Filozofická fakulta
Faculty of Arts

Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice

POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **How Children Tell Stories - The Process of Storytelling**

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Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Helena Lohrová, Ph.D.**

Oponentka bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Jana Kozubíková Šandová, Ph.D.**

Short characteristics of the thesis

This thesis focuses on the process of storytelling by children by means of examining narrative in child-adult interaction. At the beginning of the study the author delimits what a story is, why storytelling plays an important role in child development, how a story is built, and other aspects connected with this topic. Transcripts of audio recordings of the author's four-year-old niece and their translation from Czech into English provide the basis of the research conducted in this study. As the results of the analysis suggest, an inseparable part of stories told by children is predominantly imagination and creativity, which are further developed by interaction with adults.

Overall assessment

The present thesis is without a doubt a valuable contribution to this interesting topic. It is evident that the author spent a fair amount of time with gathering the data, their transcription, translation, and, last but not least, with their analysis and interpretation. The thesis has a clear structure and the argument is easy to follow, which is very convenient for the reader. It starts with several different definitions of a story and continues with explanations of why storytelling takes up a significant position in the development of children. The author clarifies the it helps realise that our life is not composed of individual experiences, but in fact it is a constantly developing story. Moreover, storytelling improves creativity, imagination, and also language and literacy skills.

A very important part of the thesis is Chapter three, where the author describes methodology in a very detailed way. I would like to appreciate her effort to collect all the data since it is not an easy task in case of spoken language, especially with small children. Furthermore, the process of transcription of audio recordings (20 in total) and in this case also their translation, since the author's niece is Czech, is a very time-consuming, but at the same time invaluable, activity. The other part of this chapter is devoted to the description of the principles of Conversation Analysis and its application to the analysis of storytelling.

With Chapter four a very detailed data analysis begins. The author focuses on several different aspects of storytelling to illustrate its richness and variety, the first one being the definition of the parameters of a story as it is not sometimes easy to delimit the boundaries of a story. In addition, stories may be composed of several episodes, which are joined with connectors to achieve coherence and cohesion. The author deals with four

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types of relations, namely *then, and, cause*, and *enable*, and describes their functions and meaning in the context of narration.

A very interesting and valuable part of the thesis is the analysis of creativity with the focus on formation of new words. It was proved that children are, as for coinage of new words, very creative and flexible. This points to their awareness that language has a structure and rules, even though they do not think about these process consciously of course. Other aspects connected with creativity are diminutives and various combinations of speech sounds, which are discussed in the thesis as well. When children tell stories, they do not only include positive features, but their imagination also very often works with negative or dark elements, which is also the case of the author's niece. This interesting characteristic of storytelling is described in final sections of the research part of the thesis.

At the very end of the thesis we can find five appendices (glossary of transcription symbols, data overview, frequency of explicitly marked story connectors, word creativity overview, list of figures). They are all very useful, however, complete transcriptions of audio recordings are missing, or at least their sample, which would make the whole analysis more transparent.

As regards overall language quality, it is very good, only some minor mistakes occur.

The study meets all requirements for a BA thesis, therefore I do recommend the thesis for defence.

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **výborně**

14.8. 2019
Datum

Podpis