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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**USING STORIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH  
TO YOUNG LEARNERS**

**BACHELOR THESIS**

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I would like to express my thanks to Mrs Mgr Naděžda Vojtková for her helpful comments and her encouragement.

I declare that I wrote this thesis by myself and used only the literature listed.

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## **Introduction**

English is called „the lingua franca of the whole world“.

Recent years have seen a massive increase in English language teaching in all Europe, not only in schools but also in factories and elsewhere. The knowledge of English is required by many employers and in many other parts of people’s life. It will be important to understand English very well in the future and this is the reason for finding better and more enjoyable ways how to start teaching young learners.

Children from an early age should learn about foreign cultures so that they grow up tolerant and sympathetic towards others. The earlier a man starts the more he gets.

As a result of this, English teaching has started to be increasingly important.

I decided to write about the use of stories in language teaching at a basic school. Most language teachers concentrate on vocabulary, grammar, sometimes on pronunciation which is covered in textbooks, but there are more pleasant, practical and useful ways to introduce and practise all these common requirements. Children love tales and stories and learning through pleasure is the way to reach the goals.

My work has two major aims. The first one is to provide a theoretical background for using stories with young learners. I will try to describe theoretical background of listening, speaking, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary learning.

In the second part I will introduce various activities which are based on my own experience as well as activities taken from methodological books and try to develop a teaching scheme for using a traditional tale “Little Red Riding Hood” , pilot it in my classes and evaluate its impact on learners’ language acquisition and learning.

# 1. Theoretical part

## 1.1 Young learners

Young learners are children from the first year of formal schooling to eleven or twelve years of age. They are relatively mature children with both adult and childish features. I would like to concentrate on young learners of eight and nine years of age. These learners have attended the third year of a special language programme. They can write and read in their first language but they do not have enough knowledge about grammar and grammatical categories. They are not competent to work with language as a tool although they can use it in everyday life. They are able to listen to a text and say what it is about. They still like playing games, singing songs, saying rhymes and introducing their own thoughts and ideas.

The following list shows general characteristics and language development of a young learner according to Wendy and Ytreberg (1990, p. 3)

- *They can tell the difference between fact and fiction.*
- *Their basic concepts are formed. They have very decided views of the world.*
- *They ask questions all the time.*
- *They rely on the spoken word as well as the physical world to convey and understand meaning.*
- *They are able to make some decisions about their own learning.*
- *They have definite views about what they like and do not like doing.*
- *They have a developed sense of fairness about what happens in the classroom and begin to question the teacher's decisions.*
- *They are able to work with others and learn from others.*

*Language development:*

- *They understand abstracts*
- *They understand symbols (beginning with words)*
- *They generalize and systematize*

## **1.2. Young children learning languages**

We can learn a lot from how little babies acquire their first language. As Brumfit, Moon and Tongue claim: *“An intriguing paradox in the development of young children is their ability to establish their first language at a time when they are unable to understand anything about the system which they come to use with such competence.*

*From experiences of learning other languages at later ages there is much that indicates that learning a language is not easy. Yet young children the world over persist and make progress even though it later appears to be difficult.*

*The fact that young children learn their first language such speed and competence must mean that if the process can be better understood, it should be possible to design methods through which children learn a second language in much the same way as they learn their first language”.* (Teaching Eng. to Children, 1991, p.213)

Babies learn through voice, gestures, speaker’s face and tone of the voice and they perceive an atmosphere around them. Then they observe the world they live in and try to give things some titles. At first children operate with concrete words and later then they develop their abstract thinking and try to use abstract words in their speech. The more concrete the words are the more children learn. They need many real things, pictures and associations to create a second language. According to my experience they learn very quickly when they can play with real things or are able to imagine situations or actions. The best way is observing new language through real actions which are motivating for them in a right way. They do not like being taught in a directive way they enjoy active involvement.

## **1.3. How can children be helped to learn a foreign language?**

In “Teaching Engl. to Children” (1991, p. 7) Brumfit, Moon and Tongue say: *“It is not surprising to note that a child’s concentration span increases as he/she grows older. Children cannot concentrate on one thing for a long period and therefore the authors recommend that lessons should be divided into a series of activities lasting no longer than five or ten minutes. This is because children are bombarded with new experiences*



*and information. Teachers should introduce a reasonable number of new language items and present and practise them in a number of different ways.*

I definitely agree with this theory. Children who are tired after their school work are not able to concentrate on my after-school language course very much and I must plan my lessons carefully and then be creative during them and change prepared ones according to the pupils' mood. A teacher should recognize that an activity is not good in a very short time and must be prepared to change it.

#### **1.4. Is there a best way to teach primary EFL?**

It is a big and very important question and should be carefully considered by all teachers and methodologists. Brumfit and Moon (1991, p.8)) point out there is not a straightforward answer to this key question. There are two main models of classroom practice: *“the classical EFL practice model on the one hand and the mainstream primary practice model on the other.*

*A stereotyped version of classical EFL is characterized by a presentation and practice model, developed largely with adults and focusing on questions of language and communication. Mainstream primary practice embodies a less structured conception of language, more appropriate to the educational needs of children, which focuses on questions of curriculum content and cognitive development. (Teaching English to Children, Ellis and Brewster, 1991, p.8)*

These two models often appeared in my own work. I like using textbooks which are suited for my children but on the other hand a more exciting lesson can be created by the second approach. Using stories in teaching is very suitable, inspiring and enjoyable.

## 1.5. Using a story in English teaching

According to the above mentioned theory and my experience I will take a story as a suitable resource for teaching and learning a foreign language. A story is something that everybody is familiar with, a majority of people used to listen to stories and like them very much. Children want to enjoy a character's adventures and like to distinguish between good and evil. Having worked with children's stories I have made my own theory. Although I work with children who are involved in learning English very much, it is very important to choose a suitable level for a certain class. They study English as their hobby and this is why they are very involved. They want to learn and I have freedom to create lessons in my way. Stories give me many opportunities for practising everything children have learnt.

In *The Storytelling Handbook* (Ellis and Brewster, 1991, p.1) state:

- *Stories are motivating and fun; they create a deep interest and a desire to continue learning.*
- *Listening to stories is a shared social experience; it provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation.*
- *Stories exercise the imagination; children can become personally involved in a story as they identify with the characters and try to interpret the narrative and illustrations.*
- *Stories are a useful tool in linking fantasy and the imagination with the child's real world; they provide a way of enabling children to make sense of their everyday life.*
- *Listening to stories allows the teacher to introduce or revise new vocabulary and sentence structures by exposing the children to language.*
- *Stories help students of all levels to understand literature, they carry ideological messages.*
- *Children books offer universal truths, moral appeals to one generation after another.*

## 1.6. Creating a good atmosphere

Classroom is a place where children should feel confident, satisfied and happy although they should learn something new there. As teachers we should have respect towards our pupils and like them all. This is a very important part of a teacher's characteristic.

Young children have a very sharp sense of fairness and they often realize inequity earlier than a teacher as Scott and Ytreberg (1991) claim.

Another important thing is to create pleasant and familiar surroundings. The classroom should be decorated not only by the teacher's tools and pictures but also by the pupils' works, projects and physical object which can make it a nice place to learn.

My pupils have a big advantage of having the classroom only for their lessons. We can create our own environment with all kinds of personal things.

I often change desks lay-out in the classroom to make it more interesting and suitable for different activities.

My children like being divided to groups or pairs. They often surprise me by their responsibility to do activities in their own way and do them well.

A secure class atmosphere is very important for forming good lessons. Here are some of the recommendations which help to create a safe class atmosphere according to Scott and Ytreberg, 1991, p.10)

- *Pupils need to know what we are doing and what is happening in the classroom.*
- *Respect your pupils.*
- *Whenever a pupil is trying to tell you something, accept whatever he or she says - mistakes as well. Constant, direct correction is not effective and it does not help to create a good class atmosphere. Correction has its place when you are working on guided language exercises.*
- *Children of all ages are sometimes unkind to each other. They should not laugh at others' mistakes, and this has to be one of the rules of the classroom. Pupils have to be told that everyone makes mistakes when they are learning a new language, and that it is all right.*
- *Establish routines.*
- *Give the children the responsibility for doing practical jobs in the classroom.*

- *Avoid organized competition. Language learning is a situation where everyone can win. Children compete naturally with each other - to see whose finished first etc., but this is something different.*
- *Avoid giving physical rewards or prizes. It tells others that they have not "won" and it does not help learning to take place.*
- *Do not give children English names. Language is a personal thing, and you are the same person no matter what language you are using.*

### **1.7. The teacher's role**

People have in general many different roles. Everybody plays a part in society. According to my own experience the personality of a teacher and his/her approach is very important. A teacher's role is very significant and should be in a high level. A teacher is often the first person who gives children new information about a foreign language. According to many practical methodological books a teacher can change various roles, because individual stages of the lesson require different approaches to learners. Sometimes only the teacher's personality can decide if the children's attitude towards learning foreign languages is positive or negative.

### **1.8. The learner's role**

The young learner is very significant and all work should be aimed towards him. *"Younger learners respond to language according to what it does or what they can do with it, rather than treating it as an intellectual game in abstract system. This has both advantages and disadvantages: on the one hand they respond to the meaning underlying the language used and do not worry about individual words or sentences, on the other hand, they do not make the analytical links that older learners do. Younger learners have the advantage of being great mimics, are often*

*unselfconscious, and are usually prepared to enjoy the activities the teacher has prepared for them". (Young Learners, S. Philips, 1997, p.7)*

### **1.9. Suitable activities**

According to my experience with young learners who attend my class in their free time I can say that high motivation makes the English classes an enjoyable and stimulating experience for the children. Creating pleasant atmosphere is a necessary part of my lessons because my pupils attend their English classes after their compulsory schooling. It demands careful preparation and the teacher's empathy because they are often very tired and exhausted and activities must be carefully chosen.

*"The activities should be simple enough for the children to understand what is expected of them. The task should be inside their abilities: it needs to be achievable but at the same time sufficiently stimulating for them to feel satisfied with their work. The activities should be largely orally based--indeed, with very young children listening activities will take up a large proportion of class time. Written activities should be used sparingly with younger children". (Young Learners, S. Philips, 1997, p.7)*

### **1.10. Planning the lesson**

The topic of my work is "How to use a story in English lessons" and this topic requires all types of planning. A good teacher should do lots of planning and preparation to create interesting and efficient lessons. It gives to a teacher lots of opportunities to be creative, use suitable well prepared activities and make lessons enjoyable for children and the teacher as well.

I teach according to textbooks but I want to make our lessons more enjoyable. For this reason I would like to prepare unusual activities but still somehow connected with the

topics which are covered in our textbooks. Long term planning preparation helps the teacher to create nice lessons for children.

We as teachers should know what we are going to do in our next lesson. It is not necessary to plan everything because of our experience but we should still know what to do in an appropriate way.

*"Children are usually full of enthusiasm and energy, and the language lesson will be full of variety and changes of activity.*

*The lesson must be carefully planned if the teacher and children are going to get the maximum enjoyment and the maximum learning out of a lesson. All teachers plan, just as all good teachers are prepared to adapt their plans, and know that they have to be prepared for emergencies".* (Teaching En. to Children, Scott and Ytreberg, 1991, p. 97)

One of the most important things for good series of lessons is lesson planning. The use of stories requires careful long term planning followed by short term planning and lesson planning for individual lessons. Planning makes the teacher's life much easier.

In Teaching En. to Children, 1991, p. 97 Scott and Ytreberg say why good teachers plan their work :

- *They can adapt the plan for future use.*
- *They get quicker at preparing work with experience.*
- *They become aware of how much time activities take.*
- *It is much quicker to check at the end of a lesson what actually happened.*
- *They know what they will need for each lesson.*
- *It gives them security and confidence, which is passed on to the pupils.*
- *It allows them to use more of their energy and enthusiasm to enjoy what they are doing instead of worrying about what to do next, or looking at the next page of the book.*
- *They can sometimes sit back and observe what is going on instead of planning the next activity in their head.*
- *Pupils like to have well-prepared lessons*

### **1.11. English language skills**

I would like to mention some skills which can create a good and productive atmosphere. Choosing a suitable language skill can be the halfway to success.

As I have mentioned I teach children at the basic school but the reason why they attend the English course is that it is their hobby and they like it. Working with my pupils is easier for this reason but it needs careful preparation and good knowledge about their age, abilities and ways of thinking.

Language skills like speaking, writing, listening, reading, as well as pronunciation practice are developed during language studies. However, all these skills can be used and taught through a story which can give us lots of space to work with them.

### **1.12. Listening**

I have prepared many listening activities for my pupils. The children like to listen to the short stories included in their textbooks. Generally they are able to understand simple sentences and commands used in the lessons. Children attending my classes listen to the language which is a little above their level. I make the meaning clear by using pictures, mime, and body language

*“Listening tasks are extremely important in the primary language classroom, providing a rich source of language data from which the children begin to build up their own idea of how the language works. This knowledge forms a base or resource which they will eventually draw on in order to produce language themselves.*

*It is almost always true that language learners understand more than they can say and when children learn their first language they respond to language long before they learn to speak. Second language also have a "silent period" in which they listen to the language around them, internalize it, and formulate their own personal grammar, which they adapt and expand as they are exposed to more language”.*

(Young Learners, S. Philips, 1997, p.17)

I agree with the mentioned theory because I often deal with my children's "silent period" and as Brumfit, Moon and Tongue add it is important to give pupils instruction how to listen.

*"Studies of classroom interaction show that children spend a large part of their time listening - listening to the teacher, to each other or to pre-recorded material. Each time the teacher uses English to explain something, give instructions, tell a story or praise someone, he/she is making listening demands on the pupils. Problems are likely to arise if teachers do not teach children how to listen". (Teaching English to children, Brumfit, Moon and Tongue, 1991, p.158)*

Teaching children how to listen is a very important part of my lessons. I spend lots of time preparing good conditions for a listening part - practising vocabulary, talking about a topic, using suitable materials and body language.

### **1.13. Speaking**

Speaking is a common skill which children generally use very much especially at the age of ten. Although they like to speak, producing a speech in the second language is quite difficult for them. They use routines and certain patterns but they are not able to communicate fluently. I often prepare games which offer opportunities to speak.

Children like repeating and playing with words and they enjoy the games with pleasure. Following Harmer's suggestions (Harmer, 1994) I often use drill methods to practise grammar, new words, rhymes and songs.

According to Ellis and Brewster (1991) in the early stages of learning we cannot expect much spontaneous speech from our pupils. The English they will learn to produce will be what is known as formulaic language. This consists of routines or patterns which children memorize and which enable them to communicate with minimum of linguistic competence. However, pupils can be given opportunities to initiate conversation too by playing games.

*"Teachers often find speaking a difficult skill to teach, because learners have to master several different elements of language in order to what they want: vocabulary,*



*pronunciation, structures, functions, and so on. One way how to teach speaking as children get older is provide such activities as storytelling is. It is important to bear in mind that children need to see the reason for doing the activity. This end-product is an important motivating factor, often more important than the topic itself". (S. Philips, 1997, p.38)*

*"Speaking practice in the early stages of learning will mainly be initiated by teacher and will consist of simple questions and answers. The following progress from tightly controlled practice to freer communication" (Ellis and Brewster, 1991):*

- *look, listen and repeat*
- *look and ask guessing games*
- *information gap*
- *questioners and surveys*
- *role-play*
- *retelling a story*
- *listen and participate*
- *reading aloud*
- *memory games*
- *dramatization*
- *rhymes, action rhymes, songs, chants*

I often use all of these activities in my storytelling lessons although dramatization and retelling stories is rather time consuming.

#### **1.14. Vocabulary learning**

My classes are based especially on vocabulary learning. pupils like playing with words and they are able to absorb them quickly. Learning through games is very effective. According to my experience children like storytelling activities because they create atmosphere full of enthusiasm.

*“For many years vocabulary was seen as incidental to the main purpose for language teaching. A part of the problem in vocabulary teaching lies in the fact that whilst there is a consensus about what grammatical structures should be taught at what levels, the same is hardly true of vocabulary. A general principle of vocabulary selection has been that of frequency and coverage. The words which are most commonly used are the ones we should teach first. A word is more useful if it covers more things than if it only has one specific meaning”.* (Harmer, 1994,p.154)

For this reason it is highly recommended to use stories to teach vocabulary as Ellis and Brewster say: *“The story notes highlight the main vocabulary areas in each story. Some will be for passive recognition only. Vocabulary in stories is presented in a vivid and clear context and the illustrations help to convey meaning. Research has shown that words are often remembered in groups which have something common. Whenever are possible, get pupils to use their senses”.* (Ellis and Brewster, 1991p.33)

It is necessary to teach vocabulary in context because words are not isolated and they can have many meanings which is important for communication as S. Philips says (1997).

### **1.15. Reading**

Texts in pupils’ textbooks are quite difficult to read. Pupils do not feel confident when reading some texts and exercises. Some of them can read fluently but the rest of the class needs practice. Storytelling brings many interesting opportunities for reading and in addition it is a good way to improve the pupils interest.

*“Reading is another significant source of learning a second language. Books open up other worlds to young children, and making reading an enjoyable activity is a very important part of the language learning experience. Pupils of ten years are able to transfer his/her reading skills to English”.* (Scott and Ytreberg, 1991)

On the other hand Ellis and Brewster (1991) suggest that to overload children with “too many reading demands” is not appropriate because it is demotivating.

Moreover it is very important to persuade pupils *“that a text in English can be understood even though there are vocabulary items and structures the pupil has never seen before.* (Harmer, 1994,p191):

There are lots of skills which can help both teachers and pupils to develop a comprehensible way how to read”. (Harmer, 1994,p191):

- *predictive skills*
- *extracting specific information*
- *getting the general picture extracting detailed information*
- *recognizing function and discourse patterns*
- *deducting meaning from context*

C. Brumfit says (1994) that real books are the foundation of an effective reading program for first and second language learners alike. Real books bring an enthusiasm for reading into the classrooms. Successful classrooms are filled with real books and the school day is filled with opportunities for children to read.

## **1.16. Writing**

On the whole pupils do not like English writing very much because of its difficult spelling. They prefer other skills particularly speaking, listening and vocabulary learning. I prepare many suitable and enjoyable activities for practising and developing writing skills which are mentioned bellow.

*“In general, it is best to produce English through listening and speaking first, then progress to reading, and leave writing to be last last. It is usual to ask learners to copy words and short sentences first-to practice their handwriting as much as their English. These short sentences and words should reflect themes connected with the children’s schoolwork or daily lives, and be linked with pictures and posters around the room. But writing is much more than the simple mechanics of getting the words down: it also involves being creative, spelling, grammar, punctuation, choice of appropriate words, sentence linking, and text construction”.* (S. Philips, 1997, p.63)

According to Ellis and Brewster (1991) teachers should help learners to make writing purposeful and contextual whenever possible. Writing activities can be divided into those which encourage copying and those which encourage creativity. Common writing functions children will practise include:

- *describing people, animals and places*
- *comparing people, animals and places*
- *asking questions*
- *giving information in response to question*
- *describing present actions*
- *narrative past events*
- *describing cause and effect*
- *giving reason*

## 2. Practical part

### 2.1. Aim of the practical part

I would like to demonstrate suitable methods of presenting a story in English lessons. Using stories in the learning process could be the most natural way how to practise skills like speaking, listening, writing and learn pronunciation and new vocabulary. The aim of my work is to present different activities which could help to develop the English learning process. I want to make the lessons more interesting and attractive and also like to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of the lessons.

### 2.2. Description of my class

My pupils have been learning English for three or four years in special after-school classes. They are eight or nine years old, they attend the third class and study English as their hobby. I have chosen “You and Me” coursebook and the pupils and I follow the activities covered in it. Although they like learning and playing with this coursebook, I also like to create my own lessons to bring more enthusiasm into my classes.

After three years of attending English lessons they know lots of vocabulary. Their listening skills are on a high level, they like to listen to stories and texts which are covered in the textbook.

They are able to read and their comprehension of a text is quite good. I must admit that my pupils prefer speaking and listening to writing or doing grammar exercises. They do not yet know how grammatical structures work in their first language properly and it causes additional difficulties in English grammar learning.

Learning pronunciation is not covered in the textbook but I would like to introduce some ideas and inform about certain pronunciation aspects.

Although, writing is very difficult for young students I would like to improve all the skills and present some interesting activities by using a story.

Despite certain anticipated problems I have decided to create special lessons and a story project which could help me to reach my goal.

Story activities will be integrated into our course each month. I need to inform my pupils' parents because sometimes our lessons will require some additional material and it is necessary to have the parents' support. I ask children to bring pictures of animals, family and countryside.

Step by step I bring into our classroom a real book "Little Red Riding Hood" (LHRR). Real reading needs real books and I prepare copies for each pupil

### **2.3. Long term planning**

According to this long term plan I prepared individual lessons. This strategy is useful not only for planning it is also used for meaningful feedback.

#### **Main results**

To act the tale using paper finger puppets

To write a short poem

#### **Linguistic aims**

##### **Skills:**

Listening: listening for general understanding, listening for specific words

Reading: reading to extract specific information, reading for detailed understanding, reading for gist

Writing: practising descriptions of people and animals, matching and writing missing words

Speaking: describing people, animals, places

##### **Grammar:**

Asking for information using *Who is this? What is his/her name?*

Answering questions. For example *This is my uncle Tom.*

**Vocabulary:**

- tale words - wolf, Little Red Riding Hood, basket, forest, cloak,
- parts of the body, animals, house words,
- adjectives- big, small, little, hungry, beautiful, strange

**Pronunciation:**

Rhyming words

**Cross-curricular links:**

Maths- practising numbers

Art- making finger puppet, decorating wall posters

Music and drama- singing songs, playing a part of the tale with finger puppets

Learning strategies- predicting, memorizing, correcting, recognizing

**Cultural information**

Recognizing differences between the Czech and English tale LRRH.

**Additional materials**

Posters with forest animals and body parts stuck on the classroom walls.

The teacher together with the children stick the children's own pictures of the tale characters on the walls. Then after each lesson they stick speech bubbles next to each character in the order they appear in the text. After finishing single lessons each child receives the text.

Dialogues need more practice and for this reason the children sometimes practise them in ordinary lessons or alone with their lesson mates.

## 2.4. Examples of lesson plans

In the following session there are some examples of lesson plans in which I would like to demonstrate how the tale Little Red Riding Hood (LRRH) can be used for ELT.

### 2.4.1. Lesson plan 1

Time: 45 minutes

Aim: vocabulary learning, listening for general meaning, speaking

Topic: LRRH, family

Material: family photos, work sheets /appendix 1a,b,c,d,e/, red flowers in the class, red pictures on the walls, the teacher and the children should wear red clothes (this task was assigned in the previous lesson), family word cards, LRRH's real books- big and small

Grammar: practising of phrases: *This is my mum. This is Peter's father.*

Assumptions: the pupils will practise old and learn new vocabulary, speaking, reading and listening skills

Anticipated problems: it is possible that the children will not recognize the story

Organization: in groups, in the circle

1st step

Motivation: make the children guess who is on the photos stucked on the board (photos of the teacher's family). Ask them what other family words they know. Write the words on the board. Tell the pupils: *This is my mother, father, etc.* and introduce new vocabulary: uncle, aunt, cousin written on word cards.

Some children introduce their photos in the same way in front of the class.

Ask: *Who is in this photo?* Anticipated answer: *This is Peter's mother.*

2nd step

Divide pupils in groups of three or four and give them opportunity to practise grammar and vocabulary by speaking about their photos. Monitor pupils' speaking and help if it is necessary.



Hand out worksheet 1 with different words and let the pupils to circle family words and find them in the text (appendix 1a, b)

3rd step

Ask the pupils to listen to the text carefully. Play the text on the cassette without the first sentence (page 2, 3).

Give the pupils question: *Listen and guess what and who is this story about?*

4th step

Divide the children into pairs and read the text again.

Underline the words you hear in the text and check it with all class (appendix 2a)

Give them the definition of "hood and ride" and let them guess and write the Czech meaning of these words on a piece of paper and then check the right guesses with all class (appendix 2b).

Give them the first sentence taken from the story and children should fill the missing word *wolf* (appendix 2c).

5th step

For ending the lesson sing the song "In a cottage in a wood"

Ask the children to bring pictures of animals living in the forest for the next lesson.

Evaluation: The pupils enjoyed both activities. They like to speak about their family every time and the photo activity was a good motivation for them. For the next time it would be better to write the sentences on the board and practise reading them before the activity. (Who is this? This is Peter's father). The children found familiar words in the crossword quickly but they had difficulties with the new ones (cousin, uncle, aunt). Pupils were able to say the grammar pattern (Who is in this photo?), they helped each other and did not need the teacher's help.

## 2.4.2 Lesson plan 2

Time: 45 minutes

Aim: to practise listening for specific reason (food vocabulary)

Topic: Animals living in the forest

Material: Flash cards with animals, animal word cards, page 4 and 5 for each child, big sheet of paper, pictures of animals, picture dictionaries and normal dictionaries for more confident pupils, speech bubbles

Assumption: the children will practise reading and speaking with enthusiasm

Anticipated problems: the pupils could feel less comfortable in role play activities

Organization: the whole class, in groups

1st step

Divide the pupils into three groups.

Motivation: Show the children a big sheet of paper stuck on the wall and let them guess the reason why it is on the wall. Each group makes their own guesses.

Piece by piece draw forest trees and let the children guess again what it is. (forest)

Then ask the pupils to show their pictures of forest animals and stick them on the paper together with the children.

Let the children find in dictionaries the names of animals which they do not know and write them on the board as they say them.

2nd step

Guessing game - the teacher - *I can see a small animal. It has got four legs, long ears, short tail and brown colour. What animal is it?* the children: *A rabbit.*

Let some other pupils describe other animals from the poster themselves and let the rest of the class guess.

One child pretends to be one of the animals and others guess what animal he or she is.

3rd step

*We are going to listen to the next part of the LRRH story. Can you tell me what animal LRRH meets in the forest? Can you describe the wolf and LRRH? Have you ever seen any wolves? What do they eat?*

4th step

*Listen to the story and tell me then what the wolf says to LRRH and what LRRH takes to her grandma's house.*

Make some guesses before listening and write them on the board and after listening check them with children.

5th step

Stick speech bubbles on the board and practise saying them with all children. Then let each group choose one character: wolves, mothers and LRRHs. Then each child from the mother's group should read one sentence from the dialogue and other children should read their part all together.

Then read the narrator's part yourself and encourage pupils to read the rest.

6th step

Sing the song "In a cottage in the wood"

Stick speech bubbles on the walls in the order they appear in the text.

Give the children the text for the next lesson and tell them to read the text at home and to try and translate it.

Evaluation: Reading the mother's part caused difficulties. Other parts were easy to read for the rest of the children. The activity was quite noisy but the pupils enjoyed it very much, especially when they tried to change their voice according to the characters. The weak pupils had difficulties with reading the text although they were helped (echo reading)

### **2.4.3 Lesson plan 3**

Time: 45 minutes

Aim: to practise and consolidate vocabulary from the text: animals and family words, story words (hood, wolf, forest, etc.)

Topic: Acting and mumbling characters, Walk about (Creating stories, page 20)

Material: text, mixed paragraphs

Assumption: children should repeat speech bubbles after the teacher using a pitch voice and then try to mumble the character's parts, they could pass around sentences

Anticipated problems: it could be very difficult to read speech bubbles out loud

Organization: in four groups

1st step

To start our lesson sing the song "In a cottage in the wood"

Revise animal vocabulary from the poster on the wall.

Choose one animal and let the children guess which one.

Without letting the children see then remove one picture of an animal from the poster and then children the guess what it was.

2nd step

Read the text which the pupils have already read and prepared at home. After finishing your reading divide children into four groups and let them discuss what it was about.

Give them speech bubbles and tell them to divide them to those said by LRRH and the wolf and give them in the right order. (appendix 3)

Check the work with all the children.

3rd step

Read the characters' parts yourself sentence by sentence and let children repeat them after you.

Give two groups the LRRH's character and two groups the wolf's character and give them time to practise reading the text in groups.

Go and help the pupils when it is necessary.

4th step

"Chinese Whispers" (Tell it Again, page 25) - give one pupil in a group a sentence from the appendix 3 which she or he must remember and then whisper to the next child in the group. This child whispers it to the next child and so on. The last child compares his or her sentence with the original one.

5th step

Motivation: *Have you ever been to a theatre? Today we are going to act the part of the LRRH story but we cannot use any words.*

Game "Walk about" (Creating stories, page 20)

- the children walk in the classroom
  - you stop them. The children "freeze" immediately and close their eyes. They then imagine a character of the wolf or the LRRH
  - they look at the character in their mind's eye, and then open their eyes and behave as that character
  - the pupils walk about, making contact with others and mumbling "conversation"
- To end the lesson sing the song " One little, two little wolves"

Evaluation: repeating did not cause the children any difficulties and problems. They enjoyed voice changing. "Chinese whispers" was a good activity although it was very difficult to pass the whole sentence. Three pupils were not able to pass it although they tried their best. During this activity the rules were changed and the children passed only a part of the sentences.

The game "Walk about" gave the children many opportunities to use their imagination and they enjoyed it very much. All pupils were involved. It was a noisy activity and for the next time would be better end the lesson with a song or activity which calms the pupils down. The pupils cooperated and were interested throughout the whole lesson.

#### **2.4.4. Lesson plan 4**

Time: 45minutes

Aim: to develop the pupils' listening skills and creativity, reading, speaking

Topic: house, creating a poem

Material: finished finger puppets, posters, dialogues

Grammar structures: In the big, big forest, there's a big, big house, etc.

Assumption: children will be able to create a poem,

Anticipated problems: the text is too long and the pupils can lose their attention

Organization: in the circle, in groups

### 1st step

Motivation: draw a big tree and a small house on the big poster and let the pupils guess why you do it. Ask the questions *Is this tree big or small? How is the house? Tell me other words to describe those pictures* (big, small, green, white, dirty, etc).

*What else can you say about this house? What can you find in the house?* (Rooms, a bedroom, a kitchen, a toilet, a window, a door, a bed, etc.)

Write the words on the board.

Write the following sentences on the board and let the pupils translate it: *In the big, big house, there's a big, big .....*

Tell the children that they are going to create a poem about the house and they need to listen to the tale carefully. There are many useful words in it which are going to fit into the poem. They can write them on a piece of paper.

### 2nd step

Write the questions on the board and sit the children to the circle around you.

Then read the pages 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Use finger puppets for the dialogues and change your voice according to the characters. (Grandma and wolf)

### 3rd step

Divide the pupils to four groups and let them discuss the questions written on the board and useful words they heard in the tale. They can write their suggestions on the paper.

### 4th step

Discuss what it was about and then write the words that can fit to the poem in the first line written on the board. Continue with the second line, etc.

### 5th step

Give each group a big empty poster and let them choose one character and draw it on the paper. After finishing the pictures stick them on the walls.

To end the lesson stick the prepared dialogues from the extract next to each character stuck on the wall. You can read them every following lesson by yourself or with the children.

Evaluation: This lesson began with the activity from the previous lesson and worked more effectively. The children were able to pass the whole sentences. Using finger

puppets made the text interesting to listen to and the pupils did not lose their attention during this activity. Although two or three children did not seem to listen to the tale they were able to answer all teacher's questions.

#### **2.4.5. Lesson plan 5**

Time: 90 minutes

Aim: to practise body vocabulary and adjectives describing people (happy, tall, small, etc.)

Topic: body

Material: word body cards, posters with a wolf shape, tale page 14 to 19, picture dictionaries

Assumption: the pupils will be able to use their fantasy and imagine the end of the tale

Anticipated problems: this lesson will be noisy, but it is not a serious problem, because it is a part of the intended purpose

Organization: in groups

1st step

Motivation: sing the song "Head and shoulders". Then stick five big posters with a wolf shape on the wall and let the pupils guess the reason.

Show the children word cards and read them with all class. Divide the class into five groups and give each group the set of body word cards and let them stick the cards on the right place. Check it with all children.

2nd step

Let the pupils guess which part of the body will be mentioned in the next part of the tale and write their guesses on the board.

Read pages 14 and 15 and give the pupils the task *Listen for body words and the action.* (eyes - see, ears - hear, nose - smell, mouth and teeth eat). Say the chant „Two little eyes" (Super songs).

Let the children find the rhyming words on the work sheet (appendix 4)

3rd step

Play the game "Puppet Children" (Creating Stories with Children, 2002)

Put the children into pairs. The "A" children mould the "B" children into any position they can.

After two minutes tell the "A" children to stand back and admire their work. The "B" children should now try to walk about in the position they are in. Then the "B" children model the "A" children.

4th step

Let the children predict the end of the tale. Let them listen for the differences between the Czech and English tale if there are any. Then read the rest of the tale. Discuss the differences.

5th step

Stick the poster of the last character on the wall and say *This is LRRH's father. He is happy, tall, brave, etc.* Divide the children again into five groups and assign each group one poster. Give the children dictionaries and a task to describe each character using adjectives which they can find in dictionaries and write them next to the characters.

6th step

Play the game "Dramatic story movement" (Creating Stories, 2002) with the children. Divide the pupils into five groups and write some dramatic movements from the story on the board. Examples: The wolf meets LRRH in the forest. LRRH picks up flowers. Father kills the wolf. etc

Then each group chooses one dramatic moment. One child will act this character and other members of the group help him/her create it.

Then other groups try to guess this character till all groups do not finish their work.

Evaluation: This lesson gave the pupils many opportunities to move. Although children often changed their positions, the atmosphere was full of interest and amusement. All children were involved and worked with fantasy and they seemed very happy and satisfied. The children were able to find nearly all differences between the Czech and English version. At the end of the lesson they described characters from the tale and used many adjectives. Pupils spent a long time with dictionary work but they enjoyed it.



### 2.4.6. Lesson plan 6

Time: 90 minutes

Aim: to act a part of the tale, to order pictures according to the tale

Material: work sheet with finger puppets, whole text, speech bubbles, pictures from the tale, real books

Grammar: describing characters with already known phrases

Assumption: the children will be able to read and act parts of the tale after they practised the dialogues in ordinary lessons

Anticipated problems: the pupils will not be able to act and read together in one moment

Organization: whole class, in groups

#### 1st step

Motivation: show the children finger puppets and act any part of the tale. Tell the children that today they will make the same puppets and try to act a piece of the story. Encourage the shy children and tell them that you will help them to read their text.

#### 2nd step

Divide the class into five groups and give each group one character. Give them real books and tell them that they can find information there. Tell them to describe their character first in their group and then for other groups.

#### 3rd step

Give each child the worksheet with finger puppets (appendix 6) and let the children to cut them out.

Then give instructions: colour wolf's eyes brown, father's hat blue, etc.

#### 4th step

Distribute pictures from the tale to each group to order them and ask the children to choose one part of the tale. Then give the children the whole text and help them highlight the dialogues which they will act. Let each group choose their own piece of the text and coordinate it with other groups in order to eliminate the same text. Read the text with the children. The children will take their text home and practise it there.

5th step

Next lesson start with the song: "In a cottage in the wood" and practise poem "In the big, big forest"

6th step

Practise acting with finger puppets in groups. Go and help and encourage less confident children. Give pupils enough time to practise their part. Then let children act their parts from the beginning to end.

Evaluation: This lesson was quite time consuming and therefore it will be better to divide it into three parts for the next time. A description of each character gave pupils an opportunity to speak and in addition it helped to develop pupils' reading skills. Weak children had problems with reading (finding words in the text), but the rest of the group supported and helped them. Picture activity gave those weak pupils a chance to show their interest and knowledge.

## 2.5. Conclusion

My aim in the thesis was to introduce different activities which can be used when exploiting stories in English classes with young learners. Based on the theoretical sources I tried to design a varied teaching scheme for using one story in my class. I have discovered some basic principles for using stories. It is necessary to create friendly atmosphere when you want to present a tale and storytelling activities. It is achieved by changing the arrangement of furniture, sitting in the circle and semicircle or decorating the classroom by pupil's and teacher's works.

This arrangement makes pupils to feel safe and confident and they try to use language without fear of making mistakes.

When choosing a tale I carefully considered whether it is interesting, motivating, suitable for children of nine years of age and whether all activities give pupils an opportunity to develop their language skills.

Lessons should be carefully planned and at the same time they should give a chance to be adapted.

Teachers should prepare his/her reading including stress, intonation in advance. Using cassettes is acceptable but real reading creates a more pleasant atmosphere and children appreciate it. This work provides space for many different skills to be practised: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Learning new vocabulary did not cause many serious difficulties. Pupils remembered all the pre-taught words and they liked to guess the meaning of new unknown ones.

Pronunciation of new words was taught by "Echo" games which were sometimes added into the prepared lesson plans.

Children enjoyed different organization. They liked to work in groups and pairs and often helped each other. When sitting in a circle or semicircle they listened to the tale carefully.

When creating the poem "In the big, big forest" children used imagination a lot and they helped to finish the poem with enthusiasm. They wanted to start each next lesson with this poem and created their own versions.

Activities connected with wall posters gave children many opportunities for practising new vocabulary and imagination as well.

Looking back at the lessons I dare say they were effective and dynamic. Children cooperated with each other in a very friendly way. The atmosphere of happiness was felt in every lesson. Pupils looked forward to every following lesson and they were conscientiously prepared.

Acting with finger puppets was a climax which they enjoyed very much although it was time consuming. Had the pupils had more time they could have performed the tale themselves in front of their parents.

Having analyzed the tale review, LRRH was a big success. What I, personally, appreciated about it was that all pupils including the shy and passive ones tried to take part.

I have learnt a lot about how to use storytelling methods in English teaching process eg. lesson planning and management, motivation, my pupils and I will utilize the gained knowledge in my further work. I am sure that stories will become a regular part of my teaching approach and I will be very happy to share my experience with other colleagues.

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## **2.7. Résumé**

This thesis deals with the question of using stories in English teaching to young learners at special courses at basic schools. The work consists of a theoretical part and a practical part.

### **Theoretical part**

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the young learner and the English learning process.

Chapter 3 shows how children can be helped to learn a foreign language.

Chapter 4 presents the question if there is a best way to teach primary EFL.

Chapter 5 describes how can be a tale used in ELT.

Chapter 6 speaks about importance of creating a good atmosphere during the English lessons.

Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the role of the teacher and the pupil during English teaching process.

Chapter 9 presents activities suitable for English lessons.

Chapter 10 is a brief summary how to plan English lessons.

Chapter 11 describes English language skills.

Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 describe theoretical background of listening, speaking, vocabulary learning, reading and writing.

### **Practical part**

The practical part contains a set of lesson plans suitable for storytelling lessons with evaluations.

## **Shrnutí**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá využitím příběhu ve výuce anglického jazyka určené pro zvláštní kurzy na základní škole. Práce obsahuje teoretickou a praktickou část.

### **Teoretická část**

Kapitola 1 a 2 popisuje žáka základní školy a proces výuky anglického jazyka.

Kapitola 3 ukazuje jakým způsobem je možné podpořit žáky v touze učit se cizí jazyk.

Kapitola 4 předkládá otázku zda existuje nejlepší způsob jak učit cizí jazyk.

Kapitola 5 popisuje využití pohádky ve výuce.

Kapitola 6 mluví o důležitosti vytvoření pěkné atmosféry v průběhu výukového procesu.

Kapitoly 7 a 8 zkoumají roli učitele a žáka.

Kapitola 9 prezentuje důležitost výběru vhodných aktivit.

Kapitola 10 je rychlým shrnutím jak plánovat výukové hodiny.

Kapitola 11 popisuje dovednosti potřebné pro výuku anglického jazyka.

Kapitoly 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 a 16 popisují teoretické pozadí poslechu, mluvení, učení se slovní zásobě, čtení a psaní.

### **Praktická část**

Praktická část obsahuje soubor příprav na výuku vhodných pro použití v hodinách motivovaných pohádkou a jejich hodnocení.

## **2.8. List of appendices**

Appendix 1: Find the words (table)

Appendix 2: Underline the words (table)

Appendix 3: Organize following sentences (text)

Appendix 4: Match the following rhyming words (words)

Appendix 5: Little Red Riding Hood (tale)

Appendix 6: Finger puppets (pictures)



## 2.8. Appendix

### 2.8.1. Appendix 1: Circle family words

SISTER      DOOR      HOOD      BROTHER      MOTHER

FOREST      GOOD      UNCLE      GRANDMA      DAY

COUSIN      VERY      AUNT      LITTLE      WOLF

SISTER      RED      GRANDPA      MUCH      FATHER

VILLAGE      DAD      WHITE      BEAUTIFUL      NAME

**Find family words in the square and write them next to the square**

B M U N C L E  
R A D D C M F  
O M A A O U A  
T D D T U M T  
H M H U S V H  
E E S S I S E  
R I A U N T R  
G R A N D P A

**2.8.2. Appendix 2: Underline the words you hear in the story**

SISTER      DOOR      HOOD      BROTHER      MOTHER

FOREST      GOOD      UNCLE      GRANDMA      DAY

COUSIN      VERY      AUNT      LITTLE      WOLF

SISTER      RED      GRANDPA      MUCH      FATHER

VILLAGE      DAD      WHITE      BEAUTIFUL      NAME

**Write Czech meaning of these words**

LITTLE = .....

RED = .....

RIDE = .....when you ride a horse, you sit on it and control it

HOOD = .....it is a part of your coat which covers your head

c) complete the sentence

This is the story of a little girl, her ..... and a big bad .....

### **2.8.3 Appendix 3: Organize following sentences.**

1. Where does your grandma live?
2. She lives in a little old house in the middle of the forest.
3. Is it far?
4. No. It is very near here.
5. Mmm. Perhaps I can eat this little girl and her grandma.
6. Look over there. Can you see those nice flowers? Does your grandma like flowers? You can go and get some for her.
7. Oh no, I can't. I can't leave the road.
8. But you can come back to the road later.
9. Yes ... that's true. I can. Oh, all right.

#### **2.8.4 Appendix 4: Match the following rhyming words:**

(it is adapted from “Tell it Again”, Ellis G. and Brewster J., 2002)

red                      please

hood                    life

mouse                  head

knees                  tea

knife                   wood

bee                      my

hat                      house

eye                      cat

## 2.8.5. Appendix 5: Little Red Riding Hood

Little Red Riding Hood, retold by Sue Arengo (1995)

In the LRRH's house

### **Narrator**

This is the story of a little girl, her grandma and a big bad wolf.

The little girl lived in a little white house. The house was in the village and the village was near a forest.

She was a good little girl. Her mother and father loved her very much. Her grandma loved her very much too.

The little girl's grandma lived in a very old house in the middle of the forest. The Little girl often went to her grandma's house.

One Christmas, Grandma gave the little girl a beautiful red cloak with a hood. She wore the cloak all day on Christmas day and the next day too. She wore it all the time, some people gave her a new name. They called her "Little Red Riding Hood".

One day her mother said:

Mother                      Little Red Riding Hood, your Grandma is ill. Go to her house and take her this basket of bread and butter.

Walk quickly to her house!

Don't stop and play!

And don't leave the road. Do you understand?

LRRH                      Yes, Mother

### **Narrator**

LRRH took the basket and ran into the forest. She walked very quickly. She did not stop and play. But soon after, she saw .....a WOLF!

In the forest.

Wolf                      Hello. How are you today?

LRRH            I'm very well, thank you.  
                    But my Grandma is ill.  
                    I'm taking this basket of bread and butter to her.

Wolf             Are you? That's interesting.

**Narrator**

The wolf was very hungry. He looked at LRRH with his big hungry eyes.

Wolf             Where does your grandma live?

LRRH            She lives in a little old house in the middle of the forest.

Wolf             Is it far?

LRRH            No. It is very near here.

Wolf             Mmm. Perhaps I can eat this little girl and her grandma.  
                    Look over there. Can you see those nice flowers?  
                    Does your grandma like flowers?  
                    You can go and get some for her.

LRRH            Oh no, I can't. I can't leave the road.

Wolf             But you can come back to the road later.

LRRH            Yes ... that's true. I can. Oh, all right.

**Narrator**

So she walked through the trees to the flowers. Now the bad wolf ran quickly to Grandma's house. He went to the door and knocked.

## In the Grandma's house

Grandma            Who is it?

Wolf                It's me, Grandma! It's LRRH

Grandma           Open the door and come in, dear.

Wolf                Where are you Grandma?

Grandma           I'm up the stairs in bed, dear. I am ill today and I can't get up.

Wolf                I've got some nice bread and butter for you.

### **Narrator**

He went up the stairs and ran into Grandma's bedroom. Then he jumped onto the bed and opened his big mouth and ate her!

The wolf put on one of Grandma's nightdresses, and got into her bed and waited. He waited for LRRH.

LRRH got lots of beautiful flowers in the forest. Then suddenly she remembered her grandma.

LRRH                Oh, dear! I am going to be late!

### **Narrator**

She ran back to the road, and soon she came to her grandma's house. She stopped when she saw the open door. And she went in.

LRRH                That's strange. Why is grandma's door open?

### **Narrator**

The wolf heard LRRH.

Wolf                   Who is it?

LRRH                   It's me, Grandma! It's Little Red Riding Hood.

Wolf                   I'm upstairs in bed, dear. I'm ill today and I can't get up.

**Narrator**

So LRRH went up the stairs and went into the bedroom.

LRRH                   Grandma's voice is very strange today! It's because she is ill.  
Hello, Grandma.  
I am sorry you are ill today. Look!  
I've got some nice bread and butter for you.  
And some beautiful flowers!

Wolf                   Thank you, dear. Put them on the table and come here.

**Narrator**

So LRRH put down her basket and went to the bed. And suddenly she was afraid.

LRRH                   Oh, Grandma, you look very strange today!  
Oh, Grandma, you have got very big eyes today!

Wolf                   That's because I want to hear you, my dear.

LRRH                   Oh, Grandma, you have got very big ears today!

Wolf                   That's because I want to hear you, my dear.

LRRH                   Oh, Grandma, you have got a very big nose today!

Wolf                   That's because I want to smell those beautiful flowers, my dear.



LRRH                    Oh, Grandma, you have got a very big mouth today and a lot of very big teeth!

Wolf                    Yes, my dear. And that's because I want to eat you!

**Narrator**

And the wolf jumped out of the bed and ate LRRH. Now the wolf was big and fat and he wanted to go sleep. He took off Grandma's nightdress and put it on the floor. Then he got back into bed and went to asleep. Soon he began to snore loudly.

Wolf                    Zhhhhhhh. Zhhhhhhh.

**Narrator**

Soon after, LRRH's father came to the house. He saw the open door.

Father                    That's strange.  
Why is the door open?  
And what's that noise?

Wolf                    Zhhhhhhh. Zhhhhhhh.

Father                    Grandma's voice is very strange today.  
It's you the wolf.  
What are you doing in Grandma's bed?  
Well, you can't run away now.

**Narrator**

And he took his knife and killed the wolf.

Father                    Perhaps Grandma is alive!

**Narrator**

So LRRH's father took his knife and cut open the wolf. And LRRH jumped out.

LRRH                      Oh, father! Quick! Help Grandma. She is in there, in dark!

**Narrator**

Then Grandma jumped out.

Grandma                Oh! Oh! Where's that bad wolf?

Father                    Everything is all right now. The wolf is dead.

**Narrator**

So Grandma had a cup of tea and some nice bread and butter.

Then LRRH and her father went home to their little white house. LRRH ran to her mother and told her everything.

After that, LRRH always stayed on the road. And she never saw a wolf again.

2.8.6. Appendix 6: Finger puppets









