

# Role of fairy tales in the development of language skills

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## Abstract

Fairy tales are an important part of children's literature. They are an integral part of the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in children which are the four essential skills of language. They have been used as suitable teaching materials in language textbooks throughout history. The role of fairy tales in developing language skills is of immense significance. The regional fairytales serve as a storehouse of language tradition and indigenous vocabulary. It is crucial to consider the consequences of utilising them to teach social skills, gender awareness, and cultural inclusivity in addition to the subjects included in the primary school curriculum.

## Introduction

Stories can be an integral part of developing listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in children which are the four essential skills of language. Primary school instructors frequently employ fairy tales without taking into account the many educational opportunities this literary form may generate, like examining gender stereotypes, storytelling, and various social issues. Indian classrooms have always utilised fairy tales as they provide possibilities to teach varied social, emotional, and literacy abilities. They are widely used in classroom instruction; thus it is crucial to consider the consequences of utilising them to teach social skills, gender awareness, and cultural inclusivity in addition to the subjects included in the primary school curriculum. Folktales known as fairy tales often feature fantastical creatures like talking animals, elves, wizards, and fairies. The hero is guided by supernatural forces through adventure, conflict, luck or tragedy, and ultimately to a joyful conclusion. Justice is served, good deeds are rewarded, and evil people are put to shame. Before being first recorded in France in the sixteenth century, fairy tales date back thousands of years and were passed down orally from one generation to the next. Both adults and children made up the early audiences. These time-tested stories were being gathered all around the world by the nineteenth century. Fairy tales became a staple in children's literature libraries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although they were still seen as interesting to readers of all ages (Lepin, 2008).

Folktales have been used as suitable teaching materials in language textbooks throughout history. It is the ideal starting point for learning a first or second language. According to current foreign-language pedagogy, the study of cultural context is essential for a foreign language learner, which contends that teaching a foreign language should go beyond formal and structural concepts. Folktales serve as effective study material for foreign languages since they are part of a larger cultural context. A child can better understand their surroundings and themselves by reading children's literature. Children can learn vital lessons through the genre of fairy tales. Despite certain unrealistic themes, fairy tales have a beneficial overall impact and provide essential building blocks for children's growth. According to the Jungian interpretation, fairy tales teach kids how to resolve common human issues, wants, and relationships in a constructive manner; mastering these abilities can ultimately have an impact on a kid's health, and quality of life, or even shape its values and beliefs in the future. The fact that fairy tales stimulate development in children is one of the primary reasons why they are significant. The purpose of fairy tales is frequently to test children's initiative. For the development of a kid's consciousness and moral growth, reading the narrative to the child is crucial, but so is having the youngster act out the story. (Visikoknox & English, 2016)

Fairy tales are narratives that incorporate folklore elements like fairies, goblins, princes, and princesses. A type of folktale is called a fairy tale. The earliest fairy tales were told and retold for a very long time before they were ever put down in writing. After these tales were examined it turned out that, the Cinderella narrative appeared in more than one, perhaps even ten, different forms. Depending on the setting and era, each narrative seems to have distinctive narration and cultural components. Various authors still like creating and penning fresh versions of fairy tales today. (Hallett & Karasek, 2009) For folklore, the eighteenth century was golden. Ancient tales from oral sources started to be collected and written down by collectors all across the world. Joseph Jacobs, a well-known author of the beloved books *English Fairy Tales* (1890) and *More English Fairy Tales* (1894), was one of these collectors. Fairy tales developed become a significant component of children's literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fairy tales, however, can't be categorised as children's stories because they can uniquely entertain readers of all ages. The primary audience for fairy tales at first was probably both adults and youngsters. (Kerven, 2009)

Children frequently have a limited understanding of the universe, which makes it difficult for them to distinguish between the bizarre, the odd, the absurd, and the merely "grow up" (Tolkien J. R. R. et al., 2008). They are "less experienced and less educated" than adults, which prevents them from fully understanding adult society (Hunt, 1994). Children and adults both see the world differently, and this can lead to many instances of miscommunication between them. One of the fundamental purposes of fairy tales is to provide reason and order to the unintelligible nearly chaotic environment for youngsters.

## Four skills

### Listening skill

Learning a language involves the development of four language skills. The four skills of language i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing must be fostered through language education. Harmer divided the four language skills into two categories: productive skills, which include speaking and writing, and receptive skills, which include reading and listening (Harmer, n.d.). It is an input ability that aids in the development of students' other language abilities, particularly their productive language abilities. When it comes to fairy stories, listening to them has two benefits: learning information and experiencing pleasure. The information and delight pupils learn through listening to fairy tales may aid them in acquiring new information. It's likely to aid in the improvement of speaking abilities. By replicating the narrator's speech pattern, one can benefit from listening to fairy tales in terms of language skill development, particularly in speaking. Therefore, by studying the narrator's speaking style, which includes intonation, caesura, tempo, and other speaking patterns, students will be able to speak decently.

### Speaking skill

Some instructors find it challenging to encourage linguistic proficiency in speaking. In this situation, fairy tales can aid students in honing their speaking abilities. If we provide the student with a relevant topic or assignment, they will participate eagerly [30]. Fairy tales offer useful subjects and discussion points, therefore they can aid in the student's speaking ability development [40]. The teacher can put up students' exercises in a variety of ways using the diverse topics that are supplied by the fairy tales. Using storytelling activities can improve speaking abilities since they require the student to participate in speaking. With regard to this paradigm, the teacher can request that the students recount the fairy tales they have already read. This type of project is beneficial for students since they will put their skills to change a piece of work from one form to another to use in this task. Additionally, it encourages the pupil to speak up because speaking is a necessary skill for plays. As a result, the will improve their speaking abilities.

### Reading Skill

Reading is one of the receptive skills which also involves speaking skill in itself. This skill helps in the development of all the other three skills. Children learn about language features like adjectives, comparatives, past tenses, etc. through the use of fairy tales. The pupils can learn those language areas

by means of reading exercises. Fairy tales also offer an abundance of vocabulary. The pupils will learn and produce language in a better and more refined way due to the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary learnt from reading fairy tales.

### Writing Skill

The most advanced of all the language skills is the writing skill. It helps in the expression and production of one's ideas in a language. Speaking and writing have slightly different communication contexts. While writing is usually used by authors to explain and transmit their thoughts to readers who are truly separated by both time and space distances, speaking is always intended for face-to-face communication among the audience members present. Therefore, a complete and more unambiguous message is needed. (Iqram & Student's Id, 2015) This skill needs practice. Fairy tales can improve the writing abilities of students. The instructor may assign some type of creative writing assignment that is motivated by the text. Students can create updated versions of well-known fairy tales, including a fresh take on the fairy tales. They can even summarise the stories. Additionally, students can be allowed to create their own fairy tales by adding their own ideas and drawing inspiration from well-known fairy tales.

## Conclusion

The role of fairy tales in the development of language skills is of immense significance. There is almost no child in this world who has not listened to fairy tales in his or her childhood. The oral tradition still is prevalent and even societies with no knowledge of the alphabet have a very rich tradition of oral tales. As the skills of language moves from listening to speaking and reading to writing fairy tales have their role in every stage of language development. The creation of a sound knowledge of language in the minds of children starts with the skill of listening. The regional fairy tales serve as a storehouse of language tradition and indigenous vocabulary. The awe-inspiring plot and happy ending provide a perfect setting for learning language skills.

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