

USING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. A CASE STUDY

Daniela-Florina FERCEA

***Abstract:** This study presents the results of a study conducted in four schools situated in the rural area in Caraş-Severin county, Romania. The purpose of the study is to raise awareness on the role of children's literature in teaching English as a foreign language in Romanian middle schools, as many coursebooks used since 2010 no longer encourage teachers to use literature in EFL courses. The study that we have conducted is part of a larger PhD. thesis that proposes the reintroduction of children's literature in teaching EFL in Romanian middle schools.*

***Keywords:** children's literature, EFL, Romanian middle schools*

1. INTRODUCTION

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach of teaching English based on children's literature texts offers students a proper education not only in the field of foreign languages but also in their long-life learning process. However, only after a thorough analysis of the research results, one can confirm the positive influence of abridged literary texts in the process of learning English.

The present case study examines the practical features, aspects and procedures followed throughout the study. It presents a complete account of the methodology of the study and its results: the research design, the population, the sample, the instrumentation, the questionnaire and its validity and reliability and the procedures. Furthermore, it introduces the statistical methods used in the study, the responses to the questionnaire and the classroom observations. The presence of literary texts, either included in English textbooks used in Romanian middle schools or received in the form of handouts, has a major impact on readers and a decisive role in teaching English as a foreign language.

The materials used by teachers and learners in Romanian middle school system usually do not include children's literature on a large scale but determining the extent to which these materials prove to be useful re-

sources for teaching and learning is a real challenge, and hopefully this study offers an appropriate answer, in terms of methodology and research findings.

2. THE RESEARCH POPULATION

An important task was to decide on the target population for the survey. In deciding to conduct a questionnaire-based survey, I had already determined to attempt to sample as wide a range of young learners in as many different teaching and learning contexts as possible, ‘young learners’ being defined here as learners aged from 10–14. Consequently, the participants in the proposed study are a focus group of middle school students, fifth to eighth graders, mostly belonging to the rural area of education (schools in various villages situated in Caraș-Severin County, Romania). The study is conducted on 100 middle school Romanian students, as follows: 35 middle school Romanian students in the 5th grade who have just started learning literature (first year of EFL study), 20 middle school Romanian students in the 6th grade (second year of EFL study), 20 middle school Romanian students in the 7th grade (third year of EFL study), 25 middle school Romanian students in the 8th grade (fourth year of EFL study).

The increased interest in teaching and learning of English that has resulted from the changes in the national curriculum guidelines for English, the lowering of the age at which young learners are introduced to English in the public middle school system, and the widespread public dissatisfaction with the proficiency levels achieved in schools, has represented a more than sufficient reason for choosing this category of questionnaire respondents. Also, since I teach primary and middle school pupils, I was able to compare both educational stages, depicting students’ capacity to respond to questions expressed in English and their level of understanding literary concepts, narrative structures, the message of a text. Of course, my selection of middle school graders can be explained due to their older age and to a few extra years of school experience, especially in learning English.

3. THE RESEARCH METHOD

The methods chosen for this research are the mixed methods which integrate comparative, qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed methods research is a major advantage to this study as I integrate qualitative and quantitative research questions, along with their specific research designs, techniques for collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, in

the end comparing findings and results.

Linking the strengths of comparative, quantitative and qualitative methods will serve our purpose and, finally, compensate for their separate limitations. Pluye and Hong (2014: 30) argue that: “the development of mixed methods has been important in the areas of program evaluation and education since the 1980s, although the first reference books on mixed methods were not published until the beginning of the twenty-first century”.

According to Wisdom and Creswell (2013), the core characteristics of a well-designed mixed method study include the use of rigorous procedures in collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, at the same time being appropriate to each method’s tradition, therefore the study providing a suitable sample in both parts of the methods.

As for the comparative method, by implementing the data during data collection, analysis, or discussion into comparison components either concurrently or sequentially, will lead to framing the entire issue within philosophical/theoretical models of research.

Romanian middle school students were questioned twice: once at the beginning of the proposed research, and later at the end of the study after a considerable period of working and learning English with the help of literature. The main purpose was to show their ability to depict the role of children’s literature in teaching/learning English. Within a social constructionist model that seeks to understand multiple perspectives on a single topic, at a certain point the students would have their saying in choosing literary texts, which will guide teachers in setting out a new personalized literature program, according to their needs and expectations, based on their past experiences and taking into consideration the history of the English textbooks in Romania.

Despite the practical features, aspects and procedures followed throughout the study, mixed methods are especially useful in understanding contradictions between quantitative results and qualitative findings, since one can compare quantitative and qualitative data.

Using a mixed method study has several advantages, but the most important one is the ability to give a voice to study participants, in our case the middle school Romanian students, ensuring that study findings are grounded in participants’ experiences, reflecting participants’ point of view. Mixed methods have great flexibility and are adaptable to many study designs, such as interviews or observational studies, being able to elucidate more information than can be obtained in only quantitative research.

By collecting rich and comprehensive data, mixed methods also re-

flect the way individuals naturally collect information, appealing to a variety of factors, mainly social and academic.

The comparative method makes an accurate display of analogy, as two or more literary texts, belonging to children's literature, can be analyzed from their teaching potential and the printing position held in the Romanian middle school textbooks. By seeking similarities, we reach to students' interests and infer future teaching goals.

Using mixed methods can also pose some difficulties and drawbacks that are inherent in this approach. For instance, to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data, many more skills and resources will be required and that can be time-consuming and exhausting. Without a clear and coherent rationale for using mixed methods, and a suitable design and strategy for integrating the data, the study can become incoherent. Moreover, there is a high probability of potential conflicts and contradictions that may arise from combining different paradigms, assumptions, and methods.

In fact, the major challenge involved in using mixed methods is the necessity to create a study with qualitative data, while integrating this with precise quantitative data. One can include too much qualitative data so that the quantitative data does not stand out, therefore combining the qualitative approach, focusing on a limited corpus, comprising selected works to create thorough and solid research.

3.1 The Questionnaire

The researcher uses a questionnaire as the main instrument in the proposed research to achieve the aims of the study. There will be two questionnaires that will be distributed among the participants, both for students. One questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the study and the other one after a certain period of class working on literary texts.

Both questionnaires are made up of five main sections. The first includes basic personal information (age, gender, years of studying English, English level) which can give a personal outlook on the type of the participants (students). The second section includes questions about the use of literature, its presence or absence during English classes, what are the students' favourite texts for reading. The third section includes questions about the different methods used in class to implement the children's literature program: types of activities which are most effective for learning English and understand literature. The fourth section of the questionnaire is to check participants' beliefs, perspectives, attitudes and anxieties or worries concerning the children's literature program (relevance of literature). The last

section deals with how much the used methods may motivate and encourage students to learn English through the help of literary texts, expressing their motivation in the classroom environment.

3.2 Types of questions

It is well known that a questionnaire is a written document to collect information regardless of the mode of administration. The two questionnaires present a similar structure, all the participants are asked the same questions in the same way. This structured questionnaire is preferred for the proposed study as the same data from all participants need to be analyzed, interpreted and measured.

The types of questions that will be included are closed-ended questions which will require the participants to make choices among a set of answers to each question. The response could be equally limited to one answer, or they may select more than one option. Kazi and Khalid consider that “For measuring dichotomous variables closed-ended questions are preferred because possible answers can be easily pre-coded. Pre-coded questions are defined as those in which numbers are assigned to a given answer. Precoding saves time for assigning numbers later and hence decreases error. Coding helps in data entry, as information of questionnaires in paper format are entered in data entry programs by putting in the numbers rather than writing the whole answer” (Kazi and Khalid 2012:515).

In the current research questionnaires, some of the questions will relate to the reasons for students’ participation in the English literature lessons, and how the literature lessons contribute to students in terms of improving their English and their learning process in general (development of creating literary charts and portfolios) and examine the student’s grades. Alongside these questions, there are questions relating to the students’ perception of the teacher’s functioning and distribution of material and the way the teacher contributes to students both in terms of educational content and personal aspects, encouragement and motivation. Once more the topics of the questions try to get answers to the current research questions and data to check the objectives of the intended analysis and the teaching of the HOTS, the higher-order thinking skills which is a concept popular in American education. Higher-Order Thinking Skills encourage students to go beyond memorization, promoting skills like analysis, evaluation, and innovative ethinking, including synthesizing, analyzing, reasoning, comprehending, application, and evaluation.

The proposed study uses closed-ended questions as the number of

participants is quite large (100 students) and summarizing the answers is easier than in the case of open-ended questions.

3.3 The administration of Questionnaire

In general there are usually two methods of administering a questionnaire: self-administered questionnaire and interviewer administered questionnaire.

Mainly, a self-administered questionnaire is used in the proposed study as it only requires questionnaire distribution; it is inexpensive and doesn't need trained staff. This mode is less prone to information bias but has a greater chance of having no response items. "The main advantages of self-administered questionnaires are that it can reach a large sample size, cover wide geographical area, cover population, which is sometimes difficult to reach, excellent for capturing sensitive topics and cheaper as compared to other modes of administration" (Kazi and Khalid, 2012:516).

The method of self-administered questionnaire distribution that is used in the proposed study is either through email or electronic distribution. Participants are capable of completing the questionnaire at their convenience, in their homes, at school or in their free time and at their own pace. Main disadvantage of the emailed questionnaire is low response rate even after repeated emails, and queries of the participant cannot be clarified. Two effective techniques for improving the rate of response are: enclosing some encouragement and keeping the questionnaire brief.

This questionnaire is an electronic questionnaire (Google form) including data collected through personal digital devices, smart phones and cell phones. "Questionnaire can be designed to filter and screen participant's response, checks for input error, range and skip patterns can be incorporated preventing significant typing and data format error" (Seebregts & all, 2009). However, electronic questionnaires can be a potential bias because they are restricted to those participants who have access to a cell phone, computer and internet connections. That is why students who do not have a cell phone or computer in the proposed research will have to do the questionnaires at school in class in the computer room.

Occasionally, in special cases, the questionnaires are also administered by the interviewer. These special cases refer to students who have disabilities and who need proper guidance or to poor grades students that need extra explanation and supervision. That being the case, both questionnaires were self-administered and researcher-administered. Self-administered questionnaires were delivered online or in paper-and-pen formats, in person

or by e-mail. Researcher-administered questionnaires took place in-person, or online between researchers and respondents. With the latter format the researcher can gain deeper insights by clarifying questions for respondents or asking follow-up questions. All questions were standardized so that all respondents received the same questions with identical wording.

3.4 Validity of Questionnaire

Validation is used to assess the clarity of the questionnaire as well as its suitability to the participants. A questionnaire is valid if it is understood by participants correctly and if questions are simple and unambiguous.

Validity is the degree to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure. Validity is a complex topic as Kazi and Khalid (2012) describe in the journal "Questionnaire designing and validation". There are three types of validity: content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity. A questionnaire that undergoes a validation procedure makes sure that it accurately measures what it aims to do, regardless of the responder. A valid questionnaire helps to collect better quality data with high comparability which reduces the effort and increases the credibility of data. According to Kazi and Khalid (2012) a valid questionnaire must have the following characteristics: simplicity and viability, reliability and precision in words, adequate for the problem intended to measure, reflect underlying theory or concept to be measured and capable of measuring change.

The instructions of the questionnaire are clearly written in English. The purpose of the questionnaire will be stated and included at the beginning of the questionnaire along with guiding instructions so that the participants answer all the questions properly. To order the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher used to analyze survey data in Google Forms. The outcomes showed that the questionnaire is highly reliable, due to the participants' responses.

A pilot test is conducted on both questionnaires, the reliability will be established by testing for both consistency and stability. Consistency indicates how well an item measuring a concept is related together as a set, indicating how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is calculated in terms of average inter-correlation among the items measuring the concept.

Furthermore, the researcher distributes the pilot survey among a group of referees who are specialized in English language and methodology as well as English supervisors and middle school teachers, just to validate the questionnaire.

In addition, the graphics based on the individual answers show a

change of perspective towards literature, in our case adapted stories for children, and the way students develop their English level of proficiency with their help almost comes as an authority in the field to confirm the questionnaire's reliability. Results indicate that the study instrument, the questionnaire, is highly reliable, since the anonymous aspect of the responses should disregard any exterior interference: teacher's authority, peer pressure, family expectations, social media message, etc.

4. Research results

For the findings to truly represent the phenomenon the researcher is claiming to measure the participants are chosen from a large group of middle school students of all grades, from fifth to eighth. The participants (students) in the proposed research are from different middle schools in the rural area, the Western region of Romania, a region more financially developed and with a good internet connection. These 100 Romanian Students have more possibilities to learn a foreign language than in other parts of the country due to an easy access to high technologies.

The time limit of this study focuses on my concerns as an English teacher who tries to improve children's performance by literary means and the impact it has on student's participation in class. Therefore, it will proceed for at least two years before allowing a follow up study in the following year.

The research is conducted in four schools and on a relatively large number of participants, so the findings can be generalized. Furthermore, the findings definitely shed a better light on how teaching English through children's literature and adapting diverse methods to implement this program can create interest and improve school performance.

The research study proposed further explores the influence of teaching literature to Romanian students by examining students' grades. The English grades of the participant students will be examined to inspect whether learning through the help of children's literature influences their English proficiency level. This is done by comparing their grades now with those obtained a year ago. The grades will be taken from the initial and final tests given in September of 2023 and June of 2024.

For the proposed study the English grades were compared among two groups (those who learned English through literary texts and those who did not) in order to check if students' English level and grades improved after learning more than a year with the help of literature. The results were more than satisfactory: the English grades have improved considerable, the educational process has become more enjoyable, promoting also those stu-

dents who had always found it hard to express themselves in a foreign language, in our case English.

4.1 Questionnaire responses

This study is conducted to explore the difficulties, worries and complications that faces an English teacher who tries to teach with the help of literature. It will further examine the impact of literature components in stimulating students' interest in learning English. It will investigate and assess the students' perceptions and attitudes towards literature and whether its incorporation in the secondary school syllabus helped to improve the students' grasp of the language.

The questionnaire consists of five sections. The first section is the demographic variables of the respondents, the remaining sections consisted of questions to find out the views of the respondents against Likert scales, which are a structured way for researchers to gather diverse opinions and attitudes. They allow respondents to express agreement, disagreement, or neutrality concerning statements or questions. The first consists of the options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The second: Always (100%), Usually (80%), Sometimes (60%), Occasionally (20%) and Never (0%). The students' questionnaire was presented in English with a constant teacher's assistance, just to make sure that the students understood all the questions and statements in it.

The study is meant to get responses from students regarding the teaching /learning of literature, why the students face problems and difficulties as well as the students' perspective of the program. After collecting the data from the questionnaires, the researcher will analyze the data for the purpose of answering the research questions. The questionnaires is analyzed using the frequency count technique and percentages. They are presented in the form of tables and figures. Demographic variables of the respondents will also be collected at the beginning of the questionnaire to obtain background information as supporting data to understand the overall analysis.

As far as the results of the study are concerned, we found out that 59.7% are girls and 40.3% are boys. As far as their age is concerned, 33.3% are 11 years old, 19.4% are 12 years old, 23.6% are 13 years old and 23.6% are 14 years old.

54.2% of the respondents have been studying English for more than five years, 22.2% for five years, 20.8% for four years and 2.8% for three years. As far as their English level is concerned, 52.8 declare that they have an intermediate level of English (B1), 27.8% lower intermediate level (A2),

19.4% upper intermediate (B2).

54.2% declare that they have had no contact with English literature, while 45.8% declare that they have had some contact with English literature.

When it comes to the language of the literary texts they read, 87.5% have read novels or short story only in Romanian, while 12.5% have read both English and Romanian literary texts. The majority of respondents have read fairy tales (76.4%) and poetry (72.2%), whereas comics, novels, short stories have been part of the reading lists of a smaller percentage: novels (19.4%), short stories (62.5%), comics (16.7).

When ranking the type of texts they prefer to read, most of the students prefer to read fairy tales (34%) and comics (30%), while the least preferred types are non-fiction (47%), plays (46%) and novels (40%). As far as the type of fiction they prefer, most of them prefer adventure stories (44%) and animal stories (36%).

Based on these results, I have chosen the types of texts to use during the lessons, that is fairy tales, mainly animal stories, adventure stories and comics. The students are provided with short excerpts, or abridged versions of chapters so that the teacher may focus on specific topics that are relevant for children. The texts will mainly be used as support for discussions and critical thinking activities rather than focusing on grammar and vocabulary input.

As far as the methods of teaching are concerned 88.9% of the students mentioned that they are used to discussing with the teacher, whereas 73.6% said they usually have writing activities after reading a text. However, when expressing the type of activities they would prefer to do after reading a literary text, 54% mentioned they dislike or they do not find useful writing an essay, while 47 % rank the discussion with the teacher as being the most effective. Another effective activity would be watching a video before reading the literary text. Based on these results, the activities and exercises designed for use in classroom will focus more on discussions (both lead by the teacher and group discussions) and less on writing assignments.

The texts that I have chosen to use in the classroom are: *Cinderella* rewritten by James Finn Garner, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl, *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney

After using these texts for a period of three months I asked the participants to fill in the final questionnaire so that their feedback can be used for future lesson plans.

99% of participants enjoyed the use of literary texts in classroom and believe that it is an effective way of learning English. 50% believe that literary texts helped them improve their vocabulary, 32.4% believe they improved their grammar whereas only 15.7% believe that they improved their general knowledge of the world. When asked about the most important message they learnt from the texts, 67% answered that friendship, respect and family values were the most essential, while tolerance was considered important by only 12.7%.

As far as their preference for one of the literary texts discussed, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was their favourite text, followed by *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *A Christmas Carol*.

Finally, 98% of the students answered that they would like to continue reading such texts in class and 59.9% feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and idea during class.

4.2 Classroom observations

Firstly, the researcher believes that without encouraging the participants, they may have trouble giving their answers to the questions fully and clearly, however, due to the large number of participants it will be difficult to conduct all the interviews face-to-face. In addition, because the interview questions are in English, Romanian-speaking students may find it difficult to comprehend all questions as some of them are not proficient enough in this language, therefore, it is important to benefit from teacher's guidance.

Secondly, children's insufficient ability to articulate their responses makes the researcher's task a challenge. True, there is vast evidence of children responding to literature and I could easily confirm that thanks to my constant classroom observations. Their strong appeal to tales comes from one of the basic narrative elements of all stories, that of the breaking of rules. Without question, it is an indispensable structural element used for propelling plot. I asked them to imagine the following scenarios: What if Little Red Riding Hood went obediently to her grandmother's house? What if Tom Sawyer listened to his Aunt Polly? What if Harry Potter stayed put in his dorm? Their immediate response was something of the kind: "And where is the fun in doing that? They are like us: we also don't listen all the time to our family!" I consider that their personal connection with the characters have conducted to school progress, improving their English grades.

A lack of interest in the connections between children's literature and children is the main characteristic of English textbooks published in Romania for middle schools as textbook authors tend to cover texts de-

signed for adults, since children were considered small versions of adults. As far as I can tell, this publishing approach had a negative influence during English classes, and all my efforts went into changing this direction by selecting adapted literary text according to my students' age and needs.

The texts most frequently discussed might be characterized as literary fiction for young readers, but I tried to select those narrative passages which can raise moral awareness, instilling feelings of respect, honour, love and tolerance. The body of children's literature used in my English classroom can be described as beyond didactic, practical, ideological, connected with the marketplace and the schoolroom, it is a way of helping all students that find it difficult or boring to learn a foreign language.

5. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION

One limitation of this research project is the fact that there were only 100 middle school students involved in the surveying process and their number should be higher in order to validate the results. Also, there would have been useful the presence of an interview addressed to teachers that teach in the middle school system and work on literary texts during their English classes. Ideally, a wider range of teachers and pupils involved in the analysis would have been adequate and, consequently, that would have led to more examples of the use of children's literature in the secondary school lessons. In the current research, there is no teachers' point of view, therefore, the importance of an interview, with questions that relate to the difficulties facing English teachers in teaching literature, their concerns and worries and reasons, is more than demanding. Questions of teachers' years of experience teaching English and teaching literature as well as their methods implementing the program in class (with or without high-tech) could have been useful data. If I were to undertake research of a similar type in the future, I would attempt to include a wider range of students and teachers and to ensure that there were more examples of the use of children's literature in the lessons taught in Romanian middle schools.

Another limitation of the research is the fact that only a few examples of popular children's literature were analyzed. In terms of the time available, since I was teaching full-time, commuting from one school to another, it was difficult to find opportunities to work on literary texts during English classes. I had to make a choice between including fewer examples and conducting a more detailed type of analysis or including more examples and analyzing them less comprehensively. In the event, I chose the former.

I believe now, however, that this raises problems in terms of acceptability and that it would have been better to attempt to analyze a wider range of text samples. Finally, there are many other works that could have been included in the literature review. Once again, there was a need to be selective. Inevitably, therefore, readers may find that writings that they consider to be of real significance have been omitted.

Despite the limitations of this study, I believe that there are a few areas in which it contributes to existing knowledge and understanding. Educationalists in Romania and elsewhere often recommend that teachers use children's literature in teaching English to young learners. However, they rarely define what they mean by children's literature in any explicit way, tending to confine themselves to discussions that imply that the term 'children's literature' refers exclusively to narrative fiction or, at best, that narrative fiction is necessarily of more intrinsic value than other types of children's literature.

The critical review of writing on children's literature included in my first PhD report draws attention to a variety of different ways in which children's literature can be defined and evaluated. It also draws attention to the fact that without a proper selection of children's literature works, i.e., literary pieces that are cognitively, linguistically and culturally appropriate, there is no genuine contribution to teaching and learning.

In my analysis of English lessons taught to young learners in a range of different contexts in the Romanian public system of education, the case of middle schools, I was able to highlight the fact that the constant use of children's literature may be widely regarded as a form of genuine contribution to children's learning.

Irrespective of textbooks, story books and modern concept books that are widely used in Romania in the context of teaching English to young learners, in our case middle school students, I was able to demonstrate the usefulness of reintroducing literature through children's adapted stories, its positive impact on students' teaching and learning skills.

All of these mentioned above provide a corpus of information that needs to be taken into account by those who advocate the use of children's literature in secondary English classrooms in Romania and, perhaps, it can be considered as a basic teacher's guide, which makes it even more available to general classroom practice.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions for the research in question relate, in part, to the limitations of the present study and, in part, to issues emerging from it. First, I believe that there is a need for further analysis of a wider range of language lessons taught in Romanian middle schools, from the perspective of resource use. Only that English classroom which incorporated effective use of children's literature has shown any real evidence of effective teaching and genuine learning.

However, there are a few books designed primarily for children who speak English as a first language that are appropriate for young learners of English in Romania middle school system. Where the language is appropriate, other aspects of the books, such as the story line, may not be appropriate. After all, learners of English for whom the language is appropriate are likely to be considerably older than the native speakers for whom these books are primarily intended. Teachers who wish to make use of children's literature of this type need to be extremely careful about the criteria they use for selecting them and about the ways in which they use them, particularly, as the language they contain often seems simpler at first sight, then it turns out to be more complex on closer inspection.

Secondly, there is a need to look carefully at the kind of advice that teachers of English could give to young learners in relation to the use of children's literature in order to determine its usefulness. Therefore, there will be more than suitable to create an interview addressed to teachers, as a way of sharing their classroom experience, concerns, and overall impressions, apart from the student target questionnaires.

Thirdly, apart from their innovative position, these adapted stories consist of simple sentences that convey a powerful message. In our analysis, all the abridged literary fragments used are filled with meaningful illustrations and the plot has a happy ending each time, just in order to demonstrate that every misfortune can be surpassed through a forceful determination combined with a lot of hard work, in this way, also conveying a moral value. Children are simply mesmerized by the characters with whom they have so much in common and manage to improve their English grades by enjoying the regular English classes.

Not only these abridged texts function as some sort of conventional pattern 'breakers', but they also install the English teacher in his/her role of authority, having the freedom to teach in a different manner, slightly diverging from the established curriculum.

The best way of summing up our analysis is to express a general fact: everybody loves a *good story*, and our adapted versions portray the embodiment of a fine storyline, with characters that fight for their happiness, performing as role models for the child reader. Regardless of any external constraints, they came as the most natural answer to the didactic struggle of introducing children to a literary canon and sharing cultural heritage and this statement can be firmly validated by the research results.

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Notes on the author:

Daniela-Florina FERCEA (GUGEA) is a PhD. Student in English literature at West University of Timisoara and has published numerous articles on the topic of teaching English to children and teenagers. She writes poetry, her latest volume is *Lacrimi de mai*, ed. Marineasa, Timisoara, 2006. She teaches English to children at Scoala Gimnaziala Zavoi, Caras-Severin, Romania daniela.gugea@yahoo.com