Fairy tales as metaphorical reflective narratives in EFL teacher training
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Abstract

The pedagogical use of English in teaching prospective primary school teachers can be considered a form of ESP because it has to be specifically tailored to their future professional needs. This article describes a reflective writing exercise carried out in English by a group of Italian fourth-year trainee teachers (enrolled on a five-year university course in nursery and primary education), in the context of a series of workshops on the uses of narrative in the EFL primary classroom. In particular, students on this course were required to work with the language and metaphors of classic and modern children’s literature and fairy tales.

As well as being of use for future teaching practice, this specific linguistic and narrative knowledge can be of assistance to prospective teachers during their training, to support them in the negotiation of multiple learner/teacher identities and in beginning to visualize themselves as (effective) future EFL teachers. To this end, students were asked to write an original fairy tale inspired by their language learning history, as a means of reflection and transformation.

This exercise has implications for research on the use of reflective writing in EFL teacher training, with regards to both investment in classroom practice and learners’ autonomy in the evaluation and improvement of their language learning process.