

FOLKTALES AS A CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC RESOURCE FOR TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO YOUNG STUDENTS

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Abstract. *Folktales are a valuable tool in teaching English as a foreign language to young learners. They provide authentic, rich, meaningful information and facilitate the process of acquiring the target language. Children undergoing constant emotional, physical, and cognitive growth, with limited life experience and little knowledge of the wider world, benefit greatly from stories that provide a context for enjoying engaging content, creating meaning from the language used. can get to know the language. Carefully selected or modified folktales also have features such as parallelism and meaningful, natural and rhythmic repetition of language, thereby enhancing students' ability to learn the language informally.*

Keywords: *folklore, periodicals for children, picture books, folk songs, ballads and literal meaning.*

Folk tale is a product of folk oral creativity, which is considered one of the genres of folklore, is one of the most common types of it. A fairy tale is a story, a legend that is part of an oral tradition, does not belong to a single author or writer and is considered to be passed down from generation to generation. Folktales can change over time, can be reshaped with changes, and are often changed with each retelling. As a result, different versions of the same folktale may appear.

As a form of simple folklore, folktales often contain hard life lessons to instruct listeners or readers on how to behave. Thus, folk tales help to pass down values and beliefs, customs and culture from generation to generation. We can turn to different sources when looking for stories to teach English to young learners. One of the most common sources is, of course, collections of folk tales, picture books and magazines or children's periodicals, and websites.

Periodicals for children

There are periodicals for teachers as well as children, where the reader can find fairy tales or short stories enriched with pictures. These stories are usually adapted, and longer ones may be split into multiple episodes published through multiple ongoing volumes. Children's periodicals may be published weekly or monthly. If the gap is longer, young language learners may forget the last part of the story.

Picture books

Picture books published by international and national publishers are now frequently found in bookstores in developing countries. They vary from fairy tales to folk ballads with a plot. They are also written in simple language suitable for the level of young readers. However, picture books, especially those published internationally and in color, are still unaffordable for many families with young children in poor countries.

Internet resources

Nowadays, many people prefer to go online first, and this leads them to turn to popular websites where they can find English language folktales from different cultures. In these addresses we can find a number of stories, often folktales that have been edited and suggested for use in lesson plans and educational activities. From some online sources, teachers can download pages of text or drawings and make copies (called photocopies) for use in the classroom. Unfortunately, these lesson plans are limited and do not fit any specific curriculum. Often they are expensive to download. And sometimes the English used is not of a high standard.

Teachers can look at many different sources and over time amass a collection of folktales and stories that can be used in their classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to share their story collections so that each can increase the number of resources available.

Folk tales and children

In every country, children of different races and ages are told from a very young age by their parents, grandparents, and even siblings, folk tales from their homeland. Many children hear these tales at a very young age and spend their childhood learning these stories, folk songs and ballads.

Psychologists and teachers have emphasized that stories play an important role in children's development [4]. Stories, especially folktales, stimulate their imaginations and provide them with material from which children build their understanding of the world's origins and purposes, and form the abstract concepts and values that guide them. These stories stimulate their imagination of the world, allow them to imagine the world outside their home, teach them rights and wrongs, what behavior is expected and accepted, what is not acceptable and what the consequences can be helps to understand. Through folk tales, children learn to distinguish positive concepts such as family, friendship, hard work, honesty, faith, love, respect, and disobedience to parents, betrayal, laziness and other such negative aspects. Through folk tales, which often end with a happy ending, children are formed to understand and appreciate goodness, positive values and characteristics, that the good, honest, hardworking and brave earn respect and love, and the bad, lazy and dishonest are punished. . Children can enjoy great works of folk art, discover their role, identity and responsibility through folk tales [1].

As a result of exposure to folk tales, many children grow up with exciting dreams of being a hero or a princess or a fairy or a wizard after hearing the tales told to them. Stories, myths and fairy tales have become an important part of the intellectual life of children and for many, they are an integral part of the process of growing up.

The following steps recommended by Palmer, Shackelford, Miller and Leclere can be used to help young readers better understand the story:

Step 1: Teachers identify the figurative language they want students to understand.

Step 2: Teachers clarify or explain the literal meaning of phrases or words that may be difficult for children to understand.

Step 3: Teachers check that the literal meaning makes sense to the students.

Step 4: Teachers use activities that help children connect the meaning of the phrase to their lives; they can then give examples of a colloquial, informal language expression or word where the intended meaning is clear. Students can also be asked to generate more examples, identify correct pictures, describe expressions, discuss and predict [2].

Once students have a clear understanding of the literal meaning of the story, folktales allow teachers to create many activities related to the input and context provided by the story.

Folktales stimulate the imagination and creativity of young readers

Folktales encourage imagination and creative thinking by asking young readers to find new solutions to the problem(s) presented in the story or to predict what will happen next. The stories present a whole imaginary world with miracles, mythical and magical animals and various surprises. Both of these kids can enjoy that magical, wonderful world while learning a language at the same time. Topics start with a broad, general theme or an idea that can spread in different directions, allowing young learners to pursue their personal interests through a foreign language [3].

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