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## FOREWORD

The International Journal TEACHER at the Faculty of Education in Bitola, with its international dimensions presents a fresh wave at the pedagogical setting in the Republic of Macedonia. It delivers, analyses, affirms and elaborates serious interdisciplinary themes, occurrences and areas that with its existence mark the present educational field. The papers in the journal present significant pedagogical phenomena and occurrences that are in context with the Balkan and South-East European geographical area. A dominant characteristic, beside the internationality of the papers, is its interdisciplinary belonging which gives them special attention to the reader from all kinds of fields to enjoy in the implementation of the theoretical and empirical experiences of the authors.

In this instance, as always, we would like to express our gratitude to our editors and reviewers, who, with their dedication give maximal input in the improving of the quality of the journal as for forming a stand-point in the international library fond.

As always, a very personal gratitude to the authors who with their theoretical and empirical experiences contributed to the enrichment of the professional and scientific knowledge of the readers, i.e. the users of this renowned international journal.

To those who will come in contact with the pedagogical traces of the journal, we wish them enjoyment and uncovering of the secrets of their profession, as for a critical overview of the separate professional and scientific work, elaborations and attitudes.

A very sincere thank you note to all those who will project good-intended remarks and suggestions that will be in the sense of improving the quality of the pedagogical and other standards of the journal. In fact, that is what the crucial point of the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board is in the upcoming 2015.

Let the new 2015 serve as a challenge in the search of new pedagogical creations.

With respect,

The Editorial Board



# THE BROTHERS GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES IN MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION<sup>5</sup>

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## *Abstract*

This paper pays attention to the involvement of the Brothers Grimm's fairytales in the lectures of Macedonian language in three primary schools in Štip, Republic of Macedonia. The overviewed textbook corpus shows that only a small number of Brothers Grimm's fairytales is included in the elementary school education. Moreover, the paper shall indicate the methodological approach of teachers when interpreting a Brothers Grimm's fairytale, the methods and techniques used, i.e. teaching strategies etc. Hence, the fairytale, as a literary genre, which develops the child's intellect and fantasy, shall be reviewed.

*Key words: fairytale, Brothers Grimm, teaching interpretation*

## 1. Introduction

A fairy tale is a literary genre that children encounter in the earliest years, even in the family surroundings, then in preschool and for this reason it has the biggest impact on their intellectual and emotional development. They are the first contact the child makes with literature. With beautiful sentences and constant moral lessons, they bring the child into a world in which kindness and positive values are constantly emphasized (Vrnjković, 2011: 194).

## 2. Subject of analysis

When we examine the corpus of fairy tales that introduce children to the world of literature, we cannot disagree with the Jadranka Vladova's viewpoint that it is a lucky choice if "the reading" begins with "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" by the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (Vladova, 2001: 35). Therefore, in this paper, the subject of analysis are the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm used in primary school teaching in Štip, R. of Macedonia (PS "Vanco Prke", PS "Toso Arsov", PS "Dimitar Vlahov" and PS "Goce Delchev"). After the analysis of the literature used in Macedonian language teaching in these schools, it was found that in all schools the situation is almost identical.<sup>6</sup>

## 3. Methodological aspects in the analysis of Brothers Grimm stories in the textbooks of Macedonian language in elementary education

Namely, in all four schools, Macedonian language teaching in the first grade uses the textbook "Makedonski jazik".<sup>7</sup> On p.69 of the mentioned textbook, a task is set for the pupils "Retell the "Little Red Riding Hood" using the images. This is understandable given the age of

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<sup>5</sup> Revisional scientific paper

<sup>6</sup> In textbooks for higher grades the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm are not included. Accordingly, our analysis was focused only on the textbooks which included the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm.

<sup>7</sup> Makedonski jazik, Textbook for the first grade in the nine-year educational system by the authors Eleonora Strezovska, Jadranka Simitkovska, Tatjana Necevska and Aleksandra Mitrovska, Toper, Skopje, 2008.

the child-recipient and his understanding of the world. Since the attitude of the child towards the fairy tale is characterized by enjoyment in the rhythm and splendor of the words, in the contents and ways of presenting those contents and because the tale presents the world as a child of that age conceives it (Stojanović, 2010: 385) it makes sense that teachers in primary education, first by presenting the eight images/illustrations or slides will try through observation and conversation to arouse interest in the pupils. The latest pedagogical-didactic considerations show that creative teaching should be applied, which would allow pupils to create and be creative. Specifically, because the core of creativity constitutes the triad: child-surroundings/background-teacher the main purpose of the common activities between the teacher and pupils in the classroom should be discovering the creative possibilities of each pupil and their creative awakening, finding creativity both in the teacher and in the pupil (Stanojević, 2010: 410). The same author points out to how to achieve it: "There is neither a correct and unique, nor wrong way to acquire creativity. Children should be left to go after their own paths to find their own way of creation and to turn their mind into an artistic, creative and holistic one. Such component possess literary texts in the teaching process, educational and creative, because literature is a fertile ground for the aesthetic education of the pupils - to enable them to consistently identify, understand, evaluate, experience aesthetic values (Stanojević, 2010: 411). In this sense, the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* that pupils encounter in first grade (although they are familiar with it!), is an excellent choice. The *Little Red Riding Hood* fairy tale contains the old story of a bloodthirsty wolf that swallowed the grandmother and the little girl, as well as the timeless message about the all seeing eye of justice that does not allow evil to go unpunished. *Little Red Riding Hood* is the epitome of childhood innocence and naivety. Her behavior is dominated by love and curiosity, driven by the primitive human instinct for understanding the world. The hedonistic disposition for the beautiful and unknown brings the little heroine in a state of ecstatic oblivion, when the dangers and many temptations are not noticeable. The wolf is the epitome of evil which will eventually suffer the chains of his own hypocrisy. The popular *Little Red Riding Hood* is a fairy tale of novelistic type, it intertwines the real and miraculous in a way that recognizes the reality of human life and the cost of human existence (Milinković, 2006: 120-123). By showing the pupils illustrations from the fairy tale in mixed order and asking them to sort them in the right order regarding the storyline, several goals are achieved: first, they refer to their prior knowledge of the fairy tales heard in the family circle, thus improving their memory, then they are getting accustomed to think logically while putting the illustrations in order, and given the fact that the pupils are also required to tell the fairy tale according to the illustrations, their speech and expression develops ... In this sense, in his book *The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* Bruno Bettelheim says: "In order to really keep the attention of a child, a fairy tale has to entertain it and encourage its curiosity, but in order to enrich its life, it must boost its imagination; it must help to develop its intellect and to express its emotions; it must be in accordance with its fears and aspirations ..." (Bettelheim, 1976: 18). Here we also remind of Lihachov's viewpoints regarding the fairy tales: "The theme in fairy tales is a fight for overcoming a crisis, poverty or a natural disadvantage, a struggle for personal affirmation, and this in a fairytale is wealth, personal happiness, or the hand of a beautiful girl or boy ... The multitude of difficulties and temptations through which it must pass, the main hero is provided assistance by a typified assistant. The assistance is direct or indirect via the means of a magical object ... The conflicts in the fairy tale are caused by "spiritual" forces. Lihachov points out that the fairy tale contains a battle of wit, a fight of various intentions and the magical forces of nature. The intentions do not encounter resistance at the middle, but collide with other intentions, often unmotivated. Therefore, the obstacles in the story cannot be predicted. They are unexpected, sudden" (Lihačov, 1978: 63-64).



On p.78 from the textbook for first grade the task "Characters from famous fairy tales" can be found. Firstly, the teacher reads the description of three well-known fairy tales and the pupils recognize and name them. Excerpts from the fairy tales *Snow White*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella* are given, after which, based on images from the abovementioned stories: "Guess and name the characters in question?", the pupils have a specific task to name the characters from the abovementioned fairy tales. During the interpretation of the fairy tales, the characters as carriers of the storyline are primary, and their analysis on the lessons is inevitable. Often, after noticing the major and minor characters, their features are discussed and they are separated and classified as either protagonist or antagonists. The pupils often characterize them, without pointing the specific parts of the fairy tale in which this characteristic is "seen". The teachers elaborate the procedure, so that they ask the pupils to point out the places where the features of the characters can be seen and to support their answers with excerpts from the text (Stojanović, 2012:120).

*Cinderella* is a folk tale not only according to the basic steps, but also in every detail. The basic motive of the evil stepmother and the difficult life of the stepdaughter is very common, the story flows smoothly without interruptions of the descriptions, it includes the King and the Prince who gets married, in it, with the help of the birds the dead mother helps her child in trouble and it does not lack the typical iteration from the folk tale (the verses Cinderella sings to the tree, the calling of the birds, the song of the dove for the right fiancée); the story has a happy ending, harsh punishments are given (to the stepmother's daughters, the "delicate" doves take their eyes out), the good and beautiful uncompromisingly wins. But, the true value of the spirit of the folk tale should be searched in the details, in the atmosphere of the life shown, in the overall behavior of the heroes. And that is revealed at every step and turn. Before her death, the mother simply advises her daughter: "Dear child, be a kind and good, in that way you will always be fine ...". A simple emotionality is also present in the sequence: "When winter came, a white snow blanket covered her mother's grave, and when at spring the sun uncovered it, the father married." Also, when Cinderella begs the father: "Tear it father, the first branch that will touch your hat ... bring her to me," she actually wants him to remember her. When the author talks about the stepmother's daughters that "they were beautiful and fair skinned to the eye, but ugly and black in the heart", he then thinks like a man of the people who considered the white complexion as a code for beauty. The housework that Cinderella had to do is a description of everyday village activities: to rise early, to carry water, to light the fire, to cook and do the laundry. The clothes are generally described as gold or silver. Cinderella hides in the pigeonry or climbs a tree which the folk storyteller does not mind as he does not mind the description of the stepdaughters cutting their thumb or foot, after which the bleeding starts: "Cut a part of the heel; when you are queen you will not have to go on foot" (Crnković, 1987: 59-60).

On page 79 the task: "Recognize the story" is located. The teacher read excerpts from three fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm: "... She ran through the forest. She was scared and tired. She came across a meadow with a cottage" (A question by teacher: Do you remember which story is this?) Then text is read again: "... She opened the door and saw a table with seven chairs arranged around it, seven bowls, seven forks, seven teaspoons." The teacher interrupts again: "Which story is that?" Then the teacher reads the story until the pupils recognize it. At the end of the lesson, the teacher gives guidance to the pupils for the next lesson, to describe the characters of the fairy tales that they like. On the same page, an instructive - fun game called "Find the pair" is shown, where eight illustrations from four fairy tales are given, and the pupils have a task to connect the illustrations that belong to the same fairy tale. The fairy tales included are: *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Snow White* and *The Seven Dwarfs*, *Cinderella* and *The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats*.

In the textbook for the second grade there is not a single fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm. Except, in the second grade as a reading assignment is interpreted the fairy tale "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." The heroes in the fairy tale are built on the principle good - evil, without any psychological reasoning. In both good and evil there are some variations: good - naive, good - clever, good - cunning, good - stupid, good - skillful; evil - wicked, evil - a desire to physically eliminate the rival, evil - sly, evil - skillful, evil - strong, evil - supernatural (with magical abilities) (Prop, 1978:10). So, the characters in the fairy tale "Snow White" are polarized: they are good (the Queen - mother, Snezana, the huntsman, the dwarfs, the Prince) and evil (the Queen-stepmother). This kind of division actually helps the child in understanding the behavior of each character and, as psychology indicates, it allows the child to organize the chaos of its ambivalent (mixed) feelings, to determine its own feelings that torment him/her. Therefore, instead insisting on the question why Snow White after coming into the dwarfs' house, takes the same amount from each to stop the hunger, the teacher aiming at developing the children's reasoning is better to ask the question "Why do we think that Snow White is good?" (Vladova, 2001: 41-42) and to illustrate it with examples from the fairy tale. In this fairy tale, the Brothers Grimm gave a strong condemnation of human's self-centeredness and woman's narcissism. The fairy tale can be defined as an apology of goodness manifested in the natural behavior and simplicity of an unprotected girl. In the fight against the bad and evil queen, Snow White gets help from the supernatural creatures-dwarfs, who symbolize exemplary patterns of human behavior, and on the side of the arrogant queen are the magical mirror, the comb and apple. The properties and actions of the magic objects, emphasize the illusions of physical beauty if deprived of spiritual charm and warmth, while the dwarfs, with their actions demonstrate labor and order as a criterion and measure for human values (Milinković, 2006: 120-123). In fact, these fairy tales unobtrusively offer many life lessons or the pupils come to a realization about them by themselves. *Little Red Riding Hood* emphasizes the importance of listening to the parents' advice and this fairy tale is very useful because it warns children of the dangers of talking with strangers and the risk of wandering without parental supervision (Vrnjković, 2011: 195), and the message from *The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats* is also similar.

The magical objects that the pupils will encounter in these fairy tales (the magical mirror belonging to the Snow White's evil stepmother, Cinderella's wonderful assistants, etc.) are an opportunity to emphasize that the mirror is a so called magical object, one of those various magical objects with whose help impossible things happen in fairy tales. The children can recall the other wonderful objects from the fairy tales (the lamps, flying carpets, invisible hats, dancing shoes, shoes of seven miles, golden apples, magical tables, etc.) (Vladova, 2001: 43-44).

Very useful for qualitative teaching interpretation of the fairy tales are some of the strategies used in primary school teaching: *branching*, *brainstorming*, *star of the story*, *skeletal display*, *a five row strategy*, where the creativity of each pupil is particularly evident. The strategy *star of the story*, gives the pupils the opportunity to make an illustration of everything they understood by reading and talking about the fairy tale: the characters, the place of unfolding of the action, the subject of the story, and so on. The *branching* strategy allows pupils to put on paper all the emotions, associations, thoughts, ideas, etc. which the fairy tale awakens in them. The result is an image both of the mental and emotional world of each pupil.

The thing that makes the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm recognizable, and which is generally characteristic for the fairy tale, is their epilogue in which everyone gets what they deserved: good triumph over evil, justice over injustice; the poor deserve wealth, the Princes conquer the hearts of their chosen ones, and the evil stepmother and the other heroes as the embodiment of evil are properly punished. Everything ends in such a way that the main hero



after a series of obstacles created by supernatural beings triumphantly achieves his goals (Milinković, 2006: 120-123). This is consistent with the position of V. J. Prop: "... the fairytale gives a man the opportunity to make his constant desire to escape from reality come true, and thus still to remain within its borders. Freed from the confines of reality and striving for a higher artistic truth, the fairy tale has always been an inseparable part of the literary creation. All those works in which the main hero goes through numerous life temptations, falls in dead-end situations, so that eventually and quite unexpectedly, with the help of God or some other miracle, on an totally amazing way, solves all of its troubles, are very similar to a fairy tale ..." (Prop, 1978:5). According to Prop, a fairy tale is a folk tale whose plot intertwines the real and unreal. Unlike legends and myths, it does not have pretensions towards the truth. Its purpose is to entertain the listeners who accept it as something invented, something that never really happened.

In the textbook for the third grade, "Makedonski jazik",<sup>8</sup> on p.145 there is the fairytale "The Magic Porridge Pot" and on the same page a definition is given about what are fairy tales or stories, what are the most prevalent characters in fairy tales, most famous authors of fairy tales... This is a teacher's guide for the way of organizing the lesson, the lesson usually beginning with questions like: Do you know what is a fairytale? What fairytales do you know? etc. Because the pupils are third-graders, it is likely that solid and various responses will be given. This fairy tale is particularly susceptible to incorporation/correlation to the contents of the subject Macedonian language with the subject Arts and Crafts, where the students have the opportunity to illustrate insights, feelings, experiences, opinions and associations from the fairy tale. In this way, teachers encourage pupils to artistically present the character or some situations from the fairy tale that left the biggest impression.

In the fourth grade textbook "Makedonski jazik"<sup>9</sup> on p.58 there is the fairy tale "The Golden Key", and on p.86 is the fairy tale-fable "The Wolf and The Fox." In the case of the fairytale "The Golden Key" which does not have an ending, the teacher leaves the pupils the possibility to finish the fairy tale and hence to see the responses of the pupils about what is hidden in the small treasure chest, more precisely what each of them would prefer to be hidden. This is indicative, because the wishes of children-pupils who do not often comply with reality. Rade Prelevic recognizes the cathartic function of fantasy in children's literature: "... the child is a being who rarely admits defeat and in every situation one finds the safety thread that draws it from the well prepared traps created by life. Sensing what life has to offer, the child rejects such a life, refusing to grow up, choosing an imaginary place where all wishes can come true... So, it is the place of the eternal cycle dictated by the child's desire. And that place with all its constant and wonderful cycles is the place of fantasy" (Prelević, 1978: 96-97). Another strategy that teachers use while working with this fairy tale is when pupils ask and answer questions asked by the pupils themselves. Asking questions before, during and after reading it, allows pupils more actively and deeply to engage in the process of reading. In addition, they will be able to identify gaps in understanding which should be further clarified (Moss, 10). When older, the pupils are asked to provide information about the place described in the fairy tale, the descriptions of nature and landscape, to quote interesting thoughts, to give their opinion on the story, its message etc. When pupils discuss about the place, the questions with which they will come to recognize the progress of the hero in the storyline, for example, leaving Snow White in the woods, and so on. Besides giving a description of the environment, pupils are trained to

<sup>8</sup> "Makedonski jazik" Textbook for the third grade in the nine-year educational system, by the authors Mito Spasevski, Lidija Grkova and Biljana Lalcevska, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> "Makedonski jazik" Textbook for the fourth grade in the nine-year educational system, by the author Ljiljana Atanasova, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2009.

perceive details, they can gain knowledge about the progress of the hero through the fairy tale and how it affects the storyline in it. The place from the journey has a generative, but also a connecting function, not only in the structure of the story, but also regarding the plot. Namely, the journey as a road on which the hero in the fairy tale goes through space and time is a possibility of multiple intersections (meetings, partings, confirmed or betrayed expectations and realizations), and that treasury of possibilities that stands before the traveler also sets the different outcomes of his journey... The long road straight ahead leads to the goal, the side road leads to uncertainty, the road on the left leads to death, the road on the right ensures success ... This action contributes to maintaining the suspense in the reader and the anticipation of a happy outcome. Good will win, but only after it resists the numerous temptations. Even if the hero dies, in the final part the characters –assistants will revive him/her and will ensure a successful return to the initial position (Stanković-Šošo, 2005:119-131). This shows that the question of death or the theme of death is often entailed. In the abovementioned fairy tales the theme of death is present in many places: the death of Snow White's mother, the order given by the evil stepmother to kill Snow White, the attempts by the evil stepmother to murder Snow White, the apparent death of Snow White from the poisonous apple etc. The answers to the questions like: What does Snow White look like? Why does she look like that? What happened to her mother?, will reveal the character of Snow White's mother, whose premature death will encourage the child associations in two ways: in terms of the text, to define Snow White as an orphan, and from the psychological aspect to "naturally" and painlessly (as psychologists claim) introduce death (Vladova, 2001:43-44). Although it is quite as probable as birth, and thus the encounter of the child with it (through death of close family members or persons from the surroundings), often seen as a taboo, explanations regarding it are mostly mystical than explanatory.

#### 4. Conclusion

All these fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm which are learned in primary school can serve as a good example of how children come to intermediate knowledge of death as a life phenomenon. In the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm the danger to life of the carriers of positive social behavior, are caused by beings similar to humans, their personifications, whether in animal or human form, aided by supernatural powers. Their action brings the positive character to the brink of death, but after a "miracle" it has been delayed, which provides an opportunity for salvation. In the Brothers Grimm's fairytale, usually there is not a direct, immediate murder that causes death. The carriers of positive behavior, as a rule are spared from death, until the carriers of negative either self-destruct or disappear from the fairy tale. The hunter in *Snow White* should commit murder at the behest of the Queen, but as barrier appears his conscience, the punishment for the stepmother-Queen is such that she self-destructs before the fact of her own failure, although the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* has the opportunity to eat her in the woods, which he does not do it there, but in the house of her grandmother, the execution of the sentence over the Wolf is left to the hunter, the forest keeper, guardian of the human social order and morality, therefore, he is given the task by society that he must execute without remorse, and it can even be said with a social blessing (Konstantinović, 2006: 91-104).

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