

UDC 372.881.111.1

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

DOI 10.54151/27382559-2021.2b-307

FAIRY TALE: A UNIQUE METHOD OF ENRICHING VOCABULARY¹

Matikyan H. H., Torosyan R. M.

The article presents the peculiarities and the importance of enriching vocabulary via fairy tale text. Fairy tale as a type of text (including linguistic and cultural components) should be considered as a method, way of teaching vocabulary. It is worth mentioning that language teaching process through fairy tales has become urgent and preserved a key role in enriching vocabulary.

Keywords: fairy tale, vocabulary, method, text, technique, word, experiment, traditional, literary.

“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales.

If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.”(Albert Einstein)

Introduction. The **aim** of the article is to present fairy tale as a unique method of teaching and developing a foreign language vocabulary. The **objective** is to develop system of tasks and conduct an experiment to justify the aim of the paper. Fairy tales provide entertainment and further topics for discussion. They are fun and short, rich in terms of language yet less grammatically complex and syntactically speaking than many other forms of literature. Fairy tales are a great source of vocabulary, grammar structures and syntax. And in addition to that fairy tales are short enough, to keep students interested long enough to get to the happy end [3].

One of the purposes of fairy tales is to entertain, so writers and tellers choose and use words with particular care to keep the audience interested.

¹ Special thanks to Robert McDowall, a former president of the Folklore Society for his thoughts and contribution.


Fairy tales include unusual words, or words that have a strong phonological content, with interesting rhymes or sound that are onomatopoeic. In fairy tales there is used evocative vocabulary, the language of the fairy world, memorable language such as metaphors, alliteration, rhymes, and the spoken language of the common people. The built-up repetition of the words and phrases is one of the features of fairy tales that is very helpful for language learning. The context created by the story, its predictable pattern of events and language, pictures, all act to support the reader's understanding of unfamiliar words. Children will pick up the words that they enjoy and in this way stories offer space for growth in vocabulary [1].

With the help of fairy tales specific vocabulary could be taught: different old words, beginnings and endings (e.g. Once upon a time; Far-far away; They lived happily ever after...) names of the characters and things which are connected to the characters (e.g. fairy, witch, king, queen, prince, princess, magic stick, throne, and etc...), names of the setting, places (e.g. forest, kingdom, far-far away land, etc...), gems and precious metals (e.g. silver, copper, gold, steel...) [3]; [1].

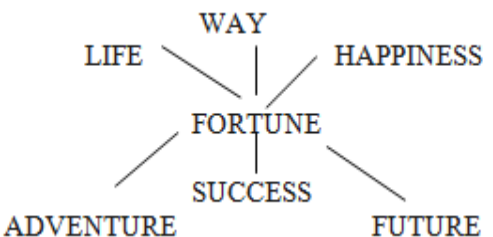
There are a good number of techniques of teaching vocabulary. Some of which are discussed below:

a) Showing pictures or using Audio-visual aids. b) Showing real objects or models c) By framing illustrative sentences [4].

It is generally accepted that vocabulary is best assimilated and memorized with the help of exercises and activities that are aimed at making the learners use the corresponding vocabulary in practice. Assuredly, those activities are quite different based on their levels, vocabulary types and learners' language proficiency, but its undeniable that they are necessary and obligatory at any age group. Those appropriate for fairy tale texts are considered to be the followings:

Activity 1: Draw a word	Procedure
Level: Pre-Intermediate Purpose: Vocabulary review Skill area: Vocabulary Type: The whole class 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher whispers to one student, or write down on a slip of paper, a word or phrase that that class has recently learnt. 2. The student draws the representation of it on the board: this can be a drawing, a symbol or a hint clarified through mime. 3. The rest of the class has to guess the item.

Activity 2: Adjectives and nouns	Procedure
Level: Pre-Intermediate Purpose: To practice the position of adjective before noun Skill area: Vocabulary Type: The whole class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students suggest adjective-noun phrases, for example, “a black cat”, “an expert doctor” 2. As the phrases are suggested, they write the adjectives in a column down the left-hand side of the board, and the nouns on the right-hand side of the board. 3. Then they volunteer ideas for different combinations and draw a line to join the two words. 4. If someone suggests an unusual or strange combination, they have to justify it. 5. As the fairy tales texts are generally so rich of adjectives the mentioned activity is quite suitable for working on them.

Activity 3: Brainstorm round a word	Procedure
Level: Pre-Intermediate Purpose: Vocabulary review and enrichment Skill area: Vocabulary Type: The whole class 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher takes a word the class has recently learnt, and asks the students to suggest all the words they associate with it. 2. Then they write each suggestion on the board with a line joining it to the original word, in a circle, so that they get a “sunray” effect. 3. If the original word was “fortune”, for example, you might get: [2]

These types of activities are very stimulating and can engage learners in the lesson more effectively. Having analyzed the structure of fairy tale texts, the history of their emergence and the importance of using fairy tales for teaching a foreign language and its crucial role in teaching methodology we decided to examine English textbooks of middle school in Armenia in order to find out whether fairy tales are included in the textbooks and are paid enough attention to. As a result of investigation we came to a conclusion that the usage of fairy tales lapses in the 7th, 8th and 9th grades. The term „fairy tale“ sometimes fails to encompass legends, ancient and historical stories and myths.

Grade 5 <i>The Three Bears</i> <i>The Frog Prince (by Grimm Brothers)</i> <i>Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (folktale)</i> <i>The Princess and the Pea (by Hans Christian Andersen)</i>	Grade 7 <i>The Three Princes (by Eric A. Kimmel)</i> <i>The Happy Prince (by Oscar Wilde)</i>
Grade 6 <i>The Well at the World's End (a Scottish folktale)</i> <i>The Scotsman and the London Judge's Daughter (a Scottish folktale)</i>	Grade 8, 9 No fairy tale

After looking through the textbooks of middle school in Armenia we found some fairy tales which were included in the textbooks. Below we will present the results of our investigation with the help of a table.

The next stage of our experiment was to share questionnaires among the English teachers and students of grade 7 to find out the effectiveness of using fairy tales for language teaching purposes. The research was conducted at school N 11 in Gyumri, in Shirak region of Armenia. The aim of the questionnaires was:

- To ascertain if fairy tales are worth using in the foreign language lessons;
- To make sure that fairy tales can be used to enrich vocabulary.

The experiment was carried out among 10 learners of the 7th grade.

We had made two tests, one of which was for checking vocabulary of the textbook text. The other was made for checking the vocabulary comprehension of the fairy tale implemented. One of them will be shown below. In the first part of the experiment the learners were introduced the text for reading material included in the 7th unit which was entitled “Isn’t it Fun to Whitewash the Fence?” After getting acquainted with the text and working on vocabulary the learners were given a test (with 3 tasks and 22 points in total) which involved the exercises of the textbook to check the vocabulary assimilation. The test included the following tasks:

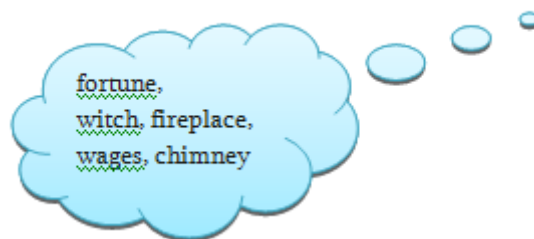
- ✓ Which words and expressions are suitable to describe Tom?
- ✓ What’s the word for...?
- ✓ Fill in the missing words in the correct form.

Having finished the first test the learners were introduced the fairy tale entitled “The Old Witch” in the second part of our experiment. As we have already mentioned above it was involved in the lesson as an additional material

to provide much vocabulary than the reading material itself did. The learners read the fairy tales in roles with a great pleasure. It was obvious from the very first side that they became motivated and interested in the content and the plot of the text introduced. Each word that the learners came across during reading interested them a lot. The learners took part in the lesson with a great pleasure. Fairy tale caught their attention, interest and incremented their curiosity, as it enables the learners' imagination, as they are fun and have a rich vocabulary. As a result of an active discussion the learners realized that the message of the fairy tale was to be kind with everyone and not to be indifferent to others' problems. After learning the message of the fairy tale text and working on vocabulary the learners again were give an interesting test (with 5 tasks and 30 points in total) with diverse exercises. Its aim was to check the learners' vocabulary comprehension and to find out how successfully they enriched their word stock.

VOCABULARY TEST ON THE FAIRY TALE "THE OLD WITCH"

Word sleuthing. Search the following words on the Internet and present information about them (definitions, synonyms and examples of sentences).*



Pic.1

Characterize the sisters with the adjectives given below.

kind, jealous, hard-working, selfish, lazy, indifferent

/4/

Match the verbs with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| To sweep | a. to put something in a place so that no one can find or see it |
| To prop up | b. to put someone's dead body in the ground during a funeral ceremony |
| To befall | c. to clean a floor, the ground, or another surface using a broom |

* The word *sleuthing* means to search for and discover. In this context it presupposes to give a word or words to the learners to investigate on the Internet. They should try to find as much as they can about the word, starting with its etymology.

- To milk d. to stop something from falling by putting something under it or against it
- To hide e. to draw milk from (a cow or other animal), either by hand or mechanically
- To bury f. to make lots of quick small movements up and down, or side to side
- To shake g. to ask for something, or to try to get something
- To seek h. if something unpleasant befalls you, it happens to you

/8/

Find the synonyms of the following words in the text. /5/

Words	Synonyms
Fate	_____
Salary	_____
Cook	_____
Clean	_____
Cheerful	_____

The first task was something new but very intriguing. It presupposes to give a word or words to the learners to investigate on the Internet. We cannot but mention that it is a long process to work on a word and give a detailed description of it. But we also see that the words are assimilated better in that way, because while working on them the words are memorized much well than while only reading and pronouncing them. The second task was something new for them as we rarely come across this kind of exercises in the textbooks. The crossword was accompanied by the pictures of the corresponding words which made the task more motivating. The third task was alike the task introduced in the first test as the learners again were to describe the heroes of the fairy tale text with the adjectives given. It makes the learners think and only after it do the exercise. The fourth task was almost the same as the second task in the first test, as it presupposed to match the given verbs with their definitions. This task is difficult, as the learners do not see any Armenian translations but only English explanations of the words, so they should understand them and try to match with the corresponding verb. The fifth task was the most difficult of them, as the learners should read the given words and try to understand the concepts and find their synonyms in the text. The learners expressed their attitude to the test, saying that it was really something different and eye catching for them.

The test really made them work more excited and they really became motivated after reading the fairy tale and writing the test. They got 1 point for each correct answer and at the end they were evaluated with 10 marks system.

The results of the first part of the lesson

The results of the survey showed that the vast majority of the learners got good marks, as the percentage of the good mark was 60% with 6 learners which comes to be the highest one among all the marks. The test was considered to be easy for their level but as the learners' motivation was rather low they were not that much impressed by the text. For that very reason they had a slight number of mistakes in the task "Which words and expressions are suitable to describe Tom?" Let us observe an interesting fact that shows that the learners had difficulties in describing the characters of the story they read. This proves that the text did not develop their imagination well, so the small size of the text, which later on caused lack of important information affected on their test results. Anyway, we should not deny the fact that there were learners who got excellent marks, as its percentage index was 30%, with 3 learners. Although the complaints about the reading material are justified but as any other text it also provides new vocabulary and is quite suitable for that level of knowledge. So, some of the learners filled the test with no mistakes.

The index of the satisfactory mark was 10%, with one learner. On the whole, this is not a bad result, but the learners made some mistakes in the task "Fill in the missing words in the correct form". The reason is that the exercise was accompanied by some of the words which were not introduced in the text given as a reading material. That is they were extra words and the learners had not got acquainted with them in the text beforehand. The absolute proof of that fact is that the text did not provide enough vocabulary, so the learners had to come across extra words out of the lesson. We cannot but mention that the index of unsatisfactory mark was 0%, which means that no one failed the test. This was of course an advantage for the teacher. Overall we see that the learners faced some difficulties while writing the test.

The aim of the second stage of the experiment was to develop learners' vocabulary with the help of a fairy tale implemented as an additional material, which is generally regarded to be an effective way of enriching learners' vocabulary in the language teaching process. The learners were introduced a fairy tale with interesting structure and content. After reading the fairy tale

text in roles and working on the vocabulary the learners again were given a test with 5 tasks for checking vocabulary comprehension.

The Pie Chart below shows the productivity of the textbook material.

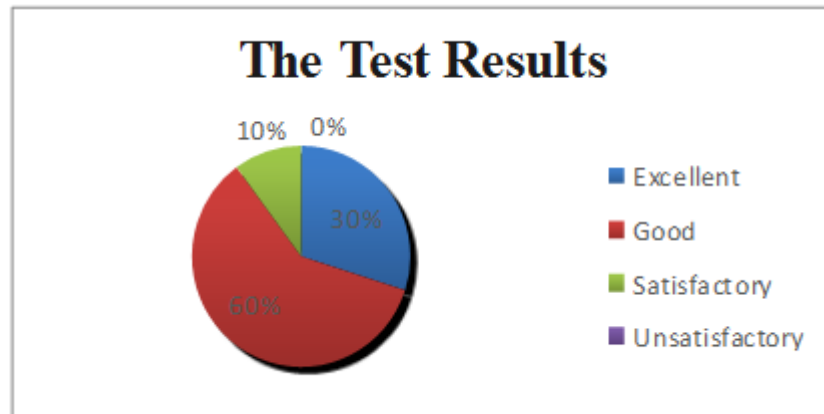


Diagram 1. The Results of the Second Part of the Lesson.

Overall, we can judge by the numbers we have got that this method of developing vocabulary was a great success, as the excellent mark percentage was 70% with 7 pupils. This significant growth of percentage emphasizes that the text was really motivating and impressive for the learners. Almost all the learners were interested in the text and were waiting for the further development of the events. Unlike the first test the second one included 5 tasks, as the fairy tale text was quite informative and big in size. The percentage of the good mark decreased to 20%, with 2 learners. This shows that the learners had success in writing the tests.

Analyzing Table 2 and the pie chart presented below we see that the percentage of the satisfactory mark was 10%, but unsatisfactory mark index was again 0%. The main mistakes the learners had were connected to the task "Match the verbs with their definitions". Working on the verbs particularly is a bit difficult process, but most of the learners overcame it easily. A slight difficulty was observed in doing the task "Find the synonyms of the following words in the text". The learners should understand the concept given and find it in the text which they did really not bad. The other tasks were fulfilled by them without mistakes. They liked the task "Describe the two sisters with the adjectives given below", as in this case it was perfectly possible to imagine what characteristic features the characters had, which was not the same in first

stage of the lesson. They just enjoyed the whole process of the lesson. The absence of the unsatisfactory mark once again proves our success.

Comparing the two surveys conducted on developing vocabulary of the learners of middle school based on the textbook material and fairy tale as an additional material it becomes clear that the use of fairy tales in the process of teaching a foreign language is rather effective than using only textbook texts, as they are considered to be unique ways of developing and enriching learners' word stock. Due to exclusive structure and fascinating content they serve as the best ways to motivate their learning and develop their imagination. The significant rise in the percentage index of the excellent mark from 30% to 70% illustrated on the Table 3 confirms that all the problems the learners had with vocabulary were solved smoothly.

The Pie Chart below illustrates the productivity of the fairy tale text.

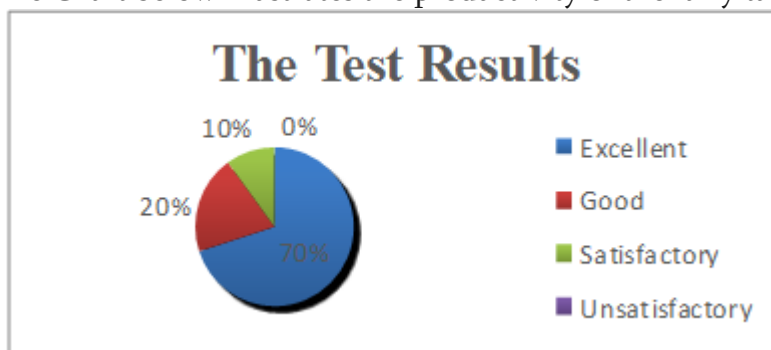


Diagram 2. Comparison of the Results of the First and the Second Part of the Lesson.

Taking a look on the both result it becomes obvious that the goal of the experiment was achieved. First, the learners' imagination was perfectly developed and they became greatly stimulated. Second, their vocabulary was essentially enriched after getting acquainted with the fairy tale text and working on its vocabulary. And finally, the learners learned a valuable lesson from the text, as they develop also moral values and have instructional significance. The textbook material itself could only add 22 new words to the learners' word stock, whereas fairy tale added 52 new words together with the textbook text. It ought to be taken for granted that fairy tale text with its wonderful influence on the increase of the number of learners' vocabulary should necessarily be treated as a unique way of developing learners' language skills, particularly their vocabulary. There was an essential fall in the percentage index of good marks, from 60% to 20% on the account of the rise of the excellent mark index. The satisfactory and unsatisfactory mark indexes

registered no change. Thus, we can conclude that fairy tales are a way of improving and extending vocabulary. Fairy tales are an easier method of extending vocabulary. They should be adopted by educational institutions for extending vocabulary. Educational establishments might start this process by selecting English traditional fairy tales into the curriculum of teaching English as a foreign language.

**ՀԵՔԻԱԹՐ ՈՐՊԵՍ ԲԱՌԱՊԱՇԱՐԻ ՀԱՐՍՏԱՑՄԱՆ ՈՒՐՈՒՅՆ ՄԵԹՈՂ
Մատիկյան Հ. Հ., Թորոսյան Ռ. Մ.**

Հոդվածը ներկայացնում է հեքիաթի տեքստի կիրառման կարևորությունը բառապաշարի հարստացման համատեքստում:

Հեքիաթը՝ որպես լեզվամշակութային բաղադրիչներ պարունակող տեքստի ինքնատիպ տեսակ, կենցաղավարում է լեզվաշխարհում, և ժամանակի հրամայականն է հեքիաթը ընդգրկել դասագործընթաց: Լեզվի դասավանդումը հեքիաթի տեքստի միջոցով դարձել է հրատապ և առանցքային բառապաշարի հարստացման գործում:

Բանալի բառեր. հեքիաթ, բառապաշար, մեթոդ, տեքստ, տեխնիկա, բառ, գիտափորձ, ավանդական, գրական:

**СКАЗКА КАК УНИКАЛЬНЫЙ МЕТОД В РАЗВИТИИ СЛОВАРНОГО
ЗАПАСА**

Матикян А. Г., Торосян Р. М.

В статье представлены особенности и важность сказок в контексте развития словарного запаса.

Сказка как уникальный тип текста, содержащий языковые и культурные компоненты, управляет в языковом мире, и наш век требует включить сказку в учебный процесс. Обучение языку с помощью сказочного текста стало актуальным и важным, поскольку оно успешно развивается.

Ключевые слова: сказка, словарный запас, метод, текст, техника, слово, эксперимент, традиционный, литературный.

REFERENCES

1. Cameron L. Teaching Languages to Young Learners. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 2001. 258 p.
2. Ur P. & Wright A. Five –Minute Activities, A Resource Book of Short Activities. UK. Cambridge University Press. 1992. 105 p.
3. Bagg M.B. Folk Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom. 1991
URL:<http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED343432> (18.04.2020)
4. Vishwanath B. Vocabulary: Active and Passive Vocabulary: Various Techniques of Teaching Vocabulary, The Criterion: An International Journal in English, February 2015, URL: <https://www.the-criterion.com/vocabulary-active-and-passive-vocabulary-various-techniques-of-teaching-vocabulary/> (07.02.2021)

Information about the authors

Matikyan H. H. - PhD

State University of Shirak

E-mail: hasvrej@mail.ru

Torosyan R. M.

E-mail: rebeka.96@mail.ru

Received by the editorial office on 11.10.2021

Reviewed on 11.11.2021