

DEVELOPING LEARNERS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES THROUGH FAIRY TALES

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DEZVOLTAREA ATITUDINILOR ȘI VALORILOR STUDENȚILOR PRIN INTERMEDIUL POVEȘTILOR

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Abstract. The article presents a study of fairy tales as a valuable source for training learners' English language skills, as well as one of the possible complementary didactic materials for developing learners' personality. Thus, the paper points out the effects of fairy tales in the English classroom and their potential to bring the whole magic world to learners, teaching them moral values and language norms and standards. Moreover, there are described some algorithms how to use fairy tales in a fruitful way to contribute to the learner's development as a whole.

Keywords: fairy tale, development, value, attitude, skills, competence.

Rezumat. Articolul prezintă un studiu al poveștilor ca sursă valoroasă pentru formarea abilităților de limba engleză ale studenților, precum și unul dintre posibilele materiale didactice complementare pentru dezvoltarea personalității lor. Astfel, articolul evidențiază efectele poveștilor în cadrul orelor de limbă engleză și capacitatea lor de a-i transpune pe studenți într-o lume magică, învățându-i valori morale, norme și standarde lingvistice. Plus la toate, sunt descriși câțiva algoritmi de folosire a poveștilor într-un mod productiv pentru a contribui la dezvoltarea personalității studentului.

Cuvinte-cheie: poveste, dezvoltare, valoare, atitudine, abilități, competență.

Literature plays an important role in our life. Fairy tales as a part of the children's literature could be a valuable source for teaching English as a foreign language. During the English lessons teachers tend to develop the basic skills: *reading, writing, speaking and listening* [11]. Fairy tales can also be used as a method to intensify emotions, stimulate the imagination and increase the critical power of children. In general, fairy tales carry a positive and educative mission [14]. Through them, the child's emotions are expected to be under control, his imagination can increase, and the child can think critically.

With the help of fairy tales specific vocabulary could be taught: different old words, beginnings and endings (e.g. *Once upon a time; Far-far away; They lived happily ever after...*) names of the characters and things which are connected to the characters (e.g. *fairy, witch, king, queen, prince, princess, magic stick, throne, etc...*), names of the setting, places (e.g. *forest, kingdom, far-far away land, etc...*), gems and precious metals (e.g. *silver, copper, gold, steel...*) [1].

Moreover, fairy tales play an important role in teaching grammar. They help children notice language areas such as past tenses, adjectives, comparatives etc. Teachers could use passages from the fairy tale to identify the grammatical features. *For example, to ask students to find irregular verbs, to write down all adjectives or to locate the words and phrases that indicates position in place or time. Word-order* can be taught through reading fairy tales as well.

In the same light, fairy tales stimulate a child's imagination and cultural literacy which is powerful and important. They often include different cultures and ways of doing good things. They teach us right from wrong by strong moral lessons. They use an indirect way of presenting model situations to children and therefore appeal to children's imagination. The motif of three unsuccessful attempts is often found in fairy tales. This model situation points out an important message to children, that success does not come in the first attempt but if we are patient and do not give up, it will come in the end. It gives children hope and comfort as well as happy endings [2]. Fairy tales teach children that good will always triumph. Characters in fairy tales are either good or bad. The accurate division between good and evil help children understand the difference. And for children it is easy to choose a right side because a good character is always rewarded whereas a bad character is always punished.

Fairy tales develop critical thinking skills in children. They learn about what happens to them depending on the choices they make. Not all the characters can be good role models. These stories teach them to take good decisions even at bad times for a better ending. They can help children deal with emotions themselves. Children relate these stories and find a fairy tale hero in themselves. Also fairy tales are great fun taking the children to another world of dragons, prince, kingdom, palace, castle, etc. The researcher H. Nur states that storytelling can be an interesting art [13]. Through storytelling children get different cultures and lifestyles. Children will explore new worlds and engage them in the plot and character visualizations [15], [16].

The use of a fairy tale as a *pedagogical tool* is linked especially to the development of children's literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which itself changes in concepts of childhood and children [10]. Fairy tales were soon enlisted in the services of teaching children. For example Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont published a series of pedagogical works targeting specific ages and social classes which included several fairy tales in order to teach children social values and virtues [9].

Children's literature helps a young child make sense of what it is to be human and helps them understand the world around them. The fairy tale genre provides ways for children to receive important messages. Children who are exposed to fairy tales can benefit greatly from them. They are an important part of a child's development, especially in terms of their consciousness and moral development.

Fairy tales may contribute to the enrichment of a young reader's knowledge in a number of ways. They teach moral and values highlighting the most universal norms and standards of language existence. The educational value is the value shared by teachers, parents, and others that includes education, morals, and etiquette, as well as positive values. Thus, the goal of education is to test and integrate all of the values into the human life and to develop them in the child's personality. It should be viewed as a component of the entire educational effort that has to share and develop not only information, skills, and technology, but also other characteristics: personality, morals, and ethics [6].

In this perspective, the fairy tale develops most often the basic values of life such as trust, hope, honesty, kindness and belief in high power which could be interpreted as a root of faith [12]. Stories as well as fairy tales help children feel positive about other countries and cultures, and can broaden their knowledge of the world.

It should be mentioned that the moral values might be grouped into (Fig. 1.):

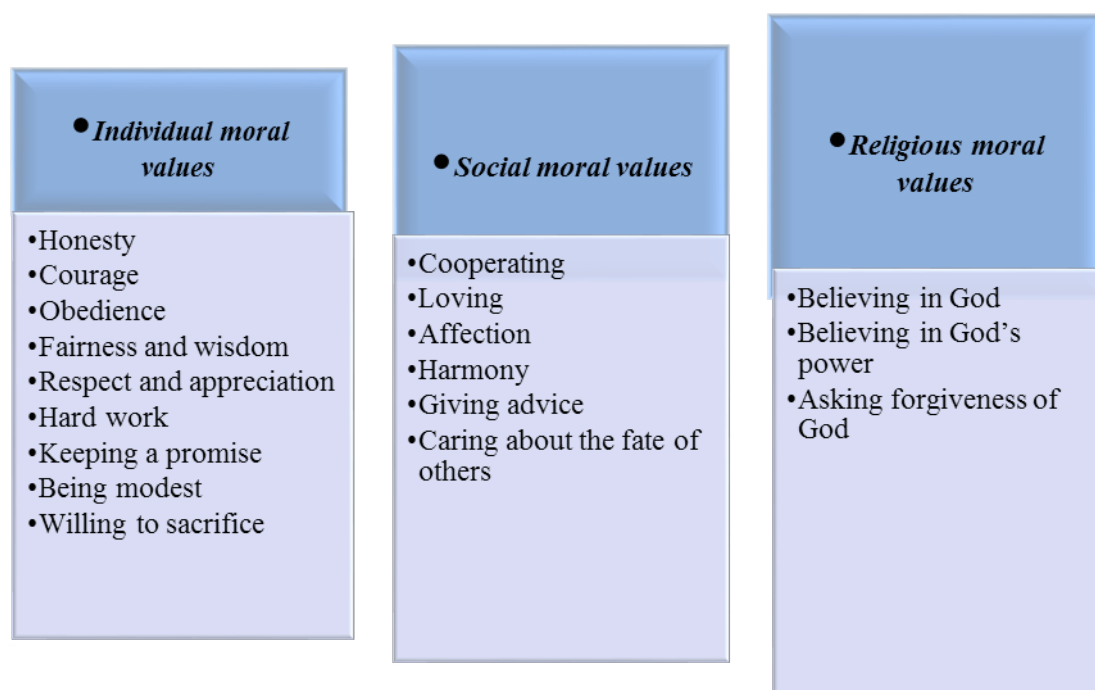


Figure 1. Types of moral values

We may say that reading fairy tales can benefit child development in a variety of ways. Exposure to fairy tales during childhood can:

- develop reading, speaking, listening, writing, critical thinking skills.
- entertain children while teaching the basic structure of telling a story
- foster students' development by allowing them to project their imagination and creativity into a story
- help dispel fears of the unknown
- help children cope with the difficulties of growing up and foster a belief for a better tomorrow
- help children learn about conflict and possible ways to solve a problem
- explore universal themes, such as love and hate, fear and courage, greed and generosity, loyalty, justice, etc.
- help children deal with emotions themselves
- build resilience in children
- cultivate good values in the child's character (honesty; kindness; self-esteem...)

Fairy tales speak the language children understand and show the complicated world before the children's innocent eyes in a comprehensible manner by their simplicity, clear definition of good and evil, understandable incidents and beauty of their language. Besides, they deliver the information about social values, traditions and basic human interactions, information of the ethical origin and information about a moral dimension of the human life.

It is essential to take the students' intellectual maturity, life experiences, emotions and interests into account. Collie and Slater agree with above and add that when reading a literary work the students have both "a linguistic and a cultural gap to bridge" [7]. Therefore, in order to make the students understand and enjoy the text, it must not be too much above their normal reading proficiency. The length of the text is "a crucial pedagogical factor" which should be considered when looking for a suitable text/fairy tale as well [3]. The decision what is an

adequate length of a fairy tale depends on the age and child's level of language acquisition. Generally, younger children and beginners require shorter fairy tales.

It should be taken into account that work on a fairy tale largely follows a certain methodology. During the lessons the teachers may choose different methods and techniques in accordance to their goals. The exploitation of a fairy tale can go on within 2-3 lessons, when the goals, objectives, methods and techniques of teaching children, and ways of working with them change.

The method of exploring fairy tales at the school involves the following forms and techniques for working with the text. An efficient teacher should think about finding the right ways how to work proficiently on a fairy tale with a view to involving all learners into the process of comprehending the content. For example:

At the pre-reading stage - preparatory work (guessing the topic, brainstorming, pictures, children's assumptions, presenting the new vocabulary, first comprehension of the tale).

At the while-reading stage - selective reading, answering questions and asking questions by the children, verbal and graphic drawing, drawing up a plan, all types of retelling, drawing up a fairy tale by analogy with what was read and some others- might be chosen by the teacher [8].

At the post-reading stage the teacher may propose the following activities: drawing a picture of the favorite character; acting out a scene from the story; re-writing the end of the story; making up a group or class fairy tale; working with flashcards of the scenes from the story to identify characters or events, etc. In the light of those mentioned above, we propose an algorithm of working on a fairy tale (Table 1.):

Table 1. Algorithm of working efficiently on a fairy tale

N=	Fairy tales	Values reflected in the fairy tale	Algorithm of working on a fairy tale		
			Pre-reading activities	While-reading activities	Post-reading activities
1	<i>Pied Piper of Hamelin, Rumpelstiltskin, Three Golden Flowers, The Ugly Duckling and Frog Prince</i>	HONESTY, RESPONSABILITY, RESPECT, KINDNESS, ACCEPTANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting slide show pictures with the new vocabulary - Practicing chants/tongue twisters - Guessing the topic, - Brainstorming, Pictures, - Children's assumptions, - Presenting the new vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening to a fairy tale recorded from a disk - Answering questions and asking questions by the children - Selective reading - Drawing up a plan - Creative retelling - Discussion of characters' behavior - Using different linguistic games (Puzzles; Charades; Bingo) - Categorize the words; Picture word search; - Match characters and descriptions, etc.) - Working with flashcards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drawing a picture of the favorite character - Acting out a scene from the story - Re-writing the end of the story (this can be done on paper or orally) - Making up a group or class fairy tale. (Use different characters from several fairy tales) - Emphasizing the main idea of the story and its moral - Project work
2	<i>Enchanted Princess, The Slave and the Lion, Snow White and Rose Red</i>	KINDNESS, GOODNESS, EMPATHY, SENSITIVITY, COMPASSION			
3	<i>Snow White and The Seven Dwarves, The Emperor and His New Clothes, and Beauty and the Beast</i>	SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE, COURAGE, FRIENDSHIP, LOYALTY, KEEPING PROMISES			

These activities involve children in the process of learning the language, making it as successful, interesting and effective as possible [8]. At the same time, the teachers are able to develop their students' moral values that are presented in the selected stories. Thus, it can be said that these methods are very good to use because they can instill character and provide positive benefits for children's development, especially on the moral, emotional and social levels.

It can be concluded that teachers, working on fairy tales, are able to develop students' cognitive, linguistic and social skills. Moreover, using various methods and strategies during the lessons they instill moral values in the student's character in an enjoyable and fruitful way. It should be mentioned that it is very important to cultivate good values in the child's character since early childhood by parents, then by teachers at school. If a child gets sufficient character education from both teachers and parents, then he will grow into the next generation armed with a noble character being able to make the world better.

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