Editor’s Corner

Using Bulgarian Folktales in English in the EFL Classroom

Second call of the 23rd Annual International BETA-IATEFL Conference

Forthcoming Events

SEETA News
Contents

Editor’s Corner 3

Using Bulgarian Folktales in English in the EFL Classroom
Bill Templer 5

Report on the 22nd BETA-IATEFL Conference
Theodora Pontika 22

Second Call for the 23rd BETA-IATEFL Conference 24

Forthcoming Events 25

SEETA News 26
It’s December and Christmas is approaching. It’s the time when all books will be closed, the streets and stores will be crowded with people making last-minute preparations and the hearts and thoughts will be turned toward home.

Christmas is the time for love and sharing but it is also thanking for the good things that have come to us. One of the major developments that have taken place this year is the 22nd Annual International Conference of BETA in Varna. We had a good number of presentations and lively plenaries. But most of all we enjoyed the opportunity to get together and open our minds to new challenges. This brings me to the long-term commitment of BETA as part of SEETA but also to the new contacts that have been established with relevant organizations and the fact that our association joined the International Federation of Teacher Associations (FIPLV)!

We would also like to thank all of you for your invaluable support as members of the association! Make sure you don’t miss our next focal event – the 23rd Annual International Conference entitled “The English Language Classroom: Can Research Meet Practice?” which will be held from 11th to 13th April 2014 in Blagoevgrad!

And keep reading the E-Newsletter where there will be announcements for future initiatives and feedback on events attended or projects created!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your loved ones!

Tsvetelina Harakchiyska
ALL LEARNERS LIKE GOOD STORIES

Younger learners (and older ones too) enjoy folktales, fairy tales of all kinds, and most EFL teachers know that. Textbook writers too, including versions of familiar ‘children’s stories’ from the international or English repertoire. But how many teachers here in Bulgaria use English versions of Bulgarian traditional tales in their teaching—stories that all the teachers and a portion of the younger (and older) learners probably know in original Bulgarian through the numerous books of Ran Bossilek and Angel Karalyichev?

Using indigenous traditional tales: toward a ‘Bulgarian Applied ELT’

In ‘indigenizing the EFL syllabus,’ making it closer in feeling, content and imagination to the life worlds of Bulgarian learners (Templer, 2013), Bulgarian folktales in English translation have a key role to play. In this vein, Pishghadam and Zabihi (2012) stress the need for localization of materials in ELT, moving toward a distinctively ‘Iranian TEFL’ in their own country, including much more Iranian culture in the content of the teaching syllabus. In this they cite Kumaravadivelu’s (2006: 171) pedagogic parameter of ‘particularity’, where postmethod EFL pedagogy “must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural mileu.” I would argue that
indigenizing materials in Bulgaria, integral to a ‘Bulgarian TEFL,’ needs to take this parameter into clear account, within a framework of an ‘Bulgarian Applied ELT’ sensitive to local realities. As Pishghadam and Naji 2012: 48) stress: “Localizing ELT material in favor of one’s native culture can be a good solution not only in thwarting the cultural imperialism brought about by ELT, but also in enculturing students. In this respect, Applied ELT opens a new area of research. Periphery countries should come up with ways to implement systematic and scientific localization in all areas of ELT, especially in material designing.” This is also connected with “real-life literacy,” bringing into the classrooms texts learners are familiar with from their homes and communities (Purcell-Gates and Gates 2013).

Dobreva et al. (1994) mentions some 1,600 tale types in the Bulgarian folktale corpus. It is a uniquely rich national heritage worth looking to for moral values, pleasure, entertainment, sustenance of national identity. This is especially important in today’s bewildering centrifugal conjuncture of mass emigration and the multiple discourses of ‘becoming European,’ looking (and going) ‘West.’ Based on field research, Creed (2011) thinks there is much value today in archaic still vital Bulgarian traditions, of which folktales also remain an enduring legacy. Most Bulgarian folktales are firmly rooted in nature and the rural agricultural world. They were and are tools of socialization, politicization, models for behavior, and many embody what Zipes (2006: 169-191) has called the “liberating potential of the fantastic.”

This article discusses a few angles and approaches. It does not discuss specific tales in depth or present lesson plans, but points readers to where they can be found. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the tale collection Bossilek (1974a), Children’s Stories, the main English volume of his traditional tales published in Bulgaria before 1990.

Tsvetkova, in a BETA paper presented in Varna (2004), stresses an important dimension of working with such ‘indigenous’ traditional tales:

As for traditional folktales, they have one particular quality that makes them an indispensable educational tool, namely, their national ‘colour’. They inspire in children a feeling of national belonging and help them understand national traditions and values. In the era of cross-cultural communication when people of different nationalities meet, study, work and live together, it is of paramount importance to be aware of one’s own cultural peculiarities and to be able to understand and accept other cultures.
In South Asia, Mahanand and Goswami (2011) have created a textbook encouraging the use of Indian folktales in English for rural ELT in the Indian schools, with many suggestions and examples, covering 16 indigenous traditional tales, a good paradigm for indigenizing English in a working-class South Asian learning ecology. In a review of the book, Kabir (2011) stresses the need for culture-specific and locally anchored materials, especially for pupils in non-privileged and marginalized learning environments in rural India:

The recent literature in the field of materials development suggests the use of culture specific and locally available resources in teaching foreign or second language to the learners, young or adult. Such recommendations strongly pave the way for bringing in folk resources in the classroom as they are by their own nature unique representative of specific cultures, and highly familiar to the people adhering to those cultures. The thematic familiarity with the resources replete with various types of genres scaffolds learners’ learning of the ‘unknown’ through the ‘known’.

Tsvetkova (2004) spells out a range of pedagogical approaches:

One single story can be exploited in a variety of ways and for a variety of teaching purposes – to introduce or consolidate new vocabulary or structures, to develop a topic or topics from the syllabus, to teach the foreign language across the curriculum, to cater for mixed abilities and multiple intelligences etc. Children dramatize or mime the stories, suggest their own versions of the story (modern, horror, comics etc.), make illustrations, masks, puppets, create crossword puzzles and play other games with the main vocabulary of the story... The list of useful and enjoyable story-based activities cannot be finished. Every single child and person in general, can excel in a different area depending on his or her type of intelligence (a natural ability to perceive the surrounding world and a specific learning style determined by one’s predominant receptors).

King (2001), again at a BETA conference, argues for using stories of all kinds in the EFL classroom, going beyond ‘fairy tales’ and Cinderella to appeal to older learners. He does not mention utilizing Bulgarian folktales in English translation, but makes useful points in dealing with how stories “stimulate the imagination and the emotions ... different senses,” noting that “stories also have an exponential quality in that they stimulate the telling of more stories.” In this vein, I recommend that all teachers watch the video story by Colin McNaughton and Satashi Kitamura (2013), “Once Upon an Ordinary School Day,” about an ordinary boy’s discovery of his extra-ordinary imagination as a storyteller, thanks to his imaginative new teacher, link here: <http://goo.gl/kuh3nu>.
All Bulgarian folktales fit that description, appealing to the senses and helping students to tap into their inner feelings – often in a world of sheer magic, like the wonderful tale *A Gift from the Heart* (Дар от сърце), a folktale all teachers probably know and love in a version as collected by Angel Karalyichev. This is available online in Bulgarian at a useful site, Приказки без край (<http://goo.gl/XaItG5>), and can be found in English translation in an excellent collection of twenty Bulgarian folktales by Pridham (1967), as well as in Hecht (2007). What is the tale’s core message? Trust? Humility? Cooperate, don’t compete? Fate is unpredictable? The proverb: Ако ръка дава, а сърце не дава, нищо не става? There’s more to life than material gain? Most folktales have multiple levels of meaning or ‘theme,’ which learners can wonder about in many directions and discuss.

**INTRODUCING BULGARIAN FOLKTALES IN ENGLISH**

In another BETA conference, Ivanova and Yancheva (2004) specifically stressed the idea of using Bulgarian folktales in classrooms here, exemplified in adopting the tale *Косе Босе* (The Blackbird and the Fox) and Elin Pelin’s Дядовата ръкавичка (Grandfather’s Glove), concluding:

> In the end we can add that all traditional Bulgarian stories could be adapted and be used effectively in the foreign language classroom. They can be used over and over again depending on our teaching objectives at different levels and ages. At the same time they won’t become boring because of variety of suggested interesting activities and games; different topics that are practiced through them. In this way children acquire and remember the language in a natural way.

One small introductory unit can focus on the famous tale *Косе Босе*. Here a quite well-done video of the tale in Bulgarian: <http://goo.gl/kIINZ7>. Bossilek (1974a) contains a nice translation. A project several years ago here in Bulgaria included an English adaptation of the *Косе Босе* with many exercises done by Keith Kelly in a *Living Language Children’s Playbook* you can download: <http://goo.gl/aTkho4>. This book contains the tale in English with many exercises, and is a good model for what can be done with such a traditional text. Perhaps some teachers could create a similar version of another tale, and get the British Council or some other NGO, such as the America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF) <http://goo.gl/iGqLNo> to help sponsor such a booklet online.
Keith’s book was connected with a BC project he launched, BBBB (*Back to Back Big Book*), and served as a trailblazer for a later Comenius cross-border project (*European Big Books of Folktales and Legends, 2006-2009, [http://goo.gl/JmVbgY]*) that created 11 books here in Bulgaria, with a range of tales (*[http://goo.gl/KWPJJ3]*). Tsvetkova (2004) gives a detailed description of the BBBB project and how it trained over 600 teachers in regional workshops in 2003-04 in techniques to use Bulgarian folktale materials in English in the schools here, an article well worth reading as background and orientation (see also Koeva 2003). The work of that project could be revitalized in new inventive ways on a smaller scale.

Another introductory unit on traditional much-loved tales can center on Elin Pelin’s famous short story: here a video version of *Grandfather’s Glove* in Bulgarian done by children: <http://goo.gl/o6zYkH>. Students love to create small dramatic skits using such tales. Here a slide version retelling of the same story in (somewhat broken) English <http://goo.gl/kUxqC3>. The *Big Books Project* (BBBB) volume Granddad’s Glove by Julian Whitney (published 2003 Sofia, not online) has a first-rate English translation <http://goo.gl/KWPJJ3>. Students can compare the two, presented in multimedia format. This can whet their appetite for more such tales and their dramatization, their artistic remolding in paint, drawings, puppets, self-designed costumes and sculpture. Recent research suggests “effective classroom arts integration can reduce or eliminate educational achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students,” using “the arts--composing, painting, drawing or sculpting; playing, singing or listening to music; and dancing and dramatic performance--to foster retention and learning” and thus to enhance literacy (Science News 2013).

**BULGARIAN TALES IN ENGLISH IN PRINT AND PUBLISHED ONLINE**

**Books**

There are five published collections of Bulgarian folktales in English: Bossilek (1974a), Bossilek (2005), Pridham (1967), Nicoloff (1979) and Hecht (2007). Pridham’s collection of 20 tales, *A Gift from the Heart,* in based on tales published by the great folktale collector and editor, Angel Karalyichev. Assen Nicoloff’s collection, published in Cleveland/Ohio, is probably based on tales drawn from books by Bossilek and Karalyichev. Nicoloff (1905-1988) was a Bulgarian-born American living in Ohio who published a number of books on Bulgarian folklore over the years. Bulgarian libraries sometimes have a copy Bossilek (1974a; 2005),
both published in Sofia. Bossilek (1974a) contains 60 tales, and very beautiful illustrations; an identical translation in German was also published that same year (Bossilek 1974b). Bossilek (2005) is over 300 pages, and should probably be reprinted. Bossilek (1974a) and (2005) are now both very rare books. Appendix 1 includes the contents of the volume (1974a), a beautiful large format book, strikingly illustrated by Ivan Kirkov. On Kirkov and his artistry, see <http://goo.gl/yymFGF>.

Pridham’s book can be found in a number of used copies at a reasonable price (check <www.abebooks.com>), and is a nice smaller collection, its translations superb. It includes of course the title tale, *The Magic Pipe*, *The Unwashed Pot*, *The Spring of Youth*, *Sly Peter at the Fair*, *Grandmother Marta*, *The Escape of the Animals*, *the Boy with the Golden Star*, *the Bag of Lies*, *The Precious Stone*, *the Lazy One*, *The Spoiled Daughter*, *Simple and the Princess*, *The Ungrateful Bear*, *Silian the Stork* and several others. Born in Washington D.C., Radost (1922–2009) grew up in Sofia, her father a Bulgarian diplomat closely connected with the royal family. She was a young bridesmaid at Boris III’s wedding to Ioanna in 1930. Radost later fled Bulgaria in early Sept. 1944, since her parents feared for her personal safety as the Soviet army approached. She later arrived in London, where she became a key reporter for the BBC Bulgarian Service, and married a British officer. Her BBC colleague Peter Udell (2010) wrote a moving obit on Radost. Hecht (2007) has 15 tales, including *A Gift from the Heart*, *Live Water*, *The Magic Ring* and others. It is available both as a Kindle book and paperback, and is the only such collection in print.

### Online materials

There are numerous Bulgarian folktales in English translation online. Here several sites: the story *Dust for Plums* is here <http://goo.gl/H7fnMI>. Other tales: <http://goo.gl/0Snfzc> here. Hitar Petar and the Dragon in a beautiful and engaging slide presentation: <http://goo.gl/577neV>. Hitar Petar in another brief tale of cunning: <http://goo.gl/DRPiWl>. Students will probably know some of these classic Hitar Petar gems, mini-trickster tales. Here several tales, including an engaging Bulgarian version of *Cinderella* (Пепеляшка) in English <http://goo.gl/XxPe19>. Students can compare this with the Brothers Grimm
version of this tale translated into English and known worldwide. Another tale there is The Language of Animals (Езикът на животните), its original version and a translation here <http://goo.gl/de01Em> at двуезична библиотека, a useful dual language site with various texts teachers can utilize <http://goo.gl/AUZc11>. This site also has a dual-language version of the tale Господ преобразен в старец (The Lord God as an Old Man <http://goo.gl/oYUxWz>), which many teachers will know.

**TALES IN THE BULGARIAN ORIGINAL**


As mentioned, there are other versions of numerous tales, and teachers can simply Google a title in Bulgarian and see what they find. Or search the term ‘български приказки’ there and on youtube. In March 2013, a library in Sliven organized a ‘Bossilek week,’ where a number of Bossilek’s tales were highlighted, some dramatized (<http://goo.gl/so1tw9>). Perhaps local libraries can organize such events with a few tales in English translation as well, kids love it. There are also puppet shows with folktales, another performance option to experience and enjoy <http://goo.gl/Lpgca0>.
ILLUSTRATING THE TALES

An excellent activity is for learners alone or in groups to draw illustrations for tales they are reading. In 2013, the Bulgarian Cultural Institute (BCI) in Moscow organized just such a Russian competition:

“WE DRAW BULGARIAN FAIRY TALES” INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S COMPETITION FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Probably you and your children do not know the magical fairy tales characters Kuma Lisa and Ezhko Bezhko, Grandpa Petko and Granny Pena yet? They are all characters from the Bulgarian fairy tales. What are they? Are they merry or are they sad? Let the children answer these questions by themselves. We propose to Russian children to draw illustrations for the Bulgarian folklore fairy tales. In order to ensure equality for all the children we chose the fairy tales (all of them translated in Russian). The children – either by themselves or together with their parents – can read them in the Russian version of our website.

The results of this competition for children aged 7-9 and 10-12 were judged and an exhibition “Children Draw Bulgarian Fairy Tales” was put on in September 2013 at the BCI in Moscow (<http://goo.gl/WyRoOR>), linked to the Embassy. Students could read tales in English (or English and Bulgarian) and do the same in Bulgaria, combining art, literature pedagogy and foreign language learning. Here, for example, a slide show of illustrations for Three Brothers and the Golden Apple. It can serve as an example drawing the tale: <http://goo.gl/lt1HyR>.

Rumen Skorchev’s illustrations


PUTTING FOLKTALES IN THEIR BROADER CONTEXT

Folklore studies

Folktales are one key genre of international folk literature and thus a part of folklore studies, a field well developed in the U.S. but perhaps little known among
teachers in Bulgaria. So how to approach the folktale as a special genre of stories among the folk – long retold in oral tradition, a genre of ‘orature’ and the so-called ‘fireside media’—before folklorists (like Bossilek and Karalyichev) transcribed them, is a scholarly field teachers might focus on more.

The standard textbook on using folktales for teachers in ELT is Taylor (2000), with a comprehensive approach to the folktale as a genre in ELT materials, and many pointers for how to teach the texts. This book would be a useful addition to a school or personal library. A downloadable introduction with many practical pointers on what to focus on in teaching any tale is Peterson (2005), with many lesson plans for specific tales from a whole range of countries that American children might be encouraged to read. A brief introduction to what folktale is, dealing with setting, themes, and tale types, is Chimatim (2013). Stith Thompson’s *The Folktale* (1946) is the classic text on analyzing/classifying folktales internationally, a very influential book for folktale classification. Dobreva et al. (1994) is the standard ‘type index’ of Bulgarian folktales, listing some 1,600 tale types, also available in a German translation. Bettelheim (1975) is one of the most famous and stimulating psychological studies of the folktale and its impact seen through the lens of child psychology. Ashliman (2004) is a major handbook on folk and fairy tales, with an excellent overview of classification, examples, contexts and folktale scholarship. Much of the introduction is available accessible online. Zipes (2000; 2006) are outstanding works useful for folktale pedagogy. Dr. Academician Dobreva, at the Institute of Folklore, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, has done extensive folkloristic work on the Bulgarian folktale. Perhaps teachers want to read some of her articles (see <http://goo.gl/6EQtqO>). Briggs and Tongue (1965) is a famous collection of English folktales, Briggs (1977) an excellent sampler of folktales and legends from the British repertoire. Dorson (1986) is a superb handbook on the many subfields of American folklore and its study, by a recognized doyen in the discipline. Degh (1989) looks at folktales as they function(ed) in the life worlds of rural society in Hungary, folk narrative ethnography. Folklore studies centering on Bulgaria or comparative perspectives is a rich field of research that could interest some of our students or colleagues. The Folklore Institute in BAS (БАН) has since 1973 been the only national academic unit in Bulgaria training folklorists to the level of PhD <http://goo.gl/YyB3aF>.
Children’s and young adult literature

Folktales are also an integral part of children’s and young adult literature, a subfield and rich complex of genres sometimes taught in English departments at Bulgarian universities. Dr. Ludmilla Kostova (VTU) teaches a course at Rousse University, for example, *English and American Children’s and Young Adult Literature*. The current detailed course handout notes:

*The course reflects current trends in the study of children’s and young adult literature in the humanities. It begins with a historical overview of the concepts of the child, childhood and adolescence. Different definitions of child and young adult literature are presented and discussed, along with various approaches to them. Emphasis is placed on the historical background determining the emergence and development of children’s literature in Western Europe, and the “export” of works for children and young adults into North America and the creation of such works for the new context (Kostova 2013).*

It is a huge topography of study and encompasses many kinds of texts. A new journal has recently been launched by specialists in ELT in Germany, Children's Literature in English Language Education <http://www.clelejournal.org>. You can explore the journal, it is open-access. Perhaps if you work with materials relevant to children’s literature (not just folktales), you might in future publish an article there. The co-editor Janice Bland (University of Paderborn) informed me that she would be pleased to receive submissions from Bulgarian teachers. Bland (2013) and Bland and Lütge (2013) are two major new contributions to children’s literature pedagogy in ELT. Both have chapters dealing with folktales, as well as numerous other genres. Among other basic literature, the following are fundamental: Alsop (2010), Carpenter and Richard (1991), Lesnik-Oberstein (2004) and Lerer (2008). Useful comprehensive websites online include: Children’s Literature Network <http://goo.gl/hdI0re>; History of Children’s Literature <http://goo.gl/ZlMN32>; The Children’s Literature Web Guide, <http://goo.gl/NZBMmB>. Young adult literature includes Harry Potter, the Twilight series, etc. The themes in young people’s literature often revolve around growing up, finding identity, learning the ‘ropes’ of society as an adolescent, relations in the family, at school, young love, self-reflection and much more (Templer 2013; Lee 2012).

**SCHOOLING ‘MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES’ IN ELT**

In the Bulgarian ELT context, Markova (2006) describes an empirical study done in Blagoevgrad focusing on teaching through the prism of ‘multiple intelligences’
(linguistic, logico-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist, see <http://goo.gl/VQG2>), developing a lesson plan with a range of classroom activities using a story from Milne’s Winnie-the-Pooh tales. Dr. Markova observes: “The implications for language teaching are that classroom activities should be organised in a way which stimulates our students’ various intelligences. As a result, they get more actively involved in the learning process.” She calls for more research looking in experimental ways at ‘multiple intelligences’ among Bulgarian learners, and how to address and activate these more ‘emotional’ intelligences, using children’s and young adult literature, for example: via dramatization, drawing/painting/sculpting, puppetry, students writing their own tales, in this echoing Tsvetkova (2004) also stresses teaching for “mixed abilities and multiple intelligences.” Giuliani (2013) explores MI theory and ESOL and suggests ideas on its creative applications. New research strongly suggests using the arts to appeal to students’ emotions, visual-spatial, musical and bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence to enhance general learning (Science News 2013).

**STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF BULGARIAN FOLKTALES TODAY: ACTION RESEARCH NEEDED**

A separate question is whether younger Bulgarian learners today actually know a lot of these traditional tales in the original Bulgarian, indeed grew up listening to them being told or and have read them themselves. What tales are part of the ‘canon,’ the syllabus in their classes in Bulgarian at school? What free reading of tales have students done? That is a question you can explore in your own classroom: what specific Bulgarian folktales do your students know, love, relate to, and why? Based on experience, some teachers I have interviewed think the present generation knows far fewer such stories than Bulgarians growing up two or three decades ago when the socialist government fostered a strong reading culture and books authored by Bossilek, Karalyichev, others were low-cost, widely available in local bookstores and many libraries. Now post-socialist Bulgarian reading culture has transmuted, and is perhaps in sharp downspin among the current NetGen, where Facebookery is trump for far too many. Recent studies indicate that the average Bulgarian family spent the equivalent of €6 on books in 2010, and €2 on cinema/theatre/concerts (Novinite, 2012a). A study by the NGO Заедно в час reflects this:
Experts from the NGO note that poverty has the most negative effect on education while in the last 10 years, the difference between the best-prepared students from the largest cities and/or from families with good income and the worst-prepared disadvantaged students and those from the villages is growing. They say the data means that Bulgarian schools cannot compensate for the negative effects of family environment, of poverty and of low social status, thus ranking Bulgaria at the level of countries such as Peru and Uruguay, not as a European one. (Novinite 2012b; see also Novinite 2013a).

In my experience, teachers in village schools across the Shumen district certainly agree. There is an urban-rural divide as well as a social class divide. This may reflect some of the problems that Victoria Purcell-Gates (1995) analyzes in her path-breaking study of low-literate adults and their children in the U.S., often living in a “world without print” in their everyday lives, facing a kind of cultural and linguistic ‘elitism’ at schools, where language is indeed “other people’s words” among the non-privileged and marginalized—literacy shaped by cultural cum class factors. Yet students everywhere in Bulgaria, urban and rural, live today in a country with the highest risk of poverty in the EU, and many are affected by this in innumerable ways in their daily lives and those of their parents (Novinite 2013b), including literacy. Nearly a third of all workers in the country are low-paid, with a monthly net pay around 325 BGN (<http://goo.gl/h2lQ1c>). This is the existential burden of the unending ‘transition.’ Заедно в час is trying to change this, see their site and excellent video (<http://zaednovchas.bg>). Bulgaria is not alone. In a new 460-page study by the OECD, the UK ranked 22nd among 24 countries examined. UK Under Secretary for Skills Matthew Hancock stated: “This shocking report shows England has some of the least literate and numerate young adults in the developed world” (<http://goo.gl/phx0Qjv>). The implications are thus international, perplexing. In our cyberworlds, how is text literacy being progressively eroded and why? Is there a literacy crisis, especially among the non-privileged majorities (Purcell-Gates and Gates 2013)?

Teachers could do a student survey as a springboard to get started on introducing Bulgarian folktales in English in your work, and also encourage students to do more such free voluntary reading in English—and in Bulgarian—specifically exploring folktales and other genres of children’s and young adult literature. Aydin (2013) provides a relevant recent study from Turkey on recreational reading in one's native language (including children's lit, young adult literature) and its impact on learning L2. Prof. Aydin’s findings for Turkey are intriguing. As he sums up:
First, recreational reading in Turkish has positive effects on students’ cognitive skills. In other words, EFL learners perceive that recreational reading in Turkish improves their memory, intelligence, imagination, critical and creative thinking skills, and research, analysis and synthesis skills. Second, recreational reading in Turkish has positive effects on their linguistic skills. That is, it contributes to the awareness of the similar and different points between the two languages and to the changes and development of languages as well as their translational skills. Furthermore, recreational reading in Turkish is beneficial to the improvement of their main language skills (speaking, reading and writing) and to grammar and vocabulary.

The last conclusion obtained from the study is that reading in Turkish causes positive perceptions and attitudes towards EFL learning and enhances motivation and self-confidence. ... EFL teachers should encourage their students to read books to enhance motivation and self-confidence. It can be emphasized that foreign language teachers should encourage and motivate their students to read books in their native languages, as recreational reading is a very useful tool to improve the cognitive and linguistic skills of EFL learners and to create positive perceptions and attitudes towards foreign language learning.

Similar studies are needed in Bulgaria, investigating whether developing a recreational reading habit in Bulgarian (or perhaps Turkish), a form of Free Voluntary Extensive Reading in L1 (Templer 2012), can function as a significant stimulus for encouraging ‘self-selected pleasure reading’ and a ‘long-term reading habit’ (Krashen and Williams 2012) in English or another language learned largely at school, such as German or French. Insights from Purcell-Gates (1995) on the cycles of low literacy along a rural-urban cline of social class and culture can also be tapped, along with vistas to “real-life literacy” based on familiar “real-life” texts such as Bulgarian folktales that students may know and love (Purcell-Gates and Gates 2013), countering school and syllabus-ideological tendencies to promote literacy largely for a specific socioeconomic elite. They also stress experimenting with “multi-age grouping.”

CONCLUSION

Introducing Bulgarian folktales in English can be done at primary level and well beyond. How do students respond? What kind of activities were you able to develop? Was dramatization, readers’ theatre, a spin-off option? Have multiple intelligences been tapped, and how? What values and ‘messages’ do specific tales convey, always an intriguing question? What is distinctively Bulgarian in a tale? As the BETA 2014 conference theme asks: “can research meet practice”? Yes, through classroom action research on student literacy (Purcell-Gates and Gates 2013), on
using such folk tales. Findings can be published. Tsvetkova (2004) and Ivanova and Yancheva (2004) suggest, teachers can generate a broad range of engaging activities with such tales for Intensive Reading. Peterson (2005) is packed with ideas. Advanced students could also be given a task (perhaps in groups) to translate certain folktales from Bulgarian to English, and compare their results. Or take a standard translation (of those mentioned here, for example, such as Bossilek (1974a) or Pridham (1967), and compare with the Bulgarian original, evaluating the translation, suggesting perhaps alternative renderings. Another exercise is to have students think of proverbs in Bulgarian that can apply to a tale, part of the repertoire of Bulgarian folk wisdom, and perhaps find an English proverb equivalent. Here a good list of very relevant English proverbs <http://goo.gl/NWyu3D>. Proverb study is a well-established subfield in folklore studies, known as paremiology, which could also be introduced to more advanced students. Some folklorists specialize in proverb research <http://goo.gl/ZKmwS>.

Teachers and their students could thus build bridges in literature pedagogy between Bulgarian and English teaching in the schools, English and art classes, a variant of CLIL. This energizes ‘national education’ in a positive grounded sense (Pishghadam and Zabihi 2012), foregrounding a parameter of ‘particularity’ (Kumaravadivelu 2006: 171) within a ‘Bulgarian Applied ELT’ (Pishghadam and Naji 2012). What is more particularly ‘Bulgarian’ than Bulgarian folk culture? Colleagues in German could also do something similar, working with Bossilek (1974b) and other German translations, such as Bossilek (1988). Teachers can team up to translate more of these tales into English, and make them available online, perhaps through the BETA site or some other university website, open-access and cost-free. Lessons plans can be sketched, tested in class, put online and shared. Teachers could join hands, similar to the paradigmatic project Tsvetkova (2004) describes. More such translations and lesson plans are clearly needed, and need not be published in costly print. Cyberspace beckons and is enough. Economy is a Bulgarian guideline, teamwork a practicable vision. Yes, and make sure to watch McNaughton and Kitamura (2013), and show to students and colleagues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebted to Dr. Ludmilla Kostova (VTU, Veliko Turnovo) and Dr. Janice Bland (University of Paderborn, GFR) for useful suggestions and discussion, and to my teachers long ago in the Folklore Institute, Indiana University, among them Richard Dorson and Linda Degh.
REFERENCES


/N.B. all URLs here accessed 23 October 2013]
Theodora Pontika holds a BA in English Language and Literature from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has been teaching for the last seven years and is currently working at a private language school. She has been a member of TESOL Macedonia-Thrace, Northern Greece for a long time and has served on the board for six years. She is the vice chair of the current executive board and one of the volunteers on the SEETA platform.

Undoubtedly, one of the highlights of my summer holidays was the BETA IATEFL22nd Annual Conference which took place from 21st to 23rd June. When I volunteered to go as a representative of TESOL Macedonia-Thrace, Northern Greece, I had no idea that it would be a great experience; both personally and professionally.

The conference took place in Varna, the largest city and seaside resort on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and the third largest city in Bulgaria. I was thrilled when, during my Google search prior to my visit, I found out that it is part of the so-called Bulgarian Las Vegas – Golden sands!

Since the airfares were too expensive, I decided to put my seatbelt on and drive all the way to the Department for Information, Qualification and Lifelong Learning of the Shumen University.

Ten hours later, I realized that I was too late to attend the plenaries and talks but right on time for a long walk through a magnificent park and a great dinner at a lovely restaurant on the coastline. The lively talk with the board members and the plenary speakers along with the local food and the breathtaking view of the Black Sea were a great combination.

On Saturday, I got the chance to attend many interesting plenary talks, presentations and workshops on a wide variety of topics. The venue was full of teachers who, having travelled from all over Bulgaria, were eager to catch up with the new trends of ELT. Publishers were there, too. A very long hall on the first floor of the venue hosted a large exhibition of the biggest national and international publishing houses. After a long but
A rewarding day, the BETA-IATEFL committee had organized a welcome reception. It goes without saying, that BETA IATEFL people know how to keep their teachers happy! A delicious buffet, a prize draw, great music and lots of dancing made the night unforgettable to those of us who were there.

What I love about conferences is that having fun and socializing goes hand in hand with professional development. So, the following morning, I woke up early to attend some more exciting talks. The conference ended with a great sightseeing tour organized by Zhivka Ilieva, the committee secretary, which gave us the opportunity to admire the city centre, the archaeological museum and the cathedral.

I would really like to thank BETA IATEFL and TESOL Macedonia-Thrace, Northern Greece for giving me the opportunity to attend such a remarkable conference. Also, warm thanks to Zarina Markova, committee member. Without her help and amazing personality the conference wouldn’t have been the same!

So, have you got any plans for next April? The 23rd BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference will take place from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April on the campus of the South-West University in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. It’s only three hours away from Thessaloniki and I’m definitely going! Will you join me?

With Sylvia Velikova (BETA President) and Zarina Markova (BETA International Coordinator)

With Dr. Terry Lamb (University of Sheffield, UK; LACS Project Coordinator) and Nadezhda Doychinova (LACS Project Member)
DEAR COLLEAGUE,

The Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association (BETA-IATEFL), the South-West University of Blagoevgrad, and the Regional Inspectorate of Education – Blagoevgrad are pleased to invite you to the 23rd BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, which will take place from 11th to 13th April on the campus of the South-West University in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

The aim of the 23rd BETA-IATEFL conference is to provide a platform for a stimulating exchange of practical ideas and research findings on a broad range of topics. Traditionally they include, but are not limited to: Applied Linguistics; Blended Learning; Content and Language Integrated Learning; Global Issues; Literature, Media and Cultural Studies in ELT; Teacher Education and Development; Teaching English for Specific Purposes; Teaching Young Learners and Teenagers; Testing, Evaluation and Assessment.

Confirmed plenary and featured speakers are Terry Lamb (University of Sheffield, UK), Desmond Thomas (University of Essex, UK), Ellie Boyadzhieva and Gergana Apostolova (South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria), Paul Davis (Pilgrims, UK).

A book exhibition of major ELT publishers and service providers will accompany the conference.

A programme of social events including a trip to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Rila Monastery will offer you the opportunity to combine your professional growth with delightful experiences.

On 11th April (Friday), BETA will host the Annual General Meeting of the South Eastern Europe Teachers’ Associations (SEETA).

SPEAKER PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 12th January 2014.

For speaker proposal forms, fees, and accommodation, please check: http://www.beta-iatefl.org. For further queries, contact: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Blagoevgrad.

With best regards,
The Conference Organizing Team
If you are a teacher of English and live outside Sofia or have a very busy schedule, you can register for the online courses with the British Council Bulgaria.

The next session begins at the end of January and registration is open until 19 January.

Join a multinational online learning community and choose from a number of courses such as:

- TKT
- Learning Technology in the Classroom and
- Primary Essentials.

The British Council Bulgaria is introducing two new courses:

- Communicative Assessment and
- Steps to Success.

Check out the British Council Bulgaria website (http://www.britishcouncil.org/bulgaria-teacher-training.htm) to learn more about registration deadlines, course details and fees.
Classroom can be a positive, emotional and social environment through music where young learners can share the joy of creativity in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Music is motivating and aids the development of positive attitudes towards the target language. Through songs and rhymes children easily remember new words and phrases, because they all love repeating them many times and do it with great pleasure.

In Norman’s opinion: ‘We sing because we enjoy singing, not because songs help us learn English and yet songs are possibly one of the most brain-friendly ways of learning. Songs are multi-sensory, and they appeal to both the right and the left hemispheres of the brain, as well as to our desire for pleasure.’ (Norman, 2010: 17)

Songs influence more than one sense – the children listen to them, they see the teacher singing – articulating the sounds. They see the teacher's actions or if there is a clip (as in our case) there are more visual clues and the children activate their motor memory.

---

**Teacher's Lounge**

**SEETA BOOKLET 2013-2014**

Join us on a collaborative project: a SEETA Booklet on how to become a successful blogger! See the project as it's happening and find out how you can contribute.

**Young Learners: Tips and Tricks !**

**Steliyana Dulkova**

Magic tricks and fun stuff for young learners.

*Amazing Systems for Teaching English to YL!*

Practise the Present Continuous

Learning the Numbers

**How To ...**

**web 2.0 tools**

Find out how to use some popular web 2.0 tools. Read teachers’ experiences and share tips and ideas. Follow 'how-to- videos.

**SEETA Webinar**

**January 2014**

**Kieran Donaghy**

Teaching English Through Film in a World of Screens
Established 1991 in Sofia, BETA seeks to build a network of ELT professionals on a national and regional (Southeast Europe) level and establish the association as a recognized mediator between educators and state bodies, public and other organizations.

BETA members are English teaching professionals from all educational sectors in Bulgaria – primary, secondary and tertiary, both state and private. BETA activities include organizing annual conferences, regional seminars and workshops; information dissemination; networking with other teachers’ associations and NGOs in Bulgaria and abroad; exchange of representatives with teachers’ associations from abroad.

We are on the web:
http://www.beta-iatefl.org

Thank you for reading and supporting BETA-IATEFL by being a member!