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The Use of Fairy Tales to Reinforce Speaking Skills in EFL Learners

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Resumen

Hablar se ha considerado una habilidad esencial entre las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas para comunicarse en este mundo globalizado. Los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera de todo el mundo han intentado utilizar diferentes estrategias para mejorar las habilidades orales de sus alumnos. Esta síntesis de investigación tuvo como objetivo identificar los efectos del uso de cuentos de hadas en el desarrollo del habla en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Para responder a la pregunta de investigación se analizaron catorce estudios empíricos. Los hallazgos de esta síntesis de investigación muestran que los cuentos de hadas ayudan a los estudiantes a (1) mejorar su competencia comunicativa oral cuando aprenden inglés como lengua extranjera; (2) aumentar la motivación y la confianza en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera; y (3) activar la participación en los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: habilidades lingüísticas, competencia comunicativa, cuentos de hadas

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Abstract

Speaking has been considered an essential skill among the four language skills to communicate in this globalized world. EFL teachers all over the world have tried to use different strategies to improve their students' speaking skills. This research synthesis aimed to identify the effects of the use of fairy tales on the development of the speaking skill in EFL learners. In order to answer the research question, fourteen empirical studies were analyzed. The findings of this research synthesis show that fairy tales help students to (1) improve their oral communicative competence when learning English as a foreign language; (2) increase motivation and self-confidence in EFL learners; and (3) activate participation in learners.

Keywords: language skills, communicative competence, fairy tales

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Dedication

This research synthesis is dedicated to my wonderful daughter Brianna, and all my family who supported and motivated me throughout this project. This research synthesis is also dedicated to myself for trusting in my capacity to achieve my goals, and never giving up. Finally, I would like to dedicate this research synthesis to my friend Carmen who supported me unconditionally.

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Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) involves learning the four language skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Speaking is one of the most important skills for students to develop since it facilitates oral communication and contributes to the development of students' communicative competence. EFL teachers are constantly trying to find strategies and materials to teach this important skill to their students. One of these strategies and materials is the use of fairy tales (Lepin, 2012; Manukyan & Durgaryan, 2019). Fairy tales are considered a particular type of teaching material that contributes to the enhancement of linguistic skills such as speaking, writing, reading, vocabulary, grammar, etc. Moreover, fairy tales may contribute to the development of non-linguistic skills in students such as motivation and self-confidence (Masoni 2018; Uzzahara 2022; Yavuz 2017). In addition, teachers can find many types of fairy tales, which can be adapted for each group taking into account their students' learning styles and needs (Lepin, 2012). Therefore, this research synthesis attempts to present an analysis of previous studies on the effects of the use of fairy tales on the development of the speaking skill in EFL learners.

This research synthesis includes six chapters. The first chapter is related to the description of the research, the background, the problem statement, the rationale, the research question, and the objectives. The second chapter includes the theoretical framework, which contains key concepts and definitions related to the use of fairy tales in the EFL classroom. The third chapter presents the literature review where I include part of what has been researched in this area so far. In the fourth chapter, I describe the methodology used in this study, which involves the exclusion and inclusion criteria for the selection of the studies. Chapter five describes the analysis of the fourteen research studies examined in order to answer the research question. Finally, the sixth chapter includes conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter I

1. Description of the Research

1.1. Background

Language teachers are constantly looking for different ways to improve their teaching practice as learning a language is a complex process (Fauzan, 2014). People use language creatively, and we cannot plan all the words and sentences that we are going to say even an hour from now, so, in other words, speaking happens spontaneously (Fauzan, 2014). One of the areas of language learning that represents a challenge for both teachers and students is speaking (Khorashadyzadeh, 2014). In order to develop this skill, students need to learn grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, among other skills (Khorashadyzadeh, 2014). Moreover, as Hidayati (2019) mentioned, developing strong English-speaking skills will also allow students to participate in global interaction. In addition, Kosar and Bedir (2014) explained that speaking is an important skill for language learners to develop in order to communicate more effectively. Therefore, this skill becomes an important element of communicative competence among EFL learners (Boonkit, 2010).

According to Kurun (2012), speaking skills involve three basic areas of knowledge, mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, reading, and vocabulary), functions (transaction and interaction), and pragmatics, which deals with social and cultural rules (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants, etc.). That is why it is essential for EFL teachers to develop teaching and learning strategies that help learners enhance and reinforce their speaking skills by covering all the different aspects mentioned above.

Among the different communicative strategies which teachers can use to develop EFL speaking skills in their students, we have the use of fairy tales, which, based on Ling and Tsu-Chia (2015), are stories with fantasy characters and settings that can be used in the language classroom as a learner-centered strategy. Furthermore, the use of fairy tales may help learners develop their vocabulary, oral communication, writing, imagination, motivation, and self-confidence (Bazurto & Bravo, 2018; Kimkong, 2014) which can in turn, help students develop their communication and speaking skills (Manukyan & Durgaryan, 2019).

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1.2. Statement of the Problem

English has spread over different cultures and places and has become the main language in areas such as communication, technology, and education. It is believed that English can give people better opportunities to study, travel, or work abroad (Erving & Quinde, 2021). English has become a mandatory subject in the Ecuadorian context and communication is the main objective proposed in the current Ecuadorian English Curriculum (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Thus, the curriculum demands the integration and application of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method to promote real and authentic speaking experiences within the classroom (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). However, as stated by Calle et al. (2012) in a study conducted in Ecuador, many teachers' strategies used in the classroom are framed within a traditional model, focusing only on grammar and translation. Additionally, Huang et al. (2015) stated that a number of language educators around the globe encounter problems with the teaching of speaking in the classroom; inhibition, lack of knowledge, low participation, and mother-tongue use in their students are among the main reported issues. Therefore, this research synthesis aims to study the reported effects of the use of fairy tales on the development of the speaking skill in EFL learners.

Calle et al. (2012) also mentioned that some teachers in Cuenca, Ecuador, in general, were not applying updated communicative strategies in the classroom. These teachers still used traditional strategies that hindered the development of communicative competence in their students. Similarly, Peña (2017) pointed out that teachers in Ecuador must begin to apply different methodologies and strategies in order to give their students the opportunity to learn the target language more effectively. One of these strategies may be the use of fairy tales.

The idea of using fairy tales emerges as an alternative teaching strategy since its effectiveness in the language classroom has been demonstrated in research studies (Huertas, 2017; Slater,1987). However, there is a lack of research synthesis covering the effects of the use of fairy tales on the development of the speaking skill in EFL learners reported in previous studies. Therefore, it is important to carry out this study. Finally, the present study might become an excellent source of information for EFL teachers who want to use fairy tales in the classroom.

1.3. Rationale

Literature plays an important role in people's lives (Mikesova, 2006). Fairy tales, as a part of children's literature, could be a valuable source for teaching English as a foreign language (Lepin, 2012). Also, Matheudakis et al. (2017) claimed that fairy tales tend to provoke emotional reactions, such as laughter, sadness, disappointment, and anticipation, and this boosts learners' social and emotional development. Thus, the use of fairy tales can increase EFL learners' motivation to participate and learn (Visikoknox-Johnson, 2016) since fairy tales have an impact on learners' cognitive and affective development (Mattheoudakis et al., 2017).

In addition, Sharipova (2021) argued that the language of fairy tales contributes to the development of linguistic skills, such as reading, vocabulary, speaking, and the enrichment of language knowledge. Furthermore, some studies carried out by Mikesova (2006) and Sharipova (2021) stated that most EFL learners taught with traditional methods lack the knowledge of vocabulary to express basic ideas. Thus, fairy tales might be a powerful alternative (Manukyan & Durgaryan, 2019).

Moreover, Zipes (2012) argued that fairy tales are a medium through which children can express their own ideas and can improve their EFL speaking skills. Fairy tales provide them with a powerful basis for both language and personality development. In fact, (Lepin, 2012) mentioned:

> Fairy tales are one of the possible supplementary teaching materials for English language learners. It is not only the atmosphere of mystery, thrill, and wonder which makes fairy tales so unique and valuable, but they can bring the whole magic world to a young reader and learner, improving the literature on learners. (p 5).

As can be seen, fairy tales seem to be a good option to foster the development of speaking skills in the EFL classroom as well as other skills. Therefore, it is important to review previous research on this topic in order to examine the effects of the use of fairy tales on the development of the speaking skill in EFL learners.

1.4. Research Question:

After analyzing the relevant literature for this synthesis, the following question has arisen.

- What are the reported effects of using fairy tales on the development of speaking in EFL learners?

1.5. Objectives

1.5.1. General Objective:

- To analyze the reported effects of using fairy tales on the development of speaking in EFL learners.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives:

- To determine the effects of using fairy tales on the development of pronunciation in EFL learners.

- To examine the effects of using fairy tales on the development of communicative competence in EFL learners.

Chapter II

2. Theoretical Framework

This section provides a wide understanding of the concepts, characteristics, and distinct elements of fairy tales to reinforce speaking skills. To begin, the definition and essential characteristics of fairy tales will be presented. Then, I will discuss the importance of speaking skills and some strategies that teachers have used in order to develop this skill in their students.

2.1. Fairy Tales

2.2. Definition of Fairy Tales

According to Hallett and Karasek (2010), a fairy tale is a story that involves folkloric features such as fairies, goblins, princes, and princesses. The fairy tale is a sub-class of the folk tale. The oldest fairy tales were told and passed down from generation to generation before they were written. Later, there were different versions of the same story. Each story appeared to have unique telling and cultural elements which were influenced by the place and time of the

story's original region. Nowadays, different authors still like to invent and write down new versions of fairy tales (Lepin, 2012).

Fairy tales are stories either created or strongly influenced by oral traditions (Grimm et al., 2020). Their plots feature stark conflicts between good and evil, with magic and luck determining the usually happy endings (Lepin, 2012). While each society of the world has its own body of folktales and fairy tales, specific themes and motifs tend to be repeated across many cultures and periods. Universal human emotions such as love, hate, courage, kindness, and cruelty are represented in the different plots of fairy tales (Hallett & Karasek, 2010).

Zipes (2012) claimed that fairy tales are arguably one of the most important cultural and social influences on children's lives as these stories have a certain quality that involves princes and princesses, combat, and adventures. Each fairy tale relates a different story about a specific situation which entertains the readers. Moreover, in the modern era, violence is usually removed from fairy tales so that they can be read by children. Therefore, moral lessons and happy endings become common features in fairy tales that influence children (Hallett & Karasek, 2010).

Armer (2021) describes five reasons to use fairy tales in the EFL classroom:

1. "Fairy tales expand students' imaginations.

2. Fairy tales are short and simple.

3. Fairy tales are universal.

4. Fairy tales increase Cultural awareness. And

5. Fairy tales spark debates and discussions" (p. 2-3).

2.3. Characteristics of Fairy Tales

Ruldolf (2022), Hallet and Karasek (2010), and Armer (2021) establish the following characteristics related to the setting, characters, and plot of fairy tales.

2.3.1. Setting:

● Place and time are many times unknown in fairy tales. The setting is often an enchanted place, such as a forest with castles, kingdoms, and far-faraway lands.

● Fairy tales usually begin and end with "special" compositions such as; "Once upon a time," "In a far-far away land," "Like days long ago," "There once was,"

"A long, long time ago," "They lived happily ever after," "They lived for many, many joyous years" (Lepin, 2012, p.16).

2.3.2. Characters:

● Princes, princesses, heroes, and heroines are often included in fairy tales as well as poor farmers, young children, wise old women, beggars, and soldiers. These characters are sometimes expressed in the fairy tales' names, such as Rapunzel, Hansel and Gretel, Sleeping Beauty, and The Frog Prince.

● Fairy tales usually incorporate clearly defined good characters and bad characters. For instance, Little Red Riding Hood and The Big Gray Wolf are good examples of the sharp division between good and bad characters.

2.3.3. Plot:

● Fairy tales present historical facts from the past.

● Most fairy tales are short stories because people used to tell them (or read them aloud) and listen to them.

● The main character often wants to make life better or resolve the conflicts of others.

● Fairy tales involve magic elements. Magic may be both positive and negative. For example, "in magic porridge pot, when the little girl used it properly, the pot did not harm anyone, but when mother tried to use it and used it in the wrong way – the town was covered in porridge" (Lepin, 2012, p.8).

2.4. Fairy Tales and Strategies to Improve Students' Oral Skills

Fairy tales are applied in EFL contexts to reinforce the four linguistics skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Canepa et al., 2019; Simon, 2022). Also, fairy tales are used as a strategy to promote oral production in the language classroom, taking into account students' proficiency level in the language and thus making the necessary adaptations. Thus, fairy tales might be an excellent alternative for teaching language (Canepa et al., 2019; Simon, 2022).

According to Lepin (2012), almost every fairy tale carries moral messages. It is proof that fairy tales are not mere entertainment but can also be educational. Canepa et al. (2019) claimed that fairy tales are an excellent strategy to provide knowledge of the different skills in the English language due to the extensive literature it contains. However, it is necessary to apply adequate tasks to improve speaking skills. For instance, Willis (1996) and Lepin (2012)

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mentioned that activities such as brainstorming, discussions, picture narrating, picture describing, role play, finding the differences, story completion, storytelling, and simulation are very useful because they motivate students and enhance the comprehension of vocabulary, writing, oral communication, and speaking, which lead to the improvement and increase of language knowledge in EFL learners (Lepin, 2012). In addition, using fairy tales is a great way of accessing children's imagination, which is an important element in the process of learning (Visikoknox-Johnson, 2016). Moreover, children get to learn certain lessons, in a non-threatening, playful manner, which could even be applied to their current circumstances (Visikoknox-Johnson, 2016).

2.5. The Speaking Skills

The main purpose of learning a language is communication. Students should be able to hold a conversation in the target language, in this case, English (Rodgers & Richards, 2014). Learning how to express themselves in the target language is important because learners can communicate how they are feeling, and what their thoughts are, they can ask questions, give answers, etc. (Rodgers & Richards, 2014). Many strategies have been used in order to develop the speaking skills of EFL learners. These strategies include repetition, role-play, debates, group work, and oral presentations, among others (Fauzan, 2014). When teachers try to apply new activities in order to improve students' speaking skills, they should focus on communication, which means not putting too much emphasis on certain mistakes that students might make.

Furthermore, Vélez and Paredes (2021) state that teachers should focus on the development of oral production in students through information exchange, meaning negotiation, and interaction. In addition, if the teacher wants to focus on developing students' communicative competence through speaking, the classes should be learner-centered, to encourage active students' participation; they are the main actors in the teaching and learning process (Vélez & Paredes, 2021) Fairy tales offer students the opportunity to develop their speaking skills by performing different activities that are both entertaining and meaningful for them (Vélez & Paredes, 2021).

Chapter III

3. Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the existing literature that is useful for this research synthesis. Thus, relevant studies on the use of fairy tales to enhance learners' speaking skills were analyzed, selected, and classified based on categories such as effects, activities, and perceptions. It should be noted that I have included the reported effects of fairy tales on different language skills, not only speaking since many studies have demonstrated the positive effects of the use of fairy tales on oral communication, writing, and vocabulary development.

Marosi (2020) claims that "fairy tales are close to every human being. There is hardly a person who, as a child, did not read or talk about wonderful stories of beautiful princesses and brave princes, wicked witches, and helpful animals" (p.12). That is to say, everybody is familiar with fairy tales. What is interesting is that through time, fairy tales have also become an excellent strategy to develop the different EFL learners' linguistics skills (Lepin, 2012; Tsu- Chia & Ling, 2015; Slater, 1987). Similarly, Lepin (2012), Marosi (2020), Visikoknox-Johnson (2016), and Uzzahara (2022) have found that the use of fairy tales increases learners' self-confidence, motivation, and values. Therefore, fairy tales foster both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of language learning. In the next paragraphs, I will mention some of the reported effects of using fairy tales in the classroom to develop different language skills. I will also include some of the non-linguistic effects of using fairy tales that might contribute to students' learning.

Linguistic Effects

3.1.1. Oral Communication

According to Manukyan and Durhgaryan (2019) and Simon (2022), fairy tales are considered a good strategy/teaching material that can be applied in the classroom in order to improve the communicative competencies of EFL learners since it promotes interaction among learners. Regarding pronunciation, as Arfani et al. (2020) mention, it is essential to provide students with authentic models of language use. Arfani et al. (2020) wanted to investigate how effective fairy tales were in the teaching of English, especially pronunciation. After one month of using these teaching materials, the results showed positive effects on the development of EFL students' pronunciation levels.

Similarly, Aleksandrovna et al. (2020) mentioned in their study that "a great way to enhance the pronunciation of the language is to read fairy tales aloud, as they are meant to be spoken

and heard by others" (p. 3). For this reason, the aim of this study was to use Russian fairy tales translated into English as a means to teach English pronunciation. The authors collected data by using interviews and analyzed the results following content analysis principles. The authors concluded that the use of Russian fairy tales in English significantly enriched the participants' pronunciation skills. Moreover, the researchers were generally satisfied with the study material, which consisted of Russian fairy tales in English. They concluded that applying this material helps to foster the speaking skills of the students.

1.1.1. Writing

Writing has always been a challenging skill for learners to develop. According to Yavuz (2017), "writing skills have a multi-dimensional nature in that clear and correct writing needs to use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and also the organization of the writing task to convey ideas clearly and adequately" (p. 350). Therefore, there are a lot of elements at play when learning to write. Yavuz (2017) carried out a study at the Balıkesir University, with the aim to examine the effects of fairy tales on students' writing skills. After the intervention, the results showed that fairy tales are an excellent resource to develop the mentioned skill. The author concluded that fairy tales can be used "as a great model for learners in writing because fairy tales have a clearly-set frame, have a pre-defined terminology, a limited structure, a lively atmosphere and a familiar setting and plot" (Yavuz, 2017, p. 351). In addition, in another study, it was found that fairy tales help students to develop writing skills as a means of communication in two aspects: creative and practical. With fairy tales, the writing skills of students become creative and practical because this material helps students develop their imagination. At the same time, fairy tales help students learn vocabulary and grammar in a more entertaining manner (Lepin, 2012).

Furthermore, Kholmurodova et al., (2021) analyzed the effects of using fairy tales to teach English to students who belonged to the education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This research lasted for one school year. After the intervention, it was found that the students enjoyed the topics covered in the stories and that fairy tales motivated them to start writing their own. Also, Kholmurodova et al., (2021) reported that the learners had the advantage of developing their knowledge of other language areas such as verb tenses, adjectives, and comparatives. In addition, Kholmurodova et al., (2021) mentioned three activities that students can do in order to develop their writing skills using fairy tales: writing a newer version of famous fairy tales, making a summary of fairy tales, and writing their own fairy tales using their imagination. Overall, the use of fairy tales helped teachers and students develop a better classroom atmosphere with students who were more motivated to learn English.

1.1.1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an essential component in learning a language whether a foreign language or a native one. It allows learners to perform a conversation without much problem (Masoni, 2018). Thus, many studies have been conducted in order to analyze the effectiveness of fairy tales when teaching English.

Huertas (2017) carried out a study to analyze the effects of fairy tales on EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. The participants were high school students from Colombia. The results of this study showed that the participants were able to learn vocabulary in a more joyful manner; the students seemed to enjoy the lessons more and showed more interest in the topics. All of this resulted in their better learning of vocabulary (Huertas, 2017). In another study, Simon (2022) also found that fairy tales have a great advantage for the teacher when presenting new vocabulary to students. Through fairy tales, the students were able to identify the unfamiliar words when seen in the sentence, paragraph, and as part of the overall story (Mikesova, 2006).

Moreover, Abdulla (2012) found that storytelling was a good way to teach vocabulary to EFL high school students from Iraq. The results of this study showed that fairy tales help students to improve their learning and retention of English words better than with other strategies or materials. The author also mentioned that "stories [from fairy tales] are the most valuable resources that teachers have and they propose to students a world of supported meaning that they can relate to" (Abdulla, 2012, p. 21).

1.1. Non-linguistic Effects

1.1.1. Motivation and Values

It is well-known that motivation is an important factor that helps a person to achieve goals. Therefore, a study was performed by Uzzahara (2022), whose aim was to know whether the use of Acehnese fairy-tale stories in English can motivate students to learn this target language, especially speaking. Further, this author mentioned that "students' motivation is something that can move or encourage students in the learning process so that students can achieve the intended learning objectives" (Uzzahara, 2022, p. 7). This study was carried out with 27 high school students, who were chosen as participants. At the end of this study, the students felt more motivated to speak in English than they did before, and this shows the positive effects of using fairy tales in the EFL classroom (Uzzahara, 2022). Similarly, in another study which has already been mentioned, Lepin (2012) stated that fairy tales can be used as a strategy to teach not only linguistic skills but also morals and values. Thus, students can

reinforce their values and learn new ones as well as learn English with the use of fairy tales (Lepin, 2012).

In addition, a study carried out by Visikoknox-Johnson (2016) focused on analyzing the impact of fairy tales on children. In this study, the author found that fairy tales can even be considered as therapeutic for children because fairy tales teach children how to deal with some human conflicts, desires, and relationships in a healthy way. By analyzing the stories of fairy tales, children can learn some lessons in order to address painful or unsettling issues in a non-threatening, playful manner. Moreover, the author mentioned that the use of fairy tales provides a great opportunity of accessing children's imagination.

1.1.1. Self-confidence

Having self-confidence will significantly improve students' willingness to communicate in foreign languages (Gurler, 2015). An international conference by Marosi (2020) addressed the issue of fairy tales in EFL classrooms as an opportunity to improve students' self-confidence. This conference took place in J. Selye University Pedagogical Sections and included the idea that it is important to enhance social skills among students (cooperation, empathy, problem-solving, decision-making, and confidence) through fairy tales, which in turn would help foster their self-confidence. Uzzahara (2022) mentions that fairy tales provide some experience and emotional connection which allow the students to improve their self-awareness and self-confidence, which eventually might lead to their personality development. Additionally, this author states that fairy tales are a kind of literature that contain a large number of stories and each story can contribute to the development of self-confidence in students. This will improve students' performance in the target language. Finally, self-confidence is one of the facilitating factors that help people start and hold a conversation, which means that speaking requires a high degree of self-confidence (Uzzahara, 2022).

Chapter IV

4. Methodology

This research study aims to analyze the effects of using fairy tales on the development of the speaking skill in EFL learners. This paper is a research synthesis, which is "the process of combining the results of multiple primary research studies aimed at testing the same conceptual hypothesis" (Cooper, 1993, pp. 4-5).

 In order to carry out this study and gather suitable information, the data was collected through online databases such as Academic Articles, Research Gates, and Google Scholar, among others. Moreover, most of the educational journals that provided valuable support for the basis of the research synthesis are the following: *International Journal of Language Academy, Education, and Learning Research Journal, Yangon University of Education Research Journal, Science Review, Hong Kong Baptist University, International Conference of J. Selye University,* among others journals. Each source has useful information to provide useful articles for this work. Finally, inclusion and exclusion criteria have been established to have relevant studies about the use of fairy tales.

The inclusion criteria included the following. First, the selected articles must provide information on the use of fairy tales to reinforce speaking skills in EFL learners. Second, the research methodology of the studies can be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. There is no restriction regarding the type of method since all of them contribute to the development of this paper. Third, studies must be published within the last ten years in order to analyze relevant and updated information about the use of fairy tales in EFL contexts. Fourth, the selected research papers must focus on EFL learners from different age groups. Finally, even though the studies were chosen based on fairy tales to improve speaking skills, some linguistic and non-linguistic effects of fairy tales, such as motivation, were also included.

The exclusion criteria included the following. Studies or articles whose primary focus is ESL learners were not part of this research synthesis. Also, articles that have been published more than 10 years ago were not included in this study.

 Additionally, the following keywords were used to collect information: (a) speaking skills, (b) writing skills, (c) vocabulary (d) learners(e) fairy tales, communicative strategies in EFL classrooms, and oral communication. All of these words were taken from some research studies in order to obtain useful information.

Chapter V

1. Data Analysis

In this research synthesis, 14 studies were considered for analysis in order to answer the following research question: What are the reported effects of using fairy tales on the development of speaking in EFL learners? It should be noted that even though the main focus of this study was the influence of fairy tales on the development of the speaking skill in EFL students (linguistic effects), I have also included non-linguistic effects such as motivation and self-confidence. These aspects, according to the studies examined, have an indirect impact on students' speaking skill. The studies were divided into the following categories: research location, research design, research instruments, linguistic effects of using fairy tales, and non-linguistic effects of using fairy tales.

Research Location

Table 1

Research Location

Location	Author/year	No of studies	Percentage
Asia	Arfani et al. (2020); Abdulla (2012); Aleksandrovna et al. (2020); Kholmuradova (2021); Simon (2022); Uzzahara (2022	6	40
Europe	Manukyan & Durhgaryan (2019); Masoni (2018); Marosi (2020); Lepin (2012); Gurler (2015); Yavus (2017)	6	50
North America	Visikoknox-Johnson (2016)	1	5
South America	Huertas (2017)	1	5

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		14	100
Total		14	100

Table 1 presents a categorization of the studies according to their location (the continents where these studies were carried out). As it can be seen, six studies were carried out in Asia. In Europe, we have six studies on this topic. In North America, I find only 1 study, and in South America, we have only one study too. Moreover, table 1 reveals that in South America, there is little research on the use of fairy tales to reinforce speaking skills in EFL learners.

Research Design

Table 2

Research Design

Design	Author/year	No of studies	Percentage
Quantitative	Arfani et al. (2020); Abdulla (2012); Gurler (2015); Kholmuradova (2021); Lepin (2012); Marosi (2020); Masoni (2018); Manukyan & Durhgaryan (2019); Simon (2022); Uzzahara (2022); Visikoknox-Johnson (2016); Yavus (2017).	12	75
Qualitative	Aleksandrovna et al. (2020); Huertas (2017);	2	25
Total		14	100

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Table 2 shows a categorization of the 15 studies according to their research design: quantitative and qualitative methods. It should be noted that there were no mixed-methods studies. As it can be observed, 75 % of the studies applied a quantitative design, while 25% of them used a qualitative design. The results of all quantitative method studies showed that the use of fairy tales reinforces speaking skills in EFL learners. For instance, Simon (2022), Arfani et al. (2020), Marosi (2020), and Lepin (2012) concluded that the use of fairy tales helped students learn the target language in a better manner because these materials offered variety and entertainment for students, among other benefits.

In the qualitative studies, it was found that fairy tales are considered a didactic material, and, therefore, several aspects should be taken into account. For instance, Aleksandrovna et al. (2020) and Huertas (2017), concluded that teachers should carefully select the fairy tales they want to use in the classroom, taking into consideration aspects such as students' needs, emotions, learning styles, intelligences, etc.

4.1. Research Instruments

Table 3

Research Instruments

Instruments	Author/year	No of studies	Percentage
Observation	Arfani et al. (2020); Visikoknox-Johnson (2016).	2	20

Interviews and Content Analysis	Aleksandrovna et al. (2020); Kholmuradova (2021); Masoni (2018); Simon (2022); Yavus (2017).	5	30
Tests and Questionnaires	Abdulla (2012); Gurler (2015); Huertas (2017); Lepin (2012); Marosi (2020); Manukyan & Durhgaryan (2019); Uzzahara (2022);	7	50
Total		14	100

Table three displays the research instruments used in the 15 empirical studies. As indicated in the table, observation was used in two studies. In addition, Arfani et al. (2020) and Visikonox-Johnson (2016) stated that these data collection tools allowed them to reflect on their teaching practices and obtain results based on their own experience. On the other hand, in six studies, interviews and content analysis were applied to gather information on the use of fairy tales as a strategy in the classroom to teach and learn English speaking skills in EFL learners. Furthermore, tests and questionnaires were the research tools preferred to collect the information by appearing in 7 studies.

1.1. Linguistic Effects of Using Fairy Tales

Table 4

Linguistic effects of fairy tales

Linguistic effects of fairy tales	Authors/year	No. of studies	Percentage
Oral communication	Arfani et al. (2020); Aleksandrovna (2020); Simon (2022)	3	40
Vocabulary	Abdula (2012); Huertas (2017); Msoni (2013); Simon (2022)	4	40
Writing	Lepin (2012); kholmuradova et al., (2021); Yavuz (2017)	3	20
Total		10	100

Table 4 shows the linguistic effects of fairy tales. Speaking was one of the areas that benefited from the use of fairy tales. As explained above, speaking is such an important skill to develop, so teachers and students can take advantage of this material. Meanwhile, vocabulary plays an important role in the acquisition of communicative competence. With the use of fairy tales, the students were able to identify the unfamiliar words when seen in the sentence, paragraph, and as part of the overall story (Simon, 2022). Moreover, writing is another skill that is mentioned in this analysis. Writing is one of the skills that students can improve through the use of fairy tales because many times the students are encouraged to write their own stories after they have read some fairy tales (Yavuz, 2017). In ten out of the total amount of studies, the learners improved their vocabulary retention with the use of fairy tales by 25%.

Non-linguistic Effects of Using Fairy Tales

Table 5

Non-linguistic effects of fairy tales

Non-linguistic effects	Authors/ year	No. of studies	Percentage
Motivation and values	Lepin (2012); Uzzahara (2022); Visikoknox-Johnson (2016)	3	50
Self-confidence	Gurler (2015); Marosi (2020)	2	50
Total		5	100

Table 5 shows the non-linguistic effects of the use of fairy tales. These effects, however, contribute to the learning of the target language among EFL students. I found 5 studies that included these types of effects. The first non-linguistic effect is motivation.The learners were able to enhance their speaking comprehension, through motivation and self-confidence fostered by the use of fairy tales. The studies conducted by Lepin (2012) and Visikoknox-Johnson (2016) showed positive results in student's motivation and values. These authors affirm that learners need to be motivated in the classroom, so they can improve their knowledge. Thus, the students become more confident as they use the language to communicate. Therefore, fairy tales are considered an excellent teaching material because through them students are motivated to express their own ideas and can improve their EFL speaking skills. Self-confidence is an important aspect that will improve students' performance in the target language. In the study carried out Uzzahara (2022), learners enhanced their self-awareness and self-confidence using fairy tales.

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Chapter VI

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

This research synthesis aimed to analyze the reported effects of using fairy tales to develop EFL learners' speaking skills. In the light of the previous discussion of the results and the literature review, I have gathered the following conclusions. Using fairy tales in EFL classrooms is an excellent strategy, which can help students develop their speaking skills. Moreover, the different languages presented in these types of stories can be a great opportunity for language students to enhance their vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, fairy tales can be used with different age groups. The teacher would need to carefully select the appropriate story based on students' characteristics and language proficiency level. Therefore, fairy tales can be used in the EFL classroom and with a range of levels as this strategy provides the opportunity to develop different areas of language such as vocabulary, grammar, and speaking which leads them to an improvement of their communicative competence.

Going beyond the linguistic benefits listed above, fairy tales can also aid in the development of motivation and self-confidence in students. The studies analyzed in this work have demonstrated that by using their imagination and creating their own stories, students' motivation and their trust in themselves can be enhanced. This in turn will have positive effects on students' learning, since it has been discussed that a motivated student will have better possibilities of learning and even becoming successful in other areas of their lives. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to use fairy tales with their students, since they can have a positive impact not only on their learning, but also on their personal development.

1.1. Recommendations

After analyzing the findings of this research synthesis, there are some recommendations for further research on the reported effects of using fairy tales to develop EFL learners' speaking skills. There were articles that analyzed the use of fairy tales in the classroom, and these studies took place in many parts of the world. However, none of the research papers examined took place in Ecuador. Thus, research about using fairy tales to improve speaking skills should be developed in this country. It would benefit EFL Ecuadorian educators and learners because it would provide an overview about the use of fairy tales in our context. Besides, it would be an opportunity to find out if the results are the same as the ones found in other regions.

In addition, most of the articles found were studies that have not included the analysis of both linguistic and non-linguistic effects in the same article. It would be important to carry out projects where these two types of effects can be studied, since non-linguistic effects such as motivation can enhance the performance of the target language in students. Moreover, most studies were focused on young people, not on adults. Therefore, it is recommended that future research focus on implementing fairy tales in adults due to the fact that fairy tales contain a lot of vocabulary which may be beneficial for an adult who wants to learn the English language.

Finally, the last recommendation is for teachers to try to implement fairy tales in the classroom with their students. Based on the analyzed studies, I can say that the teachers would find many benefits when using these stories. Fairy tales are a kind of material that has a great advantage for students and can help them develop their linguistic skills such as speaking, vocabulary, and writing, while enhancing their motivation and self-confidence.

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