



## **THE USE OF FOLK TALES TO DEVELOP CHILDREN'S CRITICAL THINKING IN ENGLISH CLASSES**

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***Abstract:*** *the article is devoted to discussing the ways certain major advantages in using folktales for teaching languages the meaning of folktales and the definition of critical thinking because folktales can help to develop children's critical thinking and creative thinking which are the most sophisticated things in learning foreign learning.*

***Keywords:*** *folklore, folktales, language teaching and learning, primary English as a foreign language, critical thinking.*

### **Introduction**

What is folktales?<sup>1</sup> Why do most teachers and parents use folklore, such as folktales, novels, and poems while teaching and bringing up their children?

Folktales are traditional stories that have been shared from generation to generation and they tend to be about people and their characters like bad, generous, talkative, sleepy, and so on, talking animals, clever tricksters, and folktales reflect the values and wisdom of a culture. Folktales acquire simple but deep meaning and consist of animals acting like people and they can solve almost all issues in the end. That's why, parents usually choose folktales because children can manage or continue folk and fairy tales with imagination. However, teachers always choose folktales while teaching because folktales reflect the culture and not only shape intercultural thinking but also describe the people, culture, and customs of each country. Moreover,

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<sup>1</sup> Folktale. (2019) In Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. <https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/folktale> (Accessed on 7 January 2019).



it helps to improve critical thinking during the lesson. So, what is critical thinking? Why do teachers think folktales improve critical thinking during language lessons? Critical thinking means the ability to analyze information from the standpoint of logical and personal psychological approaches to apply the results obtained in a variety of communication situations. Critical thinking also contributes to the formation of several communicative skills among students: to understand and generate foreign language statements under specific situations of communication, speech, and communicative intent; to carry out their communicative behavior following the rules of communication and national and cultural characteristics of the country of the studied language.

### **Main Body**

Many scholars have defined critical thinking like many other phenomena in different ways. Therefore, it is worth discussing one of those definitions. Ennis (1989) defines critical thinking as "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do". According to them, critical thinking is consciously observing, analyzing, reasoning, and evaluating processes. Critical thinking is that mode of thinking that stimulates a higher level of thinking in individuals and enables them to make rational decisions analyzing different contexts skillfully and wisely. A critical thinking approach asks students to do something with the information that has been already learned. Critical thinking, in addition to explaining and enhancing students' independent thinking abilities, also helps them solve independent problems and draw conclusions. However, it is required that the child's imagination has already been formed, and many students read fairy tales in their childhood, which contributes to the development of their thinking abilities. For this reason, many teachers use fairy tales as a tool for teaching. Additionally, fairy tales are easy to understand and carry deep educational meaning, while also being interesting and containing a variety of vocabulary. Learners can quickly and easily learn the language through their interest in fairy tales, and they can engage their thinking abilities by continuing the stories or concluding them in different ways. This ensures that the lesson is engaging and enjoyable, which is why fairy tales are often used with beginner language learners.



However, a question arises: what would happen if teachers used novels instead of fairy tales? As we know, just like in every language, Uzbek novels contain complex vocabulary and English novels also have many intricate words, characters, and events. This can make it difficult for learners to understand everything in one reading, leading to boredom and a decrease in their interest in learning the language. In addition, stories are mostly used in various ways in English teaching and learning classes from motivating them to supplementing course book coverage of themes to acquire the language easily. In the main, they are utilized in a class to introduce the language and expressions that support learners to enhance their learning skills. A usual method of using folklore stories in primary English classes can be key lexis for children because when they come across such a word, they can easily recognize it in the context. Besides that, stories are useful not only for learning new vocabulary or lexis but also for developing basic communication skills and enriching critical and creative thinking. For instance, when a teacher tells a tale to the class, he asks questions about facts; plot, main personages, and events in the story which leads learners to think and retell it by their expressions. However, it should be considered that for children to be encouraged to think, teachers also have to think. It means that firstly, teachers should be motivators for pupils to encourage them to read stories and imagine highly because imagination is the first and main key procedure to acquire a new foreign language properly. For example,

*How does the tortoise become the winner in competition with the rabbit? <sup>2</sup>*

*The “Rabbit and Tortoise Story” is a tale of a race between a speedy rabbit and a slow tortoise who are good friends. The rabbit challenges the tortoise to a race, and the tortoise reluctantly agrees. During the race, the rabbit becomes overconfident and takes a nap, while the tortoise keeps moving steadily. In the end, the tortoise wins the race, teaching us the lesson that “slow and steady wins the race.” This story reminds us of the importance of perseverance, not underestimating others, and the value of patience on the path to success.*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://infinitylearn.com/surge/topics/rabbit-and-tortoise-story/>





Below we have discussed the Rabbit and Tortoise in English for kids to learn the values and morals from this story. This story teaches us a timeless lesson: “Slow and steady wins the race.” It reminds us that success doesn’t always go to the fastest or most confident but to those who persevere, regardless of their speed. From that day on, the rabbit learned to be patient and not underestimate others, while the tortoise realized that determination and perseverance could lead to great achievements. The forest remained a place where the rabbit and the tortoise cherished their friendship and remembered the valuable lesson they learned together.

Even folktales are used to help learners develop competencies in language, so they are now widely used as pedagogical resources and materials in English as a foreign language classes. Taking all into account, it is stated that integrating folklore with the primary English lesson is both demanding and valuable now, lessons with folktales, proverbs, and sayings may be effective for not only language learning but also learning moral values. Folklore gives a great opportunity for students to get high motivation and inspiration to learn a language which is the most sophisticated task in language teaching.

In conclusion, folk tales are not only interesting but also an effective tool for language learning. They not only enhance critical thinking skills but also develop communication abilities, assisting parents in raising their children and teachers in making lessons more engaging. Moreover, fostering critical thinking is important not only in education but also in real life, as it enables children to independently find solutions to problems and think for themselves, allowing them to make their own decisions.

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