



USING FAIRY TALES TO DEVELOP CREATIVE THINKING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

This article discusses the development of creative thinking and speaking skills among primary school learners through the use of fairy tales. Fairy tales, as engaging and culturally rich materials, expand learners' imagination and create a natural language environment for oral communication. The findings of the study show that storytelling, role-playing, and fairy tale-based activities help students enrich their vocabulary, improve fluency, and build confidence in expressing their ideas in English.

Keywords: fairy tales, creative thinking, speaking skills, storytelling, primary education, motivation

Introduction

In recent years, communicative competence and creative thinking have become among the most significant goals of English language teaching, particularly in primary education. The ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language does not simply mean knowing vocabulary and grammar; it also requires confidence, imagination, and the ability to express ideas clearly and naturally. Among the four language skills, speaking is considered both the most challenging and the most crucial for learners, as it directly reflects their communicative competence and practical language use.

Developing speaking skills in young learners requires methods that are engaging, interactive, and emotionally stimulating. Traditional teaching approaches that rely heavily on drills or repetition often fail to motivate children to speak freely. In contrast, story-based instruction, particularly through fairy tales, has proven to be an effective and enjoyable way to encourage oral communication. Fairy tales,



as part of world folklore and cultural heritage, contain simple yet emotionally rich plots, repetitive structures, and memorable characters. These features make them especially suitable for classroom use with young learners.

When children listen to, retell, or dramatize fairy tales, they are not only learning language but also developing cognitive and creative abilities. Retelling helps them improve pronunciation and fluency, role-playing enhances their confidence and interaction skills, and discussing characters stimulates critical and imaginative thinking. Moreover, fairy tales provide moral and cultural lessons that foster empathy, cooperation, and respect qualities that support both language learning and personal development.

Integrating fairy tales into English lessons also creates an authentic and low-anxiety learning environment. Since stories naturally capture students' attention, they encourage spontaneous speech and reduce the fear of making mistakes. Teachers can use fairy tales to introduce new vocabulary, practice grammatical structures in meaningful contexts, and organize communicative activities that involve dialogue, storytelling, and creative expression.

This study aims to investigate the role of fairy tales in developing creative thinking and improving speaking skills among elementary school learners. It seeks to demonstrate how storytelling activities contribute to learners' linguistic, cognitive, and emotional growth, providing an effective pedagogical framework for enhancing oral communication in English language classrooms.

Methods

This study was carried out in a primary school English class consisting of 25 students aged between 8 and 10. The participants were at the beginner level of English proficiency and attended regular English lessons three times a week. The research was conducted over a period of six weeks, during which a series of storytelling and speaking activities were integrated into the curriculum.

The main objective of the intervention was to determine how the use of fairy tales could enhance learners' speaking skills and creative thinking abilities. The selected fairy tales Cinderella, The Three Little Pigs, and Snow White — were chosen for their familiar themes, simple language, and moral value, which made



them appropriate for young learners. These stories also contained repetitive structures and dialogues that provided natural opportunities for oral practice. During the lessons, students engaged in a variety of communicative and creative tasks.

- Retelling the stories in their own words to develop narrative fluency and sequencing skills;
- Role-playing key scenes to practice pronunciation, intonation, and interaction; Creating alternative endings or new characters to stimulate imagination and originality;
- Participating in group discussions to share opinions about characters and moral lessons.

Visual aids such as flashcards, story pictures, and short video clips were used to support comprehension and maintain motivation. The teacher provided scaffolding through vocabulary pre-teaching, model dialogues, and corrective feedback throughout the sessions. Data for this research were collected through three main instruments classroom observation, oral performance assessments, and teacher feedback forms . Students' progress was evaluated based on three criteria: speaking fluency – measured by their ability to speak continuously and naturally; vocabulary use – assessed through the variety and accuracy of lexical items used during tasks; creativity – evaluated through originality of ideas, story modifications, and active participation; a pre-test and post-test design was employed to compare students' oral performance before and after the storytelling program. Observational notes and teacher reflections were analyzed qualitatively to identify behavioral and motivational changes. The combined qualitative and quantitative results provided a comprehensive understanding of how fairy tales influenced both linguistic and creative development in young learners.

Results

The results of the study revealed that the implementation of fairy tales in English language lessons had a significant and positive influence on the development of students' speaking fluency, vocabulary range, and creative thinking. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results demonstrated visible progress in all evaluated aspects of oral performance.



Students' speaking fluency improved noticeably. During the final stages of the program, learners were able to narrate stories and participate in short dialogues with greater ease and fewer pauses. Their pronunciation and intonation became more natural, and they demonstrated improved rhythm and coherence while retelling the stories. The regular practice of oral storytelling encouraged spontaneous speech and helped overcome hesitation and fear of making mistakes. Vocabulary expansion was clearly observed. Through repeated exposure to key words and expressions in fairy tales, students internalized new lexical items related to characters, emotions, and actions (e.g., brave, wicked, rescue, magic, forest, castle). Many learners began to use these words correctly and creatively in other classroom contexts, indicating the long-term retention of new vocabulary. Creative thinking showed significant development. When students were asked to invent alternative endings or new characters, they demonstrated originality, imagination, and confidence in sharing their ideas. Some groups created humorous or modern versions of traditional fairy tales, while others introduced culturally relevant elements, showing their ability to adapt global narratives to local contexts. These activities not only enhanced creativity but also strengthened collaboration and peer interaction.

Classroom observation and teacher feedback indicated a marked increase in students' motivation and engagement. Most learners actively participated in discussions, volunteered for role-plays, and expressed enthusiasm for English lessons. They displayed a higher level of confidence in speaking English, both individually and in groups. The findings confirm that incorporating fairy tales into the English curriculum can effectively enhance students' communicative competence and creative expression. The integration of storytelling activities provided a meaningful, enjoyable, and low-anxiety learning environment that fostered linguistic development and imaginative thinking simultaneously.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that fairy tales serve as highly effective pedagogical tools for enhancing both language proficiency and creative abilities in young learners. The use of familiar and emotionally engaging narratives provides a natural context for language acquisition, enabling students to



internalize new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and pronunciation patterns through meaningful communication rather than mechanical repetition.

One of the key strengths of using fairy tales lies in their repetitive structure, which supports memory and prediction. Repetition of phrases and dialogues in stories such as “Once upon a time”, “She lived happily ever after”, or “The wolf said...” helps students recognize patterns and use them confidently in their own speech. The moral content of fairy tales, meanwhile, promotes deeper engagement and reflection, encouraging learners to discuss values, behaviors, and emotions — thus expanding both linguistic and cognitive horizons. Fairy tales create a low-anxiety learning environment that promotes enjoyment and confidence. Because storytelling activities are familiar and playful, they help reduce students’ fear of making mistakes, which is often a major barrier to speaking fluency. As learners take on different roles, retell stories, or invent creative endings, they practice authentic communication in an atmosphere of fun and emotional safety.

Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring the success of such activities. Their guidance and scaffolding are essential for helping students move from passive listening to active speaking. Effective teachers design tasks that integrate storytelling with communicative techniques such as pair work, group discussions, and drama. They also adapt fairy tales according to the learners’ proficiency levels simplifying language for beginners or encouraging analytical and critical responses from more advanced students. The integration of visual and digital aids, such as animated story videos, flashcards, and online story creators, can make storytelling even more interactive and accessible. This aligns with modern educational trends emphasizing multimodal learning and creativity in language teaching. The discussion highlights that fairy tales not only improve linguistic competence but also nurture imagination, empathy, and cultural awareness. They help bridge the gap between linguistic form and personal expression, turning English lessons into emotionally rich and intellectually stimulating experiences.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the use of fairy tales in English language teaching plays an important role in fostering both creative thinking and oral communication skills among young learners. Fairy tales provide a meaningful and motivating



context where students can experiment with language, express their ideas freely, and develop confidence in speaking. The combination of storytelling, role-play, and creative retelling activities encourages students to use language actively and imaginatively. These methods help learners improve their pronunciation, expand their vocabulary, and enhance their ability to construct coherent and expressive speech. Moreover, the emotional and moral aspects of fairy tales stimulate curiosity and empathy, which further enrich the learning experience.

Integrating fairy tales into the English curriculum thus offers teachers an effective strategy to make speaking lessons more interactive and enjoyable. Such activities create a positive classroom atmosphere where communication is natural and purposeful. Future research may focus on exploring the benefits of digital storytelling, interactive multimedia resources, and cross-cultural analysis of fairy tales in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. These directions could provide deeper insights into how traditional stories can be adapted to modern educational contexts while maintaining their linguistic and cultural value.

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