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Thesis

WOLVES AND FOXES AS VILLAINS IN ENGLISH FAIRY TALES

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval/a samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 26. června 2014

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Jana Kužílková

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ABSTRACT

Bc. Kužílková Jana. University of West Bohemia. June, 2014. Wolfs and Foxes as villains in English fairy tales. Supervisor: Mgr. Libuše Lišková, M.A.

The thesis deals with fairy tales as a literary genre in general with its typical features and elements. The theoretical part is primarily focused on animal fairy tales with wolves and foxes appearing in them as the main characters. This part also introduces the most significant European collectors of fairy tales and their work. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of fairy tales in children´s lives as well as their role in education. The practical part of the thesis focuses on the research, realized by means of the questionnaire, related to using fairy tales in English language teaching. It also deals with the author´s analysis of the typical characteristics of wolves and foxes appearing in English fairy tales. The classroom research, realized by means of the experiment, finds out whether the pupils are able to recognize personality traits of the wolf and the fox in chosen fairy tales and identify adjectives for those. The objectives and conditions of the research are described in the practical part as well as the results of them.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The title of this diploma thesis is 'Wolves and Foxes as villains in English fairy tales'. The main reason why I had chosen this topic was the fact, that children are not interested in reading in general. From my point of view, fairy tales have a great potential to be used in ELT as a valuable source of authentic material. With an appropriate adaptation, fairy tales can be used with pupils of all ages and all language levels and moreover they can motivate children to start with reading. Another reason why this topic was chosen is that I wanted to know, if the teachers at lower secondary level use fairy tales in their English lessons.

This diploma thesis is focused especially on animal fairy tales, in which the wolf and the fox are often villains. Regarding the animal fairy tales, my intention was to find out whether there are any differences between wolves and foxes in classic English fairy tales and if the pupils are able to recognize their personality traits and identify adjectives for those villains.

The theoretical part of the thesis is focused on fairy tales as a literary genre in general. It defines the fundamental terms related to the topic and it also describes the typical elements and features of fairy tales. This part further deals with the history and classification of fairy tales. Moreover, the most significant European collectors of fairy tales and their contribution to the literary genre are mentioned. Then, the theoretical part deals with animal fairy tales and describes the wolf and the fox as the main villains in more detail. Finally, the role of fairy tales in children´s lives is discussed and also their educational function and impact in ELT is dealt with.

The practical part of the thesis describes the methods used for gathering data and explains the objectives and conditions of the research. In this part, the research questions are also stated. Firstly, an analysis of particular wolves and foxes appearing in selected fairy tales is mentioned. It discusses their personality traits and typical behavior. Then the classroom research, carried out at lower secondary level, finds out whether the pupils are able to recognize personality traits of wolves and foxes and identify adjectives for those. Secondly, the teacher questionnaire was used to discover whether the teachers at lower secondary level use fairy tales as a source of authentic material in their lessons.

The following chapter provides the results and commentaries. In this chapter, the outcomes of the research are presented by means of tables and graphs to be more comprehensible. All of the results of the research are followed by appropriate commentaries. The next chapter is focused on potential implications for English teachers resulting from the

research. In addition to that, the limitations of the research and also suggestions for further research are mentioned. In the final part of the thesis, 'Conclusion', the main ideas of the thesis are summarized.

II.   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The main objective of this chapter is to provide general information about fairy tales as a literary genre. This chapter is divided into four parts. In the first part, the term 'fairy tale' is defined according to various accessible sources and the typical elements related to fairy tales like the main characters, themes or functions are described there. The second part briefly discusses the history of fairy tales and furthermore, it deals with the most world-famous collectors and writers of fairy tales including some of their significant works. The third part of this chapter describes the classification and history of fairy tales featuring animals in detail and correspondingly deals with wolves and foxes as fairy tales´ villains. The fourth part is focused on the importance of fairy tales in children´s life, both in upbringing and education and it also deals with the possibilities of their use in English language teaching.

General Characteristics of Fairy Tales

There can be found many similar definitions of what the term 'fairy tale' means. It is related to different opinions concerning the purpose of the origin of fairy tales and who they were actually intended for. Therefore, some of these various points of views will be presented in this subchapter. Free Online English Dictionary (n.d.) states that fairy tale is "a story about fairies or other mythical or magical beings, especially one of traditional origin told to children" while Carpenter and Prichard (1995) defines fairy tales as:

> Narratives set in the distant past of events that would be impossible in the real world. They often include magical happenings and the appearance of fairies, but the supernatural does not always feature in them and the heroes and heroines are usually mortal human beings. Such creatures as giants, dwarfs, witches, and ogres frequently play a part, as well as talking animals. (p. 177)

Another explanation of what fairy tales are is given by Flanagan (2003):

> Fairy tales are simple stories of humans and their dealings with magical beings such as fairies, dragons, and wizards. Originally intended for children, the fairy tale has in certain instances involved into longer and more sophisticated narratives of

supernatural events. The term embodies folktales such as "Snow White" and "Cinderella", many of which were originally collected in the early 19th century by the Brothers Grimm in *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. (Contemporary Literature)

All these definitions claim that fairy tales are stories featuring magical beings and that they are intended for children, but on the other hand, Brown (1992) states that fairy tales were originally intended for adults´ audience, because they were sometimes very cruel and related to terrible happenings such as murders, rapes or starvations (p. 14). The disunity of these definitions could be caused by their authors´ different points of view of a period when fairy tales originated. Brown describes the fairy tales in ancient times, whereas Flanagan mentions the fairy tales collected in the 19th century.

The term 'fairy tale' was first employed by a French writer, Countess d´Aulnoy, whose collection of stories were published under the name *Contes de Fées* which was translated into English as *Tales of the Fairies* in 1698 (Brown, 1992, p. 2). Carpenter and Prichard (1995) add following:

The term 'contes de fées' was adopted as a description of such stories in France at the end of the 17th century, and the English translations of the French 'contes' of this period introduced the expression 'fairy tale' and 'fairy story' into English language. (p. 177)

The purpose of fairy tales varies with regard to different ideas of each storyteller. Brown (1992) explains that fairy tales were originally stories narrated round the fire during cold winter´s nights and their main function was to entertain people (p. 3). According to Zipes (2013), the main function of fairy tales was:

Awaken our regard for the miraculous condition of life and to evoke profound feelings of awe and respect for life as a miraculous process, which can be altered and changed to compensate for the lack of power, wealth, and pleasure that most people experience. (p. 51)

Typical elements and features of fairy tales

There can be found many various elements typical for fairy tales, whether they are magic phrases, good and evil characters or talking animals. Number of themes and motifs appearing in fairy tales tend to be repeated across many cultures and periods of time. Fairy tales usually consist of magical events and the presence of fairies, but the supernatural does not necessarily play a part in them (Carpenter & Prichard, 1995, p. 177). Regarding the fairies, Crystal (1992) describes them as "supernatural beings that appear in folklore under many names and in a variety of more or less human-derived shapes, with multifarious characteristics and tendencies" (p. 431). On the contrary, Brown (1992) mentions that the most important is not the presence of fairies, but the magic and the supernatural and also that the story is unbelievable. She also states that fairy tales always include a battle between good and evil and it is the good that always wins (p.3).

There usually perform many characters with supernatural powers in fairy tales. They could be such beings as witches, dwarfs, ogres, fairies, goblins, elves and so on. Also the animals, which are in most cases able to talk, appear in fairy tales very often. There can be found also traditional characters like kings and queens, princes and princesses, who usually fall in love; a cruel and tyrannical stepmother or country people like millers, gamekeepers and woodcutters. These characters represent symbols of good or evil, simplicity, honesty or unfaithfulness. Magic spells and enchantments make also a part of fairy stories as well as honesty, devotion and the keeping of a promise (Brown, pp. 3, 4).

As was already mentioned, fairy tales are usually set in the distant past and they are not concerned with the particular, therefore the story often begins with phrases 'Once upon a time' or 'A long, long time ago'. The plot of fairy tales is always very simple. It is usually about someone who has to deal with supernatural happening often in the face of adversity. Another typical and necessary element for fairy tales is a happy ending, which is usually expressed with phrases 'happily ever after' or 'they lived happily ever after' (p. 3).

History of Fairy Tales

Fairy tales exist all around the world in every language and they became part of each country´s cultural heritage (Brown, 1992, p. 2). According to Brown (1992), they are very old genre, dating from pre-historic times, but their history is not defined exactly, because they were transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation over many centuries which

means that they make a part of the oral tradition (pp. 6, 7). We can read about the oral tradition in particular in the introduction of *The Complete Fairy Tales* (1997) written by brothers Grimm:

> Told by generation after generation, the traditional stories projected the deepest wishes of the folk, generalized diverse characters into a few types, selected the incidents that would most strikingly illustrate what characters were capable of. These stories have something which the most brilliant improvisations are without – depth, fullness, a mysterious relation of parts. (p. 11)

Regarding written tales, Dr Jamie Tehrani, a cultural anthropologist at Durham University, claims that the oldest one was an *Aesopic fable* that dated from about the sixth century BC (Grey, 2009). Crystal (1990) describes fable as "a story about animals which may be interpreted as referring to human behaviour" (p.430). Carpenter and Prichard (1995) state that some of today´s known fairy stories appeared already in Indian story-collection *Panchatatantra* in the 6th century AD or in the *Book of Sindibad* which is supposed to have originated in Persia in the early 9th century. The first recorded fairy tale similar to today´s "Cinderella" is found in the middle of the 9th century in a Chinese book of folk-tales. One of the earliest works that appeared in Europe was Chaucer´s *Canterbury Tales* in 1387 which included structures resembling fairy tales such as a fairy story told by the Wife of Bath. In the middle of the 16th century in Italy there appeared the collections *Piacevoli Notti* by Giovanni Francesco Starapola and *Pentamerone* by Giambattista Basile which contains the first known versions of many fairy tales, for example "Cinderella" or "Snow White". These collections were not intended for children, because they often comprised of violent narratives.

A chapbook represented an early type of printed literature in Early Modern Europe. The chapbooks included such tales as "The Seven Champions of Christendom" or "Tom Thumb" which were very popular and broadly read by children at the turn of the16[th] and 17th centuries in England, but in those days the "true fairy tales circulated only in oral form" (p.177). Fairy tales narrated orally were also admired in French aristocratic society during the reign of Louis XIV when the people tired by intrigues and wars, "were happy to retreat to the relatively simple moral basis and childhood associations of fairy tales" (p.178).

The first writer of fairy stories is considered to be Madame d´Aulnoy in the 1690s (p.178). She produced *Les Contes des fées* in 1696 including well-known fairy tales such as

"La Chatte Blanche", "Le Serpentin Vert" and "L´Oiseau Bleu" and many others that were immediately translated into English and maintained a popularity even up to the 19th century (Drabble, 2000, p. 346). Marie-Catherine, Baronne d´Aulnoy was followed by Charles Perrault, whose "tales were often printed in bilingual English-French edition for use as a school book" (Carpenter & Prichard, p. 179), but also the original English tales such as "Jack and the Beanstalk" started to be published. In the 18th century the fairy tales were fallen into disuse as reading for children, because they were considered by some educationalist as immoral. In 1823 the work of the brothers Grimm was translated into English which led to increase of children´s interest in fairy tales. The tales of Hans Christian Andersen appeared in English in the 1840s and they were followed by Joseph Jacobs´ *English Fairy Tales* in 1890 and later by other collections of this same author (p. 179).

Drabble (2000) states, that Barrie´s *Peter Pan* is "one of the most enduring of original stories with fairy characters before the First World War" (p. 347) and also describes the works of the 20th century as following:

> The late 20th century saw a revival of interest in the adult fairy tale, but fairy stories for children also continue to be published through the whole range of the market, from popular mass market versions of old favourites to sophisticated and handsomely illustrated adaptations by well-known authors. (p.347)

To summarize what was mentioned above, fairy tales have a very long tradition, but their history is not defined exactly. Even though they were collected all around the world for many centuries, the most famous European collectors of folk tales were Charles Perrault in the 17th century in France, brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in Germany in the 19th century and Joseph Jacobs in England at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. These collectors will be discussed in the next chapter.

European collectors of fairy tales

This chapter deals with the most famous European collectors and authors of fairy tales, concretely Charles Perrault, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and Joseph Jacobs. Each of the authors made a great contribution to children´s literature. Their most important works are mentioned in this chapter.

Charles Perrault

Charles Perrault (1628 – 1703) was a French writer and a member of the Académie française[1]who is considered to be the founder on a new literary genre – the fairy tale. He was also known as the leader of the Moderns in the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns. He was a very popular author under the reign of Louis XIV. In those days, exactly in November 1693 he published in French journal *Le Mercure Galant* his verse story "Les Souhaites Ridicules" which became later known by Joseph Jacobs as a fairy tale "The Three Wishes". Three years later, his first prose fairy tale "La Belle ou Bois Dormant" appeared in the same journal (Carpenter & Prichard, 1995, p. 178). Charles Perrault is probably the most known for his collection of fairy tales which was published under the name of his son Pierre: *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* in 1697 and subtitled *Contes de ma Mère l´Oye*. This collection of fashionable fairy tales started to be published in 1699 in provinces. Perraults´ traditional tales were very popular in French sophisticated court circles and they were translated into English as *Mother Goose Tales* in 1729 by Robert Samber. This work contained the original fairy tales as for example "Le Petit Poucet" ("Hop o´ my Thumb"), "Cendrillon, ou la petite pantoufle de verre" ("Cinderella"), "La Belle ou bois dormant" ("Sleeping Beauty"), "Les Fées" ("The Fairies"), "Le Chat botté" ("Puss in Boots"), "Riquet à la houppe" ("Ricky with the Tuft"), "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" ("Little Red Riding-Hood") or "La Barbe Bleue" ("Blue Beard") and many others (Drabble, 2000, p. 781).

A lot of these stories were already well-known to people in those days, because they were spread orally to entertain and educate children, but Perrault was the first one who wrote them down. Many of these fairy tales were later modified and rewritten down by brothers Grimm. (Parrault Fairy Tales, n.d.). Brown (1992) adds that Perrault´s stories were originally intended for adults and "became a sophisticated vehicle for the morals of the French court at the time" and it is one of the reasons why they were originally intended for adults (p. 8).

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

The brothers Grimm, Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm (1785 – 1863) and Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1786 – 1859) were German academics and authors who together collected and published folk tales. They were very influenced by romanticism in the 19th century which is reflected in their works. Instead of folklore, they were also interested in mythology, law and

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[1] French literary academy

philology. Moreover, they also established a methodology for collecting and recording folk stories.

They are best known for their collection of fairy tales *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, the first volume of which was published in 1812 and the second volume followed in 1815. This work was later translated into English by Edgar Taylor in 1823 under the name *German Popular Stories* and thus the number of fairy tales available to English children was greatly increased (Drabble, 2000, p. 436). In 1819 the second edition of their fairy tales was published with important changes in comparison to the previous one. This modified edition with five new fairy tales was translated in many languages including English as *Grimms′Fairy Tales*. It consists of famous stories such as for example "Cinderella", "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Woolf and Seven Little Kids", "The Fisherman and His Wife", "The Seven Ravens", "Hansel and Gretel" or "Tom Thumb". (Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales)

Joseph Jacobs

Joseph Jacobs (1854 – 1916) was a scholar and Jewish historian, but primarily he was an English folklorist. He is best known for his great contribution to children's literature. He was the most significant collector of fairy tales in England, even though he was born in Sydney in Australia into a family of London immigrant. In October 1873 he left Australia for England and started to study at St John's College in Cambridge where he graduated in 1877. Jacobs was interested in folklore thanks to his anthropological studies; he edited the journal Folk-lore and several books of fables and in those days became very famous writer of fairy tales for children. Apart from the fact, that he published *English Fairy Tales* in 1890, four years later he also published *More English Fairy Tales*, *Celtic Fairy Tales* in 1892 and *Indian Fairy Tales* in 1912. He died of heart disease in 1916 in New York in the United States of America (Bergman, 1983).

The collection *English Fairy Tales* consists of many well-known fairy tales such as "How Jack went to seek his fortune", "The Story of the Tree Little Pigs", "The Story of the Three Bears", "The History of Tom-Thumb" or "Johnny-Cake" (Authorama, 2003). The last one mentioned fairy tale is also known under the name "The Gingerbread Man". Jacobs′ series of collections of fairy tales made him one of the most popular writers of fairy tales for English speaking children. Regarding Jacob′s writing style, Kaplan (2003) described it as following:

In all his writings for children, Jacobs preserved the 'oral voice' – the way the stories should actually be told to children. In maintaining this approach, Jacobs gave the world versions of its best known and most representative folk stories in a form suited to children while remaining true to the essential core of the original versions. (Storyteller)

The impact of the industrial revolution in the 19th century, especially an increasing urbanization and changes in educational system, caused the extinction of popular wisdom and oral tradition in general. And that is the reason why Jacobs started to collect fairy tales not only in England, but also fare away from here. Therefore the book *English Fairy Tales* consists of fairy tales originated in Scotland or fairy tales retold by the descendants of English immigrants and moreover the original Australian fairy tales, which Jacobs had remembered from his childhood. For this reason, it is necessary to understand the title *English Fairy Tales* widely (Jacobs, 2005, p. 3).

Classification of Fairy Tales

Fairy tales can be classified according to many different points of view. Gebhartová (1987) divides fairy tales with regard to their origin into two types – 'the folk tales' and 'the authorial fairy tales'. The folktales have their roots in oral folklore and they were passed from generation to generation by storytellers ever since, whereas the authorial fairy tales have an author and they could by written in prose or in verse. The basic principles remain the same, but the plot and characters of authorial fairy tales may be different. They often reflect the elements of another literary genre, i.e. of a story or a novel. (Literatura pro děti s ukázkami textů, pp. 21-23).

One of the most important classifications of fairy tales is Aarne-Thompson tale type index that is a system for classifying folktales based on motifs. It was developed and published by Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne (1867–1925) in 1910 under the title *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* and translated and enlarged by American scholar of folklore Stith Thompson (1885–1976) in 1928 under the name *The Types of the Folktale* and again revised in 1961. In this tale type index, the tales are organized according to type and assigned a title and number and/or letter. The tales are divided into the following categories: Animal Tales (Types 1–299), Ordinary Folk Tales (Types 300–1199), Jokes and Anecdotes (Types 1200–

1999), Formula Tales (Types 2000–2399), and Unclassified Tales (Types 2400–2499). Most folk tales or fairy tales are classified under 'ordinary tales', which comprise nearly half of the index (Aarne-Thompson index, n.d.).

Another classification of fairy tales called *Morphology of the Folktale* was published in 1928 by Russian folklorist and philologist Vladimir Propp (1895 - 1970). It was a structural analysis and fundamental work on the theory of narrative. Propp´s intention was to reduce all folktales into one structure, because he was unsatisfied with the classification system of Aarne-Thompson Tale Type Index. Zipes (2006) cites that he "outlined thirty-one basic functions that constitute the formation of a paradigm, which was and still is common in Europe and North America" (Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre, p. 49).

Animal Fairy Tales

Brown (1992) states that animals appear in almost every fairy tale and only few fairy tales don´t include an animal protagonist, for instance "Rumpelstiltskin" or "Rapunzel". Animals in fairy tales are usually able to talk and their roles are very important, whether they act as a bearer of good news, give advice or warn (pp. 34, 35). The famous French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss says that animals in fairy tales are 'bons à penser' (good to think with), because the fairy tales explore many experiences through them, whether it is violence and injustice, fear or struggles for survival (Warner, Animals in Fairy Tales, 2009).

Animal fairy tales make a part of the 'Aarne-Thompson tale type index' which is one possible classification of fairy tales. There exist many definitions and explanations of what animal fairy tales are about. According to Gebhartová (1987), the animal fairy tales are numbered among folk tales and they are suitable especially for preschool children. Apart from the fact that animals play the main role in these fairy tales, they also behave and act like humans and they represent typical characters. The plot of animal fairy tales is allegorical and they usually end with a moral or lesson. (p. 21). Genčiová (1984) adds that the animal fairy tales are considered to be the oldest genre of fairy tales. In these fairy tales, animals, trees, humans or stones have a heart and an ability to talk. This kind of fairy tale still exists among the tribes of low-level civilizations. The animal fairy tales can be then divided according to animals´ behaviour and abilities into several types. The first type is fairy tales featuring animals which are able to speak. Animals, which are in addition to speaking endowed with an ability to do magic and whose crucial role is to help people, represent the second type of

animal fairy tales. The third type of animal fairy tales bear a resemblance to fables because the animals appearing in them represent personality traits, relations and behaviour of humans. Children like these stories because they have a close relationship with the animal kingdom (p. 24). Drabble (2000) describes the fable as "a short allegorical narrative relating to the actions of anthropomorphized animals and objects and distinguished by a consciously derived moral" (The Oxford Companion to English Literature New Edition, p. 336).

The animals usually also appear in didactic fairy tales and in repetitive or repetitive-cumulative fairy tales. The didactic fairy tales are stories intended to teach children a moral lesson. Genčiová (1984) mentions, that the main function of didactic fairy tales including for example "Little Red Riding Hood" or "The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids" is to teach children to be independent, to protect themselves and prepare them for their future lives (Genčiová, 1984, p. 24). Another type of a fairy tale that also evolved from animal fairy tales is the repetitive-cumulative fairy tale. This kind of fairy tale is designed especially for the youngest children to help them to improve their speech by remembering and repeating some passages of a fairy tale (p. 25). Rixon (1988) describes repetitive-cumulative fairy tales as short stories based on the repetition of similar actions or situations. The event is repeated several times all through the story and simultaneously a new character appears and joins in to accompany the main hero. As well as the number of joined characters increase, also the language is repeated and gets progressively longer with minor variations. The typical examples of repetitive-cumulative fairy tales are "The Great Enormous Turnip", "Henny – Penny" and "The Gingerbread Man", but the repeated situations can also be found in many others well-known fairy tales as for example in "Cinderella" or "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" (Rixon, 1988, pp. 4,5).

Genčiová´s classification of animal fairy tales is different in comparison with *The Types of International Folktales* created in 2004 by Hans-Jörg Uther, who expanded the tale type index of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson. Uther´s system organizes animal fairy tales according to the kind of animals appearing in them and thus distinguishes animal fairy tales featuring wild animals, wild and domestic animals, wild animals and humans, domestic animals and other animals and objects (The ATU System, n.d.).

History of Animal Fairy Tales

As was already mentioned, the animals appear in almost every fairy tale. The animals in literature are as old as the literature itself; we can find crows, lions, wolves, ravens, foxes and other beasts in ancient Egyptian and Greek and Indian sources, and also in the legendary

Aesop´s fables (Warner, 2009). According to Brown (1992), the motive of animals appeared already thousand years ago in India in the earliest collection of tales *Katha Sarit Sagara* (p. 6). Also nowadays, the animals appear in fairy tales very often. "This is because fairy tales became popular in a time before the industrialized evolution and many people still lived on rural land" (Govind, 2013).

Carpenter and Prichard (1995) mention, that the animal stories were accessible for the majority of children in the form of fables from the very beginning of written literature (p.24). The fairy stories about talking beasts were transmitted orally and existing animals were depicted in bestiaries. The production of books in which animals took part started in the middle of 18th century due to the beginning of a large bookselling of English literature for children; as for example John Newbery´s volume *A Pretty Books of Pictures for Little Masters and Misses* in 1752. The stories for children, in which the animal was a narrator of its life-story or played the principal role, began to appear from 1780s. The first of such books was titled *The Life and Perambulation of the Mouse* and was written in 1783 by Dorothy Kilner.

Also the moral tales originated in the 18th century, with animals as main characters, to convince children not to behave cruel upon animals. In these moral tales, the animal was used as a narrator or a hero who commentated on human behaviour. An example of such books was *Keeper´s Travels in Search of His Master* written in 1798 by Edward Augustus Kendall. At the same time, in the early 19th century, there appeared comic poems about funny horseplay of animals, for instance *Mother Hubbard* in 1805 (p. 24). The poem called Butterfly´s Ball in 1806 was an inspiration for many other stories from animal kingdom. *The Adventures of a Donkey* in 1815 and *Further Adventures of Jeremy Donkey* in 1821 written by Arabella Argus were for a long time the last books in which the animal played the main role. The stories, where the animals perform as narrators made a great return in 1877 with a novel *Black Beauty* written by Anna Sewell which became "one of the best-selling books for children of all time" (Carpenter & Prichard, 1995, p. 25).

Carpenter and Prichard (1995) highlight the importance of English authors at the beginning of the 20th century – Kenneth Graham with his book *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) and Beatrix Potter, who both used animals as "types of human character" in many of their books for young children. This approach was typical for the most of British tales about animals in the period between the First and the Second World War including the *Doctor Dolittle* books of Hugh Lofting or *A Pony for Jean* by Joanna Cannan which represented the first book of pony stories (p.25).

Foxes and Wolves in fairy tales

As was mentioned before, the animals appear in almost every fairy tale. Brown (1992) describes, that the domestic animals like cats, dogs, horses, sheep or cows are usually helpful and good ones (p. 34). On the other hand, there exist many wild animals like wolves and foxes that most often represent evil characters in fairy tales.

In pre-Christian times the fox was considered a symbol of gods or forest´s spirit but everything changed with the coming of Christianity and the fox began to represent a demonic creature. In many cultures, the fox appears in folklore as a symbol of cunning; the fox is also a very famous figure in fables and usually is described as greedy, dishonest and tricky (Wallner, 1998). The fox plays the main role in many traditional fairy tales; we can meet the fox in Jacobs´s collection of fairy tales *English Fairy Tales* as for example in a folk cumulative tale with a moral "Henny-Penny" who believes that the sky is falling down or in Jacobs´s another very famous fairy tale "The Gingerbread Man". The fox as the main character can be also found in *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck* written by Beatrix Potter.

Another evil character that appears in fairy tales very often is the wolf. The word 'wolf' is translated to Swedish and Norwegian language as a wicked person. Furthermore, the witches were believed to appear in the guise of wolves. According to Indo-European mythology the wolf is described as the beast with demonic origin. The earliest East-Indian legends depicted the wolf as evil and Christianity compared the wolf to the devil. Even the Holy Bible contains thirteen references to wolves, usually as symbols for destructiveness and greed. The wolf is considered to be a predator and correspondingly its nature is strongly associated with the attributes such as fear and danger. But there exist also some positive traits of the wolf found in mythology. According to the Roman tradition, the wolf was responsible for the childhood survival of the future founders of Rome, the twin brothers Romulus and Remus. Therefore, the Romans considered the wolf as a symbol of good. (Wallner, 1998). The wolf as the villain is well-known especially thanks to Grimm´s fairy tales "Little Red Riding Hood" and "The Woolf and the Seven Young Kids" and to Jacobs´s "The Story of the Three Little Pigs".

The Role of Fairy Tales in Children´s Lives

The role of fairy tales becomes more and more important in today´s world of technology and thus it is necessary to encourage children to read books of traditional folk tales to increase their general knowledge. Children between the ages of four and eight need

fairy tales for their mental development especially for an evolution of their fantasy and imagination. When listening to fairy tales, children come across many personality traits from silliness, cowardice, meanness to bravery or kindness and that´s the reason why another significant role of fairy tales is to strengthen children´s moral sense in order to deal with their future experiences in real life (Streit, 1992, pp. 11-25).

Animal fairy tales have a specific position in children´s reading materials because the animals and children are in a close relationship. Children like animal fairy tales or fables with allegoric meaning and moral the role of which is to lead them to obedience and responsibility and to protect them from premature adulthood. Obviously, children could identify with small animals easily. (Urbanová, 1998, p. 43).

According to Streit (1992), preschool-age children are dependent on storytelling. When parents narrate the stories or fairy tales to their children in the right way, later, the children will be able to narrate and read them correctly, too (p. 36). Fairy tales also have an educational function and we can rid children of bad habits thanks to the stories better than by parental reprimands (p. 42). Streit (1992) also adds that children who were interested in fairy tales during their childhood for a sufficient period of time are more resistant to nervous breakdowns in the adulthood and furthermore they have more profound interests (p. 58). To conclude the main ideas, it is obvious that fairy tales arouse children´s mental abilities and at the same time foster their interest in future.

Michal Černoušek, a Czech associate professor in psychology and a publicist, discusses the psychological issues as well as the meaning of fairy tales in children´s lives. According to him, a fairy tale is primarily a kind of art which has an irreplaceable place in children´s mental development and correspondingly its most important role is to evoke imaginations which are located deep in children´s mind (Černoušek, 1990, p. 6). The narration and listening to fairy tales consist of basic psychological relations that create a feeling of confidence and mutuality (p. 7). According to Černoušek (1990), children´s literature provides information, entertainment and advice and simultaneously develops the abilities of reading and comprehension (p. 12). Another significant function of fairy tales is to bring meaning and order to children´s almost chaotic world (p. 7). Regarding the imagination, Ellis and Brewster (1991) add following:

Stories exercise the imagination and they are a useful tool in linking fantasy and imagination with the child´s real world. They provide a way of enabling children to

make sense of their everyday life and forge links between home and school. (Ellis & Brewster, 1991, p. 1)

To summarize what has been mentioned above by all of the authors, fairy tales play an important role in children´s lives because they have a cognitive and therapeutic function as well as an educational purpose.

Using Fairy Tales in English Language Teaching

Fairy tales have a lot of particular features which make them easy to understand and thus very useful for language teaching and learning. They are suitable either for beginners or advanced students as well as for mixed-ability classes, because there can be practised many aspects of English language teaching (ELT), for example to practise verbal tenses, vocabulary or direct and indirect speech. Moreover, because the fairy tales in children´s books are written in simple language and usually accompanied by illustrations, they are also suitable for those students whose language abilities are limited. (Taylor, 2000, p. 3)
According to Ellis and Brewster (1991), the stories can serve as the basis for various language activities and the teacher can use them when introducing second language "presented in the context that is familiar to the child" (p. 1).

According to Taylor (2000), fairy tales are particularly beneficial not only for developing "cognitive and academic skills like analysing, synthesizing, summarizing etc.", but also for the fixation of new vocabulary and grammatical item or working with stress, rhythm and intonation when practising pronunciation (p. 3). Ellis and Brewster (1991) add to Taylor´s opinion that listening to stories enables the teacher to review new vocabulary items or sentences structures by exposing children to language in memorable and meaningful context. (p. 2).

Taylor (2000) claims, that fairy tales consist of many cultural components which help students to discover and understand some cultural differences and help them to develop their cultural awareness (p. 3). Ellis and Brewster add to Taylor´s opinion that listening to stories can improve "child´s confidence and encourage social and emotional development" (p. 1). Children admire listening or reading fairy tales over and over again. They exercise their imagination while trying to identify themselves with characters and at the same time they acquire new language items because a lot of their favourite fairy tales include 'natural repetition' of fundamental vocabulary and sentence structures and after that the children are

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given an opportunity to practice these structures in a meaningful context. (Ellis & Brewster, 1991, pp. 1, 2)

Ellis and Brewster (1991) say that fairy tales or stories can increase students´ motivation and develop not only their positive attitude to second language acquisition, but also encourage them to continue in learning (p. 1). Besides other things, fairy tales help students to develop their thinking strategies including for example classifying, problem-solving or comparing; strategies for learning English as a foreign language which contain for instance self-testing or training the memory and obviously they help them to develop study skills like organizing work, interpreting charts and graphs or using dictionaries (Ellis & Brewster, 1991, pp. 2, 3).

According to Ellis and Brewster (1991), when students listen to fairy tales, they share laugh, excitement and other feelings with their classmates which can support their social and emotional development and reinforce their confidence and simultaneously they develop listening and concentrating skills through illustrations and their general and prior knowledge about how language functions (pp. 1, 2). Taylor (2000) adds that fairy tales serve as a really useful authentic material that can be used not only in literature, but also in other school subject such as sociology, history, religion or anthropology (Using Folktales, p. 3).

This chapter deals with fairy tales in general. It discusses the history and classification of fairy tales as well as their characteristic elements and the most important European collectors. Moreover, the animal fairy tales, their history and typical villains appearing in them are described here. Fairy tales are a very old genre which is popular especially with children who often learn a lesson from them. They have an important function in children´s life because they not only help to encourage their social and emotional development but they also help them to discover and understand some cultural differences and for that reason they are considered to be a very useful and valuable material in ELT. Fairy tales provide a number of possibilities for teaching English topics, they increase children´s motivation and last but not least they are suitable for students whose language abilities are limited. The further chapters present research that explore possibilities of using English fairy tales featuring foxes and wolves as a learning method for English language learners in different classes.

III.   METHODS

This practical part is focused on basic information concerning the research. It also includes the author´s own research of particular foxes and wolves appearing in selected fairy tales. The background and the subjects of the research are described in this chapter as well as the methods used for gathering data, specifically a teacher questionnaire and an experiment, which was done with students. The research questions are also stated in this chapter.

Introduction to the research

The research chapter of this thesis is composed of three parts. The first part is the author´s own research based on the analysis of particular wolves and foxes in selected fairy tales. The second part is focused on using fairy tales in English language teaching (ELT). A questionnaire for teachers is used as a research tool. The objective of the third part is to find out whether the students are able to recognize the personality traits of the main animal characters of chosen fairy tales. For this purpose an experiment is used. The analysis of foxes and wolves appearing in animal fairy tales, the questionnaire and the experiment are described separately. Based on the theoretical part of this thesis, the objective of this research is to answer three following questions:

1. Are there any differences between particular wolves and foxes appearing in classic English fairy tales?

2. Are fairy tales used as an authentic material in English lessons?

3. Can students recognize personality traits of wolves and foxes in English fairy tales and identify adjectives for those?

Analysis of wolves and foxes

The objective of the research was to identify the differences between particular wolves and particular foxes in six selected fairy tales in which the wolf or the fox appears as the main character. The research focused on the best known fairy tales where the wolf plays the main role, concretely "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Story of Three Little Pigs" and "The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids". As for the fox, also two well-known fairy tales were selected, namely a repetitive-cumulative fairy tale "Henny-Penny", "The Gingerbread Man" and one fairy tale which is not probably so famous, but represents the traditional children´s literature

in England – *Jemima Puddle-Duck* written by Beatrix Potter. Finally, the differences between particular foxes and wolves are summarized in two tables.

Questionnaire

The subjects of the research were teachers of English language at lower secondary schools in the Plzeň region. The objective of this research was to find out whether those teachers use fairy tales in their lessons in general. To answer this question, a questionnaire was used (see Appendix A).

A questionnaire is an introspective research technique which is used very frequently for collecting information about a particular issue of interest. All the questions in the questionnaire need to be prepared in advance in a thoughtful way to gain written answers from respondents. Particular items of a questionnaire can be classified with regard to several criteria – the objective, the form and the content. Regarding the objective, there can be used content questions which gather data necessary for the completion of the objective of the research; and/or functional questions which optimize the process of questioning. According to the form of answers, we distinguish open-ended and close-ended questions. As for open-ended questions, the respondents form their answers themselves and these answers are quite difficult to analyse. As for close-ended questions, the respondents just choose from suggested answers. These second types of questions make questionnaires easier to fill and contribute to more reliable scoring of the responses. The third criterion is the content, which the item gathers. According to it, questions are divided into those that gather facts, or knowledge or opinions, attitudes and motives (Chráska, 2007, pp. 163-168).

The questionnaire was written in the English language and it was intended for teachers of English teaching at the lower secondary level. Furthermore, the questionnaire was anonymous and available on the internet to all teachers who wanted to participate in the research. It was a type of self-completion questionnaire which means that the respondents complete it by themselves in their own time. The questionnaire itself contained nine questions. All of the questions were close-ended with a possibility to choose only one option. This online questionnaire was created in an electronic form using the application 'Google docs'[2] in order to address as many respondents as possible. The survey was realized during February and March in 2014. The questionnaire link was sent by e-mail to my friends, the teachers of English teaching at lower secondary schools in Plzeň, namely Mgr. Ilona

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[2] Google Docs is a Web-based application for creating documents, spreadsheets, surveys etc.

Hanzlíková, Mgr. Radka Fialová, Mgr. Barbora Boušová and Mgr. Jana Karlíčková[3] who helped me with the distribution of this questionnaire among other teachers of English. Finally, I received 55 completed questionnaires.

Experiment

The experiment also belongs to second language research methods. It is one of the most common research techniques used in present-days. Experimental research deals with studying the effect of specified and controlled treatments given to subjects which are usually formed into groups. These groups can be put together especially for the purposes of the experiment or they can be natural that means they have already existed before the research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, pp. 136-137).

This research took place during the continuous teaching practice in the period from 27th January to 14th February 2014 at elementary school Benešova základní škola a mateřská škola Plzeň, Doudlevecká 35. The subjects of the research were students of English language at Benešova ZŠ, specifically the sixth graders; there were 14 pupils at the age from 11 to 12 years and they have been learning English since the 3rd grade. Their level of English was supposed to be A1, nevertheless, the differences between particular students were evident. This class was chosen firstly because of relatively low number of students in the class and secondly because of their age which I considered suitable for working with fairy tales.

Objectives and conditions

The objective of this experiment was to use a fairy tale in which the wolf appears as the main character in one lesson of English at elementary school. For the purpose of this research a fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" was chosen as an authentic material because the story is simple, not very long and primarily pupils know it in their mother tongue, so it should help them when working with it. Then the aim of the lesson was to find out whether students are able to recognize personality traits of the wolf appearing in this classic fairy tale and describe them. Moreover, students should learn a moral from this fairy tale. A tool used for this purpose was a video recording (see Appendix B) and a worksheet with tasks related to this recording (see Appendix C).

As was already mentioned, the subjects of this research were 14 pupils of class 6.A at the age from 11 to 12 years. This class was selected because children at this age still enjoy

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[3] All the teachers agreed with using their names in this thesis

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fairy tales and based on my previous experience, these pupils cooperated well and their language level was sufficient. The experiment took approximately 45 minutes and it was carried out in a special classroom for teaching languages. In this classroom, the seating was arranged into the U-shape and it was equipped with a computer and an interactive white board (IWB) which facilitated the running of the experiment. All the tasks related to the research were designed with regard to the students´ language skills, their age and their needs.

Classroom application

First of all, I prepared the worksheets and IWB before the lesson started. The lesson started with a lead-in activity called 'hangman'. When doing this activity, pupils practised their spelling and simultaneously they discovered the topic of that lesson – fairy tales. Then we started to talk about fairy tales in general. The pupils were asked about their favourite fairy tale or on the other hand which fairy tale they do not like and why. Each of the students contributed to the discussion. Then the English title of selected fairy tale was displayed on IWB and the students were made familiar with the content of the lesson.

Secondly, students were watching the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" on IWB. It was a short video downloaded from the Internet which was considered suitable for their language level. This video took approximately five minutes. When the recording finished, pupils were asked to match the words that were likely to be problematic (e.g. cottage, cupboard, woodcutter etc.), with appropriate pictures. This activity was done again on IWB. There was not any problem with the vocabulary; students were able to match all the pictures with the corresponding words. Then the fairy tale was replayed again and the students were asked to translate all passages in sequence. Then I displayed and enlarged a transcribed text of the recording of "Little Red Riding Hood" and after that the worksheets related to this fairy tale were distributed. Thereafter the instructions concerning the particular tasks were given to pupils. They had about fifteen minutes to complete the worksheets. I asked them to work individually. When the students were working, I monitored them and I was ready to give them advice if necessary. We checked out the answers together when the students were ready.

Task 1 was a task with a visual support. It contained five pictures of the main characters appearing in the fairy tale. Students were asked to write down the names of those characters. This exercise was focused mostly on spelling. The objective of task 2 was to find out, if the students were able to recognize the adjectives in general. They were asked to count up all the adjectives in the text of "Little Red Riding Hood" which was displayed on IWB in front of them. The main aim of task 3 was to describe the appearance of the wolf. Students

were asked to write simple sentences with the use of verb 'have' in the third person singular of present simple tense. I indicated the beginning of the first sentence to make this activity easier for students.

The tasks 4 and 5 were crucial for the research, because both of them were focused on the description of the wolf with the application of adjectives. Task 4 was focused on characteristic features of the wolf. Pupils were asked to describe the typical features of the wolf with use of adjectives from the text. To make this activity more comprehensible, the beginning of the first sentence was mentioned with the use of verb 'be' in the third person singular of present simple tense. Task 5 followed previous tasks. It also focused on the adjectives. In this task, students were asked to figure out as many adjectives as possible related to the wolf from the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" which were not mentioned in the text. Finally, at the end of the lesson, there were about five minutes left to check out students´ answers in their worksheets (see Appendix D). It was done again with the help of the IWB.

Particular methods, namely an analysis, a questionnaire and an experiment, which was used to gather data for finding answers to the research questions, are described in this chapter as well as the subjects and the background of the research. The results emerging from the analysis as well as from the questionnaire and the experiment are presented in the following chapter by the means of diagrams and tables with appropriate commentaries.

IV.   RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

In this chapter, the data collected from the research are introduced and analysed. Firstly, the findings of author´s own research based on the analysis of particular villains appearing in selected fairy tales are mentioned by the means of two tables. Secondly, the results of the questionnaire concerning the use of fairy tales as an authentic material in ELT are introduced. These results are illustrated by charts to be comprehensible and each chart is simultaneously accompanied by an explanation. Thirdly, the summary of an experiment done in a class is described. The commentaries of the results in term of the research questions are summarized at the end of this chapter.

Results of the analysis

The wolf

Three well-known fairy tales were selected for the purpose of this analysis, concretely "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids", both by brothers Grimm and "The Story of the Three Little Pigs" by Joseph Jacobs. All these fairy tales resemble in their main villain which is always described as 'the big bad wolf'. This signification gives evidence that wolves belong to the group of evil characters. The wolf is usually described as big, bad, cunning, mean, wicked and villainous in the majority of fairy tales.

In "Little Red Riding Hood" the wolf seems to be friendly when he meets Little Red Riding Hood in the forest; he asks her a lot of questions concerning the address of her grandmother. Instead of the negative characteristics mentioned above, the wolf is also inquisitive and noisy. The wolf from "The Story of the Three Little Pigs" is also described as wicked and villainous. He intends to demolish the houses of the three pigs. A house of the first pig is made of straw and a house of the second pig is made of sticks. Both of the houses fall down when the wolf huffs and puffs and two pigs run to their oldest and the most intelligent brother, whose house is made of bricks. The wolf wants to do the same with the third house but the bricks are resistant enough. But the wolf does not give up. He tries to get into the house through the chimney but he fall down in a trap and this is his end. This wolf is considered inventive because of his idea with the chimney. The wolf which appears in "The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids" is also inventive because he uses a chalk to make his voice soft and puts dough over his paws and sprinkles it with white flour to make them as pale

white as the goat has. This wolf is also very persistent when he tries to get into the goat´s house three times.

Table 1: Characteristics of Wolves

FAIRY TALE	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOLF
Little Red Riding Hood	big, bad, cunning, mean, wicked and villainous *but also* **deceitful** – he pretends to be Little Red Riding Hood´s grandmother **nosy, inquisitive** – he queries Little Red Riding Hood about her grandmother´s address
The Story of The Three Little Pigs	big, bad, cunning, mean, wicked and villainous *but also* **inventive** – he decides to get into pig´s house through the chimney
The Goat and The Seven Young Kids	big, bad, cunning, mean, wicked and villainous *but also* **inventive** – he uses a chalk to make his voice soft and flour to make his black paws white **persistent** – he tries to get into goat´s houses three times **deceitful** – he pretends to be goats´ mother

The Fox

The fairy tales chosen for the purpose of this analysis were repetitive cumulative fairy tales "Henny-Penny" and "The Gingerbread Man", both collected by Joseph Jacobs and an English fairy tale *Jemima Puddle-Duck* by Beatrix Potter. The fox represents a typical negative character which is usually described as sly, cunning and crafty. Unlike the wolf, the fox is not described in detail as the wolf is in almost every fairy tale. The main difference between the wolf and the fox is that the fox is not usually punished for his bad behavior.

In all of these fairy tales, the fox behaves as a villain, whose main intention is to eat the other animals. At the beginning of a fairy tale, the fox always pretends that he wants to help the other animals. But in fact, his main intention is to devour them. Therefore the fox is also considered clever and intelligent villain. As for the fairy tales "Henny-Penny" and "The Gingerbread Man", the fox finally eats the main characters and it is the end of the story. The

fairy tale *Jemima Puddle-Duck* is about a domestic duck Jemima whose eggs are usually taken away by the farmer´s wife because she thinks that Jemima is a miserable sitter. The fox is very gallant at the beginning and offers to Jemima to nest in a shed at his home, but the only thing he wants is to eat Jemima and her eggs. Finally, this clever foxy gentleman eats her eggs, but Jemima is fortunately rescued by her friend, the farm collie called Kep, and the fox is chased away.

Table 2: Characteristics of Foxes

| FAIRY TALE	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOX
Henny Penny	Sly, cunning, crafty, clever, intelligent, hungry
The Gingrebread Man	Sly, cunning, crafty, clever, intelligent, hungry
Jemima Puddle-Duck	Sly, cunning, crafty, clever, intelligent, hungry *but also* **gallant and polite** – the fox behaves at the beginning very politely and courteously

Commentary on the analysis

The research showed us that the fox and the wolf appearing in classic fairy tales are both villains with their typical features and behavior. They both do not hesitate to use various tricks to catch their prey. Therefore they are cunning, sly and crafty, but there are also differences between them. The wolf is more straightforward than the fox; he does not pretend to be friendly and does not offer any help to other animals. Thus the fox inspires confidence meanwhile the wolf scares the others. On the other hand, the fox is more intelligent than the wolf and thus the fox always outsmarts the other animals (or the Gingerbread Man) and devours them. Another difference between these two villains is in the consequences of their behavior at the end of the fairy tales. The wolf, usually not so clever as the fox, is drowned in a well with his belly full of stones or runs away, whereas the fox is not punished. As for the appearance, the wolf is always described in more detail than the fox. We know that the wolf is

big and bad, with big eyes and teeth, with black paws, but the fox is usually described only as a sly character.

Results of the questionnaire

This part shows the results of the questionnaire for teachers at lower secondary level about using fairy tales in ELT. Each chart represents one question from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of nine questions therefore nine graphs are used. These graphs demonstrate different opinions of 55 teachers who completed the questionnaire.

Do you use fairy tales in your English lessons?

No
24%

Yes
76%

■ Yes
■ No
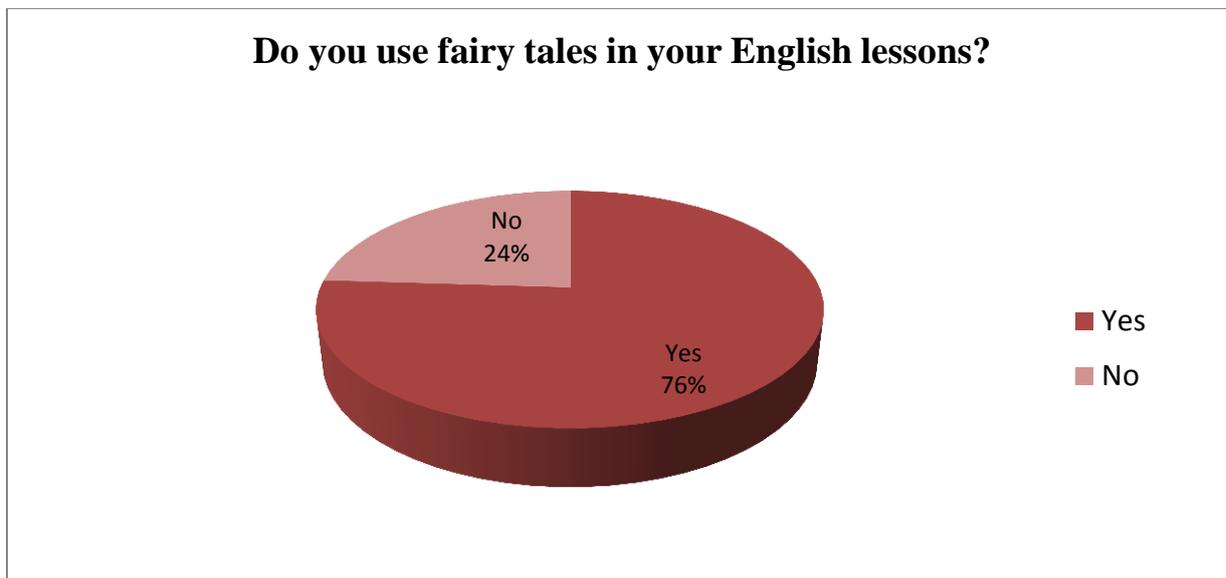
Graph 1: Using fairy tales in ELT

Graph 1

The first question of the questionnaire was crucial for this research. The objective of this first question was to find out whether the teachers of English at lower secondary school work with fairy tales in their lessons in general. I received 55 completed questionnaires. The following chart demonstrates a very positive attitude of English teachers for using fairy tales in their lessons because more than three quarters of respondents (exactly 42 respondents) answered in the positive to this question. Only 11 teachers do not use fairy tales as authentic material in their lessons. Their reasons why they do not use fairy tales in their English lessons were not a subject of this research.

If yes, how often do you use them?

- once a year — 56%
- four times a year — 24%
- once a month — 10%
- more often — 10%

Legend:
- once a year
- four times a year
- once a month
- more often
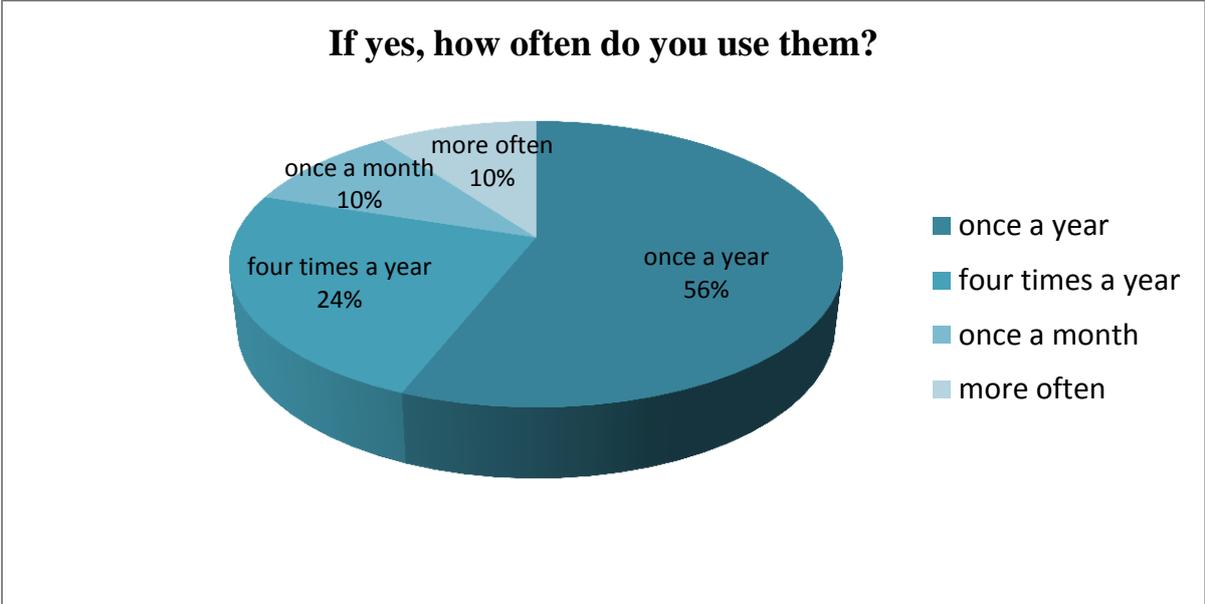
Graph 2: Frequency of using fairy tales in ELT

Graph 2

The aim of the second question was to find out how often do teachers of English language work with fairy tales during the school year. The second question was close-ended with a possibility to choose only one answer. The respondents to this question were only those who answered in the positive the previous question, which means 42 teachers of English at lower secondary schools. Resulting from the questionnaire more than a half of the teachers uses fairy tales in their English lessons four times a year, 10 respondents use them once a year and surprisingly, the rest of the respondents works with fairy tales once a month or more often. To be more precise, four teachers use fairy tales once a month and four teachers use them even more often.

Which fairy tales do you prefer in ELT?
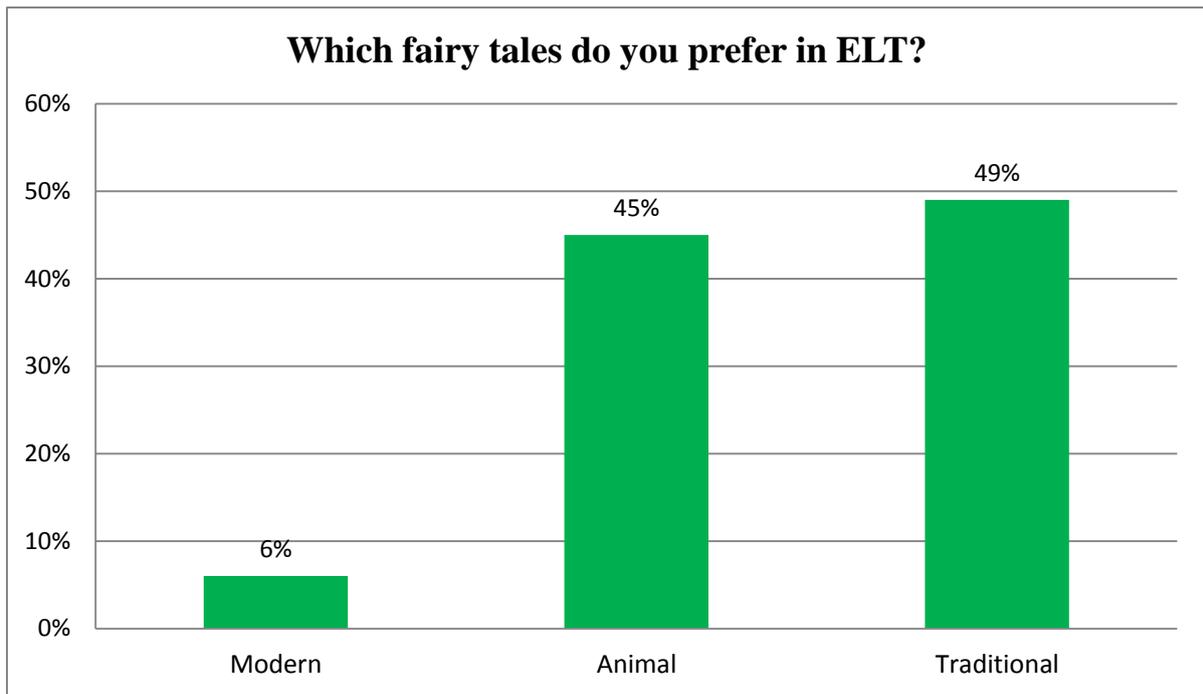
Graph 3: Preference of fairy tales in ELT

Graph 3

The objective of the third question was to discover which type of fairy tales the teachers prefer in ELT. The majority of the respondents use animal or traditional fairy tales in their English lessons, concretely 19 respondents prefer animal fairy tales and even 21 respondents give preference to using traditional fairy tales. The rest of the teachers responding to the questionnaire (only four teachers) prefer working with modern fairy tales.

Have you ever used a fairy tale in which the wolf or the fox appeared?
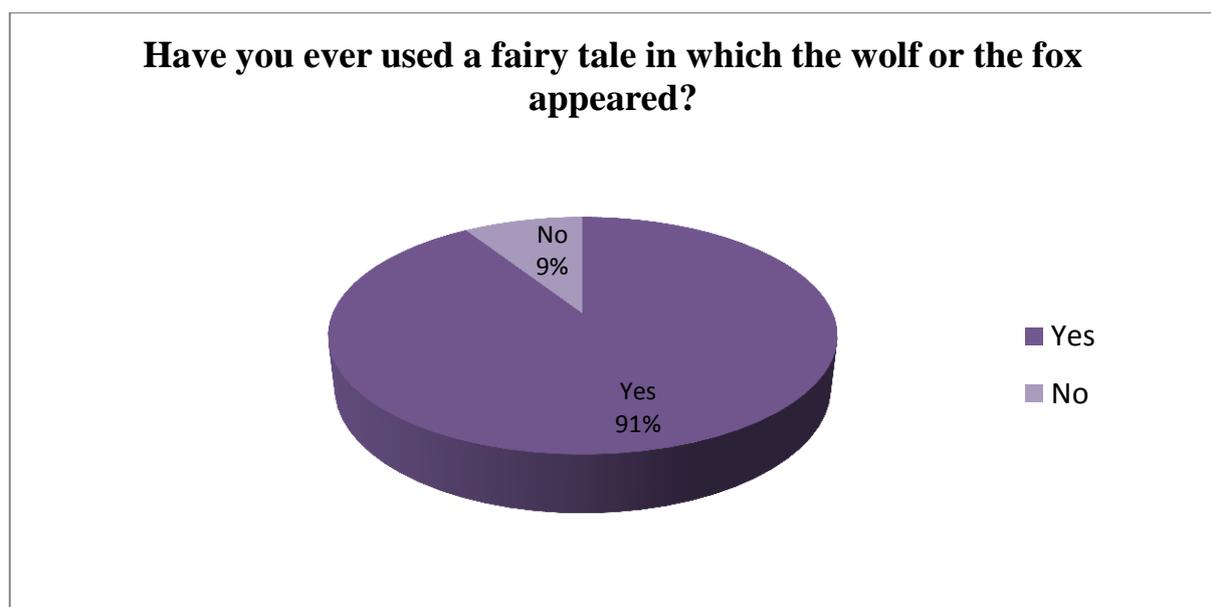
Graph 4: Fairy tales with the wolf or the fox in ELT

Graph 4

The aim of the fourth question was to find out whether the teachers of English have ever used such fairy tale, in which the fox or the wolf appeared. From this chart emerges, that the majority of respondents, specifically 38 respondents have ever used such fairy tale and only six respondents have never worked with a fairy tale in which the wolf or the fox appears.

Which element of language do you mostly teach while using fairy tales?

- Vocabulary: 64%
- Grammar: 28%
- Pronunciation: 8%
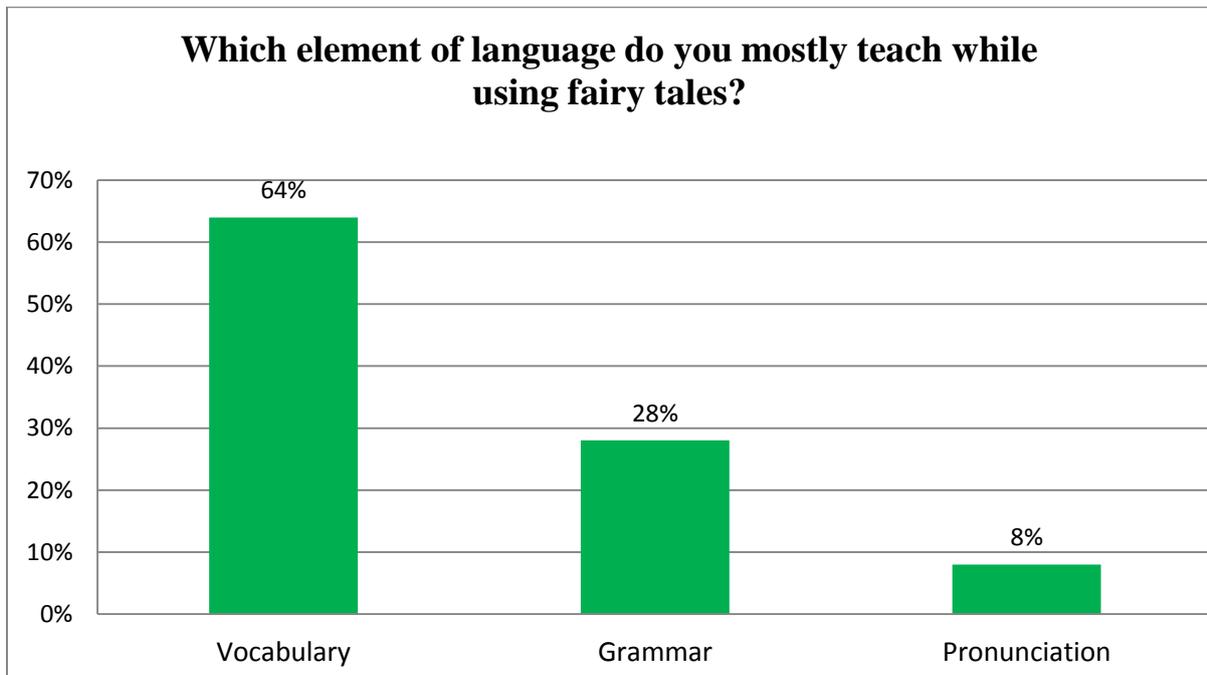
Graph 5: Mostly taught elements of language through fairy tales in ELT

Graph 5

The fifth question asked the respondents which element of language they particularly teach or practise when using fairy tales. Most of the respondents, concretely 27 teachers use fairy tales mostly for teaching vocabulary, 12 teachers for teaching grammar and only three respondents use them for teaching pronunciation.

Which skill do you mostly practise while using fairy tales?
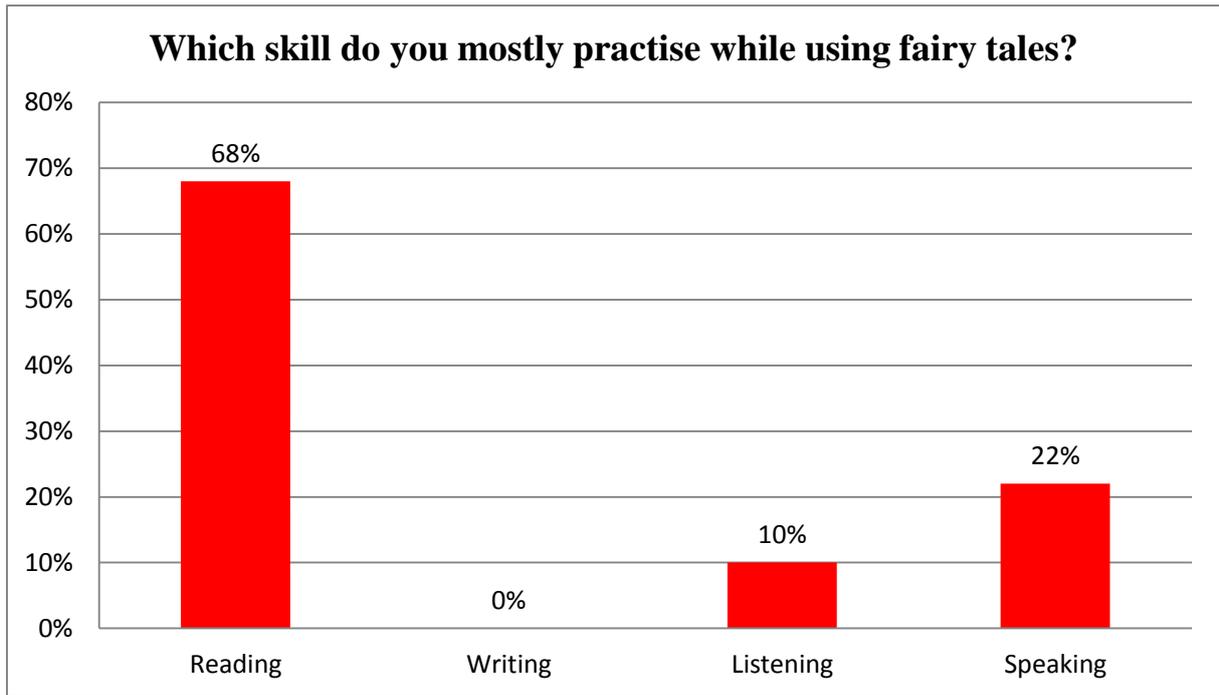
Graph 6: Mostly practised skill through fairy tales in ELT

Graph 6

From this bar chart we can see which skill is the most practised when working with fairy tales. According to 29 respondents, the most practised skill through fairy tales is reading. Nine teachers use fairy tales for practising speaking, only four teachers for practising listening and what was interesting, that nobody use fairy tales for practising writing.

Do students like working with fairy tales?
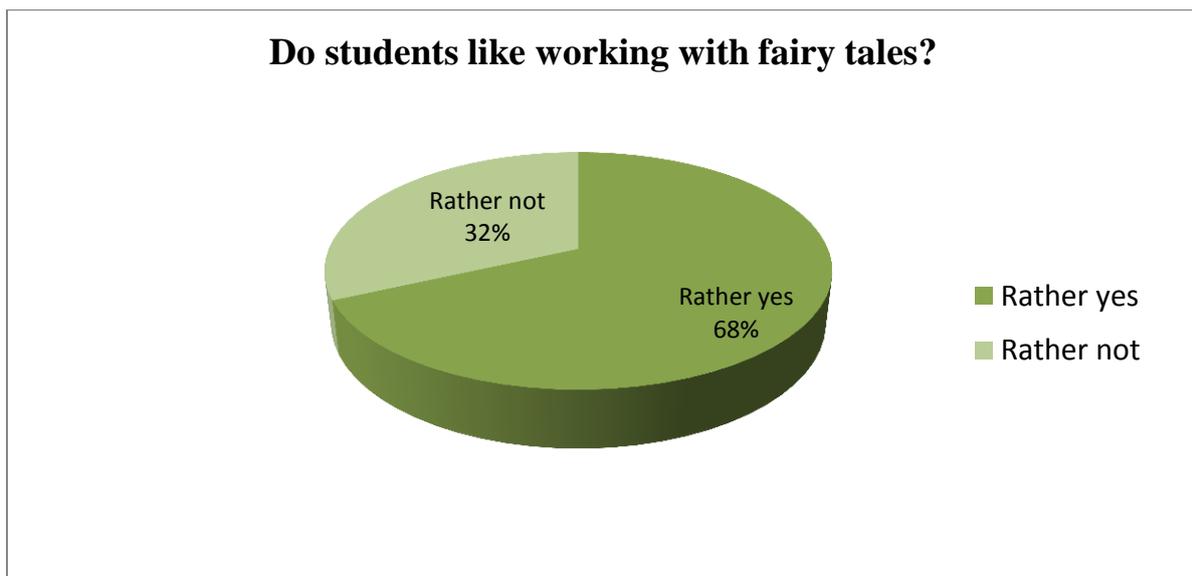
Graph 7: Popularity of working with fairy tales in ELT

Graph 7

This fifth graph demonstrates what teachers think about their students´ attitudes to working with fairy tales in ELT. More than half of the respondents suppose that their students like working with fairy tales and 18 respondents do not think so. Students´ attitude to working with fairy tales was not a subject of this research.

Which grade do you find the most appropriate for working with fairy tales?
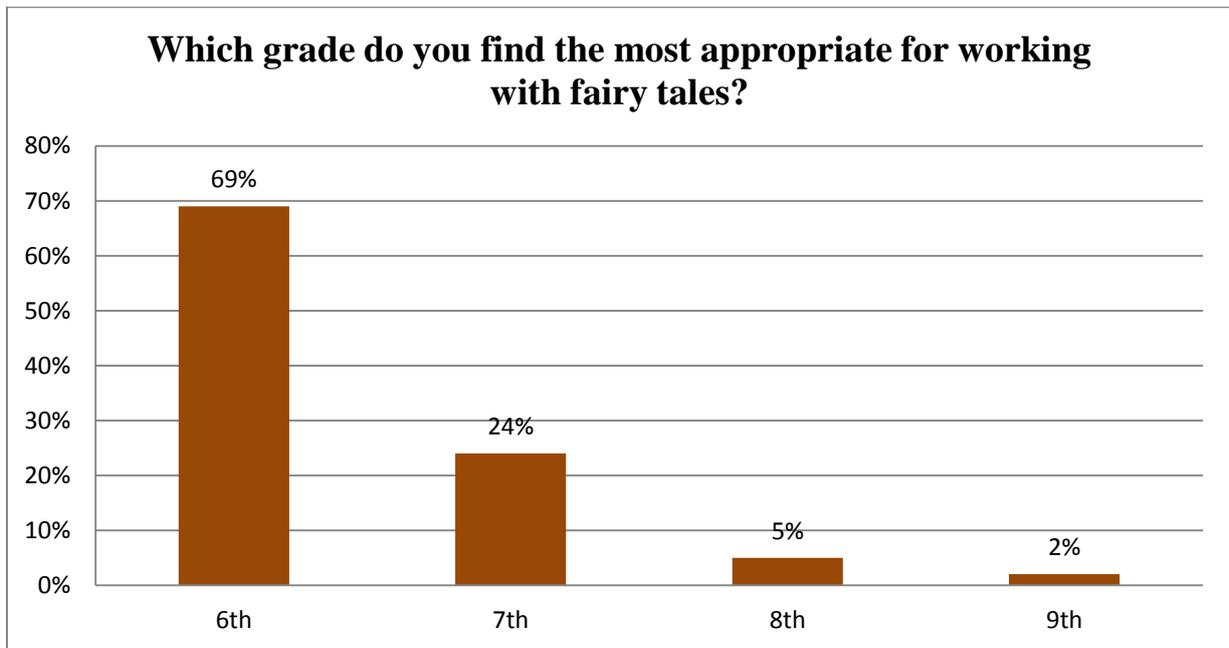
Graph 8: The most appropriate grade for working with fairy tales in ELT

Graph 8

The objective of the sixth graph was to find out for which grade are the fairy tales the most appropriate. A majority of the respondents, specifically 29 teachers answered that fairy tales are the most appropriate for 6th graders, 10 teachers find fairy tales the most suitable for the 7th graders and only three respondents think that fairy tales in English lesson are the most appropriate for the 8th and the 9th graders.

What is the most important benefit of using fairy tales in ELT?

- Entertainment
- Motivation
- Authentic material
- Good source of language
- Educational impact

34%
11%
23%
14%
18%
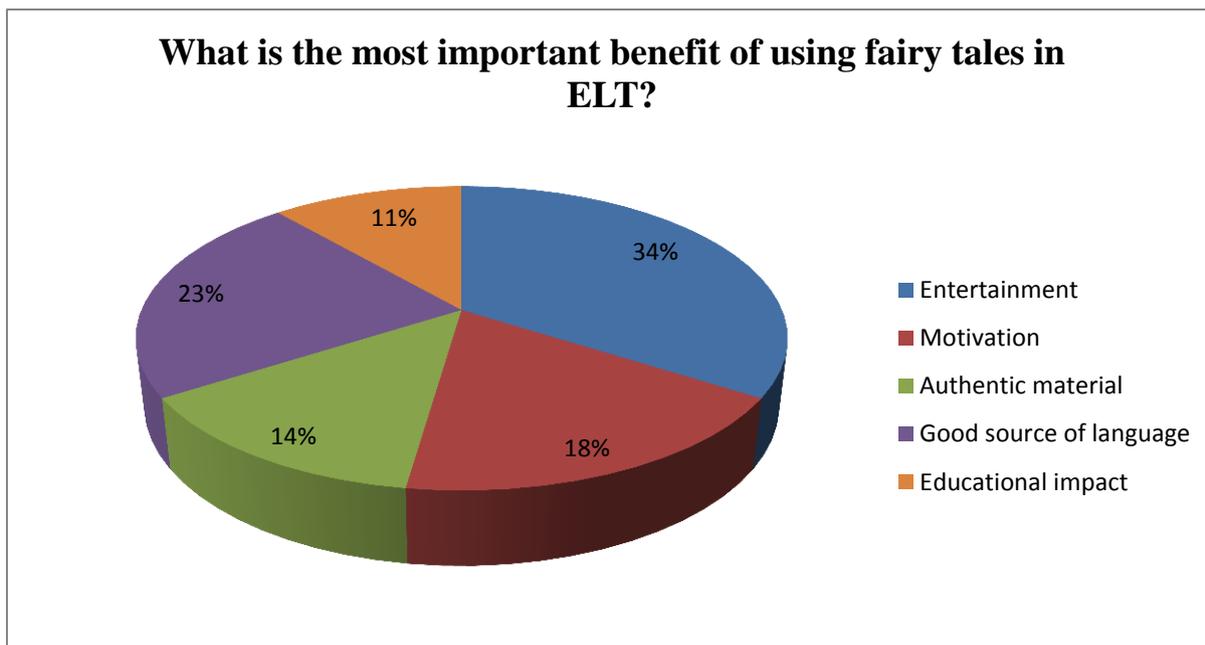
Graph 9: Benefits of using fairy tales in ELT

Graph 9

The last question related to the benefits of fairy tales. Teachers were asked to choose the most important benefit of using fairy tales in ELT. The highest number of people, specifically 15 respondents, considered entertainment as the most important benefit, while 10 respondents found the fairy tales as a good source of language. The motivation is considered as the most important benefit by eight people. Six teachers think that the greatest benefit of fairy tales in ELT is that they are a kind of authentic material. The rest of the respondents, five teachers, found the educational impact of fairy tales the most beneficial.

Commentary on the questionnaire

According to the figures emerging from the first question of teacher questionnaire, it seems that the majority of the respondents have a positive attitude to using fairy tales in ELT. Only few respondents do not use fairy tales in ELT (see graph 1). The reasons why they do not use fairy tales in ELT were not a subject of this research. As for the frequency of using fairy tales in ELT, more than three quarters of the respondents work with fairy tales at least four times during a school year in their classes, some of them even use fairy tales in their lessons once a month or more often (see Graph 2). Because of the relative high frequency of using fairy tales, they seem to be a very popular material among English teachers.

As for the preference of fairy tales, nearly half of the teachers (concretely 21 respondents) use traditional fairy tales in ELT and 19 respondents prefer to work with animal

fairy tales in their classes (see Graph 3). Both of these two types of fairy tales are considered to be the best known among pupils. In my opinion, the choice of the fairy tale depends on the pupils´ age. The animal fairy tales are the simplest ones and they are suitable for younger learners, whereas the traditional fairy tales are more complex and thus suitable for older and advanced learners. Only four teachers use modern fairy tales in their lessons. This low number can signify that modern fairy tales are not often used in ELT because there exists rarely a comparison with its Czech version and thus it is more difficult for students to cope with it.

The important finding is that almost every teacher has ever worked with a fairy tale in which the fox or the wolf appeared (see Graph 4). This fact corresponds with my expectations. One possible explanation for the popularity of animal fairy tales is that they consist of various animal characters which represent some typical behavior and these personality traits are recognized and described by students without difficulty. Pupils can differentiate good and evil characters and they can also learn a moral from those fairy tales, which could have an educational impact on children. Furthermore, their various adaptations are easily accessible on the Internet with useful comments and tips of other teachers.

As for the elements of the language, most of the responding teachers use fairy tales mainly for teaching vocabulary and grammar (see Graph 5). I expected this result, because fairy tales usually consist of vocabulary in context that children understand and furthermore, children can practice past simple tense and some set phrases when working with fairy tales. As for the language skills the teachers can practice when using fairy tales, the majority of the respondents said that they use fairy tales mostly for practicing reading, in preference to speaking and listening (see Graph 6). Surprisingly, there was no teacher who practices writing when using fairy tales. These results did not confirm my expectations. I supposed the most practiced skills when using fairy tales would be listening and reading, though I think that fairy tales are also suitable for practicing speaking and writing. In my opinion, teachers can practice all skills when working with fairy tales, but it depends on their intentions and also on the chosen activities related to the fairy tale.

Regarding the popularity of fairy tales among students, the results confirmed my expectations. Nearly half of the teachers think that many pupils do not like working with fairy tales (see Graph 7). One of the possible explanations is obvious. At the age of 11 or 12 years, students are still interested in fairy tales, they do not find them embarrassing, but their language level is often insufficient to work with more difficult ones. On the other hand, when they get older and their vocabulary is more expanded and improved, they are not interested in fairy tales already. For these reasons, the 6th graders are considered to be the most appropriate

class for working with fairy tales according to the majority of teachers who participated in the research (see Graph 8). Based on my own experience, I absolutely agree. That is the reason why the classroom research was done with the sixth graders.

As for the benefits of using fairy tales in ELT, the results are quite balanced (see Graph 9). As I expected, the majority of the teachers considers fairy tales in ELT as a kind of entertainment and a good source of language. One possible explanation is that children´s memory keeps the new language easily because they are grabbed into the plot of the story. As for the entertainment, working with fairy tales could be entertaining when the activities are chosen properly with regard to children´s age and their language level. Moreover, teachers consider fairy tales in ELT as a source of authentic material and thus the source of motivation.

Commentary on the classroom research

In view of the fact that I knew all the students from this class personally from my own teaching practice, I expected good outcomes of this lesson. These pupils were hard-working during the whole teaching practice and there were no problems with their discipline. The objective of the classroom research was to find out whether the children are able to recognize personality traits of the wolf appearing in the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" and identify the adjectives for those. Therefore, the whole lesson was focused on using of adjectives. The lesson was composed of various activities – for example a warm-up activity 'hangman', listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension etc.

The first activity 'hangman' motivated students and simultaneously it served as a lead-in to the topic. Even though, students were not used to working with fairy tales in their English lesson, it seemed they liked it because they cooperated very well. The atmosphere in the classroom was friendly and pupils coped with given tasks without any problems. Moreover, I was very pleased by the students´ language level; they were able to understand the recording very well and also their ability of expression was satisfactory. They have been learning English language for four years. A great advantage of this lesson was that students were familiar with the Czech version of the fairy tale which helped them a lot with its translation in the second activity. They were able to comprehend the meaning of some difficult vocabulary based on the general knowledge of the fairy tale in their mother tongue.

When working with worksheets, the first activity in the worksheet was quite simple for students. They recognized the main characters from the fairy tale and wrote their names down with relative ease. Students did not have any problems with the second activity in which they

were asked to find out all the adjectives in the text. Moreover, they were able to identify which adjectives are related to the wolf and subsequently use these adjectives in the fourth activity in the worksheet. They could also describe the wolf´s appearance with the use of simple phrases such as 'He has big eyes' or 'He has big ears' and so on in the third activity in the worksheet. And finally, in the last activity, students wrote down many adjectives that were not mentioned in the text such as 'hungry', 'fast', 'ugly' etc. It follows that, students have sufficient vocabulary and also that they are able to recognize personality traits of the wolf and describe its appearance with use of appropriate adjectives (see Appendix D).

The research, consisting of the teacher questionnaire and the classroom experiment, shows that fairy tales can be used as a source of a valuable authentic material. Emerging from the result of the questionnaire, teachers like to use fairy tales for various purposes – they can motivate students when the topic and also the target class are chosen properly, they serve as a good source of language and they are entertaining. All these advantages of using fairy tales in ELT were confirmed during the application of the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" in the classroom. Students were able to describe the wolf with use of appropriate adjectives and also to compare his personality traits with human behaviour. In addition, the students were highly motivated, because they were exposed to another source of language than they are used to work with. Secondly, they were engaged because of the choice of the activities. Besides all these benefits, they practised all of language skills and learnt new lexis through fairy tales easily because they were grabbed in the plot of fairy tale.

The most important findings of the research are summarized in this part of the thesis. It also describes and explains the particular outcomes of the researches. The implications for teachers, the limitations that influenced the research and the suggestions for further research will be described in the following chapter.

V.   IMPLICATIONS

This chapter, which is divided into three parts, provides the information concerning the research from author´s point of view. In the first part of this chapter, the implications for teachers based on the research described above are presented. The second part deals with the limitations and weaknesses, which were discovered in the process of carrying out the research and analysing the data. In the third part of this chapter, the suggestions for further research are mentioned.

Pedagogical implications

The research carried out by means of the teacher questionnaire shows that fairy tales in ELT are used by the majority of respondents. Working with fairy tales in ELT can be motivating as well as entertaining on condition that the fairy tale is selected with regard to the pupils´ age, their interests and their language level. Also the types of the activities related to the fairy tales should be chosen properly. According to many experienced linguists, the choice of the activity is more important than the choice of the material. Fairy tales can serve as a source of language enrichment when used appropriately. Moreover students are able to practice all language skills when working with fairy tales. The short fairy tales and repetitive fairy tales are popular especially with younger learners who can learn new grammatical structures or vocabulary by repetition of the language throughout the story. The 6th graders are considered to be the most suitable group for working with fairy tales in general.

The analysis of wolves and foxes in selected fairy tales reveals that there are slight differences between those villains. On the basis of this analysis I prepared one English lesson where the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" was used as a source of an authentic material. It is very important to choose a suitable fairy tale or to modify it with regard to the target class. Then the classroom research suggests that pupils can recognize that the wolf has typical features which can be compared to human characteristics. For that reason the fairy tales are supposed to be used for teaching children about good and bad manners and thus they can help to build pupil´s value system and self-image.

The description of wolves and foxes is appropriate to be used in cross-curricular teaching. This approach involves the application of pupils´ knowledge to more than one school subject simultaneously. Therefore, the topic 'Wolves and foxes as villains in English fairy tales' can be connected with fine art – children can create e.g. wanted posters for those

villains. This topic is also suitable to be connected with zoology – pupils can make use of their prior knowledge of mammals, specifically canines and felines, to describe the appearance and behaviour of the wolf or the fox in English lesson. In addition, fairy tales can serve as a great tool for multicultural teaching. Working with different versions of the "Little Red Riding Hood" or another well-known fairy tale from different regions of the world is an excellent way to bring multicultural literacy into the classroom.

Limitations of the research

The first limitation related to the description of villains in the fairy tales. I discovered that the wolf is usually described in more detail than the fox. It is obvious that he has black fur, long nose, big eyes, big teeth, fury hands etc. The wolf´s appearance and his behaviour are depicted with the use of many adjectives, but the behaviour of the fox is described in the same manner in all selected fairy tales – the fox is depicted as cunning, sly, crafty and clever. Based on these findings, I decided to use a fairy tale with the wolf as a major character in the classroom application.

The second limitation was that the research was done with one class only, even though my first intention was to carry out this research in all classes from the 6th grade to 9th grade. A short time after I started teaching all the classes, I decided not to do the research in the 7th grade because there were too many pupils in and in addition to that, this class was considered an extreme example of a mixed-ability one. There were 24 students with different level of language, different intelligence as well as different learning styles. At the same time I decided not to carry out the research with the 8th and 9th graders because these classes were specialized in ice-hockey and there were a lot of cancelled lessons because of their training sessions and matches. That is the reason why the research was carried out only with the 6th graders.

Another limitation concerned the extent of the classroom research. Unfortunately, I could not use more than one lesson for the research because of the schoolwork which had to be followed. My original intention was to do the experiment twice with the sixth graders; firstly, with a fairy tale in which the wolf appears and secondly with a fairy tale in which the fox plays the main role to compare the characteristics of those villains. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to do this because of the lack of time; and it was impossible to present two fairy tales in 45 minutes. Thus, only one fairy tale was used for the purpose of the experiment. I decided to work with "'Little Red Riding Hood" in which the big bad wolf appears, because his personality traits are well recognizable and I supposed students to be familiar with it.

The last limitation related to the number of respondents. As for the questionnaire, the research was carried out by online application Google docs, which I supposed to be the most effective and the fastest way of gathering data. Finally, I was disappointed by the relatively low number of completed questionnaires. During the period of two months I received 55 filled-in questionnaires. However, the questions 2-9 of the questionnaire are based on the answers of 42 respondents who answered in the first question that they are interested in using fairy tales in ELT. Therefore the results of the questionnaire are rather limited because of the low number of respondents. We can consider the numbers emerging from the questionnaire only as sample results which provide a glimpse into the actual situation concerning using fairy tales in ELT in the Plzeň region. Therefore the results cannot be generalized.

Suggestions for Further Research

As mentioned above, the results of the questionnaire are based only on the answers of 42 teachers, who responded to the first question in the positive. I considered this number insufficient to reveal the current situation of using fairy tales by teachers of English at lower secondary schools in the Plzeň region. Further research should cover a larger sample of respondents to be more reliable. It is also evident that the questionnaire does not include all possible questions related to using fairy tales in ELT. Thus the further research could be composed of larger number of questions to be more detailed.

As for the experiment, the first possibility of further research is related to the number of classes in which the research took place. It means that the research should be carried out in more than one class. From my point of view, it is important to do the research with students of different ages and language levels to have a valuable comparison of their abilities to work with fairy tales.

The second possibility of further classroom research would regard its content, which means that more than one fairy tale should be used. If two or more fairy tales were used, the pupils would be able to compare the main characters, the plot and also the morals of particular fairy tales. Moreover, they would become used to work with fairy tales that could improve their language skills, their imagination and perhaps they could be motivated to read English fairy tales in their free time.

Another suggestion for further research is to use another various activities related to the fairy tale. In my research, I preferred students to have worksheets which were created on the basis of a recording, but there are many possibilities what to do with fairy tales – for

example a role-playing game which is popular especially with younger pupils. Students try to act and speak like the main characters of fairy tale. To improve students´ pronunciation or to teach them a new grammatical structure, the repetitive fairy tales are utterly appropriate. Such activities are entertaining and they could help to improve pupils´ ability of expression and to memorize the set phrases. Naturally, the choice of a suitable activity depends on the intention of the teachers; which language skill they would like to practise.

This chapter provides the possible implications for English language teachers based on the results of previous research. It discusses the weaknesses and limitations which occurred in the process of doing the research and analysing the data. Moreover the suggestions concerning the further research are mentioned in this chapter. The main ideas of this thesis will be summarized in the following chapter.

VI.   CONCLUSION

The thesis deals with fairy tales as a literary genre in general. It is focused especially on animal fairy tales in which the wolf or the fox appears as villains. In addition to the theory concerning the characterization of fairy tales, it includes the practical part based on three types of the research. Emerging from this research, fairy tales have a great potential to be used in ELT as a valuable source of authentic material. Teachers like to work with fairy tales for various purposes. They believe them to be a good source of useful vocabulary and many grammatical structures. With an appropriate adaptation, fairy tales can be used with pupils of all ages and all language levels. The sixth graders are considered to be the most suitable age group for working with fairy tales, because they are still playful, they do not find fairy tales embarrassing and they are not ashamed of playing roles.

The traditional or animal fairy tales in which the fox or the wolf appears are regarded as appropriate for using in ELT by the most of the teachers. Pupils are usually familiar with that kind of fairy tales in their mother tongue therefore they are able to deduce unknown vocabulary based on their previous experience. Furthermore, they can recognize the personality traits of wolves or foxes appearing in those fairy tales and describe them with sufficient vocabulary. Based on the behavior of the main characters, not only the wolves or the foxes, pupils can differentiate between good and evil characters and compare their behavior with the behavior of humans. Pupils can also learn the set phrases especially when working with repetitive or repetitive-cumulative fairy tales.

When the fairy tale is modified with respect to the students´ age, language level and their interests, it could motivate them very much. Also when the topic and the target class are chosen properly, the fairy tales could serve as a good source of entertainment. Beside all these advantages of using fairy tales in ELT, students are exposed to another source of language than they are used to work with. Furthermore, when working with fairy tales students can practice all language skills. Moreover, they are able to find a moral hidden in fairy tales which could have an educational impact on them. It follows that fairy tales have an important role in children´s life.

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Appendix A: Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed for English language teachers who are teaching at lower secondary level in the Czech Republic. The collected data will be used as the basis of a research, which makes part of my diploma thesis "Wolves and Foxes as villains in English Fairy Tales'. The questionnaire is anonymous. Please, respond to the following questions:

Thank you, Jana Kužílková

1. Do you use fairy tales in your English lessons?
    A) yes
    B) no

2. If yes, how often do you use them?
    A) once a year
    B) four times a year
    C) once a month
    D) more often

3. Which fairy tale do you prefer to use in ELT?
    A) modern (e.g. Jemima Puddle-Duck)
    B) animal (e.g. The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids)
    C) traditional (e.g. Cinderella)

4. Have you ever used a fairy tale in ELT in which the wolf or the fox appeared?
    A) yes
    B) no

5. Which element of language do you mostly teach while using fairy tales?
    A) grammar
    B) vocabulary
    C) pronunciation

6. Which skill do you mostly practise while using fairy tales?

    A) speaking

    B) reading

    C) writing

    D) listening

7. Do students like working with fairy tales?

    A) rather yes

    B) rather not

8. Which grade do you find working with fairy tales the most appropriate for?

    A) 6

    B) 7

    C) 8

    D) 9

9. Which benefit of using fairy tale in ELT do you find the most important?

    A) motivation

    B) entertainment

    C) authenticity

    D) good source of language

    E) vocabulary enrichment

    F) educational impact

Appendix B

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Once upon a time, there was a little girl called Little Red Riding Hood.

She lived with her parents in a small house near the forest.

One day her mother said to Little Red Riding Hood, "Take this basket with fruits, cake, wine and chocolate to your grandma, but don't talk to strangers on the way!"

Promising not to, nice Little Red Riding Hood went away.

On her way she met the big bad wolf who asked, "Where are you going, sweet little girl?"

"To my grandma's, Mr. Wolf!" she answered friendly.

The grey Wolf then ran to grandmother's cottage and knocked on the door.

When Grandma opened the door, he locked her up in the cupboard.

Then the wicked wolf wore Grandma's clothes and lay on her bed, waiting for Little Red Riding Hood.

When Little Red Riding Hood came to the cottage, she entered and saw her grandmother.

"My! What big eyes you have, grandma!" she said in surprise.

"All the better to see you with, my dear!" replied the sly wolf.

"My! What big ears you have, Grandma!" said Little Red Riding Hood.

"All the better to hear you with, my dear!" said the cunning wolf.

"What big teeth you have, Grandma!" said Little Red Riding Hood.

"All the better to eat you with!" shouted the wolf pouncing on her.

Scared Little Red Riding Hood screamed.

Fortunately, a brave woodcutter was in the forest, he heard her scream and ran to the cottage.

He hit the awful Wolf and rescued poor Grandma from the cupboard.

Grandma kissed Little Red Riding Hood and they never saw the villainous wolf again.

Little Red Riding Hood learnt her lesson and she never spoke to strangers ever again.[4]

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[4] The text was retrieved from http://shortstoriesshort.com/story/little-red-riding-hood/ and adapted

Appendix C

WORKSHEET

Task 1: Who are these characters? Write it down.

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Task 2: Count up all adjectives in the text. How many adjectives are there?

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Task 3: What does the wolf look like? (Ptáme se na vzhled)

He has…………………………………………………………………………..

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[5] All the pictures were downloaded from the Internet

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Task 4: What is the wolf like? You can use the adjectives from the text. (Ptáme se na charakter)

He is…………………………………………………………………………………

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Task 5: Can you use any other adjectives (which are not in the text) to describe the wolf?

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Appendix D

WORKSHEET

Task 1: Who are these characters? Write it down.

Little red riding hood *Mother*   *Wolf*
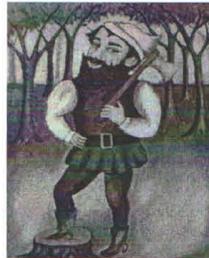
Grandmother   *Woodcutter*

Task 2: Count up all adjectives in the text. How many adjectives are there?

17

Task 3: What does the wolf look like? (Ptáme se na vzhled)

He has *big eyes.*
He has big ears.
He has big teeth.
He has a tail.
He has grey fur.
He has long nose.

Task 4: What is the wolf like? You can use the adjectives from the text. (Ptáme se na charakter)

He is... *big and bad. He is grey. He is wicked.*
He is sly. He is cunning.
He is angry.
He is awful.
He is villanious.

Task 5: Can you use any other adjectives (which are not in the text) to describe the wolf?

He is hungry.
He is fast.
He is ugly.
He is false.
He is bloch.

SHRNUTÍ

Diplomová práce "Vlci a lišky jako padouchové v anglických pohádkách" se zabývá pohádkami jako samostatným literárním žánrem a jeho vývojem, klasifikuje pohádky s přednostním zaměřením na pohádky zvířecí, ve kterých vystupuje vlk či liška jako hlavní postava. Zároveň představuje nejvýznamnější evropské sběratele pohádek a jejich celoživotní díla. Současně také řeší vliv pohádek na výchovu vývoj osobnosti dítěte a využití pohádek ve výuce anglického jazyka. V praktické části diplomové práce je zahrnut popis příslušných metod, kterými byly provedeny jednotlivé výzkumy. Praktická část se zároveň zabývá výsledky těchto výzkumů, které jsou znázorněny pomocí grafů a tabulek s příslušnými popisy a komentáři. V závěru práce jsou diskutovány možné důsledky vyplývající z průzkumu, které jsou důležité pro učitele, omezení daného průzkumu a zároveň možnosti a doporučení pro případný následující průzkum.