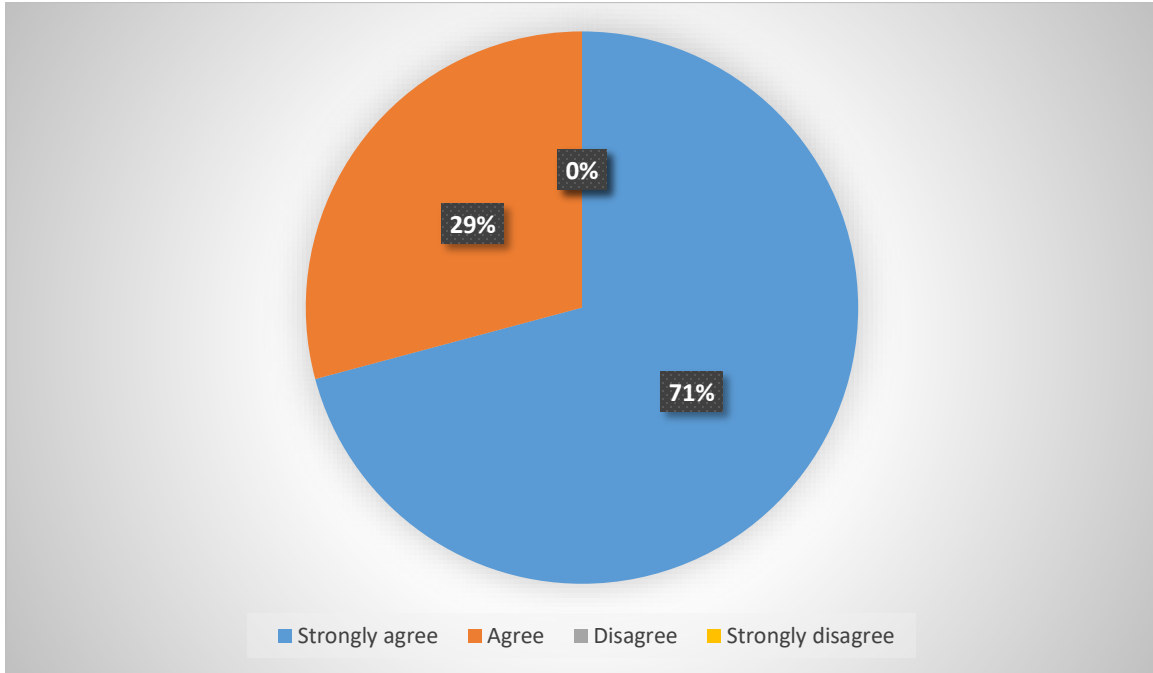
4.1.2. **Graph 2. Instrument 2 – Students like the teacher reads aloud.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 2, the 87% of the surveyed students strongly agree they like when the teacher reads aloud. The 13% of students agree when the teacher reads aloud.

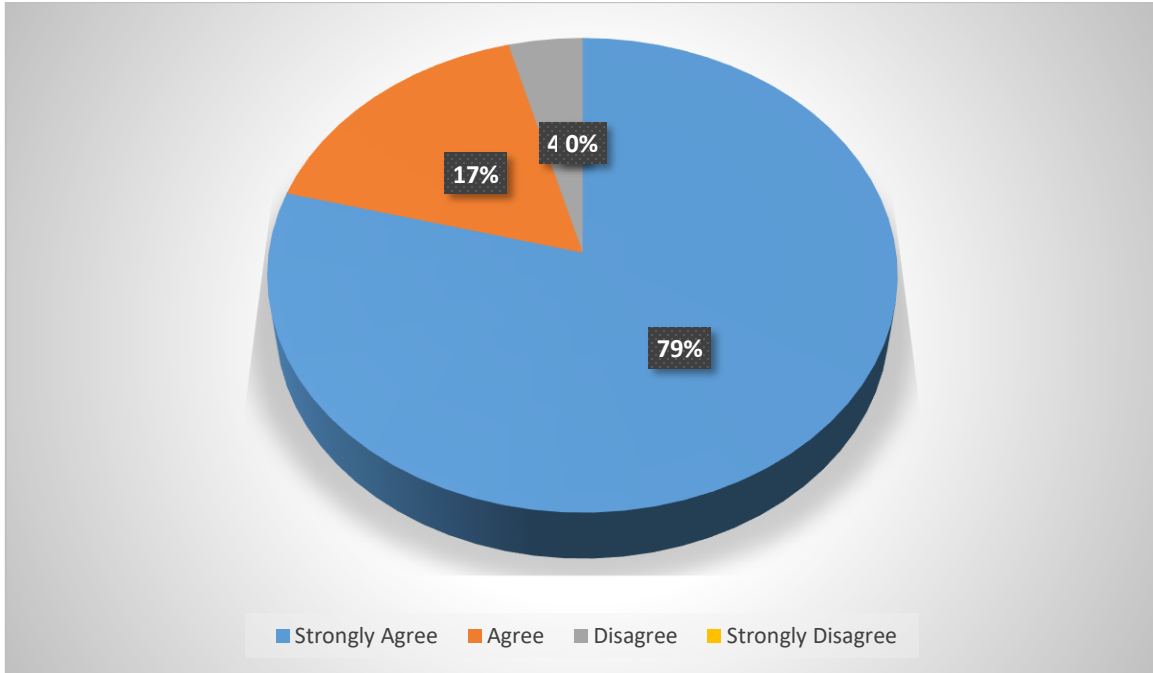
4.1.3. **Graph 3. Instrument 2 – Students use language learnt in the story in class.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 3, the 71% of the surveyed students strongly agree that they use the language learnt in the story in class. The 29% of students agree that they used language learnt in the story in class.

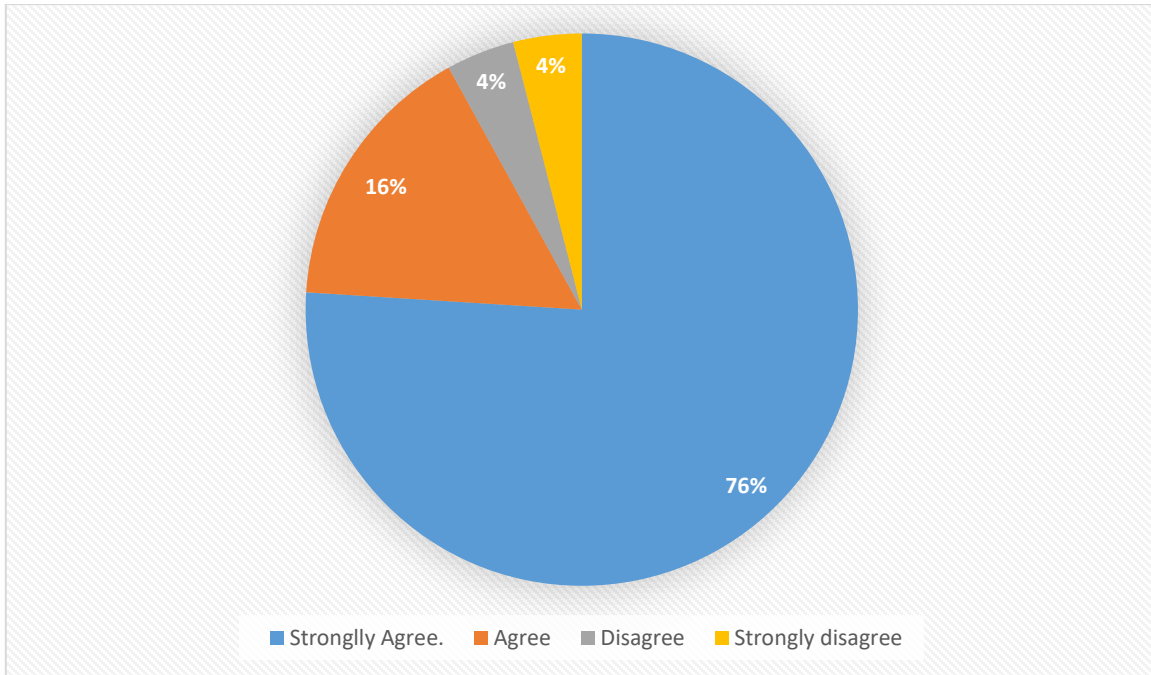
4.1.4. **Graph 4. Instruments 2 – Students learn vocabulary from the authentic material text used in the class.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 4, the 79% of the surveyed students strongly agreed that they learn vocabulary from the authentic texts used in class. The 17% of students agreed about the fact they learnt vocabulary from literary texts and the 4% disagreed about they learnt vocabulary from literary texts used in class.

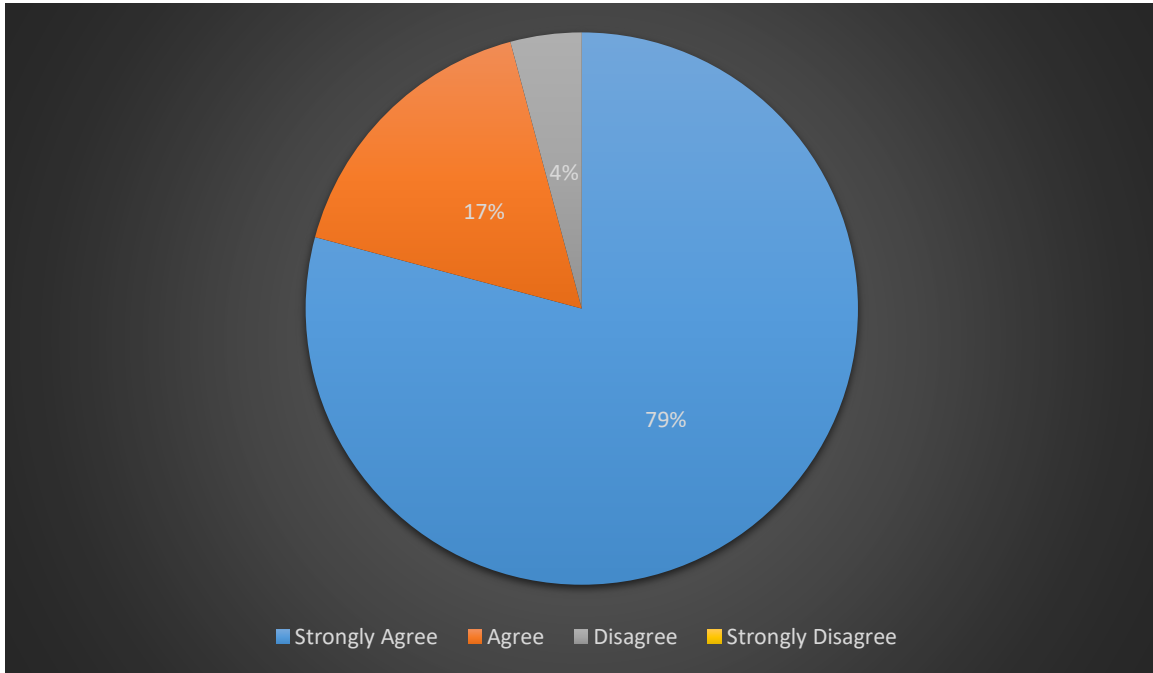
4.1.5. **Graph 5. Instrument 2 – Students use the structures learnt from the authentic reading passage to communicate.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 5, the 76% of the surveyed students strongly agreed that they use the structures learnt from the literary text to communicate. The 16% of students agreed about they used the structures learnt, the 4% disagreed that they used the structures learnt and 4% strongly disagreed that they used the structures learnt.

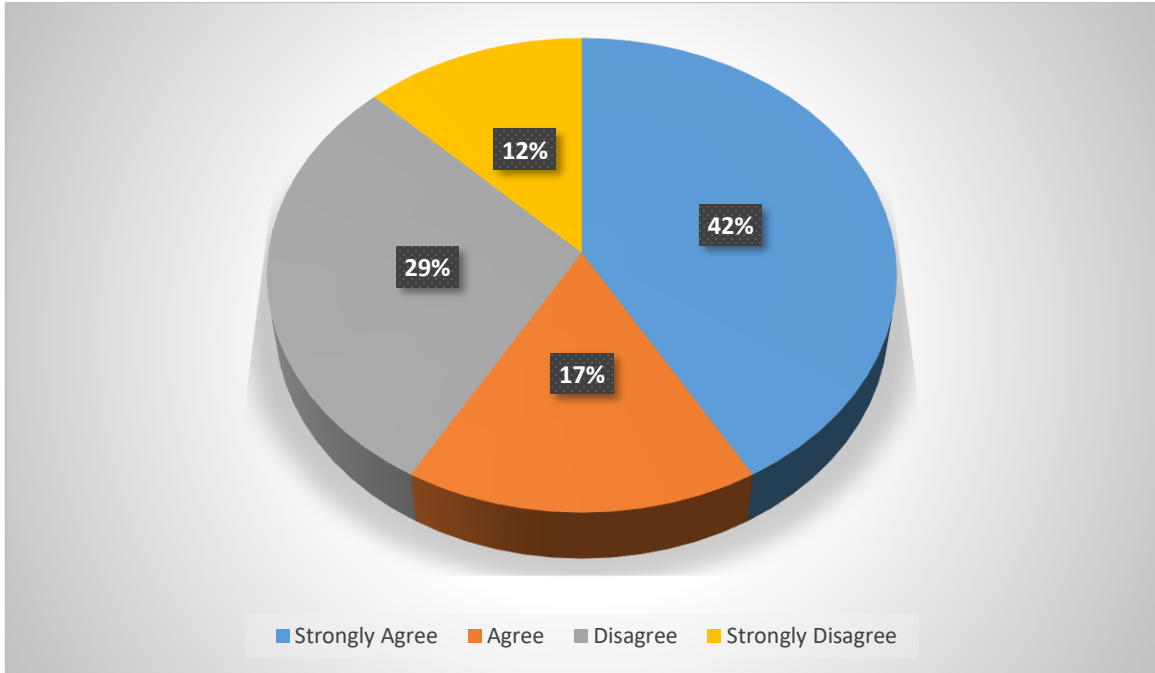
4.1.6. **Graph 6. Instrument 2 – The use of Authentic Reading Passage to improve reading comprehension.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 6, the 79% of the surveyed students strongly agreed that they use of authentic reading text is important to improve reading comprehension. The 17% of students agreed about the use of Costa Rican reading passages, the 4% disagree that they used of Costa Rican reading passages.

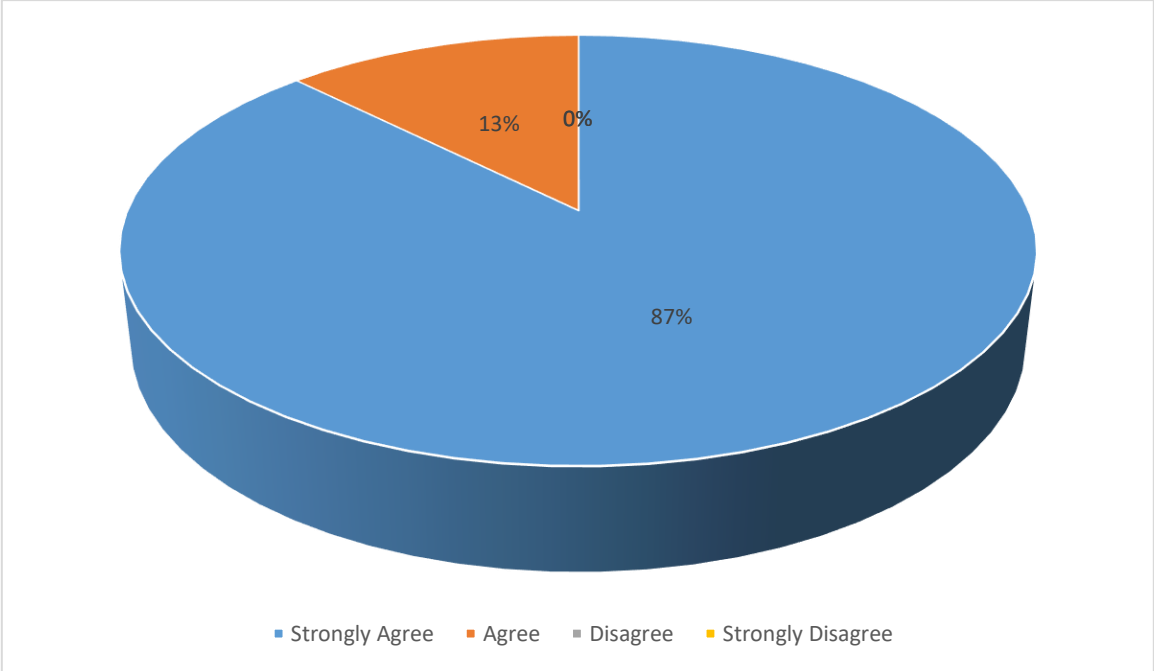
4.1.7. **Graph 7. Instrument 2 – Authentic Reading is more attractive than readings from another country.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 7, the 42% of the surveyed students strongly agreed that authentic reading is more attractive than readings from another country. The 17% of students believed the authentic material was more attractive than readings from another country, the 29% disagreed that they liked more authentic material than readings from another country, and the 12% strongly disagreed authentic material was more attractive than readings from another country.

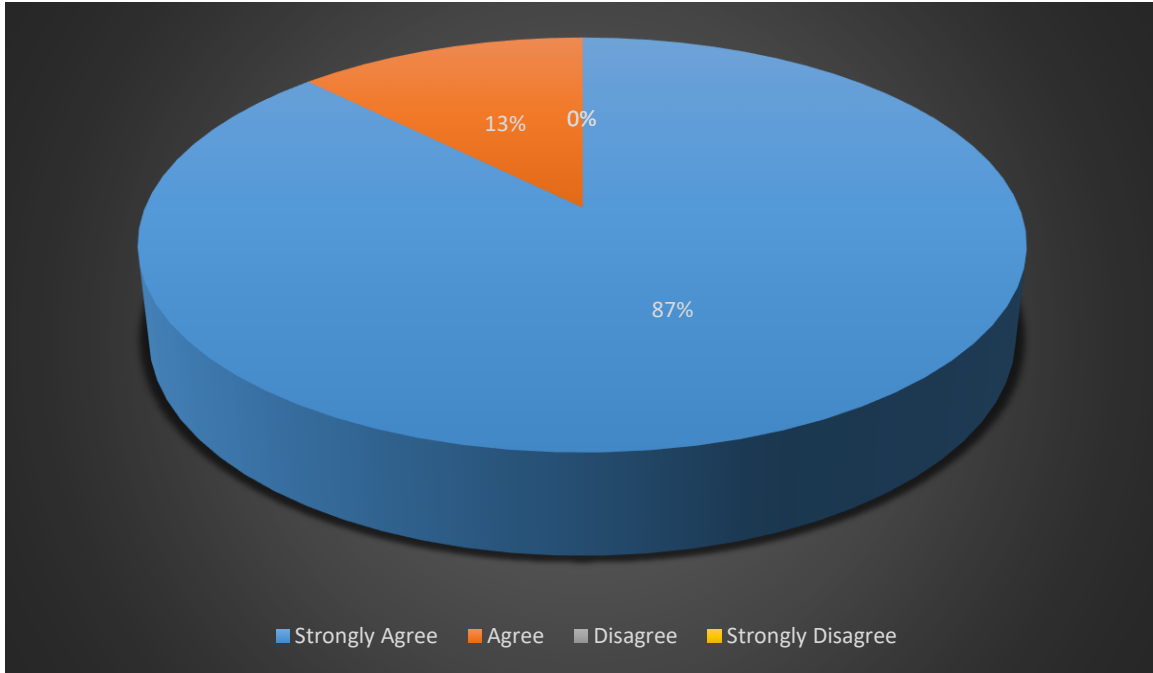
4.1.8. **Graph 8. Instrument 2 – The use of authentic reading passages help the learning vocabulary to talk about traditions and customs.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 8, the 87% of the surveyed students strongly agreed that the use of authentic reading helped them to learn vocabulary to talk about traditions and custom. The 13% of students agreed that the use of authentic reading helped them to learn vocabulary to talk about traditions and customs.

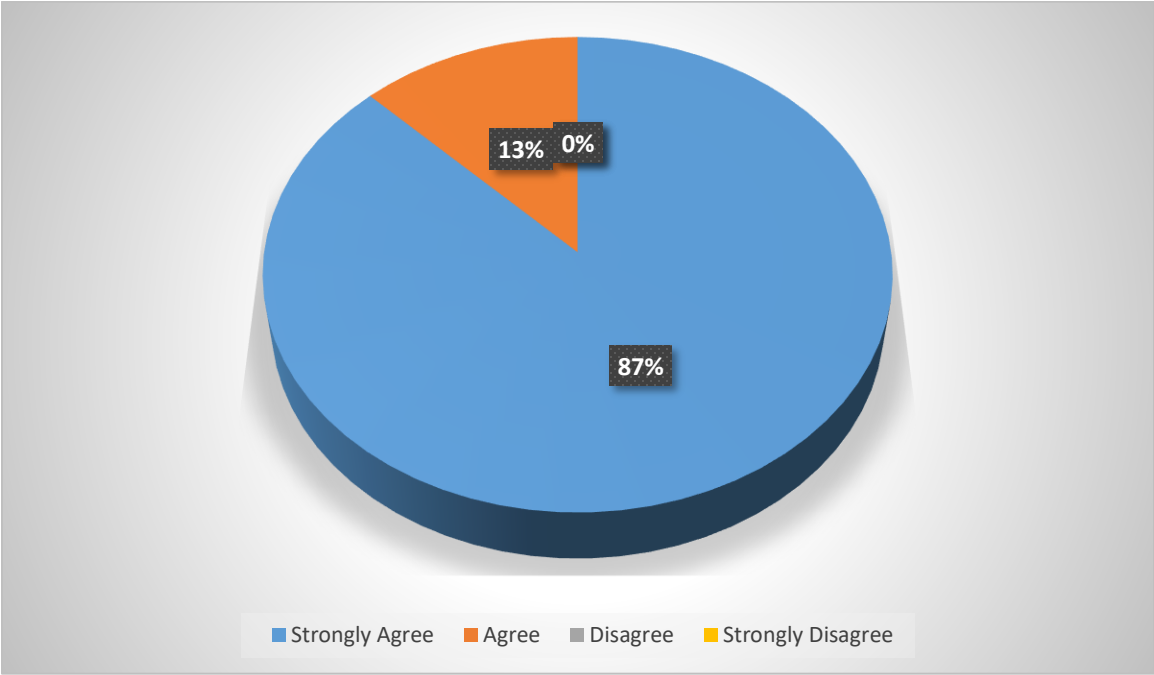
4.1.9. **Graph 9. Instruments 2 – Students like the class when the teacher reads aloud.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 9, the 87% of the surveyed students strongly agreed that they liked the class when teacher read aloud. The 13% of students agreed that they liked the class when teacher read aloud.

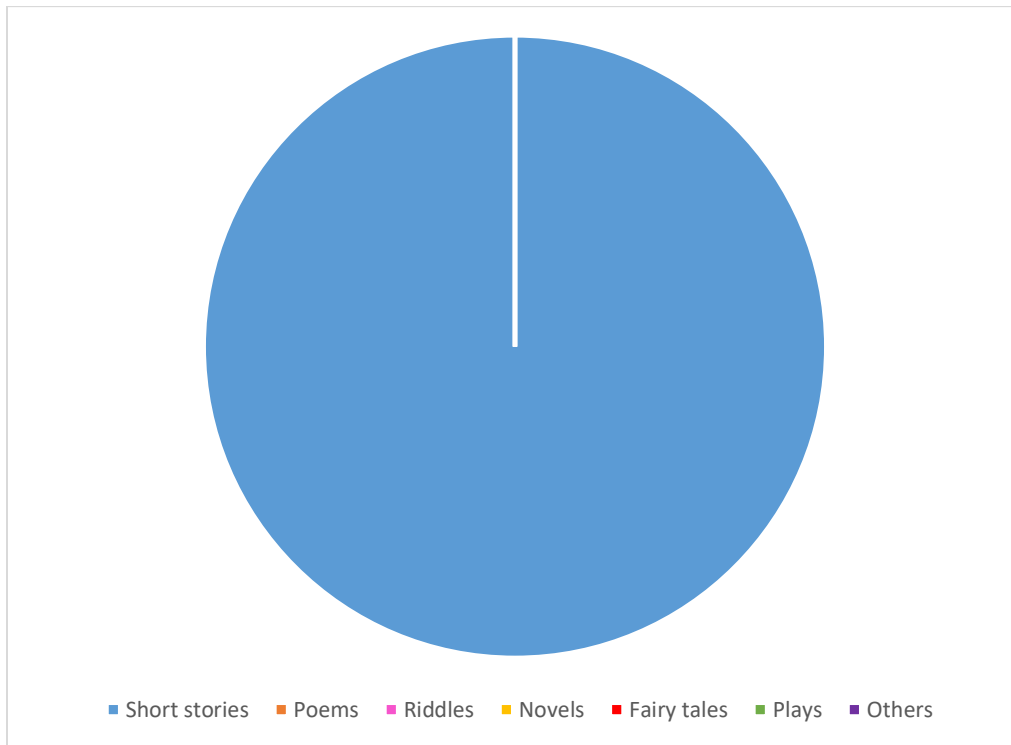
4.1.10. **Graph 10. Instrument 2 – Students consider authentic reading works used in class a facilitator to comprehend the topic that is being studied.**



Source: Survey applied to fifth grade students

In the graph number 10, the 87% of the surveyed students strongly agree that they consider authentic reading works used in class, a facilitator to comprehend the topic that was studied. The 13% of students consider authentic reading works used in class a facilitator to comprehend the topic that was studied.

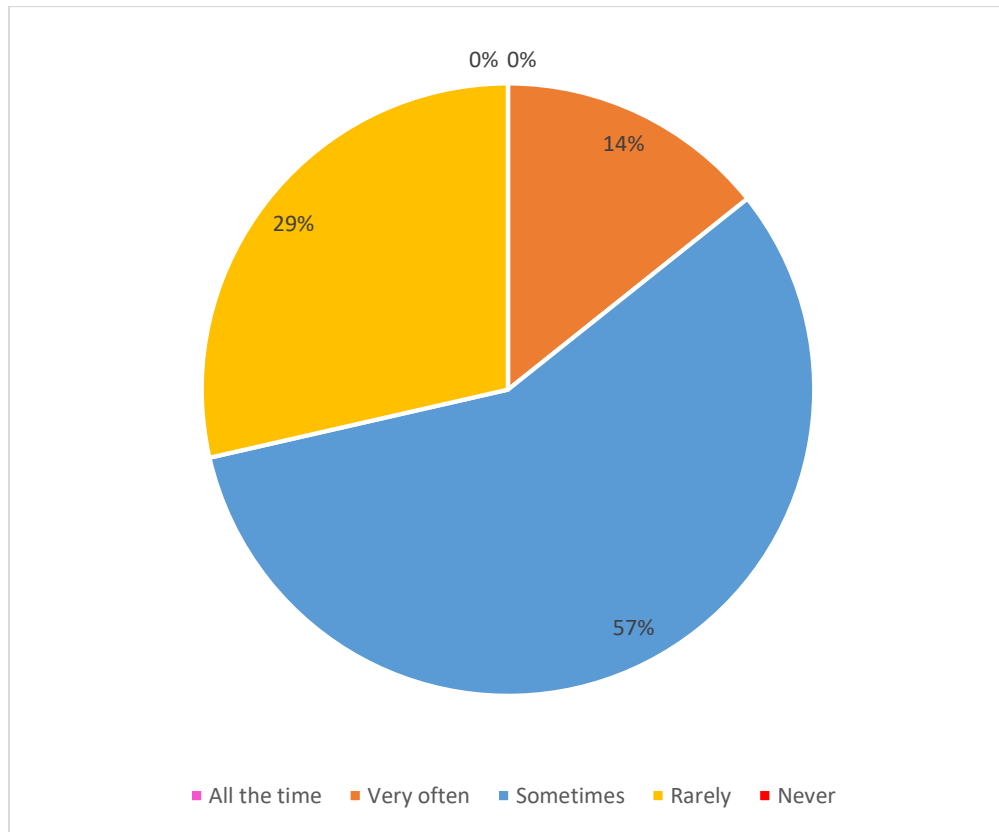
4.1.11. **Graph 11. Instrument 3 – What kind of literature works teachers use to develop their classes.**



Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the graph number 11, the 100% of the surveyed MEP teachers preferred to use short stories to develop their classes.

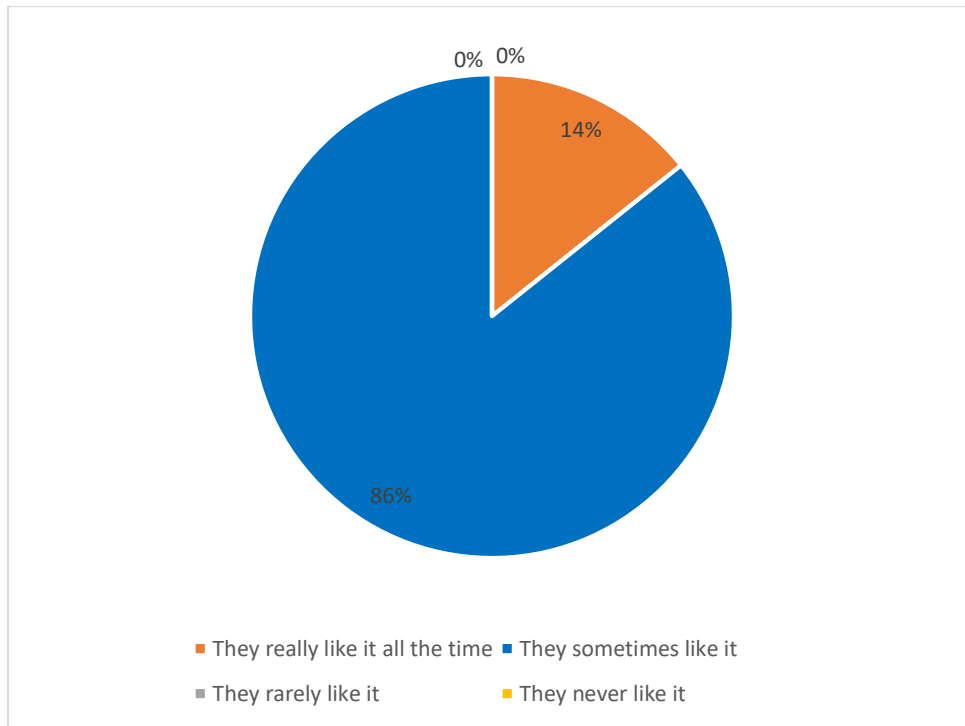
4.1.12. **Graph 12. Instrument 3 – How often teachers use reading passages in class**



Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the graph number 12, the 57% of the surveyed MEP teachers use reading passages in class sometimes; the 29% rarely use them and 14% of the teachers use literature in class very often.

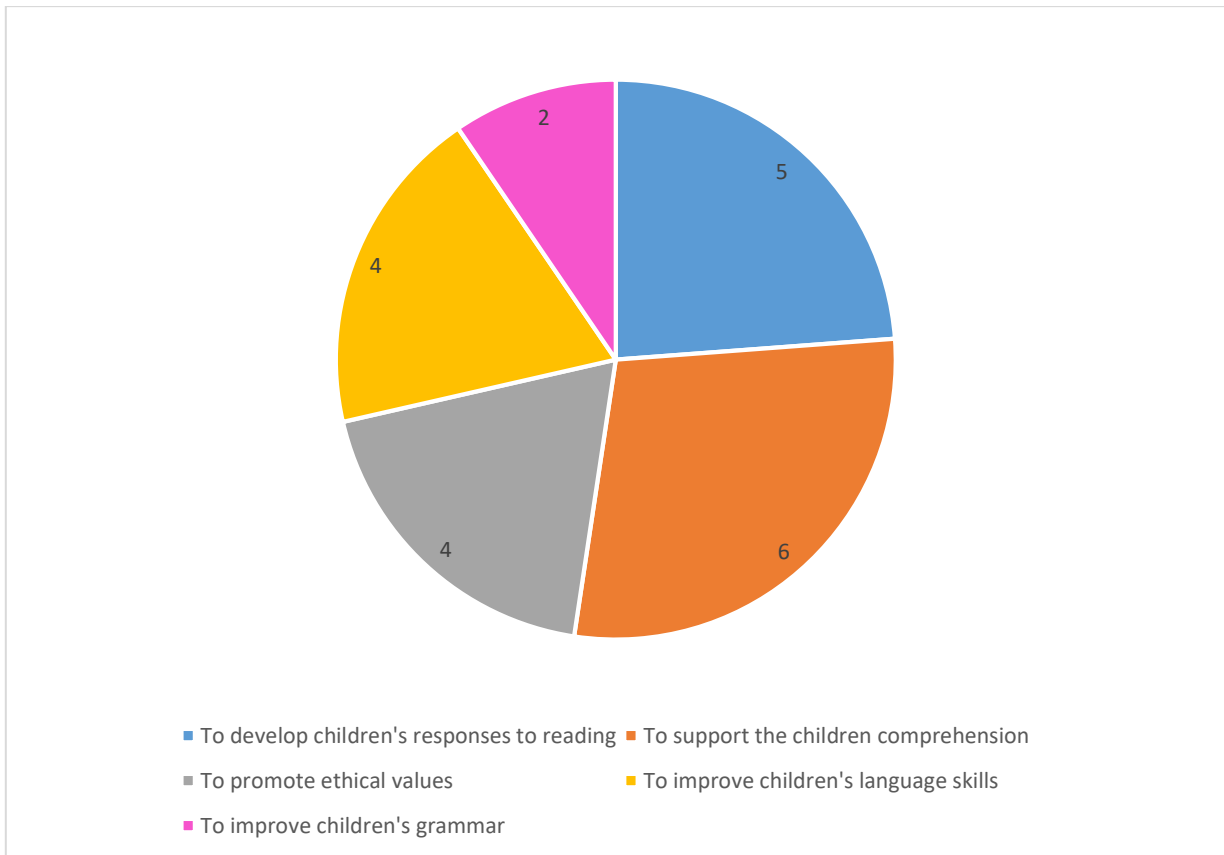
4.1.13. **Graph 13. Instrument 3 – How their students react toward the children literature do teachers use in the classroom.**



Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the graph number 13, the 86% of the surveyed MEP teachers have observed their students sometimes like when the teacher uses children literature in the classroom, the 29% use it rarely, the 14% of the teachers have detected that their students really like when the teacher uses children literature in the classroom.

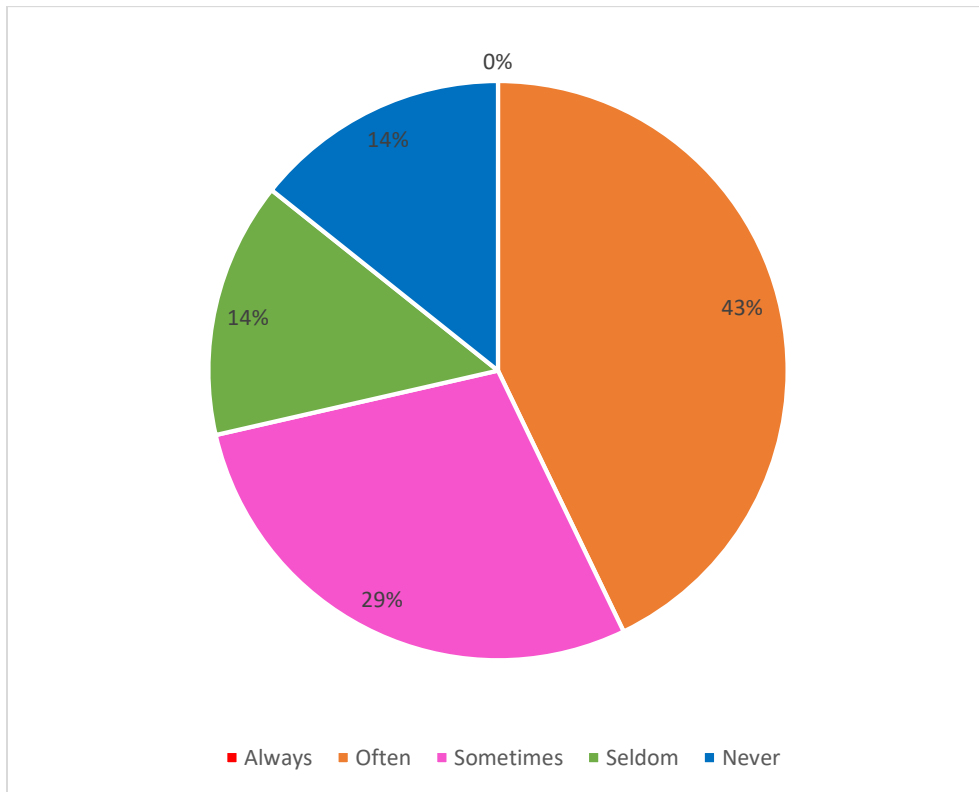
4.1.14. **Graph 14. Instrument 3 – The teacher’s purpose of using children’s literature in the class.**



Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the graph number 14, six of seven teachers use children literature to support the children comprehension, five of the surveyed teachers use children literature to develop children’s responses to reading, four teachers use children literature to promote ethical values. Also, four of the surveyed teachers use children literature to improve children’s language skills and only two of the teachers use children literature to improve children’s grammar.

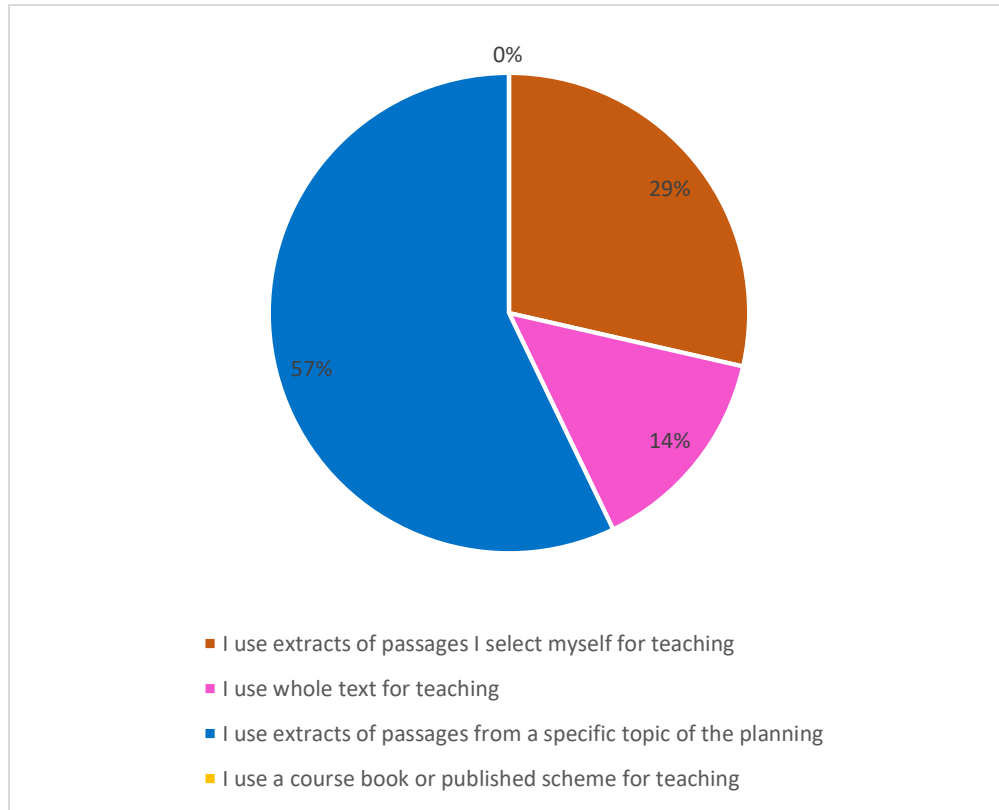
4.1.15. **Graph 15. Instruments 3 – Teachers use adaptations versions of texts instead of originals.**



Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the graph number 15, the 43% of the surveyed MEP teachers often use adaptations versions of the texts instead of originals, the 29% sometimes use adaptations versions, the 14% of the teachers seldom use adaptations versions of the text and the other 14% never use adaptations versions of text instead of originals.

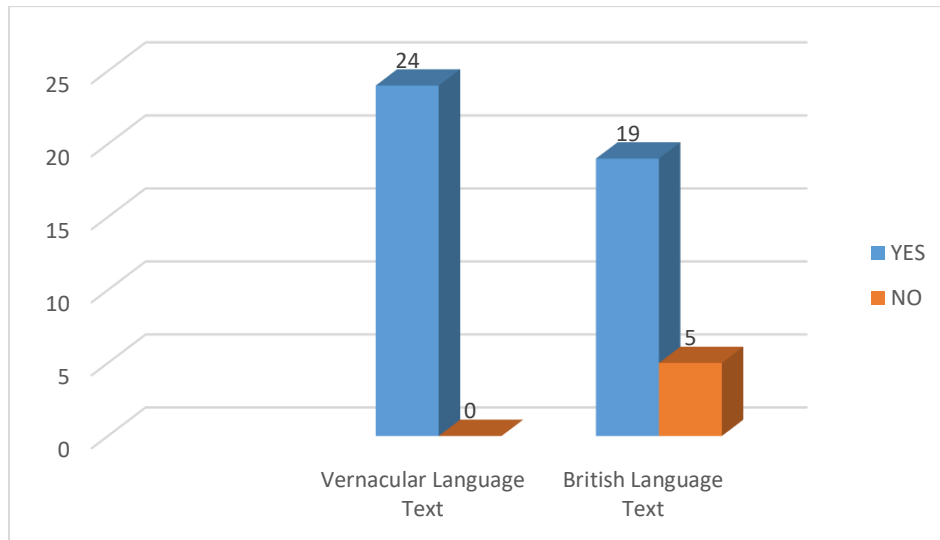
4.1.16. **Graph 16. Instrument 3 – Teachers’ purposes for using passages and/or extracts of authentic material in their teaching.**



Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the graph number 16, the 57% of the surveyed MEP teachers use extracts of passages from a specific topic of the planning, the 29% of the teachers use extracts of passages selected by themselves for teaching and the 14% of the teachers use whole text for teaching. Any of them use a course book or published scheme for teaching.

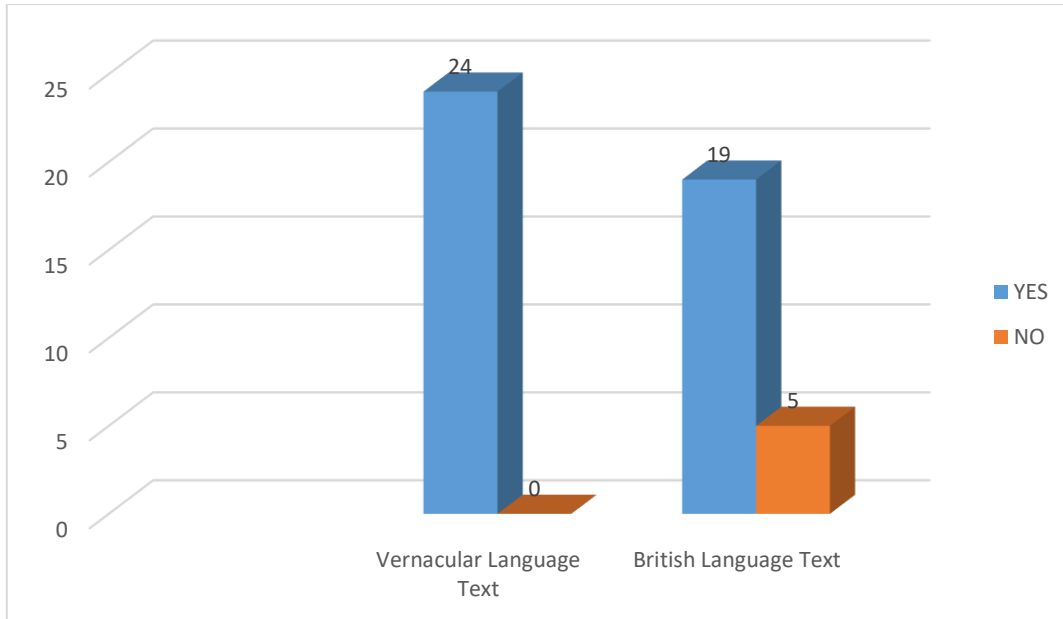
4.1.17. **Bar Graph 17. Instrument 1 – Student recognizes the vocabulary unknown.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 17, the figure shows that most of the students could recognize easier the vocabulary unknown in the text that contains authentic material than the text with British language.

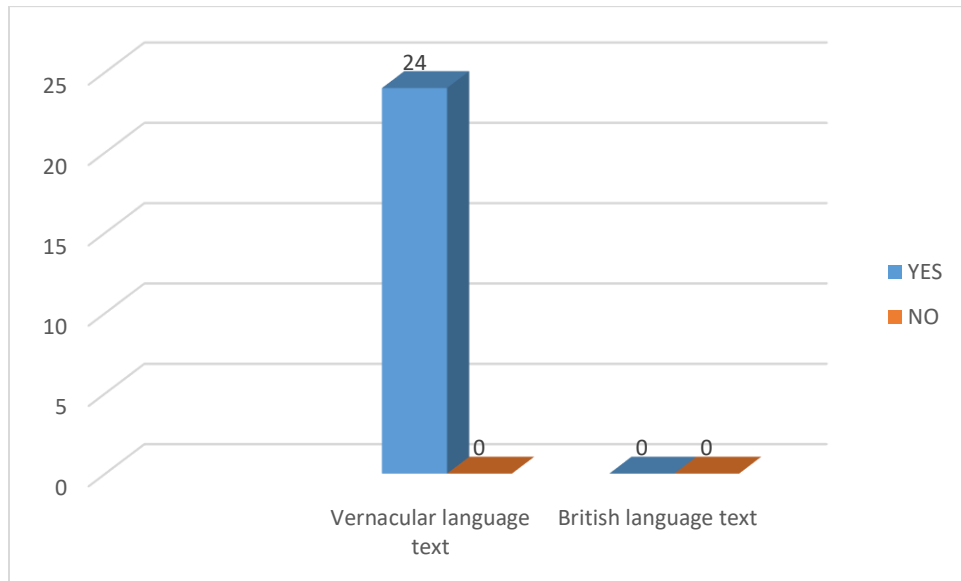
4.1.18. **Bar Graph 18. Instrument 1 – Student could write a list of unknown vocabulary and look for in the dictionary.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 18, the figure shows that most of the students could write a list of vocabulary unknown and look for in the dictionary.

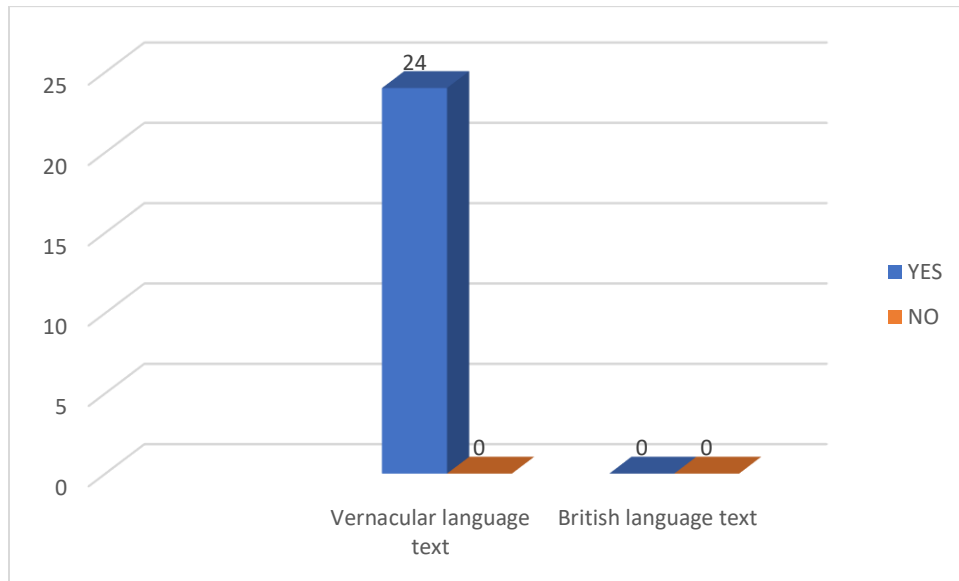
4.1.19. **Bar Graph 19. Instrument 1 – Student recognize authentic vocabulary and extract it from the text.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 19, the figure shows that all the students recognized and extracted the authentic vocabulary from the authentic material. However, students did not extract any authentic vocabulary from the British language text.

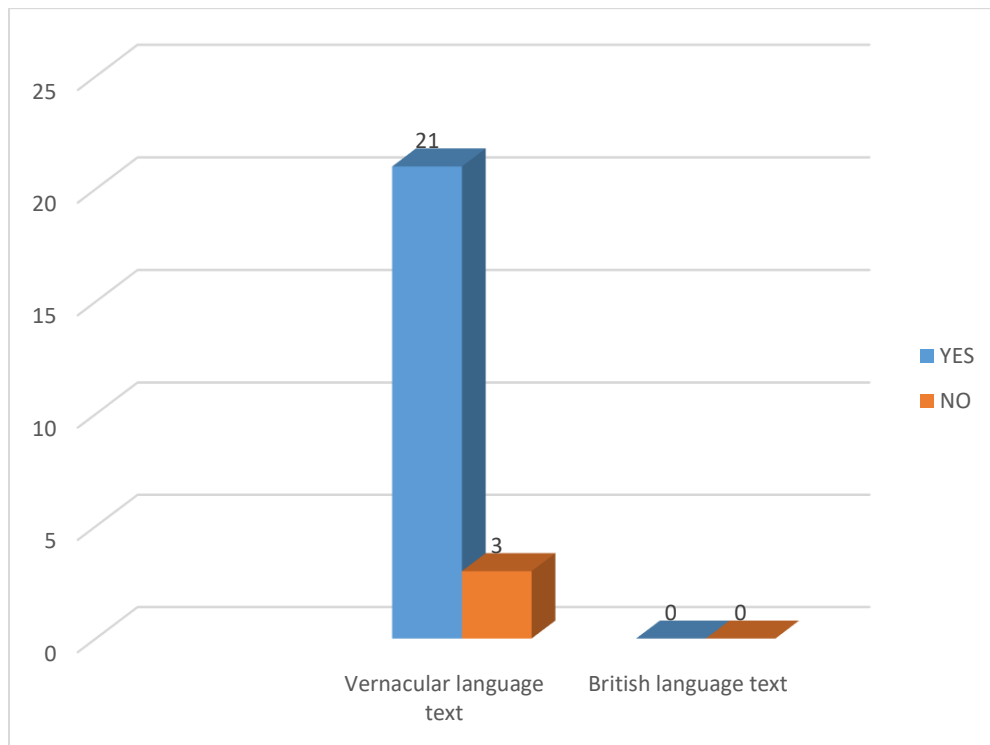
4.1.20. **Bar Graph 20. Instrument 1 – Student has a good understanding through authentic reading vocabulary.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 20, the figure shows that all the students recognized and extracted the authentic vocabulary from the authentic text. However, students did not extract any authentic word from the British language text.

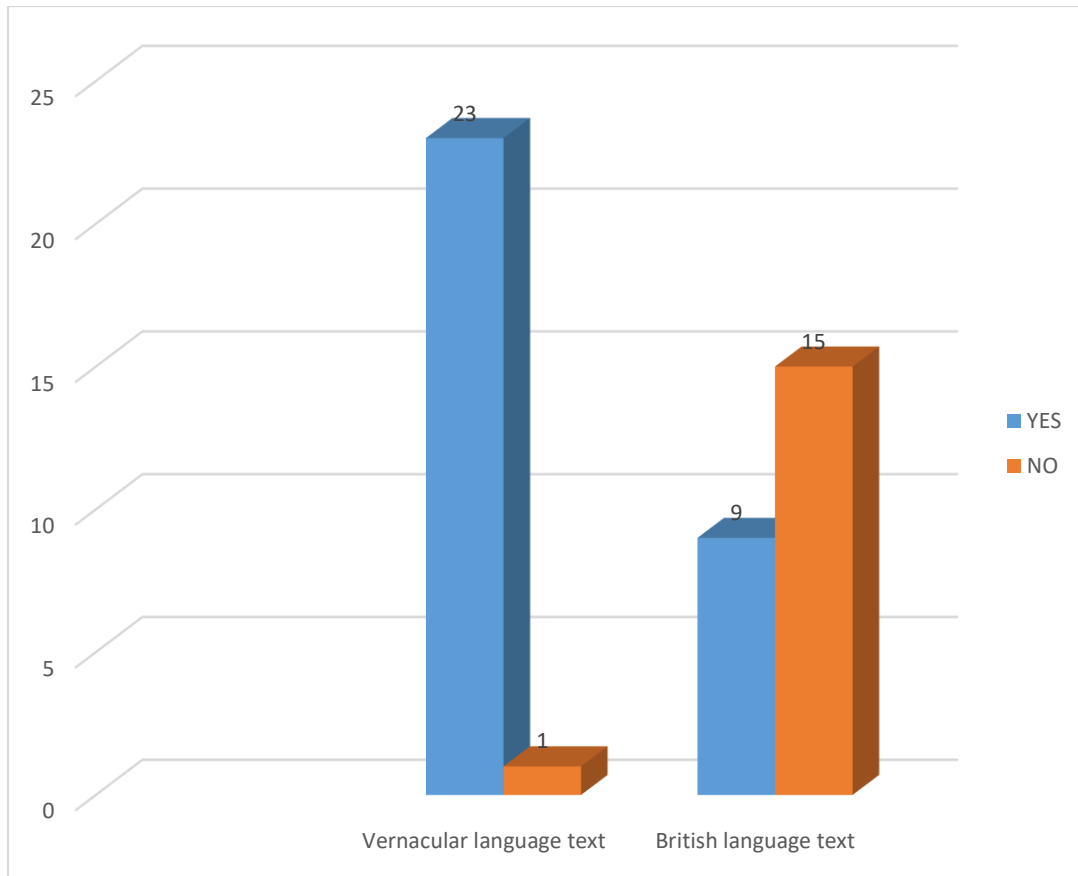
4.1.21. **Bar Graph 21. Instrument 1 – Student shows interest while reading the text and identifying with the topic.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 21, the figure shows that most students interest while reading and identifying with the topic and only three students did not react in the same way. On the other hand, nobody could interest or identifying with the British language text.

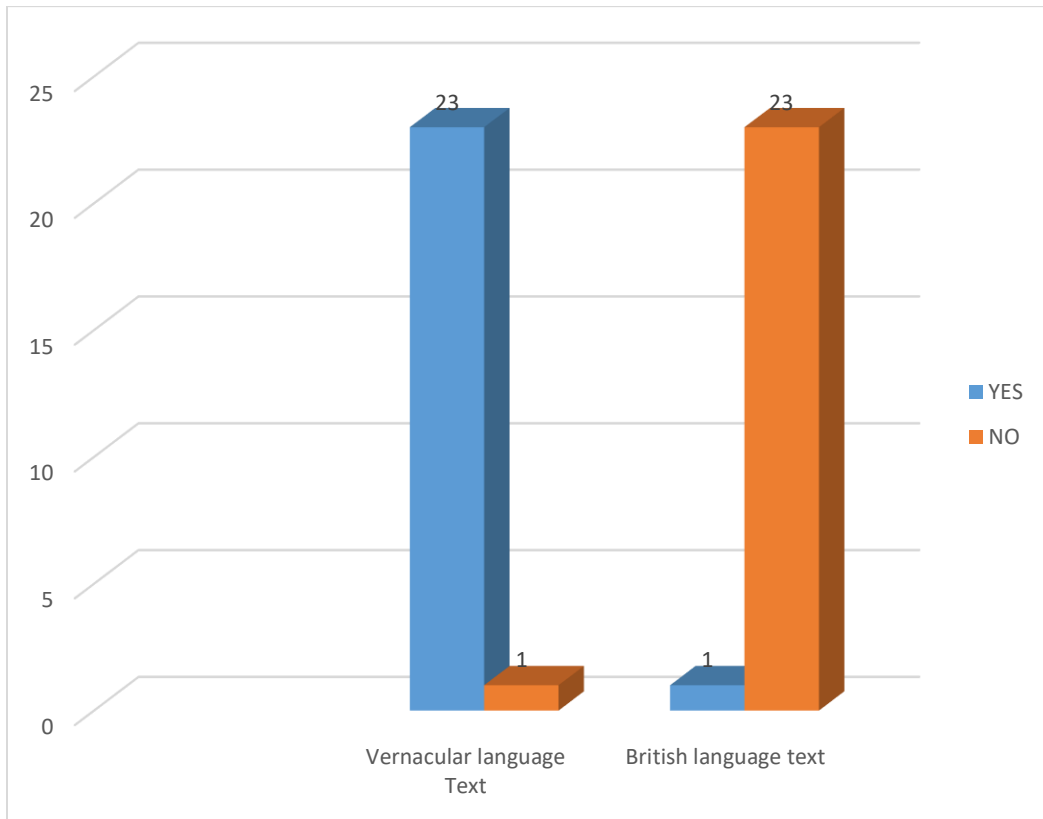
4.1.22. **Bar Graph 22. Instrument 1 – Student could complete the missing information after reading comprehension.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 22, the figure shows that most students could complete the missing information after reading comprehension in the vernacular language text; only one student could not complete it. On the other hand, just nine students completed the exercise for reading comprehension in the British language text.

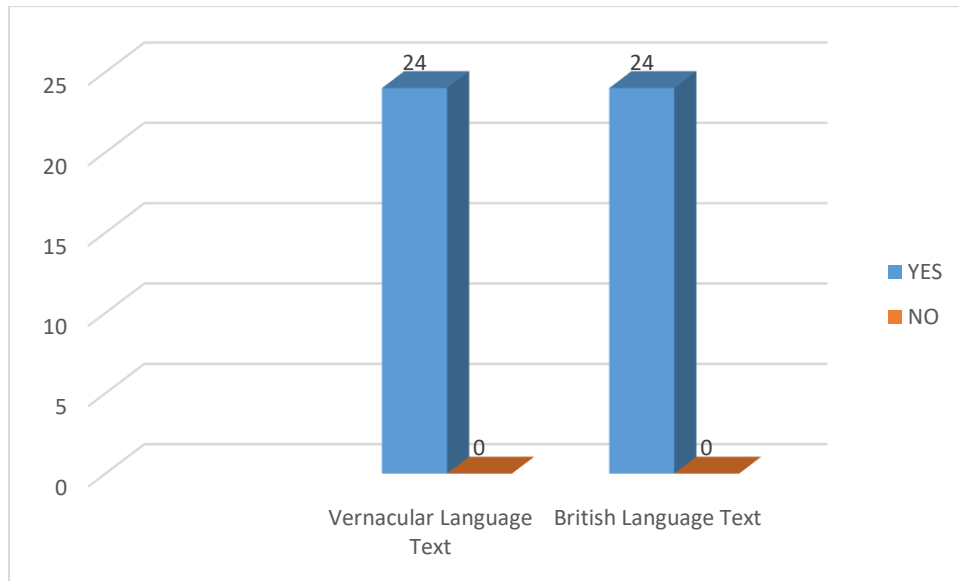
4.1.23. **Bar Graph 23. Instrument 1 – Student could write wh- questions about the paragraph.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 23, the figure shows that most students could write wh-questions in the authentic reading; only one student did not write it. In relation with the British language text happened the opposite most students could not write wh-question and only one did it.

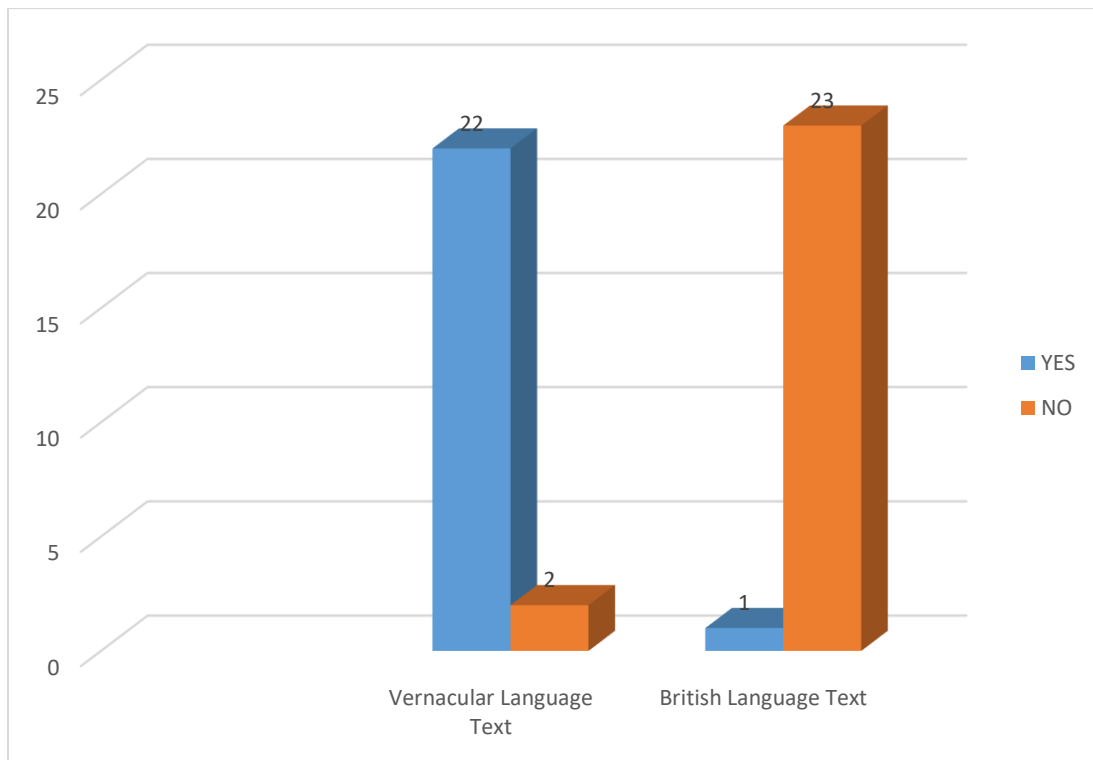
4.1.24. **Bar Graph 24. Instrument 1 – Student could work in pairs asking wh-questions to a partner.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 24, the figure shows that in both texts students worked in pairs asking questions some their partners.

4.1.25. **Bar Graph 25. Instrument 1 – Student could answer orally the questions made by his/her partner.**



Source: Observation checklist applied to fifth grade students

In the bar graph number 25, the figure shows that after reading a text most students could answer orally the questions to their partners, only two students could not answer. In the case of the British language text the opposite happened most students could not answer the question orally, just only one could answer to the partner.

4.1.26. **Table 1. Instrument 3 – Survey on Using Authentic**

Reading Passages to improve reading comprehension in the process of English learning. (Closed questions)

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	MAYBE	SOMETIMES	TOTAL
Do you know what the meaning of authentic reading passages is?	5	2	0	0	7
Do you consider that authentic reading passages can improve your class development?	7	0	0	0	7
Do you think that authentic reading passages are an important complement to English language learning process?	7	0	0	0	7
Do you consider that literature teachers require training to teach literature?	6	0	1	0	7
Do you use collaborative learning when you use authentic reading passages in your English classes?	6	0	0	1	7

Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the table number one, according to the survey applied to the MEP teachers have five restricted questions, this figure summarizing the obtained results.

4.1.27. **Table 2. Instrument 3 – Teacher’s purposes for selecting authentic reading for teaching.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total Teachers
Broadening children’s view of themselves.	1	6	0	0	7
Broadening children’s view of others.	1	6	0	0	7
Teaching ethical values.	2	5	0	0	7
Introducing children to good literature.	2	4	1	0	7

Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

In the table number two, teachers identify the purposes when they select children’s literature for teaching.

4.1.28. **Table 3. Instrument 3 – Teacher’s opinions about authentic reading passages, vocabulary, children literature, multicultural literature and others.**

QUESTION 2. Why do you think it is important to use literature where students can find some vernacular vocabulary?

QUESTION 5. Do you consider that the use of literature may or may not improve your students ‘language acquisition? Why?

QUESTION 6. How your students react toward the use of English autochthon children literature?

QUESTION 9. Do you consider that the literature used in English class is the most appropriate to the level of students? Why?

QUESTION 11. Do you use multicultural literature for the development of your class? If so, do you consider it is the most appropriate to each of your students?

In the table number three, teachers answer opened questions related with authentic reading passages, vocabulary, children literature, multicultural literature and others.

TEACHER	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 5	QUESTION 6	QUESTION 9	QUESTION 11
1	So, they can have a better understanding.	Yes. The more literature they use or put in practice, helps them improve language acquisition.	They like it because they are familiar with the information.	Yes, because it is based on the program and level he/she is in.	Not. Really.
2	It is important because it is written in the language of the common people and it is easier to be acquired.	Vocabulary can be introducing by pictures and it connect them to previous words that they already know.	No answered.	We only use literature once in a while and students do not have enough framework to understand what is read without being helped.	No, I do not. Multicultural literature features characters and themes from countries around the world, and our scope and sequence are very limit to develop love for literature.
3	Because they can learn vocabulary and expressions in the native English language.	Yes, because they acquired new vocabulary.	They like it.	Yes, because it is related to the content, they have to study according to their level.	No in public schools. I used it in private school.
4	No answered	It is really important. They can improve many skills.	No answered.	No, I do not.	No, I do not.
5	Because it helps their understanding.	Yes, it facilitates students' performance in English language acquisition.	They enjoy it.	Yes, because I select the literature for using in English class.	No, sometimes is not the most appropriate to each of my students.
6	Literature is important in the English vocabulary acquisition, but I do not know vernacular's concept.	Yes, it expands their imagination and consequently their language acquisition.	They feel good because they already known some words.	Yes, because I choose it according to the theme.	Yes, sometimes.
7	Students can improve reading comprehension.	Yes, students could widen their vocabulary through the use of literature.	Students like it, because they identify familiar words that help them understand main ideas.	Sometimes, because when they work with literature of another country is hard the understanding.	Yes, I do not consider it is appropriated to each student because most of they do not know culture from other countries.

Source: Survey applied to MEP Teachers

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

In this section of the research, many issues need to be considered when enhancing links between the use of authentic reading passages and how to improve reading comprehension in students of fifth grade at Escuela Centro America. One of the aims of strengthening the research learning nexus to improve students reading understanding. Some important findings gathered from the participative classroom observations, MEP teachers' survey and the students' survey made in the public institution mention previously.

The main research aim was to determine the effectiveness of the use of authentic reading passages to improve students' reading comprehension in a specific population. For that purpose, it is very important to consider the MEP syllabus in order to take into account the legal position and directress to follow in the educational public system.

Firstly, on chapter two is analyzed some aspects of the role of reading in the foreign language class. Also, the importance of the selection of reading material and the relevant characteristics related to the students and to the text, when teachers must select them.

The use of authentic materials in the classroom is worth reading, allowing students the opportunity to narrow the gap between class knowledge and real life. It is an enticing field of study because the reading process has been largely an important base in English language learning.

An analyzed aspect is the available time that teachers have to complete the MEP's program; it is a limitation for reading learning because reading process needs techniques, methods, strategies and obviously time to develop the English class.

The lack of readings that permits the improvement of reading comprehension, it is an obstacle for teachers to implement pleasure for reading in young learners. MEP' policies do not bring diverse options in this field. MEP' teachers must face the task to cover the MEP syllabus with insufficient options, creating their own material for classes and as if that were not enough the existing written material most of the time does not adapt to the curricular needs.

Secondly, the comparison between the use of authentic reading passages and children's literature from an English spoken country give as a result;

- ✓ In the bar graph number 19, students recognize easier authentic vocabulary;
- ✓ In the bar graph number 20, is evident the good understanding of the text "Food During Holidays" because the use of authentic reading text;
- ✓ In the bar graph 21, students showed interesting while reading the text with authentic reading passage which no happened when they read the text from an English spoken country;
- ✓ In the bar graph 22, twenty-three students completed the exercises after reading the text about Holidays, nevertheless with the text "The English Breakfast" only nine students completed the task assigned;
- ✓ Finally, in the bar graph number 23 most of students (twenty-three) were able to produce written WH – questions on the other hand, only one student was able to produce written WH – questions.

Summarizing, respecting to the comparison of the authentic text “Food During Holiday” with English language text “The English Breakfast”, it is indisputably that student reading understanding is better through the use of authentic reading text from English spoken country.

Thirdly, it is determining the utility of the use of authentic reading passages for obtaining a better scope for English learning. In the bar graph number 25, the figure shows that most of the students (twenty-two) participated actively in oral exercises which permit them express feelings, thoughts and expressing openly. But it was not the result with the English breakfast’ paragraph only one student felt free to express some ideas or share information about that text.

Lastly, authentic reading passages help to develop English classes in a positive way, improving reading comprehension. Subsequently, teachers need training about it, how to create authentic reading passages that facilitate English learning though the use of it.

5.2. Recommendations

According to the MEP requirements, it must cover six units divided into three periods during the scholar year. Despite of that, public schools do not have the same conditions to complete it. Depending on the population, location or resources, some MEP teachers give three, four or five lessons per week.

For instance, MEP teachers should have two possible options with the syllabus that allows them to adjust the program depending on the quantity of lessons that schools could offer to the different communities.

On the other hand, the creation of an English booklet that contains authentic reading passages to facilitate the learning process is a good option.

In chapter two was mentioned the magazine *Little Bee* for elementary school, it has cheaper cost than books from another country. Maybe something like that can be produced by MEP or by teachers from public schools that permit to develop a good process for English learning to improve reading comprehension which is important for the assessment of National Tests.

Relating to the use of authentic written material instead of literature from English spoken country, it is advisable to introduce more readings that hold authentic material in, to get a better student performance.

Finally, it is determining that MEP teachers should use written material with authentic vocabulary to obtain better result for reading comprehension and consequently to improve the English learning process.

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ANNEXES

INSTRUMENT 1

Observation Checklist for an English Class at Centro America

School in Students of Fifth Grade

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Topic: _____

Number of student: _____

Aspect to be observed	Yes	No
1. Student underlines the vocabulary unknown.		
2. Student writes a list of unknown vocabulary and looking for in the dictionary.		
3. Student recognizes vernacular vocabulary and extract it from the text.		
4. Student has a good understanding through vernacular vocabulary.		
5. Student shows interest while reading the text feeling identifying with the topic.		
6. Student completes the missing information after reading comprehension.		
7. Student writes wh-questions about the paragraph.		
8. Student works in pairs asking his/her wh-questions to a partner.		
9. Student answers orally the questions made by his/her partner.		

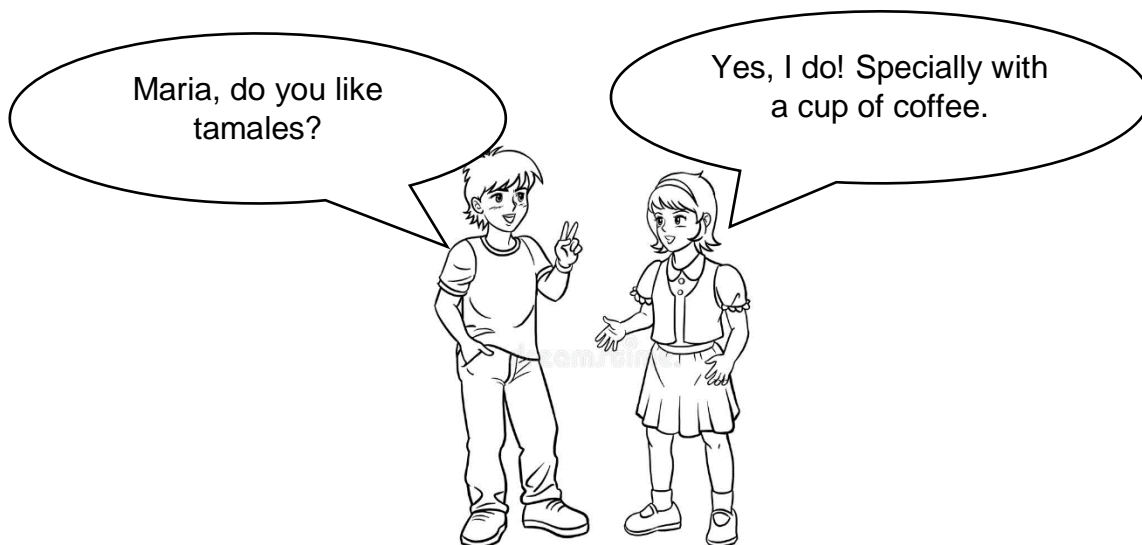


Reading

Food during holidays

There are many holidays in Costa Rica and they are also celebrated in my community. We celebrate Valentine's Day in my school by giving chocolates to our friends. We also celebrate Father's Day and Mother's Day with a special lunch in our houses and a very nice activity in the school. On those days, we eat rice with chicken, a salad and soft drinks.

We also celebrate the annexation day in the school with a "feria" in which all the students take a typical food like "picadillo", "tortillas", "chicheme", "bizcocho" or a "special fruit salad" and we sell them in the school after the typical dances and the civic act. We also love to celebrate Christmas because on these days all the people from my community prepare tamales and coffee to enjoy a nice afternoon.



After reading the text “Food during holidays”, student must:

1. To extract unknown vocabulary, write a list and looking for the meaning on your notebook.

2. To extract vernacular vocabulary, write a list on your notebook.

3. Complete the next information according to what you read.
 - a. During Valentine’s Day, we give _____ to our friends.
 - b. We celebrate Father’s Day and Mother’s Day with a _____.
We eat _____ and _____.
 - c. During Annexation day, we eat typical food like _____,
_____, _____,
_____.
 - d. On Christmas, people from my community prepare _____ and _____ to have a nice afternoon.

4. Write at least seven wh-questions about the reading “Food during holidays”.

5. Practice in pairs asking a partner the wh-questions, and then answer your partner’s questions.

READ THE TEXT AND CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER

THE ENGLISH BREAKFAST

The traditional and well-known breakfast is not as old as one may think. In fact, there have been continuous changes in the style and manner of eating.

In Saxon and medieval times, people ate two main **meals**: one at about eight or nine in the morning and the other at about four in the afternoon.

In 1597, an early traveller in the Scottish Highlands commented that people 'had only two meals a day – the little meal at about noon, the great meal in the evening'. People continued to have only two meals a day until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Men usually had a big breakfast early in the morning, while **women** had a light meal, probably cakes and tea or chocolate at about 10 a.m.

Things began to **change** with the Industrial Revolution.

In the new factories, workers worked for fourteen **hours** with short intervals during the day for meals.

So, the 12 o'clock lunch became habitual, they postponed dinner to seven o'clock and breakfast became less important than it was before...

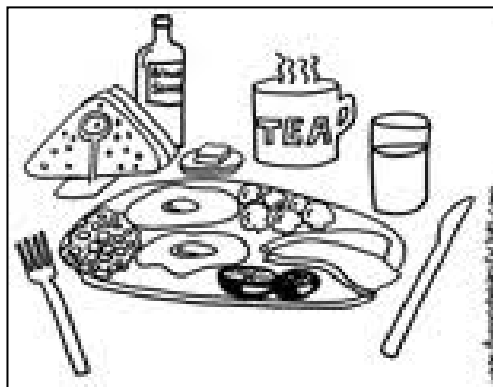
What did people have for **breakfast** in early times?

The Saxons had breakfast with cold pork, dark bread and beer. In the Middle Ages the rich ate boiled beef, mutton and pickled herrings, accompanied by beer and wine.

Only the rich ate some **fruit** at breakfast in Britain.

Today some British families have cereals, eggs, bacon, sausages, mushrooms and tomatoes.

Eggs are an important element in the British breakfast and there are dozens of ways of cooking them, they are usually boiled, scrambled or fried.



I PART. MARK THE CORRECT ALTERNATIVE:

1. How many meals did people eat in Saxon and medieval times?

- A) THEY DIDN'T EAT BREAKFAST
- B) THEY ATE TWO MEALS
- C) THEY ATE IN THE MORNING AND IN THE AFTERNOON

2. What time did they have their meals?

- A) AT 10 IN THE MORNING AND FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON
- B) AT 8 OR 9 IN THE MORNING AND 4 IN THE AFTERNOON
- C) THEY HAD THREE MEALS

3. What did women eat?

- A) CAKES AND TEA OR CHOCOLATE
- B) WOMEN HAD A BIG BREAKFAST
- C) CAKES

4. What time did women have breakfast?

- A) EARLY IN THE MORNING
- B) THEY HAD A LIGHT MEAL
- C) AT 10 A.M.

5. When did things begin to change?

- A) WITH THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
- B) THINGS DIDN'T CHANGE
- C) WORKERS WORKED FOR FOURTEEN HOURS

6. How many hours did workers work at that time?

- A) FOR FOURTEEN HOURS
- B) IN THE NEW FACTORIES
- C) WORKERS DIDN'T WORK FOR FOURTEEN HOURS

7. What did the Saxons have for breakfast?

- A) COLD PORK, DARK BREAD AND BEER
- B) DARK BREAD AND BEER
- C) THE SAXONS DIDN'T HAVE BREAKFAST

8. Who ate fruit in the Middle Ages?

- A) THE POOR
- B) THE RICH
- C) THE PEOPLE

9. What do British families have for breakfast today?

- A) CEREALS
- B) CEREALS, EGGS, BACON, SAUSAGES, MUSHROOMS AND TOMATOES
- C) EGGS AND BACON

10. How do British people usually cook eggs?

- A) BOILED
- B) FRIED
- C) BOILED, SCRAMBLED OR FRIED

INSTRUMENT 2

Universidad Hispanoamericana

English Teaching Licentiate

Student: Claudia Garcia Zapata

Survey on Using Costa Rican vernacular children literature for English language learning.

School: Centro América

Level: Fifth grade.

Date: _____ **Number:** _____

1. The teacher uses Costa Rican vernacular children literature in the class.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. You like the teacher reads aloud literature in the class.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. You use the vocabulary learnt from the story to practice English.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

Strongly disagree

4. You learn vocabulary from the literary works learnt in class.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

5. You use expressions learnt from literature to communicate yourself.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

6. The use of Costa Rican vernacular children literature is important to learn
English language.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

7. Costa Rican children literature is more attractive than literature from another
country.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

8. Using Costa Rican vernacular children literature help to learn vocabulary to communicate Costa Rican customs and traditions.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

9. You like the class when teacher uses Costa Rica literary works.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

10. You consider Costa Rican literature used in class facilitate the comprehension of a topic.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

INSTRUMENT 3

Universidad Hispanoamericana

English Teaching Licentiate

Student: Claudia Garcia Zapata

Survey on Using English vernacular children literature in the process of English learning.

School: Centro América

MEP English Teachers

You are participating in a survey about the use of English vernacular children literature in the process of English language.

The information is necessary to analyze the current situation about the English Children literature used by teachers in their classes. The researcher keeps confidentiality.

Answer the following questions according questions according to your class experience.

1. Do you know what is English vernacular children literature? If so answer question number 2

2. Why do you think it is important to use literature where students can find some vernacular vocabulary?

3.What kind of literature Works do you use to develop your class?

Short stories

Poems

Riddles

Novels

Fairy tales

Plays

Any others. Could you mention it? _____

4.Do you consider that children literature can improve your class development?

5.Do you consider that the use of literature may or may not improve your students' language acquisition? Why?

6.How your students react toward the use of English autochthon children literature?

7. Do you think that children literature is an important complement to English language learning process?

8. Do you consider that literature teachers require training to teach literature?

9. Do you consider that the literature used in English class is the most appropriate to the level of students? Why?

10. How often do you use literature in class?

- All the time
- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

11. Do you use multicultural literature for the development of your class? If so, do you consider it is the most appropriate to each of your students?

12. Do you use collaborative learning when you use children literature in your English classes?

13. How do your students react toward the children literature you use in the classroom?

- They like it all the time.
- They sometimes like it.
- They rarely like it.
- They never like it.

14. If you use children's literature in your class, why do you use it for ? (you can choose more than one)

- To develop children's responses to reading.
- To support the children comprehension.
- To promote ethical values.
- To improve children's language skills.
- To improve children's grammar.

15. Do you use adaptations or shortened versions of texts instead of originals?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

16. Do you use passages and/or extracts of children's literature in your teaching?

- I use extracts of passages I select myself for teaching.
- I use whole text for teaching.
- I use extracts of passages from a specific topic of the planning.
- I use a course book or published scheme for teaching.

17. When selecting children's literature for teaching, it may help teachers for:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Broadening children's views of themselves.				
Broadening children's views of others.				
Teaching ethical values.				
Introducing children to good literature.				