Determining the Ways Primary School Teachers Follow During the Storytelling Process

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Abstract:

Fairy tales are essential building blocks for both the transfer of cultural heritage and academic and social learning at the whole class level. It is perhaps one of the earliest methods of explaining events and facts. In this present study, it was aimed to determine the storytelling techniques used by the teachers. The study group of the research was comprised of 22 primary school teachers working in the city centre of Eskişehir, and they participated in the study voluntarily in the 2019-2020 academic year. The case study was employed as the research design. Research data were collected using a semi-structured interview technique from qualitative research methods. Descriptive analysis and content analysis were used in the analysis of the results. The data were categorised and tabulated. The data were supported by citing teacher views. According to the study results, the most used technique in storytelling is the effective use of language and presentation of fairy-tale through images. The scope of using fairy tales as a teaching instrument should be broadened, and these should be planned to be used in every lesson.

Keywords: Fairy Tales, Primary School Teacher, Storytelling

1. Introduction

Stories are one of the most ancient learning methods, and they have been an essential educational tool from the past to the present. Fairy tales are mostly fictional stories that are culturally based and passed down from generation to generation. This story became known as a cultural element and a treasure of folklore and became a branch of science to be researched. (Yaldız, 2006, p. 11; Temizyürek & Vargelen, 2016, p. 61). Stories are folkloric products. When fictional symbols are not limited, they promote children's feelings, thoughts, and dreams, which are educational aspects, verbally or in writing, and help them embrace national and universal values. (Kıran, 2008:17; Türkan, 2018, p. 1008).

Although fairy tales are often regarded as folkloric, literary tools, they are significant and current educational tools that house both the culture and the intended lives. In addition to being an educational tool shaping society, fairy tales and messages, examples, knowledge, and experiences may contribute

significantly to the development of children's think system (Arıcı & Bayındır, 2015, p. 107; Türkben, 2018, p. 1826; Şahin, 2011, p. 209).

As a result, the tales support children's education in both folkloric and academic ways, prepare children for life, and help them better understand and interpret life (Çetinkaya et al., 2019, p. 338). In addition, fairy tales offer students numerous advantages, such as language skills and fun in terms of language development (Xolmurodova, 2021).

The children will try to find solutions in their own way to problems experienced by combining the told world with their imagination and develop their language and thinking skills. In addition, the richness of their family language will be learnt from fairy tales by the subtleties of the language, giving them unlimited space of freedom to perceive the universe differently.

Tales should be used as a regular learning tool to prepare the child for life and find solutions to existing problems by using his imagination. Also, it is crucial to use fairy tales to teach that society's values and ensure that children are aware of their mother tongue and culture. Important expectations such as the children grasping the tale they listen to with their feelings and thoughts and developing a positive personality are among the contents of the fairy tales (Arıcı, 2016, p. 60; Sever, 2013, p. 149; Çıldır, 2017, p. 215; Görgü, 2007; Güleryüz, 2013, p. 294; Karatay, 2007).

Thanks to today's technological developments, although it seems that the tale has turned into a traditional literary product, the value desired to be transferred through education in fairy tales has changed in response to social and cultural changes. Thus, it is inevitable to take a new approach regarding the fairy tales' content that does not meet today's expectations and the era's realities. In terms of timeliness and change, the real problem is not in content but content presentation. Thus, if a story is complicated to read or tell, then a tedious, unstimulated, long-listening, unemotional, unconstructed storytelling text will not appeal to any child. Selecting a fairy tale that is suitable for the level, making recent additions to the content, venue, and characters of that fairy tale, and offering appropriate tone, body language, pronunciation, and technological support will make fairy tales more appealing. In this context, even the reading and telling of a story differ from each other. While the reader recreates the content and style of narration by embracing their own reading, the narrator's ability to read them and enjoys listening and living under the influence of the narrative tools they use (Çetinkaya, 2007; Özdemir & Çekici, 2013 p. 113; Duran & Öztürk, 2018). Therefore, a story is seen to capture the children's attention and motivate them, addressing the problem and conveying value in a vivid, exciting, fast, busy, poetic way.

Psychology, pedagogical, and narratology sciences indicate that fairy tales significantly have an impact on education and the child's understanding of society and nature. What is more, it is stated that they are imaginary and fantastic products and have educational and instructive values (Mert, 2012, p.3). The individual applications of the collective folk tales that differ from narrator to narrator are also known as contemporary fairy tales, modern fairy tales, literary fairy tales. Some are recreation art fairy tales created by bringing fairy tale qualities to literary texts written with individual creativity by today's writers of children's and youth literature (Yılmaz, 2013, p. 22). Also, the up-to-date fairy tales are published by rewriting and making changes to the stories of the existing folk tales.

All kinds of technical and technological tools used to make the story artistic include improving the quality of the learning environment and supporting events with an appropriate pedagogical method (Kocaman-Karoğlu, 2016). On the basis of the tales told to children, the message and the theme should be unique, there should be active events that are not contrary to the child's thought, and these events should attract and sustain the child's interest. In addition, the subject should be concise and understandable, the message should be conveyed indirectly, non-boring repetitions should be included, and superior behavioural characteristics should be emphasised. Moreover, the child's intellectual,

emotional and readiness level should be increased, the subject should be conveyed in short sentences with appropriate dialogue and animations in the mouth of the heroes, and proper intonation and pronunciation should be used. Therefore, storytelling can be a serious teaching tool that should be used skillfully to acquire and develop the targeted skills. In this respect, storytelling has an important place in the development of the child's thinking skills and personality. The purpose of the research is to show the ways classroom teachers follow in storytelling.

2.   Method

Research Design

The study uses a situation study pattern. A case study is a method that examines the details that make up a situation and examines social facts with the solution of an individual incident, associating a single incident with several points, and allowing in-depth examination of detailed information (Aytaçlı, 2012). Indicates situations that are customised according to time, location, and person. Therefore, it is thought that his work effectively reveals the ways teachers follow when telling stories. For this purpose, it is intended to produce a systematic conclusion on the feelings, thoughts, and practices of the audiences by directing pre-prepared questions on the subject to the target audience. (Türnüklü, 2000; Büyüköztürk & Çakmak, 2015).

Study Group

The study group of the research was determined by sampling the intended sampling methods with easy accessibility, using case sampling methods. Easy-to-reach sampling was used to save time and was fast to reach considering the pandemic. The study consists of 22 classroom teachers working in Eskişehir's city centre during the 2019-2020 school year. These teachers were selected on a volunteer basis from three different schools and coded from T1 to T22.

Data Collection Tool

Data were collected via a semi-structured online interview form. Before creating this form, the related literature was reviewed, and the interview form was finalised in line with the expert views and suggestions of teachers. Semi-structured interviews are interviews that allow people to express their own views through open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted via remote interviews in accordance with the social distancing rule at the time deemed appropriate by the participants. Interviews with teachers took approximately 30 minutes. The articles in this form contain instructions that show what teachers pay attention to in storytelling and what kind of explanation they prefer.

Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis and content analysis were performed on the obtained data. In addition, the themes of the grouped answers were determined, and the identified findings were explained and supported with the views received from the teachers. Content analysis was used in the analysis of interview data, and facts that may be hidden in the data were tried to be revealed.

Content analysis is the process of grouping the data and reinterpretation of data in a comprehensible way around themes. Accordingly, the data were classified in accordance with the determined themes and appropriate frequency tables were obtained. To ensure the participants' privacy and anonymity, they were coded from T1 to T22. In this part, some redundant themes were removed regarding the purpose. The research problem was made more meaningful by giving sub-themes in the relevant category. Examples from the views of the participants were given. For internal validity, interview data were summarised at the end of each interview and confirmed by teachers. In

addition, the use of purposive sampling in the study contributed to the provision of external validity. The research is limited to the sample group and applied methods and statistics.

Role of the Researcher and Reliability

Expert opinions were sought for the semi-structured interview form used in the study. The transferability of the study findings for different situations was checked. In the study, the coding and themes made during the analysis process were made differently by the researchers, and the analyses were examined in terms of similarity and difference. In this way, attention was paid to ensure coordination among researchers, cross-checking the compatibility between the coders. The findings were handled within the framework of rich and detailed descriptions and supported with examples. Then, the themes obtained were evaluated and discussed within the framework of the related literature. The data about the determination of the focus of the study, the setting in which the research was conducted and the participants were presented.

3.   Results

This section attempts to determine the methods that teachers use during storytelling.

Table 1. The ways primary school teachers follow during the storytelling process in terms of their views.

The way followed	Participants	f	p
Environment and Material	T2, T8, T11, T21, T16, T3, T19	7	31,81
Language and Style	T1, T2, T3, T4, T8, T11, T14, T16, T17, T19, T20, T22	12	54,54
Narrative Style	T5, T3, T8, T17, T18	5	22,72
Transmitted Message	T6, T8, T7, T9, T12, T13, T10, T15	8	36,36
Creativity and Imagination	T13, T,21	2	9,09

According to the table, teachers used language and style (54.54%) more when telling stories. They also included messages that had to be conveyed (53.36%) and prepared the medium and the materials (31.81%), and used them for narrative style (22.72%), and at least for developing creativity and imagination (9.09%). In this sense, the views of some of the teachers are stated by mentioning some parts of the speech texts as follows.

T1: *"I play characters with different tones of voice. In this way, I help students understand the difference between heroes. I'll make the story flow."*

T8: *"I create different emphasis, intonation and sounds in the conversations between fairy tale characters. I use words and concepts appropriate to their age group."*

As can be understood from the views, teachers attach importance to the language and style when telling a story. They pay attention to features such as dialogue-to-dialogue frequencies, loudness, and intonation and use appropriate words for the student language level.

T2: *"I eliminate the distractions in the context of the fairy tale."*

The teachers determine how to tell the story, forms a narrative style and attract attention to the necessary elements.

T11: *"I make sure to prepare the environment I'm going to tell the story based on the subject. If the subject takes place in the forest, I enrich the environment with images of cardboard trees, flowers and animals."*

T17: *"I describe the places and people in the fairy tale. I give summaries and reminders without interrupting the flow of the tale. I use improvisation and dramatisation, and I make them use it."*

The teacher's fairy tale emphasises the atmosphere by preparing the materials in advance. The students do not distract themselves and keep the interest in the fairy tale alive by the subsequent arrangements.

> *T18: "Before telling tales, I make a brief introduction of the heroes and let the students create a draft in their minds about the tales."*

> *T7: "I make explanations throughout the tale, I show the character traits of the heroes in the tale and their behaviour as an example, so that they have positive and negative ideas about the character, I focus on the subject of the tale, the real problem and the main idea."*

> *T12: "As a teacher, I try to correlate some real-life situations with those tales by sampling some events if they are appropriate for the storyline. I correlate this topic with the activities we have watched. I enable them to learn a lesson, and I illustrate social values."*

The teachers try to convey the message through storytelling, associate it with real life, and emphasise model behaviours.

> *T13: "I want them to find new titles for the tale. I ask them to think of other heroes instead of the characters in the tale, and I ask them to make comparisons. If I want the student to feel different feelings and thoughts in the story's content, I will make a change.*

> *T21: "I'd like to end the story with a surprising ending. I want them to connect the tale to our lives. I want them to guess the end of the story and the lives or re-invent the story."*

It aims to develop creative thinking skills in students through storytelling. The fairy tale aims to find a new title, reconstruct the fairy tale heroes, enable them to improve the content of the fairy tales with their interpretations and support them to use the fairy tale as a means of expression.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Fairy tales are essential literary elements that contribute to a child's learning both before and during school. In order for the student to learn effectively and permanently, stories are used as educational tools. The use of a story by the teacher for an educational purpose is only possible when the storyline content and presentation are well planned. The teacher should prepare the fairy tale, highlights, intonations, gestures, visual and verbal elements, and maintain the student's attention to which fairy tale will be told for which group and for what purpose.

The research showed that teachers mostly emphasise language and style in storytelling while using fairy tales to develop creativity and imagination. In general terms, teachers attach importance to language and style in storytelling, which shows that unique content should be emphasised effectively. In other words, the aesthetic side of the tale is brought to the fore with language and style, and semantic integrity is aimed at expanding the meaning of the concepts. As it is known, the attention span of primary school students is limited. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on the use of unique elements when conveying content, and this one needs to be taken care of diligently. It is ensured that the language used is understandable, that the style, that is, the distinctive features of the text, are emphasised and brought to the fore. Students both understand the content in the text and are closely affected by the transfer of that content in accordance with its essence. In this sense, teachers should pay the most attention to language and style in storytelling. In other words, it is an application that is organised and planned in accordance with student development levels. In the storytelling process, the development of imagination was found to be the least important by the teachers. However, fairy tales are literary products that find meaning with creativity. According to the teachers who participated in the research, fairy tales were seen as more important in developing students' listening and

comprehension skills quickly, rather than aiming to develop their imagination directly. Imagination does not depend on a single text, nor on such a narrow product as to be limited to fairy tales. Perceiving, interpreting, and expanding the tales individually depends on the child's imagination and the changes it creates in the text. The personal creativity of both the narrator and the listener is in a close relationship with each other. In this context, the fairy tale is recreated with the personality and creativity of the narrator. With the narration of the tale, language acquisition, active use of language, language development and language awareness are developed, and the way to original thinking with the tale is opened. According to the results obtained from the research, it is seen that participants accept the importance of fairy tales. Still, they do not fully master the necessary technical information in teaching fairy tales.

Based on the research findings, teachers should be encouraged to receive training about the situations and how to use fairy tales as educational tools, practice storytelling effectively and fluently, and be familiar with storytelling techniques. And also, they should be promoted to prepare storytelling stories, know what to do in the narration process, improve themselves as storytellers, and use them to develop the imagination and creativity of children through fairy tales. In this regard, teachers should consider that the student's age, linguistic and mental development levels, personal differences are significant. Emphasising the importance of fairy tales in social life, whether in schools or at home, spreading the tradition of storytelling, is that fairy tales are not limited to utopian things. Moreover, tales are not limited to emotional content such as developing imagination, and this needs to be revealed through research. It should be stated at every opportunity that fairy tales can be used at every stage of education life and that storytelling can be a professional job. In addition to the above-provided suggestions, those in this field should enrich the course content with storytelling techniques, improve students' listening and comprehension skills technically with fairy tales, and carry out academic studies that will reveal the effect of fairy tales on academic success.

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