INTED 2022

16th **International Technology, Education** and **Development Conference**

7-8 March, 2022

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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Sharing the Passion for Learning

INTED2022 Proceedings
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USING FAIRY TALES FOR ENRICHING THE VOCABULARY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract

As foreign language teachers we are constantly faced with the challenge of finding new, modern, innovative and, above all, attractive to our students, methods and ways that will enable us to more easily adopt foreign vocabulary and thus, of course, achieve students' richer vocabulary. Thus, our goal as linguists, researchers and primarily teachers is to enrich the vocabulary of foreign words in our students, i.e., students at the departments of Macedonian, German, English, and Italian language and literature at the Faculty of Philology, University "Goce Delcev" - Stip, the Republic of North Macedonia. For that aim, a research team consisting of several professors from the above mentioned departments has prepared this study based on the results of the research in which the third and fourth-year students were included from these departments and answered the questionnaire that consisted of two parts: the first part where carefully selected general statements were asked regarding the knowledge of fairy tales in their mother tongue and foreign languages, and the second part contained practical exercises with which we wanted to prove or disprove our thesis that children who actively read and retold fairy tales in early childhood, have a richer vocabulary at a later age. Confirmation or rejection of our thesis is of great importance for us as a research teaching staff, but also for our students, future teachers, who need to actively transfer their knowledge to their prospective students. With this study, we want to help the teaching professionals and, through the well-known fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, to facilitate the acquisition of a foreign language in a more sophisticated, easier, and more interesting manner.

The question is why fairy tales are the subject of our interest and why we propose them for easier adoption of foreign lexicon by students from the listed language departments at the Faculty of Philology. In response, we quote the well-known thought of Albert Einstein:

"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."

With this Einstein's quote we begin our work because it, in a concise way, conveys the powerful message that is present in every fairy tale, be it in the native Macedonian language or in German, English, Italian or another foreign language. Einstein says that wise people teach their children about life with instructive messages presented through fairy tales. So, by learning about life and the wisdom of life, in fact, new vocabulary of a foreign language is unconsciously adopted by the students from the mentioned language departments at the Faculty of Philology. There is great truth in this Einstein's quote that fairy tales really have a positive impact on the enrichment of the vocabulary both of the native Macedonian language and of the foreign languages our students study.

Keywords: fairy tales, vocabulary, foreign language.

1 INTRODUCTION

As a research team of several teachers from different departments at the Faculty of Philology, University "Goce Delcev" in Stip, the Republic of North Macedonia we have been inspired for a long time by this specific lexical unit called phraseologism. We can freely say that we are fascinated by its distribution in various spheres of human communication, from a lexicological point of view and from paremiological, folkloric, historical, social, and linguistic points of view. In a word, by studying this specific linguistic category, we penetrate deeper and deeper into this scientific well, which has almost no bottom. By digging, researching, and analyzing we enter different spheres, and try to capture the true value of this lexical unit called phraseologism, which in our opinion is invaluable. The evidence for this commitment of ours can be seen in the most of our works, as well as in this paper entitled 'Using Fairy Tales for Enriching the Vocabulary of Foreign Languages'.

At the same time, in this paper we want to emphasize the influence of phraseologisms, found in the fairy tales that were read to us in early childhood, in enriching the vocabulary when learning or studying a

foreign language. Therefore, we set ourselves the goal of doing research that will refer to this category of lexical items and which, by summarizing the results of the prepared questionnaire, will give us a modest answer to our question that has tickled us for a long time and will not let us sleep peacefully.

Through this questionnaire, we actually wanted to confirm or reject our thesis that children who actively read and retold fairy tales in early childhood have a richer vocabulary at a later age. For that purpose, some of the third- and fourth-year students from the departments of German, English, Italian and, of course, Macedonian language and literature as our mother tongue at the Faculty of Philology were surveyed. The study includes about 40 students from the third and fourth year of studying the listed languages, students who we believe have mastered the foreign language at a higher level, which of course includes a good knowledge of the stated target category called phraseologisms.

Through this modest linguistic research, we want to go back a little in the history of mankind and realize that in fact our ancestors had a great linguistic wealth that they immodestly tried to pass on to us, from generation to generation, not choosing the means and ways to do it. That is, in the distant past, when we did not have a developed speech, such wealth was transmitted through drawings on stone, then on paper, orally, and finally, in recent history, they were written and retold through stories or fairy tales. Therefore, these specific fixed lexical forms called phraseologisms are as old as humanity itself and that is why we should respect them and take them as a basis in the process of learning foreign languages, as they were unconsciously involved in the process of language acquisition, of our mother tongue; so why not take them as a basis for learning foreign languages. Einstein himself noticed the great role of fairy tales in the process of enriching the lexical fund and therefore wrote the thesis: '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". This means that even then he emphasized and gave clear signals in which direction the teaching process should move, but it seems to us that even now it is not too late to follow his thesis if we properly understand and accept it, and we, as teachers who educate future teachers, must do it. Let us summarize our idea briefly and emphasize that through our research we connect fairy tales as the oldest inexhaustible source of wisdom with phraseologisms, with a specific fixed lexical category most commonly present in fairy tales and characterized by a higher level of language proficiency, then with foreign language teaching, its modernization and, at the same time, with its connection to the traditional lexical richness; and, of course, with the enrichment of students' vocabulary, which is the primary goal in the process of mastering both the mother tongue and the foreign language. We sincerely hope that with this research we will give a new direction to the thinking of the young linguists as well as to all language lovers in general.

2 METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology consists of research approach, research type, tools, and subjects. The present research paper followed only qualitative approaches. The research type is exploratory research.

2.1 Research questions

The point of this research was to provide answers to these questions, which on their own, represent the dilemmas of any language learner. They are as follows:

- What is the level of students' knowledge of phraseologisms in fairytales?
- How do students react to phraseologisms?
- Is it easy for them to use the phraseologisms in everyday speech?

2.2 Hypothesis

1. The bigger the consumers of fairy tales in their period of early childhood the student respondents were, the richer the vocabulary they possess is in the later period.

2. Fairy tales as source of folk wisdom shared from one generation to another as something valuable have specific lexical units called phraseologisms which are considered indicators of a higher level of knowledge of a language.

2.3 Participants

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I love fairytales	62.5%	35%		2.5%	
2. When I was child, fairytales were regularly read to me	45%	30%	15%	7.5%	2.5%
3. Fairytales were very interesting to me	50 %	42.5%	5%	2.5%	
4. Fairytales have many wise things in them	65%	30%	5%		
5. Fairytales increased the level of my vocabulary	37.5%	45%	10%	7.5%	
6. Fairytales helped me to speak more fluently in my native language	25%	45%	27.5%	2.5%	
7. Fairytales helped me to learn many phraseologisms in my native language	30%	57.5%	12.5%		
8. Fairytales helped me to speak more fluently in the foreign language I study	32.5%	35%	15%	12.5%	5%
9. The fairytales helped me to learn many phraseologisms in the foreign language I study	22.5%	42.5%	17.5%	10%	7.5%
10. As s pre-service teacher I recommend fairytales in the teaching process in learning native and foreign languages	62%	22.5%	12.5%	2.5%	

This research included 40 students in total, 10 of whom were third- and fourth-year students from the department of English language and literature, 10 students from the department of German language and literature, 10 students from the department of Italian language and literature, and 10 students from the department of Macedonian language and literature. The research included only third- and fourth-year students as they are expected to be on a more advanced level. The students were predominantly female, but that data was not considered in this research. The participants were at the ages between 20 to 23 which also implies that they are active users of foreign languages and not restricted only to the one they study. The questionnaire was prepared and the survey was conducted by their language teachers in the courses of Contemporary English/ German, Italian, and Macedonian in the third and fourth year, i.e., in the 5, 6, 7 or 8 semester of their study. At these stages the students are constantly exposed to lexical units of this kind as they are frequently used in their classes. The aim of this researched is to determine the attitudes of the students to these specific phraseological units, i.e., to determine the degree to which these units are accepted or ignored during the process of the foreign language acquisition. The third- and fourth-year students in the mentioned departments have constant input of phraseological units in their classes in Contemporary English/ German and Italian as these courses represent practical tutorials, exercises and acquisition of communications skills, vocabulary, and grammar.

2.4 Instrument and Procedure

The participants were presented with a two-part questionnaire, each including 10 statements all related to the phraseological units in the language they study and were given 45 minutes to complete the test electronically and return it back to their teacher. The testing process was conducted via Microsoft Teams.

A questionnaire about fairytales was used as an instrument in this study. It consisted of two parts. The first part is with general questions about fairytales and the second part is a table with phraseologisms in Macedonian taken from the Brothers Grimm's fairytales Snow White and Cinderella where the students were supposed to try to find their equivalents in the language they study and put them in a sentence as an example. The five-point Likert scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' was used to evaluate the students' knowledge of phraseologisms in fairytales. A total of 40 students from third and fourth year from the departments of English Language and Literature, German Language and Literature, Italian Language and Literature and Macedonian language and literature, at Faculty of Philology, university Goce Delcev, Stip, answered the questionnaire.

Dear students,

We would kindly ask you to fill in this questionnaire for the needs of our research.

The questionnaire consists of two parts: in the first one you should fill the place with the answer you think is appropriate for the statements: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), N (neither agree nor disagree), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree), and in the second part you should write down the appropriate

phraseologism next to the Macedonian equivalent by finding them in the fairytales Snow White and Cinderella and put them in a sentence. Please fill in the first part of the questionnaire:
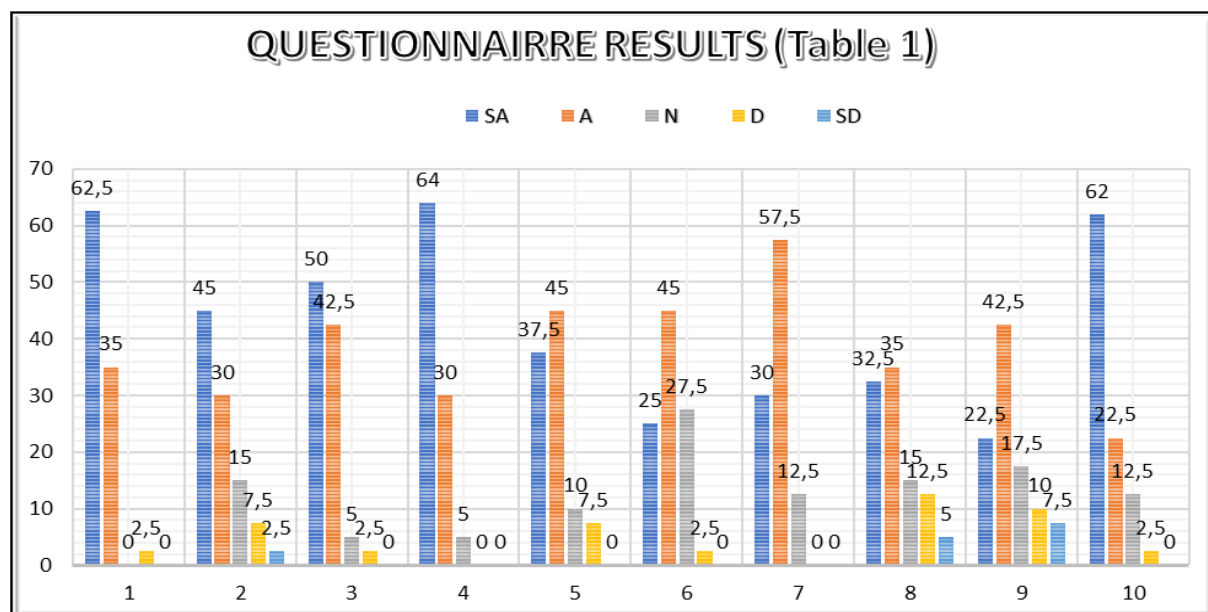
The second part of the questionnaire consists of a table where in the first column we have ten most used phraseologisms in the brothers Grimm's fairytales Snow White and Cinderella. They are written in Macedonian which is the native language of our country. You need to read the fairytales in the language you study and try to find the equivalents of the Macedonian phraseologism used in the fairytales and write tehm down in the second column. Then, in the third column you need to write an example with the phraseologism in the language you study.

Phraselogism in Macedonian	Phraselogism in the language I study	My example with the given phraseologism
1. Си живееше еднаш...		
2. Ден и ноќ		
3. Од утро до вечер		
4. Од сè срце		
5. Како да му паднал камен од срцето.		
6. Кој сака леб мора да си го заработи.		
7. Пребледеле од лутина		
8. Била убава како јасен ден		
9. Не би ти го дале ни за сето богатство на светот.		
10. Огледалце, огледалце, пријателче мое кажи ми на светот најубав кој е?		

Your contribution to this research connected to phraseologisms is really appreciated, therefore we thank you in advance for your cooperation.

The research team

2.5 Results

QUESTIONNAIRRE RESULTS (Table 1)

Referring to the first part of the questionnaire, we can notice that most of the students strongly agree and agree on the ten statements, 97% on the first question, 75% on the second, 92.5% on the third, 95% on the fourth, 82.5% on the fifth, 70% on the sixth, 87.5% on the seventh, 67,5% on the eighth, 64,5% on the ninth, and 84.5% on the tenth question. Questions 2, 6, 8 and 9 have 15 or above 15 % of the answers in the column of neither agree nor disagree. The highest percentage is 27.5% on sixth question. The answers in the columns with disagree and strongly disagree give smaller percentages but questions 8 and 9 are 10% and 12.5% which give a small concern in the terms whether to use the fairytales in the languages we study or not. In the rest of the statements the level of percentage is below 7.5%.

Referring to the second part of the questionnaire, it can be seen that most of the students have mastered the phraseologisms in their native language and in the language they study. They recognized most of the phraseologisms and used them in a sentence as an example.

3   CONCLUSION

As a final conclusion to this research, we perceive the positive attitude received by the students who study philology in their undergraduate studies and in their final years at the departments of English/ German/ Italian and Macedonian language and literature, and it was confirmed that these students do not only know, but they also recognize these specific lexical units called phraseological units and that it is the positive influence from being exposed to fairytales. These lexical units represent the great wealth of tradition and culture that is passed on from one generation to another. These lexical units are creations that best illustrate the life and mentality of a nation, while at the same time they illustrate the folk wisdom and the philosophy of the nation. The research conducted in English, German and Italian has great significance for all included foreign languages, since there has not been much data on this topic so far. With this research, the initial anticipation was to detect the phraseological units as separate lexical units, but with the received data we came across a number of interesting variations of responses and finally drew the conclusion that, despite the diversity in the languages and the different families they belong to, phraseological units have one mission in common, and that is to transfer and present to the world the linguistic and cultural wealth of a nation. The purpose of this paper is also to motivate both teachers and students, but mostly students - future teachers of foreign languages, to comprehend the great significance of fairytales and to implement them in their classrooms, to dedicate more attention to these lexical creations that will inevitably result in better, easier and more complete acquisition of the targeted foreign languages. The importance of phraseology is also immense for the students of Macedonian language, and it is crucial to include them in their teaching processes too in order to prepare students to be eloquent and capable to conduct successful communication with native speakers of English, German and Italian. It is our belief that this data, which came as a result of the analysis of our results, was obtained based on the material from the questionnaires, and these results cannot be accepted as final and complete, but only as relevant results that can serve as a foundation for further phraseological and paremiological research and deeper analyses. We are certain and grateful to the future interested scientists that will continue to further and more thoroughly research into phraseology and paremiology, as these are fields of linguistics that have so much to offer.

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