MA THESIS TITLE:

The benefits of using stories in developing critical thinking skill in Primary School

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Tetovo, 2021

Working title of the thesis:

"The benefits of using stories in developing critical thinking skill in Primary School"

Translation of the working title in Albanian:

"Përfitimet e përdorimit të tregimeve në zhvillimin e aftësive të të menduarit kritik në shkollën fillore"

Abstract

Every day, we receive information from the most diverse sources that measures must be implemented in the curriculum of the education system, to ensure pupils progress sufficiently and develop a wide range of skills. In my opinion, one of the important things that teachers should be wary about and try to develop is pupils' critical thinking. Teaching pupils to think critically is very essential, because it empowers them to make reasonable judgments. When we think about what might attract interest to pupils, we may think of stories because they also bring joy to them.

This study investigates pupils' responses to stories, including their opinions and behaviors, as well English language teachers' opinions about the use of stories in the classroom and the development of critical thinking through stories. In addition, to find out the influence of stories in learning EFL, qualitative and quantitative methods were applied in this research. The participants were pupils of primary school (5th to 9th graders) and seven English language teachers.

The outcomes of this study show opinions of pupils and teachers towards the use of stories in their classes. The results produced from my research will aid teachers to formulate a curriculum that originates from a well-informed viewpoint where the potential benefits shown from the inclusion of stories is understood; this understanding will benefit students and teachers to provide a better curriculum.

Keywords: *education, pupils, stories, primary school, critical thinking*

Abstrakti

Çdo ditë, ne marrim informacione nga burime të ndryshme se duhet të merren masa në programin mësimor të sistemit arsimor, për të siguruar që nxënësit të përparojnë mjaftueshëm dhe të zhvillojnë një gamë të gjerë aftësish. Sipas mendimit tim, një nga gjërat e rëndësishme që mësimdhënësit duhet të kenë kujdes dhe të përpiqen të zhvillojnë është mendimi kritik i nxënësve. Mësimi i nxënësve për të menduar në mënyrë kritike është shumë thelbësor, sepse i fuqizon ata të bëjnë gjykime të arsyeshme. Kur mendojmë për atë që mund të tërheqë interes për nxënësit, mund të mendojmë për tregime, sepse ato gjithashtu u sjellin gëzim atyre.

Ky studim shqyrton përgjigjet e nxënësve ndaj tregimeve, duke përfshirë mendimet dhe sjelljet e tyre, si dhe mendimet e mësimdhënësve të gjuhës angleze në lidhje me përdorimin e tregimeve në klasë dhe zhvillimin e mendimit kritik përmes tregimeve. Për më tepër, për të zbuluar ndikimin e tregimeve në mësimin e gjuhës angleze, në këtë hulumtim u aplikuan metodat cilësore dhe sasiore. Pjesëmarrës ishin nxënës të shkollës fillore (nxënës të klasave 5 deri në 9) dhe shtatë mësimdhënës të gjuhës angleze.

Rezultatet e këtij studimi tregojnë mendimet e nxënësve dhe mësimdhënësve në lidhje me përdorimin e tregimeve në klasat e tyre. Rezultatet e dala nga studimi im do t'i ndihmojnë mësimdhënsit në hartimin e planit mësimor që buron nga një këndvështrim i miëinformuar, ku kuptohen përfitimet e mundshme të treguara nga përfshirja e tregimeve; nga ky kuptim do të perfitojnë nxënësit dhe mësimdhënësit për të siguruar një planprogram më të mirë.

Fjalët kyqe: *edukim, nxënësit, tregimet, shkolla fillore, mendimi kritik*

Acknowledgments

First of all, my deepest thanks to my Master thesis supervisor Prof. Dr. Brikena Xhaferi, I am grateful for her helpful advice, guidance and encouraging words. She has guided me through the whole process and has been a great support for me. I thank her endlessly for her patience, her constructive advice and comments.

I would also like to express my thanks to English language teachers and students who have helped me in the process of my research and I am really grateful to them.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their patience, encouragement, care and faith in me.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

As the world grows more and more complex, and democracy increases across the globe, it has also become evident that pupils need problem-solving abilities, and also be able to examine circumstances critically and raise different opinions and make prudent decisions. Nowadays, people are dedicating more time to studying the English language. This includes the English language in the school syllabus which is growing every day and pupils are setting out to learn English at a younger and younger age; Kosovo is no different and is following this trend. Along with learning the English language, the development of critical thinking should also be important. Moreover, it is also evident that the ability to think critically is something that needs to be carefully cultivated and encouraged within a learning-supportive environment. Additionally, educators should know that critical thinking skills are important for pupils of all ages. Therefore, pupils' critical thinking has to be a priority for all participants in the education system. These days critical thinking skills are very important particularly in primary school, but to teach these skills is a challenge for every teacher because they need to attract pupils' interest in different ways. According to Hayes and Devitt (2008) "generally, critical thinking strategies are not extensively developed or practiced during primary and secondary education" (p.65).

Howie (1993) agrees with the advantages of using literature and asserts its role in enhancing pupils' critical thinking skills as pupils learn to "make judgments, come to conclusions, be decisive, synthesize information, organize, evaluate, predict, and apply skills" (p. 24).

This study researched how stories can develop critical thinking in English classes, the results will benefit many people from both sides of the table (pupils as well as teachers) due to the fact decisions can be made with greater knowledge of potential impacts.

Stories have their benefits. They allow pupils to learn new vocabulary, use their imagination, and develop many other skills like reading or listening. To conclude, stories are useful for pupils to be critical thinkers.

1.2 General objective

This study takes for granted to investigate the effect of stories on the development of critical thinking in primary school pupils. Thus, this thesis will find out whether using stories can develop critical thinking in primary school pupils.

1.3 Specific objectives

- To find out if stories can develop critical thinking to young pupils
- To find out if stories can develop their reflection
- To find out if teacher can use stories properly that pupils can develop their critical thinking

1.4 Research Questions

1. How often do teachers use stories in the classroom?
2. What is the general attitude of pupils regarding stories?
3. What is the role of the teacher in teaching and developing critical thinking in primary school through stories?
4. Does the use of stories help pupils to develop their critical thinking?

1.5 Hypotheses

- The use of stories in the process of teaching English language has a positive outcome on developing critical thinking.
- The use of stories in English learning, helps primary pupils to learn through more attractive and interesting approaches which increase their motivation and curiosity.
- Stories will affect and develop pupils' critical thinking.

1.6 Overview of the chapters

This master thesis is divided into five chapters.

The first chapter is a general introduction so it provides the overview of this thesis, as well as an outline of research objectives.

The second chapter provides literature review and presents different ideas of scholars about critical thinking and its development through stories. So this chapter is focused on the theoretical part of critical thinking and stories as an important part for developing critical thinking.

The third chapter, this chapter includes the methodology used in this study. It also includes participants, the materials and how data were collected and analyzed.

The fourth chapter, this chapter presents the results and discusses the findings obtained from the tests conducted with the pupils. It also presents the findings obtained from the analysis of the interview conducted with teachers.

The fifth chapter includes conclusions and summarizes of the study, discusses the research questions, also limitations and recommendations of the study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives some recommendations on how critical thinking is perceived in the spacious literature and how it can be developed through short stories. It also shows the opinions of different linguists regarding critical thinking in pupils and how stories can be useful to achieve this goal of furthering the development of critical thinking. The key idea argued in this thesis is to see how stories can affect developing critical thinking. So this section aims to establish a robust concept of critical thinking and outline the benefits associated with using stories in developing critical thinking to pupils to describe the problem of critical thinking in education.

Teaching English to young pupils is an incredibly rewarding and enjoyable experience because teachers are given the prospect of becoming pupils again with the opportunity of seeing the globe through a pupil's eyes when working with pupils, but simultaneously it can be difficult for teachers since new innovative methods and approaches stir the pupils' interest. As far as young pupils are concerned they mostly find these lessons enjoyable, as they are active parts of the process. They utilize the language to play games, communicate ideas, and frequently provide greater insight into stories.

Critical thinking is the term we encounter more and more in everyday speech, in the academic community, and above all, in literature. Thought is a psychological process through which we define the properties of the phenomenon and discover the relationships between them where we can conclude that critical thinking is definitely a thought process by which we analyze and evaluate something.

2.1.1   What is critical thinking?

One of the significant goals of education is to produce well-informed pupils, that is, pupils must understand important, beneficial, beautiful, and powerful ideas. Another goal is to produce pupils who have the desire to think critically as well as analytically, apply knowledge to improve their

lives, and also contribute to their society, culture, and human development. But what would actually be the concept of critical thinking?

According to Fisher and Scriven (1997) "critical thinking is skilled and active interpretation and evaluation of observations and communications, information and argumentation" (cited in Fisher, 2011, p. 11)

Critical thinking improves pupils' flexibility and their learning skills. We do not know how technology will change by the time pupils complete school. So, critical thinking skills are important because they prepare learners for the present and the future.

According to Glaser (1941) who defined critical thinking as:

> (1) an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that comes within the range of one's experience; (2) knowledge of the methods of logical enquiry and reasoning; (3) some skill in applying those methods. Critical thinking calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends. (cited in Fisher, 2011, p. 3)

Scriven and Paul (2007) explained critical thinking as "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, reasoning, reflection, experience or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (p. 1).

Critical thinking and problem solving skills enhance academic performance. Therefore, instead of depending on teachers for guidance, pupils should become independent and they can do this when they think critically.

Shakirova (2007) agrees that critical thinking skills are important because they enable pupils "to deal effectively with social, scientific, and practical problems" (p. 42).

Critical thinking makes learning more interactive for pupils as well as teachers because all pupils can participate during lessons. Teaching pupils the importance of thinking critically is essential to enable them to apply this level of knowledge across all subjects; pupils will reap the benefits

through gaining a greater appreciation of all subjects' curriculum. Helps in better understanding and become more involved with the subject and its importance in their lives, making them feel like active participants.

Richard Paul (1992) discussed critical thinking within the context of "perfections of thought" (p. 9).

Another linguist McPeck (1981) defined "critical thinking as the tendency and skill to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism" (p.8).

Finally, it cannot be taken for granted that pupils will come to critical thinking naturally or just because it is said to be important. It is also not enough to make critical thinking merely part of the content of the program. To become productive critical thinkers, pupils must try to think critically. Critical thinking is not a "subject" to be learned or it contains some rules for the habits that must be memorized and applied. If it is not a "subject" then what is critical thinking? Critical thinking is a result; it is a point in the process of thinking, through which everyone thinks critically, as a natural way of interacting with ideas and information; it is an active process, which is required to take place intentionally or happens by chance, which makes the pupil check the information, and so it can face a challenge: to include, adapt or distribute the information.

2.1.2   Creativity

Many scholars think that critical thinking and creativity have a close relationship because critical thinking requires pupils to be more creative in thinking. To explain the close relationship between creativity and critical thinking, Paul and Elder (2006) explain that these thinking abilities look like two sides of an identical coin. In terms that thinking requires the flexibility to come up with intellectual products, which is related to creativity.

Paul and Elder (2006) state, "critical thinking without creativity reduces to mere skepticism and negativity, and creativity without critical thought reduces to mere novelty" (p. 35).

Moreover, creativity is an important part of the development of critical thinking. When the pupils have creativity, they will most likely be successful creative thinkers. Finally, Paul and Elder (2006) note that, in practice, the two conceptions are inextricably linked and develop side by side. Hence,

the scholars believe both critical thinking and creativity should be integrated in a classroom environment during instruction.

2.1.3 Importance of critical thinking in education

As we see the importance of critical thinking grows daily more and more. There is a significant importance within the lifetime of folks that is required to attain their goals in life, even in the education system it is being given special attention and importance.

According to Pescatore (2007) "when students think critically, they interact with the text skillfully analyzing the message, comparing that message with their previous knowledge, considering alternate positions, and synthesizing the information gained into a richer knowledge base" (p. 326).

Some other scholars think that learners who think critically should constantly try to do certain actions.

According to Paul & Elder (2008) learners who think critically try to:

- raise crucial questions and problems, and prepare them clearly accurately,
- collect and evaluate relevant information,
- come up with a well-reasoned conclusion,
- open minded to any ideas, and
- communicate efficiently.

Moreover, in the education and development of critical thinking in schools, the curriculum and the choice of lessons by teachers are very important.

As a part of developing a critical thinking program, (Pescatore, 2007) noted that teachers should "have the liberty to decide on the literature which will help students develop as critical thinkers" (p.336). So, educators can bring other texts into the classroom, it may be a short story or even a common textbook.

Textbooks cannot cover and address all the pupils' needs, so teachers must have the freedom to choose teaching materials adapted to the pupils' needs. Pescatore (2007) also noted that traditional "textbooks try to cover too many topics and fail to acquaint students with controversies and

historical arguments effectively, texts supply information that is irrelevant, wrong, or boring" (p. 336).

2.1.4 Can we teach Critical thinking?

Critical thinking is becoming a more and more important component of teaching, but teaching it may often be a challenge for primary teachers. Fortunately, numerous critical thinking studies claim that critical-thinking aptitudes may be taught. Critical thinking is not a part of any course or subject. Nevertheless, it is a skill that must take place so that it can be used by pupils to understand and learn any subject in a much better way.

Snyder and Snyder (2008) indicated that critical thinking is a learnable capacity.

As Norman (1981) stated that "it is strange that we expect students to learn, yet seldom teach them anything about learning" (p. 1).

Nevertheless, Snyder and Snyder (2008) claimed that it is not easy to teach critical thinking. It requires significant commitment for students to acquire or develop critical thinking.

Nevertheless, Snyder and Snyder (2008) also proposed that students need a model (from their teacher) on how to think critically since students typically do not know how to do it. Since learners are not born as critical thinkers, and they have lack of experiences in critical thinking. Therefore, primary teachers need to encourage their pupils in their classrooms by different methods, for instance, brainstorming by asking them open-ended questions. So when pupils take part in such classes they can gradually develop critical thinking skills and perspective.

Hayes and Devitt (2008) stated that "to ensure development of critical thinking strategies, implementation of instructional activities that provide an opportunity for discussion related to topics, concept, and intellectual skills are necessary" (p. 66).

Another method that pupils can develop critical thinking is through reading stories, when they read they analyze the text and interpret the work critically, therefore this method is very useful and may affect in developing critical thinking skills. Actually it is the teacher's responsibility to encourage students and provide the platform in the class to enable critical thinking. According to Erkaya (2003) who stated that using short stories has two advantages which are: firstly, short stories are

more enjoyable for students, and make the students more acquainted with critical thinking. Secondly, stories with chronological narrative can effortlessly be remembered. Critical thinking is a skill that requires both examinations, as well as problem-solving. These days, information can be obtained from many sources therefore just information gathering is not enough. Teachers need to equip pupils with the skill so when they receive information from different sources they can discard irrelevant information, thus, they can then use appropriate information for problem-solving.

2.1.5   Teaching Critical Thinking Skills

Zohar and Dori (2003) point out that successful learning may be achieved by including the thinking skills into all school level subjects, which allows students to use the abilities in a significant context and assists them learn the subject deeply and apply it outside of institute settings. So, the integration of the critical thinking skills into the regular curriculum is stressed in this view. There are two different lines of thought among the believers of content-oriented view. Some writers argue for the implicit teaching of the critical thinking skill within the context of teaching disciplines. They declare that devoting an excessive amount of attention on the specific teaching of thinking skills and to the method of the way to think is counter-productive, since it is likely to direct the eye far from subject material content. This approach requires deep and thoughtful course matter instruction where the pupils are to think reflectively. During this process, the principles of fine thinking are not explicitly introduced**.**

Clement (1979) stated that "we should be teaching students how to think. Instead, we are teaching them what to think" (p. 1).

In addition, McGuinness (1999) stressed:

> There is a need to be explicit about what we mean by better forms of thinking and of educating directly for thinking. If students are to become better thinkers, to learn meaningfully, to think flexibly and to make reasoned judgments, then they must be taught explicitly how to do it. (para. 10).

Pupils learn to use these thinking abilities as they are deeply infused in the course. Integrating direct thinking-skill instruction with instruction in the course matter where these abilities are needed to reach is another content-oriented view that seems to take much more attention recently. Paul (1992) points out that school instruction does not inspire the progress of higher-order thinking skills like critical thinking. Paul expresses that knowledge is related with thinking, in particular critical thinking. However, typically school guideline's main importance is on the coverage of content, it is methodically taught which allows students to easily regurgitate knowledge but unfortunately restricts the possibility of critical thinking. This kind of lower- learning is merely learning by rote or association, as a result learners do not understand the logic of the material they just memorize it.

According to Bloom (1956), which includes a six-level description of thinking and is called Bloom's Taxonomy. Depending on pupils' level of proficiency include both higher-order and lower-order thinking. In the 1 level (knowledge) included beginners, then when they become more competent in the language, they gradually move through higher levels.

The six-level description of thinking are:

(1) Knowledge,
(2) Comprehension,
(3) Application,
(4) Analysis,
(5) Synthesis and
(6) Evaluation.

Table: Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

Skill	Definition	Key Words
Knowledge	Recall information	Identify, describe, name, label, recognize, reproduce, follow
Comprehension	Understand the meaning, paraphrase a concept	Summarize, convert, defend, paraphrase, interpret, give examples
Application	Use the information or concept in a new situation	Build, make, construct, model, predict, prepare
Analysis	Break information or concepts into parts to understand it more fully	Compare/contrast, break down, distinguish, select, separate
Synthesis	Put ideas together to form something new	Categorize, generalize, reconstruct
Evaluation	Make judgments about value	Appraise, critique, judge, justify, argue, support

Retrieved from: file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/blooms%20taxonomy.pdf

2.1.6 Stories to promote critical thinking

Stories have been part of our history and culture, so teachers should accept their value and use it as a pedagogical tool. According to many scholarships, stories require considerable skill and effort. Storytelling is an oral sharing of a traditional or personal tale, told using the crux of the tradition from which it has its origin. As a shared experience between narrator and audience, it provides natural language experiences for pupils. Storytelling permits pupils to internalize important aspects of story beginnings and endings, settings, characters, and plot lines. It ensures practice in expressing ideas in thought units, using rich and illustrative language, developing ideas in sequence, and choosing effective action words. We live in the information age. Every day we receive information from the most diverse sources, and a large part of them are not true, or are half true. On the other hand, many folks tell us that something we read or hear is a lie, but can we trust them more than the first? After all, they are both telling us their own truth. This is where critical thinking comes into play, through which we use logically obtained information to discover the truth.

Ennis (1987) explains critical thinking as a "reasonable and reflective thinking that is focused upon deciding what to believe or do" (p.18).

Critical thinking is simply the ability to think logically before believing something we read or before taking action. John Dewey (1909) defined critical thinking as a "careful, reflective thinking in which individuals actively reflect on issues that are relevant to their own lives" (cited in Fisher, 2001, p. 2).

We as a society know that stories bring immense pleasure to pupils, so using them as a method in the teaching and learning process should be considered.

Ellis and Brewster (1991) noted that "as stories are motivating and fun, they can help students develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language and enrich their learning experiences" (pp. 1-2).

The use of stories in the EFL classroom gives pupils the opportunity for cultural, intellectual, educational, and linguistic growth. Thus, short stories can be used as a method that motivates pupils and improves their skills. The diverse range of skills pupils can potentially acquire through this method of teaching can build a great foundation for them as they progress in life.

Pardede (2011) stated:

> Short stories can also be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role playing, reenactment, and discussion are some effective learning activities which center on a short story, EFL classes can be used for enhancing these two skills. Asking students to read stories aloud can develop their speaking as well as listening skills. Further, it also leads to improving pronunciation. (p. 22).

As we reside in an age where the content taught in schools and also the skills needed in a quickly evolving world is a constant balancing act. If educators are to meet their role in society, they have to reflect on what and the way they teach so that they assist to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, and understanding they have to be able to live and perform in society. This means that we have to make what we teach "valued added". That is, make it more pertinent, get more out of it. Such is the case with the use of stories in the class. Critical thinking is the compound of many judgments, which do not happen in a vacuum but depends on prior knowledge. Pupils manage to think better critically if they assess and judge their own and others' opinions by comparing them and looking for alternatives to conclude on a specific issue. Pourkalhor and Kohan (2013) noted

that using short stories makes pupils more relaxed; it makes reading and understanding easier. In addition, the relationship between learners is also very important for the development of critical thinking. Educators to promote such value, you need to go further on the books, out of the box, out of the traditional by developing the imagination in pupils and making them realize that there are many ways to solve a problem, but you need to think hard and use all possibilities.

2.2 Why stories?

Stories are considered as one of the categories that may be used to strengthen language skills through a creative mindset, as they have many benefits.
Ellison (2010) states there are five pedagogic reasons why literature should be used in the foreign language classroom:

> (1)Attitudinal: developing positive attitudes to language learning, different cultures, self and others; (2) Linguistic: natural exposure to the foreign language in context, lexis, grammar, discourse and pronunciation through patterns and repetitions in the narrative; (3) Cultural and Intercultural: access to, and awareness and understanding of other cultures; (4) Social and Moral: emotional development/consciousness, empathy, shared experiences; and (5) Cognitive and Creative: use of the imagination and thought processes, academic skills development to support other learning. (p. 22).

Similarly, Fisher (1999) claims there are strong pedagogical reasons for developing thinking skills in children through the use of literature. Fisher (1999) in a comparison between more able, literate children with less able ones concludes that successful learners have:

> (1) Knowledge of literary forms, purposes and genre, including meta-linguistic knowledge; (2) Skills and strategies for processing literary knowledge, including the ability to question, interrogate and discuss narrative texts; and (3) Ability to apply and transfer their learning and knowledge to other contexts. (cited in Ellison, 2010, p. 24).

Developing pupils' critical thinking in school means, amid other things, teaching pupils to reason, to ask for facts, to take into account the opinions of others and to know the opinions of others, to

evaluate, and to make decisions or choices and one of the most appropriate way for pupils to make them to think critically or to raise their interest and make them feel enthusiastic through the medium of stories. Lazar (1993) notes that exposing learners to literature ensures them with unforgettable syntactic or lexical articles. Therefore, adding stories to the curriculum should be considered as they would help pupils of different skill levels.

2.2.1   Motivating

Critical thinking is also connected to motivation. Therefore, learner motivation is viewed as a necessary premise for the development of critical thinking skills. As many studies show that stories are very important to pupils in primary school, they are important to increase their motivation and interest. The more stories you use the better the results will be because they will learn new things from the stories and feel more involved. Erkaya (2003) noted that each story commonly has a beginning, middle, and end. This will encourage learners and prompt them to keep on with listening or reading to the story to follow its plot. Moreover, they enjoy listening to the stories, so they can use their imagination to learn new things, as stories are fun for pupils, they are more interested, motivated for the course and they learn the language continuously.

Pupils are more interested when the teacher incorporates stories whilst teaching. This is because stories can motivate them by hearing the stories from their teachers as they always think teachers have experiences in their life. Pupils are willing to pay attention in class when teachers say "I have stories to tell you". Pupils are more eager to know about stories and later it will become their motivation to be successful in their life. Fisher and Medvic (2003) identified some components of effective story choice, they stressed seven components: adjustment to students' interests, psychological and social involvement, selection and previewed by the teacher, clear aim for reading the text, teacher participation, use of animation and utterance, regular students' questioning to focus on particulars of the text, and relationships to independent reading and writing. Thus, using literature within the class may motivate pupils to read more and more. We all need motivation to show our skills, even teachers would be more motivated to work and give their best when they see that pupils are learning and their skills are improving every day.

2.2.2 Culture

Stories about different cultures assist pupils of various backgrounds to be integrated. They may help pupils to be superb resources for explaining and understanding cultural and historical backgrounds, processes, actions and consequences involved within the topics tackled. At the same time, the learners are expected to have an entertaining learning atmosphere.

Strong (1996) states "literature is a powerful tool in teaching the relativity of cultural values and the innate problems in cross-cultural communication" (p. 303).

Additionally, Pourkalhor and Kohan (2013) added the benefits of using stories are:

- Increase pupils' cultural awareness
- Make the pupils feel more relaxed, and reduce pupils' anxiety.
- Give pupils a better perspective of other cultures and people.

When we learn the English language, we also learn their culture such as customs, greetings, names of different places etc., but through stories, this can be done easier as the pupils' attention is greater. While listening to a native telling a story may influence pupils' minds to learn more about the culture of that country. In summary, storytelling can be considered as a simple and very profitable way to learn about different cultures. Therefore the inclusion of storytelling in the curriculum should be seen as a necessity, as this would also help teachers to make it easier to explain or teach pupils about the culture of different countries.

Chapter 3

3. Research Methodology

This chapter provides information about the methodology of the study, information about the participants, instruments of research as well as the procedure of the data analysis.

3.1 Participants

This study was conducted at primary school "Bedri Gjinaj" in Mitrovica and was focused on the use of stories in English classes concerning young pupils. The participants were different pupils of 5th to 9th grade totaling about 40 pupils. The age is between 10 to 15 years old. In this study there also had seven English teachers, all teachers were working in primary school. Participation in the study was voluntary.

3.2 Materials

The main aim of this study was to find out whether stories would help pupils to develop critical thinking. Three short stories were used in this study. Since there are primary school pupils, the stories are chosen short so that they have the opportunity to learn and understand better and more easily.

The main reason these short stories were chosen to be taught in this study is that these short stories may be interesting for pupils and attract their attention. Since the stories are short they will not be too time-consuming and pupils can remain focused for a greater duration of teaching time.

3.3 Instrument

This research has been quantitative and qualitative study. Since questionnaires were one of the most commonly used techniques for obtaining information in both quantitative and qualitative, this research was conducted through questionnaires for pupils, and informal interviews for teachers. The questionnaire has been drafted in such a way that pupils have been able to answer easily. The set of the questionnaire were conducted using multiple choice questions (closed-ended) format. Also the tests have been divided into two sections (pre-test and post-test)

Pre-test for students

1. Do you like storytelling?

    a) Yes   b) No

2. Do you read stories? How often?

    a) Always   b) Sometimes   c) Never

3. How regularly do stories get listened to?

    a) Always   b) Sometimes   c) Never

4. Do you like to add stories in the curriculum?

    a) Yes   b) No

5. Do you think telling stories would be interesting?

    a) Yes   b) No

6. How often do teachers use stories in the classroom?

    a) Always   b) Sometimes   c) Never

Post-test for students

1. Adding stories to the curriculum will help me to enjoy the curriculum?

a) Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

2. Reading stories enhanced your imagination?

a) Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

3. Reading stories in the classroom makes the learning process more interesting?

a) Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

4. Reading short stories will motivate you to express your opinion?

a) Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

5. Story telling motivates you and makes you more creative?

a) Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

6. Storytelling will attract your mind?

a) Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

The interviews were conducted with teachers of English language and it utilizes different questions about stories and critical thinking and it was structured with open answers, allowing teachers to write down their opinions about the use of stories in developing the critical thinking to pupils.

Interview with teachers

1. How important is critical thinking to pupils?

2. As a teacher what can we do to develop critical thinking in pupils?

3. What do you think about stories and how they can affect pupils?

4. Do you think that using stories can develop critical thinking?

5. Do you think the lesson would be more effective if we use stories?

6. Do you think that the use of stories in teaching makes the lesson more interactive?

7. Do you encourage pupils with stories in the classroom?

8. How often do you use stories?

9. Are pupils more focused on learning when using stories?

10. Would pupils be freer to express their opinions if different stories were used?

11. Do you think the use of stories can be more effective in teaching English language?

12. Do you think the addition of stories to the curriculum can impact pupils' motivation for the course?

13. What impact does the addition of stories have on the classroom?

14. What kind of stories do you use?

15. Do you agree to include stories more often in the curriculum?

3.4 Data collection

This study aimed to investigate the effect of stories in helping pupils to develop critical thinking. The study was conducted at primary school "Bedri Gjinaj" during the term of 2020-2021 academic year. Pupils (20 boys and 20 girls) all primary school pupils in different classes from 5th to 9th graders. In the first stage, preceding the implementation of the study, data was gathered from the pre-test to see the current situation of the pupils and what they think about stories and critical thinking.

Secondly, short-story handouts prepared for pupils were distributed so the pupils may read the stories and answer the questions about stories. This study lasted three days, for each day a different story. During the first day was The Woodcutter and the Golden Axe. On the second day The Elephant and Her Friends was taught. The third story that was taught on day three was The Ant and the Grasshopper.

Thirdly, since the stories were a post-test checking how they had influenced the pupils on critical thinking and whether they would be satisfied if more stories would be included during the lessons, the interview with the teachers was followed.

Chapter 4

4. Results

This chapter contains a description of the findings or the results from the conducted research. This study aimed to investigate the effect of stories in helping pupils to develop critical thinking. As stated before this chapter presents and discusses the findings obtained from the analyses of pre-test and post-test, followed by an analysis of interviews conducted with primary school teachers. The results showed that the use of stories had a positive influence on pupils' critical thinking.

4.1 Findings from the pre-test

The pre-test was done at Bedri Gjinaj Primary School in Mitrovica with pupils in grades 5-9. This test was done at the beginning to see how much pupils know about the stories and how often they use them. The questionnaire has been drafted in such a way that pupils have been able to answer easily. The set of the questionnaire was conducted using multiple choice questions (closed-ended) format
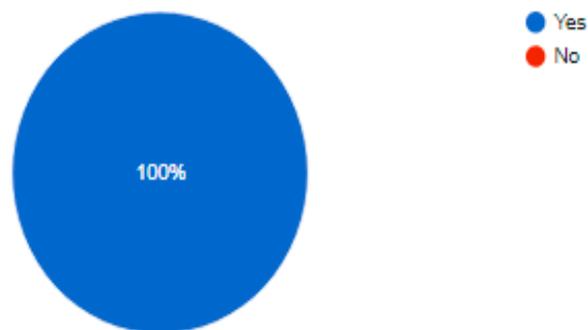
"Do you like storytelling?" This was the first question in this pre-test.

All the pupils answered the same, so it indicates that they all like stories, as we can see in 1st chart.

Chart 1: Question 1- pre-test results

1. Do you like storytelling?

40 responses

● Yes
● No

100%

"Do you read stories? How often?" Was the second question in this pre-test.

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, 27.5% answered "*Always*", 62.5% of them answered *"Sometimes",* 10% of them answered *"Never"*. As we can see in 2ndChart.

Chart 2: Question 2- pre-test results

2. Do you read stories? How often?

40 responses
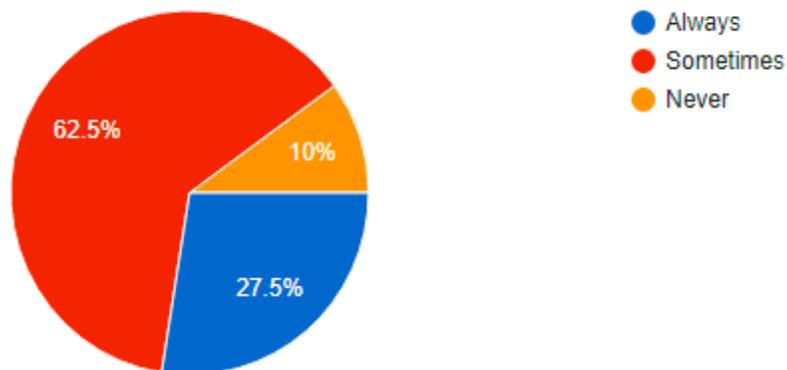
"How regularly do stories get listened to?" Was the third question in this pre-test.

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, 42.5% of them answered "*Always*", 47.5% of them answered "*Sometimes*", whereas 10% of them answered *"Never"*. As we can see in 3rdChart.

Chart 3: Question 3- pre-test results

3. How regularly do stories get listened to?

40 responses
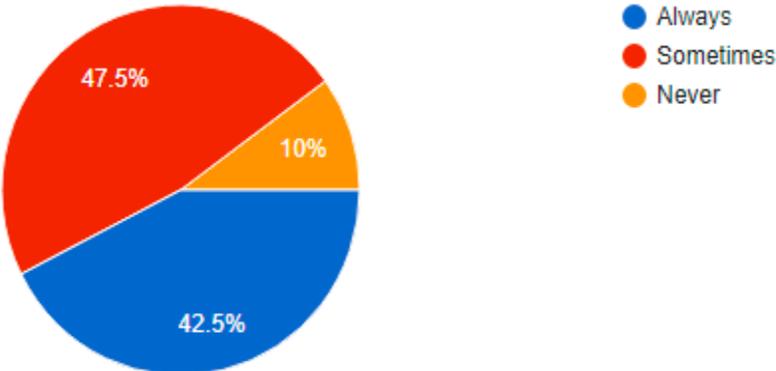
"Do you like to add stories in the curriculum?" Was the fourth question in this pre-test.

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, most of them 92.5% answered that they would like to add stories, whereas 7.5% of them answered that they do not want the stories to be in our curriculum. As we can see in the 4th chart.

Chart 4: Question 4- pre-test results

4. Do you like to add short stories in our curriculum?

40 responses
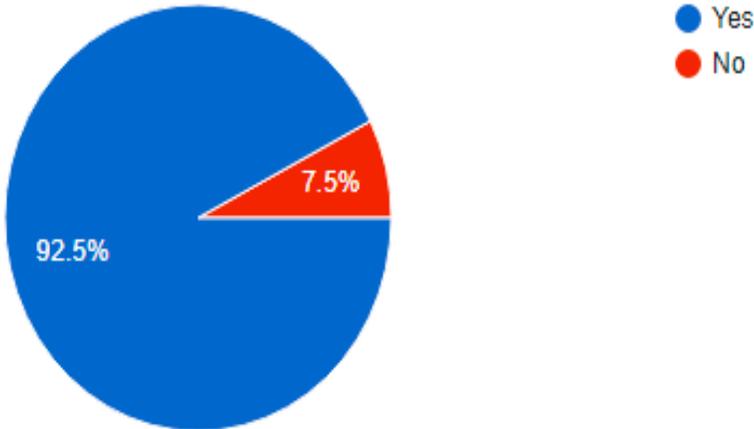
"*Do you think telling stories would be interesting?*" Was the fifth question in this pre-test.

All pupils answered "Yes", therefore we can conclude that all of them were interested in stories. As we can see in the 5th Chart.

Chart 5: Question 5- pre-test results

5. Do you think telling stories would be interesting?

40 responses
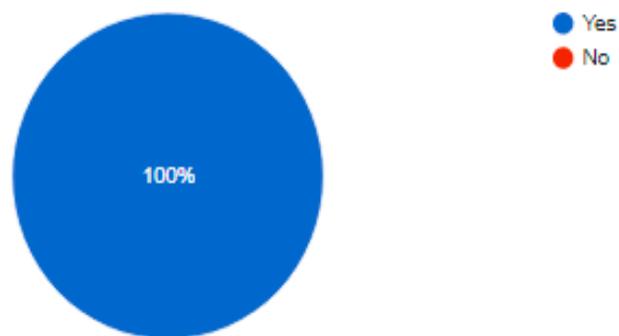
 "*How often do teachers use stories in the classroom?*" The last question of this pre-test.

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, 22.5% of them answered "*Always*", 55% of them answered "*Sometimes*", and 22.5% of them "*Never*". As we can see in 6thChart.

6. How often do teachers use stories in classroom?

40 responses
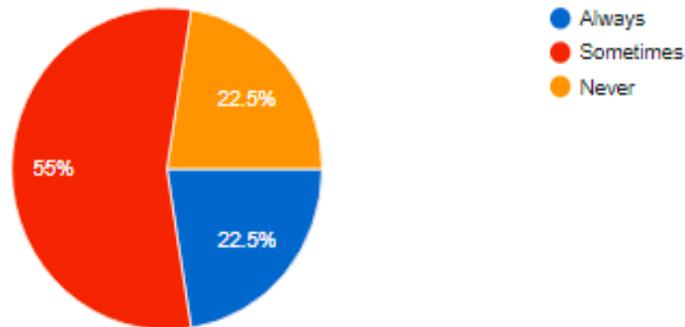
4.2 Findings from the post-test

This test was done after reading the stories on three consecutive days and 40 pupils participated in it. While reading the stories pupils were very interested and attentive, after reading the stories they answered some questions related to the stories, then we had an open discussion about the stories. I was very pleased with the pupils' approach and responses to this. The questionnaire aimed to see if pupils had changed their approach and thinking about the stories. The questionnaire has been drafted in such a way that pupils have been able to answer easily. The set of the questionnaire were conducted using multiple-choice questions (closed-ended) format.

 The first post-test question was "*Adding stories to the curriculum will help me to enjoy the curriculum?"*

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, 62.5% of them answered "*Very true*", 32.5% of them answered "*Somewhat true*", and 5% of them answered "*Not at all true*". As we can see in the 7th Chart.

Chart 7: Question 1- post-test results

1. Adding stories to the curriculum will help me to enjoy the curriculum?

40 responses

● Very true
● Somewhat true
● Not at all true

32.5%

62.5%
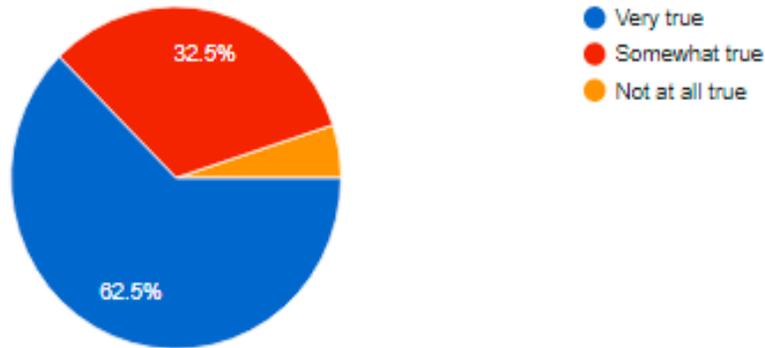
"*Reading stories enhances your imagination?*" This was the second in this post-test.

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, 27.5% answered "*Very true*", 67.5% answered "*Somewhat true*", and 5% of them answered "*Not at all true*". As we can see in 8th Chart.

Chart 8: Question 2- post-test results

2. Reading stories enhanced your imagination?

40 responses

● Very true
● Somewhat true
● Not at all true

67.5%

27.5%
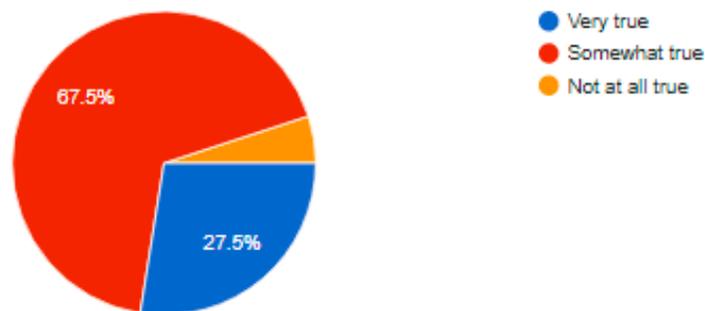
The third post-test question was "*Reading stories in the classroom makes the learning process more interesting?*"

Out of the three possible answers we have only two answers. As 62.5% of the pupils answered "*Very true*", whereas 37.5% of them answered "*Somewhat true*". As we can see in the 9th Chart.

3. Reading stories in classroom make the learning process more interesting?

40 responses
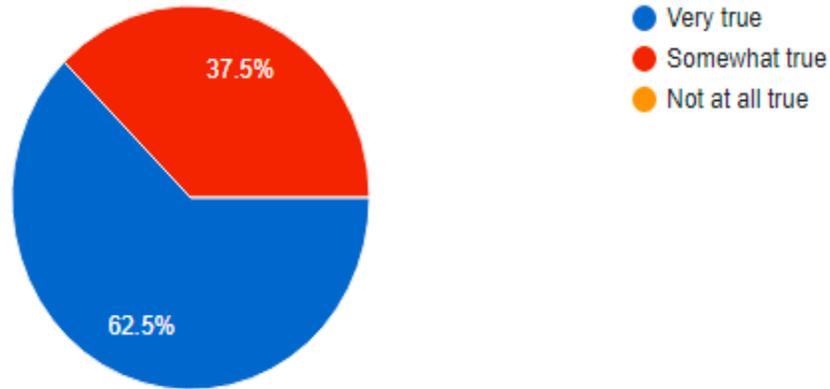
The fourth post-test question "*Reading short stories will motivate you to express your opinion?"*

Of the forty pupils in this questionnaire, 57.5% of them answered "*Very true*", 40% of them answered "*Somewhat true*", and 2.5% of them answered "*Not true at all*". As we see in 10thChart.

Chart 10: Question 4- post-test results

4. Reading short stories will motivate you to express your opinion?

40 responses
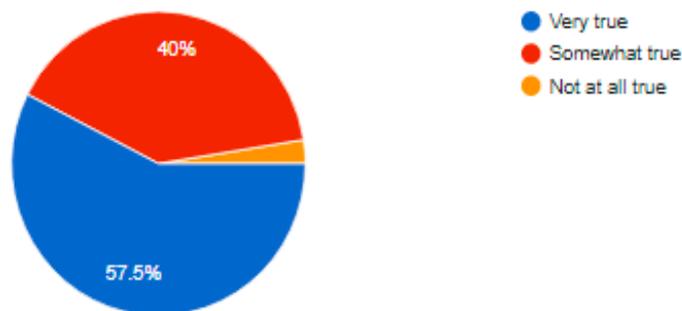
The fifth post-test question was "*Story telling motivates you and makes you more creative?"*

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, 42.5% answered "*Very true*", as 57.5% of them answered "*Somewhat true*". As we see in the 11th chart.

5. Story telling motivate you and make you more creative?

40 responses
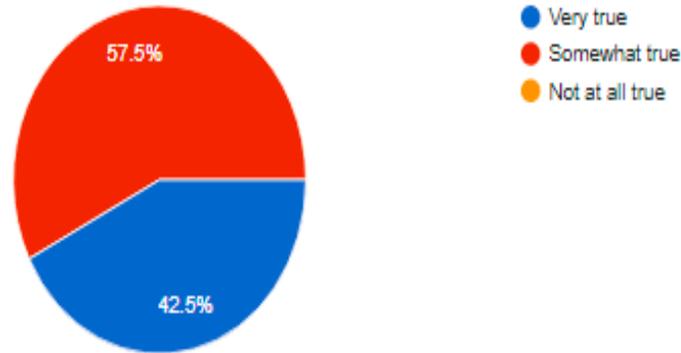
The sixth post-test question "*Storytelling will attract your mind?"*

Of the forty pupils who participated in this questionnaire, most of them 65% answered "*Very true*", 32.5% answered "*Somewhat true"*, and 2.5% answered "*Not at all true*". As shown in the 12th Chart.

Chart 12: Question 6- post-test results

6. Story telling will attract your mind?

40 responses
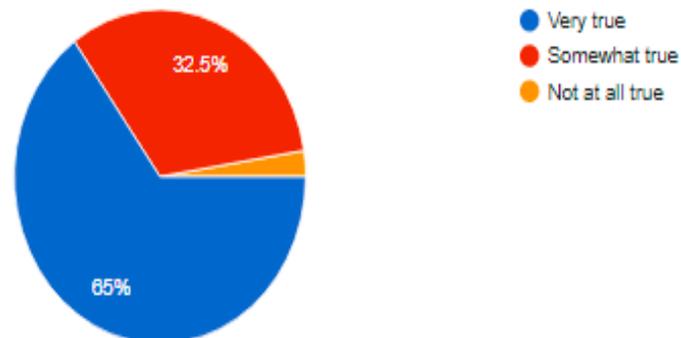
4.3 Findings from the interview with teachers

The findings revealed that teachers' attitudes are positive and stories are considered very important to develop pupils' critical thinking.

This research, as it mentioned before, also contains several interviews with teachers of English language. The interview consisted of different questions about stories and critical thinking and it was structured with open answers, allowing teachers to write down their opinions about the use of stories in developing critical thinking for pupils. The interview contained 15 questions, and all teachers answered by expressing their opinions.

Table 1: Teachers' opinion on the use of stories in the classroom

1. How important is critical thinking to pupils?	
Teacher 1	*Immense importance it contains, it develops their ability to think and expands their knowledge.*
Teacher 2	*I think nowadays critical thinking is really important to make reasonable judgments*
Teacher 3	*I think that when pupils think critically, they can solve problems more easily.*
Teacher 4	*Learn from others, encourage pursuits of curiosity etc..*
Teacher 5	*It urges them to learn better*
Teacher 6	*I think it is very important and crucial for their progress!*
Teacher 7	*It is very important because it helps them to make good decisions.*

Table 1 presents teachers' opinions about the importance of critical thinking to pupils, we can see they had the same views on importance but used different reasons about its importance. Thus they value critical thinking and think that it really matters to pupils.

Table 2: Teachers' opinion about the development of critical thinking in classroom

	2. As a teacher what can we do to develop critical thinking in pupils?
Teacher 1	*Direct them properly and give inputs in this direction.*
Teacher 2	*As a teacher we need to encourage pupils in classroom to in brainstorming by asking them questions, free discussion*
Teacher 3	*I think we should create more opportunities for play and we should improve them to think more.*
Teacher 4	*To develop C. Thinking I prefer to inspire creativity, Brainstorming, connect different ideas, work in groups and encourage decision making.*
Teacher 5	*We can involve them more in open discussion*
Teacher 6	*We as teachers should pay more attention to the way we organize our lessons and pay attention and give space to activities that lead to critical thinking skills usage in general!*
Teacher 7	*I think that the best way to develop critical thinking in pupils is not to intervene immediately*

Table 2 presents teachers' opinions about what teachers can do to develop critical thinking, some of their thoughts were that critical thinking can be developed through brainstorming by asking them questions, through open discussions. Whereas another consideration is that this could be done by playing different games.

Table 3: Teachers' opinion on the effect of using stories in classroom

	3. What do you think about stories and how they can affect pupils?
Teacher 1	*It depends.*
Teacher 2	*While pupils read stories they can analyze the text and start thinking critically.*
Teacher 3	*I think showing them stories is a great instrument to improve their skills and critical thinking.*
Teacher 4	*Stories are the best way to develop critical thinking.*

Teacher 5	Stories are good in increasing their interest in learning
Teacher 6	Personally I think they are very important as I can see clearly during lessons when stories are used, students are more attentive, they give more specific answers, they analyze and try to give their best.
Teacher 7	It helps them to participate in activities

Table 3 presents teachers' opinions about stories, some of their opinions were that stories increase interest in learning, most of them think that stories can develop critical thinking skills.

Table 4: Teachers' opinion on the use of the stories to develop critical thinking

	4. Do you think that using stories can develop critical thinking?
Teacher 1	Variously, but looking from different perspectives helps them reach out beyond what they see at first sight.
Teacher 2	We know the pleasure that stories can bring to pupils so I think that we can use stories to develop critical thinking
Teacher 3	Definitely.
Teacher 4	Yes, I do.
Teacher 5	Yes, I do.
Teacher 6	Yes because students have the right activities, discussions that give them the opportunity to use the skills that develop critical thinking.
Teacher 7	Yes, I do.

Table 4 presents teachers' opinions if using stories can develop critical thinking. Of the seven teachers who participated, all of them think that stories can develop critical thinking due to the fact pupils are pleased when they hear stories, after stories they can have discussions and this helps them to elaborate on thoughts and develop critical thinking.

Table 5: Teachers' opinion on the effectiveness of the stories in the classroom

	5. Do you think the lesson would be more effective if we use stories?
Teacher 1	*Undoubtedly.*
Teacher 2	*Yes, I do*
Teacher 3	*Yes, lessons would definitely be more effective if we use stories.*
Teacher 4	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 5	*It would more interesting with stories*
Teacher 6	*Yes, I think it would be more effective because we witness that students love stories especially when they are related with their experiences.*
Teacher 7	*Yes, I do.*

Table 5 presents that all teachers answered that teaching would be more effective if stories were used during lessons because pupils like stories and would be interested to hear or read them.

Table 6: Teachers' opinion on the use of the stories in classroom

	6. Do you think that the use of stories in teaching makes the lesson more interactive?
Teacher 1	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 2	*Yes, I do because they can express their opinion*
Teacher 3	*Yes because it creates a visual cause to discuss about*
Teacher 4	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 5	*Using stories will raise pupil's interest in learning*
Teacher 6	*It does, while sharing we can see every student engaging and collaborating with each other including the teacher.*
Teacher 7	*Yes, I do.*

Table 6 presents teachers' opinions to the question "Do you think the use of stories in teaching makes learning more interactive?" Teachers' opinions were positive, they said that stories increase pupils' interest in learning, pupils can express their opinions with each other.

Table 7: Teachers' opinion on the use of the stories in classroom

	7. Do you encourage pupils with stories in the classroom?
Teacher 1	*Often.*
Teacher 2	*Sometimes*
Teacher 3	*Yes, I do*
Teacher 4	*Yes, I do. I did it for winter holiday. There are so many ways to do this.*
Teacher 5	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 6	*Yes I do and I try to relate them with their experiences because it is motivating and inspiring too.*
Teacher 7	*Yes, I do.*

Table 7 presents teachers' opinions about the question "*Do you encourage pupils with stories in the classroom?"* Teachers answered that they try to encourage pupils with stories in the classroom. In addition, they mentioned that stories are also a motivation and inspiration for pupils.

Table 8: Teachers' opinion on the use of the stories in classroom

	8. How often do you use stories?
Teacher 1	*Twice a week*
Teacher 2	*Once a week*
Teacher 3	*Every week.*
Teacher 4	*Usually for winter and summer holidays.*
Teacher 5	*Every second lesson*
Teacher 6	*I can say I often use them as I try to relate the reading parts with stories that can motivate my students in using critical thinking skills.*
Teacher 7	*Twice a week*

Table 8 presents that teachers try to utilize stories depending on the class they have or how well the curriculum fits, the minimum they use stories twice a year, while the maximum they use stories twice a week.

Table 9: Teachers' opinion on the use of the stories in classroom

	9. Are pupils more focused on learning when using stories?
Teacher 1	*It sounds more interesting to them.*
Teacher 2	*Yes they are because stories attract their attention*
Teacher 3	*Yes, they are.*
Teacher 4	*Best pupils are focused on everything that the teacher gives them: stories, projects, collaboration etc.*
Teacher 5	*Yes, through stories they will be more focused in learning*
Teacher 6	*Yes, they are.*
Teacher 7	*Yes, they pay attention during stories.*

Table 9 presents teachers' opinions if pupils are more focused on learning when using stories, they responded that the use of stories makes pupils more focused on learning because they attract their attention and sound more interesting.

Table 10: Teachers' opinion on the use of the stories in classroom

	10. Would pupils be freer to express their opinions if different stories were used?
Teacher 1	*Absolutely.*
Teacher 2	*I think so.*
Teacher 3	*Yes, they would.*
Teacher 4	*Of course, they had to read Pippi Long stocking, and I am more than satisfied with their speech. The way they explained the book was fascinating.*
Teacher 5	*Not all pupils have the same way of learning.*
Teacher 6	*Yes definitely.*
Teacher 7	*Yes, they would.*

Table 10 presents that most teachers thought that pupils would be freer to express their opinions while using stories. Teachers said that stories can be a trigger for pupils to express their opinion more freely, even one of the teachers who participated was satisfied with the way pupils explained the story.

Table 11: Teachers' opinion on the use of the stories in classroom

	11. Do you think the use of stories can be more effective in teaching English language?
Teacher 1	*Yes I do*
Teacher 2	*Yes, I do*
Teacher 3	*Yes, I do*

Teacher 4	Yes, I do..
Teacher 5	If a student want to possess reading, writing, listening(via audio book) and communication, they should read more books and be able to tell stories using advanced phrases
Teacher 6	I believe so.
Teacher 7	Yes, I do. We witness that it is easier for them to remember words and communicate more if they can relate their thoughts and experiences to stories that seem interesting and motivating at the same time.

Table 11 presents teachers' opinions about the effectiveness of stories in teaching English language, all teachers said that stories are very appropriate for teaching English because through them can develop many skills in pupils such as writing, reading, listening, new vocabulary and it is easier for them to remember words.

Table 12: Teachers' opinion on the impact of using stories for pupils' motivation

	12. Do you think the addition of stories to the curriculum can impact pupils' motivation for the course?
Teacher 1	Largely
Teacher 2	Stories will encourage students to be more focused on learning while listening stories
Teacher 3	Well, stories can improve their motivation for the course in a way that nothing else could.
Teacher 4	Short stories are more capable for students, they can easily find the core of the story.
Teacher 5	Students may have different perceptions towards it
Teacher 6	It would raise their interest I guess because they would feel free to give their opinion, every student would be involved in the lesson.
Teacher 7	Yes, stories are motivation for pupils therefore they impact their motivation for the course..

Table 12 presents teachers' opinions about adding stories to the curriculum and the impact it can have on pupils' interest and motivation. Teachers gave different answers, but all had a positive opinion that stories would be very important and would affect students' motivation and interest for the course.

Table 13: Teachers' opinion on the addition of short stories in classroom

	13. What impact does the addition of stories have on the classroom?
Teacher 1	Huge impact
Teacher 2	Stories will attract their mind and they will use their imagination, they will motivate pupils and learn better
Teacher 3	It has an impact on students' interest, and it will improve their critical skills.
Teacher 4	Simply, reading is insufficient.
Teacher 5	It depends on students' attitude
Teacher 6	Finally I think that stories would have a huge impact.
Teacher 7	Storytelling is a unique way for pupils to develop an understanding.

Table 13 presents teachers' opinions about the impact that the addition of stories can have to develop critical thinking in pupils, teachers responded that stories are a unique way to develop critical thinking and much more such as culture, race and religions.

Table 14: Teachers' opinion on the kind of stories they use in classroom

	14. What kind of stories do you use?
Teacher 1	*I use different kinds of stories.*
Teacher 2	*Mainly fairy tales for pupils.*
Teacher 3	*Mainly short stories that pupils understand more easily.*
Teacher 4	*I use stories that are more appropriate for pupils.*

Teacher 5	*Different stories.*
Teacher 6	*Fiction.*
Teacher 7	*I like stories that make pupils use their imagination.*

Table 14 presents teachers' opinions on the kind of stories they use which as seen vary widely as a result of the differing type of stories used. Their purpose was to develop pupils' imagination.

Table 15: Teachers' opinion on the inclusion of stories in the curriculum

	15. Do you agree to include stories more often in the curriculum?
Teacher 1	*It helps teachers and students.*
Teacher 2	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 3	*Yes, because stories encourage pupils to learn better.*
Teacher 4	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 5	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 6	*Yes, I do.*
Teacher 7	*Yes, I do. Especially with pupils in grade 1-5.*

Table 15 presents teachers' opinions on the inclusion of stories in the curriculum and according to their responses, they all agree to include stories more often.

14. Conclusion

The final chapter of the study includes a conclusion of the study, as well as the research questions discussion. Then, limitations and recommendations of the study are also presented in this chapter.

5.1 Overview of the study

Critical thinking these days is really important in all countries, as well as in our country, and recently great progress has been made in terms of the inclusion of critical thinking in our schools. In recent years a great deal of thought has been put into exploring how critical thinking can be incorporated into the curriculum, hence a series of studies, both abroad and in Kosovo, aimed at investigating how critical thinking skills of pupils can be nurtured and improved. There have been many attempts to explain what critical thinking is and how to achieve critical thinking. Hence there are many opinions or definitions from different scholars and based on these definitions supplied we can defined critical thinking as a result; it is a point in the process of thinking, through which everyone thinks critically, as a natural way of interacting with ideas and information; it is an active process, which is required to take place intentionally or happens by chance, which makes the pupil check the information, and so it can face a challenge: to include, adapt or distribute the information. The study was conducted at Bedri Gjinaj Primary School in Mitrovica in the second term of the 2020-21 academic year. Pupils attending were from different grade classes 5th to 9th for a better result. The participants were 10-15 years old, and seven teachers for the interview.

The data obtained from the findings of tests conducted with pupils and from the interviews conducted with primary school teachers were analyzed to answer the research questions of this study.

1. How often do teachers use stories in the classroom?
2. What is the general attitude of pupils regarding stories?
3. What is the role of the teacher in teaching and developing critical thinking in primary school through stories?
4. Does the use of stories help pupils to develop their critical thinking?

5.2 Summary of the Findings

As mentioned before, this study contains four research questions.

Regarding the first research question of the study, "*how often do teachers use stories in the classroom?*"

The results on the test conducted with the pupils and the answers given by them showed that the majority (55%) of the pupils said that the teachers used stories sometimes. While in the interview conducted with teachers they said that depending on the class and the curriculum they try to use stories as often as possible, but at most they can do it twice a week.

According to the second question on "*what is the general attitude of pupils regarding stories?*" The results of the tests revealed that they would be satisfied if stories were involved in the teaching process as well as they can be seen as motivation for them to express their opinion more freely. Moreover, teachers' opinions were that stories encourage pupils to be more focused on learning, improve their motivation, and can develop English language skills

The next research question or the third one was "*what is the role of the teacher in teaching and developing critical thinking in primary school through stories?*"

Interviews and tests assisted in proving that the role of the teacher is essential and very important for the development of critical thinking to pupils.

Finally, the last question of this investigation was "*does the use of stories help pupils to develop their critical thinking?"*

Results of the interviews proved that all teachers had positive opinions, thus stories can develop critical thinking. Their opinions were that stories attract pupils' minds so they can use their imagination and can express their opinions more freely, also stories motivate pupils to learn better.

To summarize, the findings obtained through this master study can conclude that teaching stories to pupils has a positive impact on pupils' critical thinking skills.

5.3 Limitations

The purpose of the study was to see the benefits of using stories in developing critical thinking skills. We realize that results of the study cannot be generalized, there are some limitations in this study.

- First limitation is related to the number of participants, as this study has a limited number of participants
- The next limitation is related to the time that was in a disposal, the participants took the tests in a short period
- Another limitation was the number of stories, just three stories due to time constraints

5.4 Recommendations

Every study has its positive and negative aspects, nevertheless, despite its limitations, it is hoped that the results of this study could be a starting point for more thorough investigations that explore developing critical thinking through stories. To have a clear picture of the use of stories in English language classrooms:

- A key recommendation could be another study with a larger number of participants.
- Another very important recommendation I believe is to consider more time when investigating
- Since this study investigated the impact of teaching stories on pupils' critical thinking skills, another study with more categories of stories to get more generalized results, and
- The last one could be that primary school teachers should implement new methods and add stories in their curriculum.

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Appendix 1 – Pre-test for students

SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication – Master: English Language Teaching

Candidate: Flamur Sejdiu   e-mail: flamursejdiu02@gmail.com

Clarification: This questionnaire is part of the diploma master thesis with the title:

"The benefits of using stories in developing critical thinking skill in Primary School ".

 I guarantee that your data will remain confidential.

Class	School	City

Pre-test for students

1. Do you like storytelling?

    b) Yes   b) No

2. Do you read stories? How often?

    b) Always   b) Sometimes   c) Never

3. How regularly do stories get listened to?

    b) Always   b) Sometimes   c) Never

4. Do you like to add stories in our curriculum?

    b) Yes   b) No

5. Do you think telling stories would be interesting?

    b) Yes   b) No

6. How often do teachers use stories in the classroom?

    b) Always   b) Sometimes   c) Never

Appendix 2- First story

The Woodcutter and the Golden Axe

There was once a woodcutter, working hard in the forest, getting wood to sell for some food. As he was cutting a tree, his axe accidentally fell into the river. The river was deep and was flowing really fast – he lost his axe and could not find it again. He sat at the bank of the river and wept.

While he wept, the God of the river arose and asked him what happened. The woodcutter told him the story. The God of the river offered to help him by looking for his axe. He disappeared into the river and retrieved a golden axe, but the woodcutter said it was not his. He disappeared again and came back with a silver axe, but the woodcutter said that was not his either. The God disappeared into the water again and came back with an iron axe – the woodcutter smiled and said it was his. The God was impressed with the woodcutter's honesty and gifted him both the golden and silver axes.

1. **What was he doing when his axe fell into the river?**

a) Eating food   b) Drinking water   c) Cutting a tree

2. **The river was _____ and was flowing really fast.**

a) shallow   b) deep   c) hot

3. **When he sat what did he do?**

a) He wept   b) He smiled   c) He shouted

4. **Who helped the woodcutter?**

a) Elephant   b) God of the river   c) His friend

5. **Why was the God of the river impressed with the woodcutter?**

a) His honesty   b) His anger   c) His fraud

Appendix 3 – Second story

The Elephant and Her Friends

Once upon a time, a lone elephant made her way into a strange forest. It was new to her, and she was looking to make friends. She approached a monkey and said, "Hello, monkey! Would you like to be my friend?" The monkey said, "You are too big to swing like me, so I can't be your friend." The elephant then went to a rabbit and asked the same question. The rabbit said, "You are too big to fit in my burrow, so I can't be your friend." The elephant also went to the frog in the pond and asked the same question. The frog replied, "You are too heavy to jump as high as me, so I can't be your friend."

The elephant was really sad because she couldn't make friends. Then, one day, she saw all the animals running deeper into the forest, and she asked a bear what the fuss was about. The bear said, "The lion is on the loose – they are running from him to save themselves." The elephant went up to the lion and said, "Please don't hurt these innocent people. Please leave them alone." The lion scoffed and asked the elephant to move aside. Then, the elephant got angry and pushed the lion with all her might, injuring him. All the other animals came out slowly and started to rejoice about the lion's defeat. They went to the elephant and said to her, "You are just the right size to be our friend!"

1. What was the lion looking into the forest?

a) To eat some food   b) To make friends   c) To drink water

2. Why did the monkey refuse to make her friend?

a) She was too big to swing   b) She was too anger   c) She was too small

3. Why wasn't the elephant happy?

a) She couldn't make friends   b) She was hungry   c) She couldn't sleep

4. Who attacked the animals?

a) Rabbit   b) Frog   c) Lion

5. Who saved the animals?

a) Bear   b) Elephant   c) Monkey

6. Does the size matter to make friends?

a) Yes   b) Maybe   c) No

Appendix 4- Third story

The Ant and the Grasshopper

Once upon a time, there were two best friends – an ant and a grasshopper. The grasshopper liked to relax the whole day and play his guitar. The ant, however, would work hard all day. He would collect food from all corners of the garden, while the grasshopper relaxed, played his guitar, or slept. The grasshopper would tell the ant to take a break every day, but the ant would refuse and continue his work. Soon, winter came; days and nights became cold and very few creatures went out.

On a cold day of winter, a colony of ants was busy drying out some grains of corn. The half-dead grasshopper, cold and hungry, came up to the ant who was his friend and asked for a piece of corn. The ant replied, "We work day and night to collect and save up the corn so that we don't die hungry on cold winter days. Why should we give it to you?" The ant further asked, "What were you doing last summer? You should have collected and stored some food. I told you as much before."

The grasshopper said, "I was far too busying singing and sleeping."

The ant replied, "You can sing all winter as far as I am concerned. You will not get anything from us." The ant had enough food to last through the winter, without any worries at all, but the grasshopper didn't and he realized his mistake.

1. What grasshopper would do all day during summer?

a) Work hard   b) relax and sleep all day   c) help his friend

2. What ant would do all day during summer?

a) Work hard   b) relax all day   c) sleep all day

3. Why did the grasshopper ask for help from the ant?

a) He was hot   b) He was hungry   c) He was happy

4. Why didn't the grasshopper collect food?

a) was sleeping   b) was working   c) wasn't hungry

5. Did the ant help the grasshopper?

a) Yes   b) Maybe   c) No

Appendix 5 – Post-test for students

SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication – Master: English Language Teaching

Candidate: Flamur Sejdiu   e-mail: flamursejdiu02@gmail.com

Clarification: This questionnaire is part of the diploma thesis at the master level with the title

"The benefits of using stories in developing critical thinking skill in Primary School ".

 I guarantee that your data will remain confidential.

Class	School	City

Post-test for students

1. Adding stories to the curriculum will help me to enjoy the curriculum?

   Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

2. Reading stories enhanced your imagination?

    Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

3. Reading stories in the classroom make the learning process more interesting?

    Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

4. Reading short stories will motivate you to express your opinion?

   Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

5. Story telling motivates you and makes you more creative?

    Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

6. Story telling will attract your mind?

    Very true   b) Somewhat true   c) Not at all true

Appendix 6 – Interview with teachers

SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication – Master: English Language Teaching

Candidate: Flamur Sejdiu   e-mail: flamursejdiu02@gmail.com

Clarification: This interview is part of the diploma master thesis with the title

"The benefits of using stories in developing critical thinking skills in Primary School".

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Interview with teachers

School _____

1.   How important is critical thinking to pupils?

2.   As a teacher what can we do to develop critical thinking in pupils?

3.   What do you think about stories and how they can affect pupils?

4. Do you think that using stories can develop critical thinking?

5. Do you think the lesson would be more effective if we use stories?

6. Do you think that the use of stories in teaching makes the lesson more interactive?

7. Do you encourage pupils with stories in the classroom?

8. How often do you use stories?

9. Are pupils more focused on learning when using stories?

10. Would pupils be freer to express their opinions if different stories were used?

11. Do you think the use of stories can be more effective in teaching English language?

12. Do you think the addition of stories to the curriculum can impact pupils' motivation for the course?

13. What impact does the addition of stories have on the classroom?

14. What kind of stories do you use?

15. Do you agree to include stories more often in the curriculum?