



CULTURE - LANGUAGE - MEDIA

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In what way does the use of fairytales affect language development in primary school ESL students?

*Hur påverkar användningen av sagor språkutvecklingen hos ESL-
elever i grundskolan?*

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of incorporating fairy tales into primary school English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, specifically focusing on language development. The study investigates the multifaceted relationship between fairy tales and language acquisition. Perspectives of fairy tales such as narrative structure, thematic content, and linguistic complexity will be analyzed. I will conduct a systematic literature review to delve into the effects of fairy tales on vocabulary, communication skills, listening and reading comprehension, and literacy development. The findings emphasize the versatility of using fairy tales in teaching, accommodating various language proficiency levels.

The aim of this literature review is to impartially explore the diverse effects of fairy tales on vocabulary, communication skills, listening and reading comprehension, and literacy development. The study remains open to any observed effects, avoiding a predetermined bias towards positive outcomes. The findings underscore the versatility of utilizing fairy tales in teaching, catering to various language proficiency levels.

This study highlights the adaptability and versatility of fairy tales in achieving language development goals in primary education, emphasizing the importance of familiarity and active engagement in the ESL classroom. This study also connects these findings to theoretical approaches, curriculum directives, and the context of the ESL classroom in Sweden, providing an understanding of the implications for language education in primary schools. The overarching question is: In what way does the use of fairytales affect language development in primary school ESL students?

Keywords: Fairy tales, primary school, learning, ESL, language development

Individual contributions

I hereby certify some parts of this literature review reflect the individual participation of the signatory below. The remaining parts was written in equal collaboration with another student.

The parts I refer to as individual are:

- Parts of results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

The parts I refer to as equal participation are:

- Planning
- Research question selection
- Introduction
- Aim and research question.
- Method
- Parts of result

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1. Introduction

Children's first encounter with literature usually begins with fairy tales (Winch et al, 2010 s.584). The impact of fairy tales extends profoundly beyond the realm of literature, permeating into film, advertising, and everyday language. Fairy tales often have strong oral traditions that celebrate the past and shape ideas about the future (Winch et al, 2010 s.584). Given the profound impact of fairy tales on our global cultural landscape and their widespread recognition, integrating them into ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms becomes crucial. By using the familiarity that pupils experience when it comes to fairy tales, we can significantly enhance language learning, and improve skills in reading, listening, and speaking, while instilling essential moral values in young learners.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the word fairy tale as a "traditional story written for children that usually involves imaginary creatures and magic" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.) Tales like these often have a high recognition factor because they will often begin with "once upon a time" and end with "and they lived happily ever after". The plot structure is usually similar in terms of protagonists facing challenges and often includes mythical beings and supernatural occurrences. Fairy tales can be well known all over the world or only geographically recognized. Still, the textual structure of the different fairy tales is consistent all over the world (Winch et al, 2010 s.589). This means that it doesn't matter if you're in Europe or America, the basis is the same.

Mart (2012) describes that literacy-based instruction has a positive impact on linguistic abilities including oral abilities like sentence structure and phonological production. These claims are supported by Saxby (2024) who says that it can be beneficial to use fairy tales to develop linguistic abilities in the English language. Schmidt & Grönte (2015) also describe in their paper published by Skolverket that students in the early years of their education have varying experiences and language proficiency levels. By incorporating stories and fairy tales in language teaching the teacher can provide a common and recognizable context for the entire group regardless of their language level. Schmidt & Grönte (2015) go on to say that a communal approach using stories creates a shared context for content, active language use, and understanding language in

different situations. By revisiting and continually using literature like fairy tales the pedagogue can stimulate engagement, and social interaction, all of which benefit students who may lack experience regarding these types of texts.

Sholichah & Purbani (2018) support these observations in their study “Fostering Language Skills Development through Fairy Tales: A Literature Study” where they argue that the theoretical advantages of using literature in language teaching include providing authentic material, cultural enrichment, language advancement, and personal growth. Their research specifically examines the advantageous impact of literature on language skills development, emphasizing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Sholichah & Purbani, 2018).

In the Swedish syllabus for English (Skolverket, 2022), under central content, songs, poems, and fairy tales are mentioned. This is the only time fairy tales are brought up, but the Curriculum mentions other things that can be connected to fairy tales, such as subject areas familiar to the students, everyday situations, interests, people, places, activities, and events. The Swedish National Curriculum also declares that “in the encounter with spoken language and texts, pupils must be given the opportunity to develop the ability to relate the content to their own experiences, life conditions, and interests” (my translation) as well as “subject areas familiar to the pupils” (my translation). One of the things that characterizes fairy tales is the fact that a lot of people, old and young, recognize them (Winch et al, 2010 s.590). Cinderella, The Little Red Riding Hood, The Little Mermaid, Hans and Gretel etcetera are examples of well-known fairy tales. This means that when the students get to work with fairy tales, they are already familiar with the plot (Winch et al, 2010 s.585) Moreover, in some fairy tales, there are recurring phrases that also increase the level of familiarization. An example of this is in Snow White when the evil queen says, “Magic mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest of them all?” This is something children will be able to memorize because it is said many times in the story (Schmidt & Grönte, 2015).

Sholichah & Purbani (2018) also mention that because they are well known and popular, fairy tales are often made into movies. This means that there is plenty of video

material to use in the English learning classroom. If the fairy tales are very short, there are usually lots of different videos on YouTube for example. This makes it easier for the pupils to understand the story and the words being spoken and develops their listening skills (Sholichah & Purbani, 2018). If they don't understand a word being said they can watch the video instead and figure out what the word means.

2. Aim and research questions

This literature overview aims to examine the impact of fairy tales on language development in primary ESL school settings in order to provide valuable insights into the multifaceted relationship between fairy tales and language development in the primary school context.

Numerous researchers have highlighted the favorable results of incorporating the use of fairy tales in ESL classrooms. This method involves reviewing current research in this area to delve into this matter. I will conduct this literature review research by looking at different perspectives of fairy tales that can influence different aspects of language development, listening, speaking, and comprehension skills. These perspectives are narrative structure, thematic content, and linguistic complexity.

The central research questions explored in this study are:

- In what way does the use of fairytales affect language development in primary school ESL students?

3. Method

In this section, I am going to outline the method I used while gathering studies that have been relevant to my research area. The method used while conducting research for this study is a systematic literature overview (Ortega, 2010). A systematic literature review or research synthesis implies the continuum of techniques and research procedures that have been developed to review past literature systematically. Ortega (2010) explains that systematic reviews investigate and evaluate past findings systematically while always explicating the methodology followed in the review to enable replication by other reviewers.

I will describe the search process and delimitations that took place. I will also describe the inclusion and exclusion criteria that I have used. I chose papers that regard and examine how the use of fairy tales in the language learning classroom affects students' language knowledge. My main method consisted of performing digital searches within an educational database.

The search terms I chose are Children's stories, fairy tales, literacy development, literacy, listening comprehension, reading aloud, primary school, storytelling, language development, and ESL. I chose these terms because this study is about fairy tales and the effect of using them in the English learning classroom in relation to language development.

3.1 Search delimitations

In this systematic literature review, the exclusive database utilized was ERIC (Education Resource Information Center), employing a comprehensive set of Boolean search terms: Children's stories AND fairy tales AND literacy development AND literacy AND listening comprehension AND reading aloud AND primary school AND storytelling AND language development AND ESL. The initial search, employing all keywords without limitations, yielded a broad set of 905 results. To refine the search, the focus was narrowed down to peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2023, resulting in 188 articles.

Subsequently, a meticulous screening process involving titles, keywords, and abstracts led to the identification of five pertinent empirical studies. While working through the 188 results it didn't feel effective so in a subsequent search iteration, the original keywords and Boolean search terms were retained, but the temporal scope was further restricted to studies published between 2015 and 2023. This adjustment yielded 129 results, from which three additional studies were deemed relevant. Ultimately, the review culminated in the inclusion of eight sources.

3.2 Inclusion criteria

The articles and studies chosen were based on several things such as the age of the pupils, the year the article or paper was written, if the study is relevant to this literature review, and I wanted some of them to have a school system that is similar to the one we use in Sweden. I wanted articles and papers about pupils in primary school because even though the focus of this study is students in years 4-6, I thought it to be relevant to include a broader age group to gain a wider perspective. The studies or articles had to be a maximum of 13 years old so that I know for a fact that it is relevant to research concerning the current school system and modern science. Even though the focus of this study is based on the education of ESL students. I chose to include papers teaching a second language that wasn't English by using two articles that focused on German language teaching. I decided to use these articles with the argument that even though they focus on a different language the same method of language acquisition is used whether it is English or German. The articles study the adaptability of fairy tales in the language learning classroom whether that be German or English.

3.3 Exclusion criteria

Considering I got broad results during my search process I quickly excluded many of the papers and studies that I got. I based this on the titles if they mentioned things like

pupils with different forms of disorders such as ADHD, trauma, pupils from immigrant families, gender discourse, digital, social injustice etcetera. By doing this I found some papers that I thought might fit my research, so I continued my exclusion process of looking at the keywords and abstracts. By doing this I was able to exclude even more papers that didn't fit my criteria.

Table 1

Authors	Year of publication	Topic
Gnjatović, D	(2015)	This study underscores the profound impact of diverse fairy tales in preschool education, highlighting storytelling as a catalyst for language acquisition, creativity, and socialization, emphasizing its role as a vibrant and indispensable element in shaping early learning experiences. Relevant for thematic content.
Kelly L, B & Moses, L	(2018)	This study demonstrated that fostering inferential thinking through discussion-based strategies in a first-grade classroom, particularly with fairy tales, significantly influenced students' perceptions of reading and emphasized the ongoing importance of inference skills for comprehension development.
Kirsh, C	(2012)	This study found that storytelling in a Year 6 German class significantly enhanced vocabulary

learning, emphasizing its value as a language teaching tool and recommending further research with diverse participants. Relevant for thematic content.

Lenters, K & Winters, K (2013)

This study focused on fractured fairy tales, emphasizing a multimodal approach with drama and digital media. The study highlighted the potential of these methods to enhance oral language skills, foster authentic writing, and align with educational standards for engaging literacy instruction. Relevant for narrative structure.

Lee, Y, J (2020)

This study explores the impact of socio-culturally evolving Cinderella stories on English Language Learning (ELL) in a Critical Literacy (CL) context. The research underscores how fairy tales, through simple language and familiar plots, foster students' critical awareness, enabling them to challenge stereotypical images in the narratives. Relevant for narrative structure.

Poras, N (2010)

This study found that integrating children's stories, emphasizing the three-stage reading process, and utilizing ludic methods significantly improved language learning for young learners, creating an engaging and interactive environment. Relevant for linguistic complexity

P. Suggate, (2013)
S, Lenhard,
W Neudecker,E
& Schneider

This study revealed that, among various storytelling methods, free storytelling without a written text emerged as the most effective approach in enhancing vocabulary development for proficient readers in grade 4, emphasizing the unique benefits of storytelling in language development.

4. Results

Within the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, this systematic literature overview endeavors to address the research question: *Are there specific aspects of fairy tales that contribute more significantly to language development?* This investigation is particularly relevant given the unique linguistic challenges faced by ESL learners. To offer nuanced insights, this section of the literature review will be organized around key themes: Narrative structure, Thematic content, and Linguistic complexity. Each theme will illuminate distinct aspects of language development like phonology, semantics, and pragmatics. Each sheds light on distinct aspects of language development influenced by the integration of fairy tales in the ESL classroom.

4.1 Narrative structure

Narrative structure in fairy tales refers to how the story is organized and presented. While there can be variations, many traditional fairy tales share common elements in their narrative structure. The studies conducted by Lenters & Winters (2013) and Lee (2020) shed light on the narrative structures of fairy tales and their potential impact on language development in children. These studies explore how different approaches to storytelling, including fractured fairy tales and Critical Literacy (CL)-oriented instruction, contribute to language acquisition and critical awareness.

In Lenters and Winters' study (2013) conducted in Canada, the focus is on the narrative structure of fractured fairy tales, which are characterized by humor and unexpected twists. The study contained five fifth-grade students and their process of working with different multimodal texts. The researchers emphasize the multimodal nature of storytelling, involving activities such as reading traditional fairy tales, researching fractured fairy tales, and planning adaptations. The integration of drama and digital media provides students with tools to enhance oral language skills, experiment with communication modes, and practice public speaking. The study underscores the potential of these multimodal literacy approaches to foster active and authentic writing

processes, aligning with educational standards and promoting a balanced, engaging approach to literacy instruction.

On the other hand, Young Ju Lee's study (2020) delves into the socio-culturally evolving Cinderella stories and their impact on English Language Learning (ELL) within a CL-oriented context. This study takes place in Korea and includes eight ESL students in the third grade. The research highlights how fairy tales, with their simple language and familiar plots, contribute to cultivating students' critical awareness of texts. By employing CL practices, the study reveals how students can recognize and challenge stereotypical images associated with gender, class, and social norms present in fairy tales. Despite acknowledging limitations, such as a small sample size and a focus on specific tales, the study emphasizes the need for further research with diverse student groups. It suggests that appropriately guided CL practices can prompt valuable insights, indicating that today's children can derive meaningful messages from fairy tales and even create critically well-grounded narratives.

These studies collectively suggest that the narrative structures of fairy tales, whether explored through fractured narratives or analyzed critically, play a role in language development by providing opportunities for engagement, expression, and reflection. The integration of diverse modalities and perspectives within storytelling contributes to a richer language-learning experience for children.

4.2 Thematic content

Thematic content in fairy tales refers to the underlying themes, messages, or lessons conveyed through the narrative. These themes often involve moral lessons, cultural values, and universal truths. In the context of language development, the thematic content of fairy tales can play a significant role in shaping a child's linguistic and cognitive abilities. The studies conducted by Kirsh (2012), and Gnjatović (2015) provide insight into the thematic content of fairy tales and their potential impact on language development in children. These studies focus on how storytelling contributes to vocabulary and the role of storytelling regarding using them as a catalyst for conveying messages and values.

Kirsch's (2012) study conducted in England investigated how children in a Year 6 class learned German vocabulary through storytelling, focusing on teaching methods, vocabulary gain, and retention. An experienced German teacher used two stories with different themes. The first, "The Very Grouchy Ladybug," aimed to consolidate animal vocabulary, demonstrating excellent memory performance in the post-test. The second story, "The Town Musician of Bremen," involved various follow-up tasks. The study concluded that storytelling with different themes contributed significantly to vocabulary gain, emphasizing the importance of effective planning, engagement, and teaching strategies. It suggested that storytelling can be a valuable tool for language learning, calling for further research with different teacher and learner profiles.

Finally, Gnjatović's (2015) results in her study also agree with the previous claims about the impact of thematic content. This study takes place in Sweden and explores the pivotal role of storytelling using diverse fairy tales and children's stories in preschool education, uncovering its profound influence on language development, communication skills, and creativity. Through interviews with eight teachers, the research emphasizes the diverse approaches to storytelling, including reading from books, oral storytelling, and dramatization. The findings highlight storytelling as a catalyst for language acquisition, providing exposure to varied vocabulary and sentence structures. Socialization benefits emerge as personal narratives become valuable tools for fostering communication skills and meaningful peer interactions. Teachers view stories and fairytales as messengers conveying messages and values, underscoring the importance of intentional story selection based on theme. Creativity thrives through storytelling and inspiring activities like drawing and acting. Imagination is recognized as crucial for child development, with stories serving as powerful tools to engage children in imaginative worlds. In essence, storytelling remains a vibrant and indispensable element in preschool education, shaping the early learning experiences of children in both traditional and technologically mediated ways.

In essence, these studies collectively affirm that fairy tales, with their rich thematic content, serve as powerful messengers conveying messages and values that significantly shape the early learning experiences of children. The multifaceted impact on language

development, creativity, and social skills underscores the enduring relevance of storytelling in both traditional and technologically mediated language education.

4.3 Linguistic complexity

Linguistic complexity in the context of fairytales and language teaching refers to the intricacy and sophistication of language elements present in these stories. Fairy Tales are often characterized by their narrative richness, diverse vocabulary, and unique structures. The studies that are to be presented are conducted by Poras (2010), Kelly & Moses (2018), and P. Suggate, Lenhard, Neudecker & Schneider (2013). These studies will focus on linguistic complexity concerning reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and oral abilities.

Poras (2010) study takes place in Columbia and investigated the effectiveness of integrating children's stories in teaching English to young learners in a public elementary school. Student teachers, specializing in teaching English to young children, aimed to make the learning process enjoyable and meaningful. They conducted observations, surveys, and interviews before implementing a pedagogical proposal, emphasizing the use of stories based on children's likes and interests. The results highlighted the positive impact of games and motivating activities on language learning, creating an engaging and interactive environment. Poras's (2010) results showed that the three-stage reading process (pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading) enhanced comprehension and made the learning process more meaningful. The study concluded that selecting appropriate methodologies, incorporating stories, and using ludic methods can significantly improve language learning for children.

Another study that shows the perspective of linguistic complexity is Kelly & Moses' (2018) study. This study was conducted in a first-grade classroom in the USA to explore how support for comprehension through inferential talk about fairy tales influenced students' perceptions of reading. The teacher noted changes in students' perspectives and oral abilities after implementing discussion-based strategies. The research focused on how students engaged in inferential talk across different types of stories. Even though

we usually learn simple reading skills at first, the study showed that figuring things out on your own (inference) is important for comprehension. In this context, inference was defined as readers' ability to connect ideas beyond explicit text using background knowledge and textual clues. Previous research underscores the significance of inference and its mutual relationship with comprehension development. The study was part of a larger annual formative project in a first-grade class with 28 culturally diverse students. The teacher utilized a literature-based workshop for reading instruction and introduced pedagogical goals emphasizing interpretive responses in literature discussions.

The teacher facilitated discussion groups by introducing books with inferential questions, promoting independent reading, and reconvening the group for discussions. Students, with varying abilities, shared their inferences and thoughts during these sessions. The study categorized books into three types that fostered inferential discussions: ambiguous texts for concluding endings, didactic stories for inferring the author's message, and fractured fairy tales for inferring the narrator's credibility. The results illustrated how students independently made inferences and participated in group discussions, showcasing their ability to infer characters' emotions, predict outcomes, and analyze illustrations. The pedagogue's role proved crucial in promoting inferential thinking, guiding discussions, and validating diverse interpretations. The findings emphasized the importance of thoughtful text selection, teacher support, and effective classroom norms in cultivating inferential thinking among young students. The study concluded that inference is an ongoing skill crucial for comprehension development.

Finally, P. Suggate et al (2013) study examined how different storytelling methods and text selection (fairy tales) impact children's vocabulary development in second and fourth graders learning German. Three modalities were compared: independent reading, adult read-aloud, and free storytelling. The results indicated that even proficient readers in grade 4 acquired more words when listening to a story compared to independent reading. Notably, free storytelling, where an adult narrated without text, proved to be the most effective in enhancing vocabulary. The study underscores the importance of incorporating storytelling into language development strategies for children, highlighting its unique benefits alongside reading.

In conclusion, the different studies collectively emphasize the significance of linguistic complexity in fairy tales and its impact on language teaching. Some highlight the effectiveness of integrating children's stories, employing ludic methods, and adopting a three-stage reading process to enhance comprehension and make language learning more engaging for young learners. It also shows the importance of inferential talk in fairy tales, showcasing its role in improving students' perceptions of reading and oral abilities, underscoring the ongoing skill of inference crucial for comprehension development. Lastly, storytelling methods and text selection reveal that free storytelling, without a written text, is particularly effective in enhancing vocabulary development in children. Together, these studies underscore the multifaceted benefits of linguistic complexity within fairy tales, offering valuable insights for language teaching strategies.

5. Discussion

Using the findings seen in this study we can see that in the context of primary school English education, incorporating fairy tales benefits language development among students. Sholichah & Purbani (2018) stress the importance of using literature as a means of exposure concerning vocabulary development, sentence structure, oral abilities, and more. Therefore, many researchers have studied the use of fairy tales in the language-learning classroom. In this section of the literature review, I will summarize the previously mentioned researchers' findings regarding narrative structure, thematic content, and linguistic complexity and connect them to other sources previously mentioned in the introduction, the Swedish curriculum, and the ESL classroom in Sweden.

In the context of narrative structure, we can see that the unique structures of fairytales can have positive effects on aspects like oral abilities, engagement, expression, and reflection. Lenters & Winters (2013) and Lee (2020) observed and presented that the unique narrative structure of fairy tales has positive impacts on students' language development. Lenters & Winters (2013) used the narrative structure as a tool in the classroom to facilitate activities enhancing oral abilities and fostering active and authentic writing processes in the classroom. Sholichah & Purbani (2018) support this by discussing the effect fairy tales have on different language abilities, they describe the positive effects fairy tales have on speaking skills and writing skills. The authors state that using the unique narrative provided by the fairy tales teachers can set up activities in many ways to develop oral skills (Sholichah & Purbani, 2018). We can therefore see not only how this aspect of fairy tales can contribute to language development but also how it can be used as a means and activity creator in the classroom, promoting a wider range of socialization and diverse language strategies. Some of these activities can be turning a fairytale into a play, group discussions, and storytelling activities where the students retell the story out loud to enhance comprehension.

Another finding discovered is that the familiarity of fairy tales benefits the critical literacy aspect of language acquisition, an aspect that shows its importance in the early stages of learning a new language. Lee (2020) presented in their study the benefits of using the familiar narrative structure of fairy tales to develop critical literacy concerning

English language learning. Lee (2020) explained and showed that using fairytales with their familiarity contributed to the students' critical literacy abilities. By using fairy tales that the students are familiar with, the repeated exposure of tales and stories helps young learners to master the language more effectively. Supporting this finding is Mart (2012) who explains that the regular repetition involved in storytelling supports the acquisition of language elements while also explicitly reinforcing others. Many stories inherently include the repeated use of crucial vocabulary and structures, assisting children in retaining every detail and allowing them to predict forthcoming events in the narrative. Furthermore, repetition encourages active engagement in the storytelling process (Mart, 2012).

The studies conducted by Kirsh (2012) and Gnjatović (2015) focused on thematic content as a tool for language development. Kirsh's (2012) findings showed how using different stories with varying themes contributed differently to vocabulary and retention of the stories. Schmidt & Grönte (2015) support this by writing that by using different stories students can develop understanding and empathy. Using and reinforcing words repeated throughout the story can support students in expanding their vocabulary. These findings therefore show the importance of utilizing the thematic content seen in fairy tales.

Even if Skolverket (2022) does not mention fairy tales in the syllabus for English specifically more than once or twice, however, it brings up things that can be connected to fairy tales. Under the rubric “The purpose of the subject” it states that “in the encounter between spoken language and texts, pupils must be given the opportunity to develop the ability to relate the content to their own experiences, life conditions, and interests” (Skolverket, 2022, s35) (my translation). By using fairy tales to teach English the pupils therefore get the chance to do this. As I have previously written, fairy tales are easily recognizable and most of the students know them and can therefore relate these stories to themselves with their unique messages and themes, there are also different kinds of fairy tales with diverse plots.

The final aspect that will be discussed regarding fairytales is the aspect of linguistic complexity. Studies conducted by Poras (2010), Kelly & Moses (2018) and P. Suggate, Lenhard, Neudecker & Schneider (2013) researched this. Poras's (2010) results showed

that integrating children's stories in the ESL classroom had positive effects on English language development in the classroom. The teacher in the study emphasized the use of stories based on children's likes and interests and how they contributed positively.

Poras's (2010) results also showed that combining a teaching method of pre-reading, while reading and post-reading the stories enhanced the student's comprehension of the difficult vocabulary they faced in the literature. Schmidt & Grönte (2015) describe how using the fairytale's unique vocabulary and descriptive nature as tools in the classroom can create opportunities for the students to become more independent in their language learning using methods like the teachers in Poras's (2010) study did.

Kelly & Moses' (2018) study results showed that inferential talk using fairytale vocabulary influenced the student's perception of reading while they gained a deeper understanding of context. This resulted in discussions where students showed the ability to connect clues using their previous knowledge. Skolverket (2022) also writes in the syllabus for English grades 4-6 that "Through education, students should be given the opportunity to develop a versatile communicative ability. This ability involves understanding spoken and written language, being able to articulate oneself and interact with others in speech and writing, and adapting one's language to different situations, purposes, and recipients."(Skolverket, 2022, s36) (my translation). Connecting this to Kelly & Moses' (2018) study it shows that by using a similar method to theirs ESL teachers in Sweden are in line with what Skolverket (2022) requires and develop the English language abilities in their students.

Lastly, P. Suggate et al (2013) focused on vocabulary development using fairytales and storytelling methods. The researchers used three different modalities of the same fairy tale and concluded that even proficient readers acquired a broader vocabulary listening to the fairy tale than they would have with independent reading because the teacher can stop and explain the difficult words during the storytelling. Sholichah & Purbani (2018) write that listening skills are crucial for overall language development and that fairytales are found to be helpful by providing both information and entertainment.

In conclusion, incorporating fairy tales into primary school language education positively impacts narrative skills, vocabulary development, and linguistic complexity. The studies align with the Swedish curriculum's goals, emphasizing the versatility of

communication skills and connecting content to students' experiences. Overall, fairy tales emerge as an effective and adaptable tool for language development in primary education.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, incorporating fairy tales into primary school English language education positively impacts narrative skills, vocabulary development, and linguistic complexity. The studies presented highlight the significance of narrative structures, thematic content, and linguistic complexity in enhancing language development. The narrative structures provide opportunities for engagement, expression, and reflection, while thematic content serves as a powerful tool for conveying messages and values, shaping early learning experiences. Linguistic complexity, evident in diverse vocabulary and unique structures, contributes to enhanced comprehension and oral abilities.

While this study provides valuable insights, it's important to acknowledge limitations such as potential publication bias given that the studies included only generated from ERIC which could mean that there may be relevant studies published in other journals or databases that were not included in the review, potentially leading to a skewed representation of the existing literature. Another limitation could be cultural and language biases. This literature review primarily focuses on studies published in English, which could introduce a language bias. Relevant research published in other languages may not have been considered, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives on the topic. Another limitation of this study is the lack of EFL studies which could provide another perspective of English language learning in relation to the aim of this study. Lastly, another limitation could be the need for a more comprehensive exploration of the potential negative effects of fairy tales.

Building on the current research, a feasible empirical investigation could focus on the comparative effectiveness of different storytelling methods (traditional reading, dramatization, digital media) in enhancing language development among diverse groups of primary school students in an ESL context. This project could explore the nuanced impact of various modalities on narrative skills, thematic understanding, and linguistic complexity, considering factors like student engagement, comprehension, and long-term retention. The research could provide insights into optimizing storytelling approaches for diverse learners and contribute to the ongoing evolution of effective language teaching strategies.

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