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Ústav cizích jazyků

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Using Tolkien adaptations in the classroom: *The Lord of the Rings* vs *The Rings of Power*

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto závěrečnou práci vypracoval samostatně za použití pouze uvedených zdrojů a literatury

V Olomouci, dne 17. 6. 2024 …………………………

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Annotation

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Název práce	Využití adaptací Tolkienových děl ve výuce: *Pán Prstenů* vs *Prsteny Moci*
Název v angličtině	Using Tolkien adaptations in the classroom: *The Lord of the Rings* vs *The Rings of Power*
Zvolený typ práce	Aplikační
Anotace práce	Diplomová práce se zabývá moderními filmovými adaptacemi literárního díla J.R.R. Tolkiena a jejich využitím v rámci výuky na základní škole. Teoretická část práce se věnuje rozboru a porovnávání samotných adaptací a jejich teoretickému didaktickému potenciálu. Praktická část dále popisuje aplikované využití těchto děl ve školní praxi s cílem zjistit, zda je možné tyto materiály efektivně a smysluplně využívat ve výuce anglického jazyka.
Klíčová slova	Literatura, filmy, seriál, adaptace, Tolkien, Jackson, Amazon, *Pán Prstenů*, *Prsteny Moci*, výuka anglického jazyka, autentické materiály
Anotace v angličtině	The diploma thesis concerns with modern cinematic adaptations of J.R.R. Tolkien's work and their implementation into education process within the context of lower secondary school. The theoretical part deals with the analysis and comparison of the adaptations themselves and outlines their didactic potential in theory. The practical part then describes applied usage of the adaptions in real English language classes, verifying their effectivity and appropriateness as a tool for teaching the language.
Klíčová slova v angličtině	Literature, movies, TV series, adaptations, Tolkien, Jackson, Amazon, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Rings of Power*, English language teaching, authentic materials
Přílohy vázané k práci	Přílohy č. 1-14
Rozsah práce	57 stran
Jazyk práce	Anglický

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Abstract

The diploma project is focused on the analysis of Tolkien cinematic adaptations and their usage in English language classroom as an authentic didactic tool that might have potential for developing the language skills and systems, as well as increasing the motivation and interest of the pupils in the topic and in the language itself. The theoretical part examines a number of sources to outline an overview of the adaptations, the circumstances of their creation, film-making decisions, public acceptance and criticism, and also provides comparison of them. Subsequently, it present theoretical reasons, including possible pros and cons, why Tolkien and the adaptations of his work might have a great didactic potential. The practical part that follows deals with application of four lesson plans into authentic English language lessons at a lower secondary school, verifying the effectiveness of using these adaptations in real and practical context, utilizing observation, questionnaires and statistical analysis for data collection.

Introduction

During the 21st century, a significant number of movies and TV series labelled as "fantasy" has been filmed. Especially the recent years indicate the increase of interest in this genre with high-budget productions such as *The Witcher*, *Game of Thrones*, *House of the Dragon*, or *Fantastic Beasts* saga for example. An element that all these listed projects share, except of being works of fantasy, is that they are adaptations of literary works. Literature and cinema as forms of media have been undeniably connected since the invention of film, and with the current digital opportunities, movie companies are able to produce projects that are no longer limited, in terms of the visual aspect, by insufficiency of technology, which for fantasy genre in particular seems to be a key factor and might also be one of the reasons for its current popularity.

Regarding modern fantasy literature and its adaptations, it would be probably difficult not to mention J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and its on screen adaptations directed by Peter Jackson, as both of these works appear to be one of the most iconic and successful projects in their respective fields. Throughout the years, Tolkien's books and Jackson's movies managed to build an extensive fan base that preserves the relevance of the works to the present day. Moreover, the public interest in this franchise seems to be even reinforced nowadays, as Amazon Studios released a new adaptation of Tolkien's work named *The Rings of Power*, a TV series narrating a different story than *The Lord of the Rings* novels and movies. However, despite several different aspects of the works, such as the time period of their creation, different production teams and studios, different source material (*The Lord of the Rings* novels are the primary sources for Peter Jackson's movie trilogy while *The Rings of Power* utilizes only the appendixes from the third novel), different intended viewership and generational shift of the audience of the two works, cultural and political demands, and new technologies, *The Rings of Power* still appears to partially attempt to resemble and retain certain visual, atmospheric, and esthetical parts of the separate movie trilogy.

Therefore, the majority of the theoretical part focuses on this problematics. The first chapter outlines general attitudes and views of Tolkien himself in regards of the possibility of adapting his work into visual-based form of media and attempts to suggest what opinions might have Tolkien had on the 21st century adaptations if he was alive. The chapter also describes the adaptations themselves, the circumstances of their creation, and the public reception. Chapter number two then compares Peter Jackson's and Amazon Studios' adaptations to each other and

aims to provide reasons on why the recent TV series appears to follow the visuals and overall aesthetics of the movie trilogy despite the fact that they are not officially connected.

The final chapter of the theoretical part concerns with Tolkien and the two adaptations of his work as possible educational tools and with the didactic potential they might have in teaching English language, due to the current popularity of fantasy genre and extensive variety of options this particular franchise may provide, building also on the fact that literature and cinema in general are significant parts of modern people's lives and cultures, as well as sources of authentic language. This chapter, due to its focus, also provides a smooth transition to the practical part.

The practical part then verifies the didactic potential of the works within the context of lower secondary school by analysing lesson plans created and subsequently performed specifically for this purpose and with the aim to discover whether using Tolkien's adaptations appear to be an effective educational tools for developing learner's language skills, systems and overall proficiency, as well as whether the learners themselves consider using such materials and strategies appealing, interesting and motivating.

THEORETICAL PART

1. Adapting Tolkien

"My work has escaped from my control, and I have produced a monster;". This is a quote from a letter that Professor Tolkien wrote to Allen & Unwin publisher in 1950, during the time he was finishing *The Lord of the Rings*, which had been originally intended to be a sequel to his children's book *The Hobbit* (Carpenter, 2016, pp. 279 - 280). When he was writing these words, he probably had no idea how truthful whey would eventually become. *Lord of the Rings* has indeed become a great phenomenon throughout the years, and Tolkien's mythology in general is undoubtedly one of the most influential works of modern fantasy literature. As a proof to this statement can be given the fact that apparently many authors have admitted it is difficult to write a modern fantasy book without it being influenced by Tolkien, who is also often titled the 'father of fantasy' (Sherwood, 2020, p. 17). However, is it only fair to assume that the books themselves are not the only reason why is Tolkien and his work highly popular and successful in 21st century. Since its first release in 1954 (Tolkien, 2014a, p. iv), a significant number of adaptations, including movies (both animated and live action), television series, radio series, and games have been released (Tolkien Gateway, 2022).

1.1 Tolkien's views on adapting his works

Despite the fact that J.R.R. Tolkien passed away in 1973, at the age of eighty-one (Carpenter, 2016, p. 340), therefore, he was not able to see the 21st century adaptations by Peter Jackson and Amazon this essay is primarily focused on, there still exist records of him voicing his opinions on adapting his works and fiction literature in general.

Based on a great number of letters the author himself wrote during his life, Sherwood (2020, p. 17) suggests that the author appeared to be relatively ambivalent in regards of other content creators adapting his works to a different format rather than books. From one perspective, it might create an impression that Tolkien more or less did not have a problem with the idea of people reworking his writings into different form of media adaptations, and even appeared to be willing to discuss and consult them with the creators. As an example of this attitude can be stated an extract of a letter that Tolkien wrote to Milton Waldman in 1951, in which, while describing the creation of his own mythology, he briefly addresses the theme of recreating already existing materials. The statement goes as follows:

"I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama." (Tolkien, 1999, p. xiv).

This quotation suggests that Tolkien would presumably not object if the creators, who would eventually adapt his work, included their own input into the adaptations. Tom Shippey (2005, p. 411) in his *The Road To Middle-Earth* also mentions, based on further information from yet another Tolkien's letters, that Tolkien was well aware of the fact that movie versions would have to be modified, preferably by omitting (rather than compressing everything) certain elements of the "lesser" importance, so the major themes could be fully preserved. These remarks seem to correspond with the quotation above as well.

The willingness to consult and discuss the adaptations with the creators is well projected in his letter to Terrance Tiller, who was working on BBC Third Programme broadcast version of *The Lord of the Rings* from 1955 and 1956 (Carpenter, 1981, p. 245). Despite the fact Tolkien was clearly unsatisfied with the final portrayal of certain aspects of the adaptation, such as the chapter regarding Tom Bombadil (Carpenter, 1981, p. 245), when he was asked by Tiller on the matter of accent of certain characters, he answered politely, in detail, and with his typical enthusiasm for the subject (Carpenter, 1981, p. 271).

The final demonstration of some of the Tolkien's positive attitude towards adaptations of his work is the fact that he appeared to honestly enjoy a significant number of illustrations drawn by Pauline Baynes, who for example illustrated his *Farmer Giles of Ham*, or *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (After seeing her work, Tolkien himself made a request to Alen & Unwin if Baynes could illustrate *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*). Although he made some negative and critical comments towards some of her drawings, such as the illustration of *The Hoard*, overall, he seemed to be delighted with the results, and even called her illustrations "wonderful pictures with a touch of 'fantasy'", or that "They are more than illustrations, they are a collateral theme." (Carpenter, 1981, pp. 155, 329, 332).

However, as originally stated above, Tolkien's attitude towards adaptations appeared to be fairly ambiguous. The 1955 and 1956 BBC broadcast version seems to be a great showcase that generally summarises his opinions on adapting *The Lord of the Rings*. Despite the fact he was willing to assist and present Terrance Tiller with information regarding accents (Carpenter, 1981, p. 271), in other letters, he clearly voiced his dissatisfaction with the adaptation, and also provided a brief paragraph in which he justifies his opinion. He labelled *The Lord of the Rings* as "very unsuitable for dramatic or semi-dramatic representation" in more than one letter (Carpenter, 1981, pp. 245, 272). What seems to be the major issue Tolkien emphasizes in the letter to Tiller from November 1956 is insufficient amount of airtime the adaptation received, which apparently resulted into compression and oversimplification of the work, therefore, according to Tolkien, the adaptation lost its value as an interesting narrative that are the original

books. (Carpenter, 1981, p. 272). In addition, in his letter to Mrs Molly Waldron from November 1955, he expresses anger with certain alternations the BBC broadcast did, such as the character of Goldberry being Tom Bombadil's daughter, or Willowman depicted as an ally of Mordor (Carpenter, 1981, p. 245). Based on the style in which the letter was apparently written (intensely emotional, e.g. usage of more than one exclamation mark in a row), it can be assumed that modifications of this nature were something that Tolkien was not able to tolerate. But regardless all the criticism and negative comments on the address of the BBC adaptations, Tolkien openly admitted not to be an experienced expert on the matter of radio as a medium, expressed his flattery about his work receiving recognition and broader attention, and wished Tiller success (Carpenter, 1981, p. 272), which once more indicates his ambiguity in this matter.

To understand his approach to further extend, in his essay *On Fairy Stories*, Tolkien (2018, p. 39), among other topics, discusses the crucial difference between written, book-form literature, and other, visual-based forms of arts. His major argument appears to be the fact that while visual arts, such as drama, for example, present the audience with one, prescribed and fixed form, the written form of literature appeals to every reader individually. In other words, visual arts only depict the visions of their creators, positioning the audience into the passive role – spectators being presented with the artist's version and nothing more, whereas reading a book provides every reader an opportunity to actively engage their imagination and present themselves with their own vision of the art. Specifically, Tolkien utilizes a phrase "literature works from mind to mind", and provides a simple example, In which he states:

"If a story says 'he climbed a hill and saw a river in the valley below,' the illustrator may catch, or nearly catch, his own vision of such a scene; but every hearer of the words will have his own picture…" (Tolkien, 2018, p. 39).

This might evoke an impression that Tolkien might have considered the book-form literature, or "true literature", as he labels it in his essay (Tolkien, 2018, p. 39), to a certain degree superior to the visual-based art, due to the fact that it supports imagination to a greater extent.

It remains a matter of conjecture what opinion would J. R. R. Tolkien have if he lived long enough to see 21st century adaptations by Peter Jackson and Amazon. However, his son, Christopher Tolkien openly disliked Jackson's trilogy, stating that:

"The commercialization has reduced the aesthetic and philosophical impact of the creation to nothing… They eviscerated the book by making it an action movie for young people aged 15 to 25." (Mendyk, 2021, p. 2).

It can be assumed that Christopher, as the son, and editor of his father's works such as *The Silmarillion* (Tolkien, 1999, p.viii) for instance, would believe that his father would probably

share this opinion, at least to a certain degree. As an example of the movies' effort to appeal to broader and younger audience with the intention to increase the commercial success, Shippey (2005, p. 412) mentions such scenes as Legolas using a shield as a surf at the battle of Helm's Deep, or Aragorn "tossing" Gimli across the abyss during the same battle, arguing that "Tolkien would have understood neither addition; they are here for a teenage audience", which more or less supports Christopher's theory.

1.2 New Line Cinema's The Lord of the Rings

Although several different adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* had been released during the second half of the 20th century, it seems only reasonable to state that none of them had managed to make any significant reach or impact in comparison to the New Line Cinema's movie versions, released at the beginning of the new millennium. Originally a Miramax Films production that started in 1996, the project gradually encountered several financial and creative decision problems and disagreements (such as the studio's request to reduce all the three books into only one single movie) that eventually resulted into more or less cancelation of the project, until New Line Cinema studio decided to cover the necessary payments and make it possible for the director Peter Jackson to film the movies as a trilogy, with the budget of 270 million dollars in total (Manufacturing Intellect, 2016). In addition, due to the fact that the whole trilogy was filmed at once (Manufacturing Intellect, 2016), it was possible to release the movies in three consecutive years - 2001 (*The Fellowship of the Ring*), 2002 (*The Two Towers*), and 2003 (*The Return of the King*) (Kirpikli, 2014, p. 143). The movies immediately achieved a major success in regards of both, critical ratings and profits – by 2004, a year after the third film was released, the trilogy earned 1 279 million pounds (Shippey, 2005, p. 409), and received 17 Oscars (Goldie, 2016, p. 2), of which 11 were won by the third part, *The Return of the King* (Harl, 2007, p. 68). Due to the massive success of the movies, Shippey (2005, p. 411) in his *The Road To Middle-earth* even states that "For many people, *The Lord of the Rings* now means the film version, not the books.", which might even more clearly outline how significant role the adaptation has in the matter of popularity of Tolkien's mythology in the 21st century.

However, despite the undisputed overall success of the movies, the adaptation still received some criticism for number of decisions and alternations of both, major and minor significance that do not seem to correspond or faithfully represent Tolkien's original writings. Although a significant amount of these changes could be possibly justified by the form of media

itself, some of the others might be perceived as errors or impoverishment of the story from a certain perspective.

1.2.1 Peter Jackson and his vision

It is only fair to mention that regardless of the fact that changes and adjustments appear to be inevitable while transforming a book story into movie adaptations, the director Peter Jackson is a fan of Tolkien's writings and seems to posses a significant knowledge and understanding of the matter. As he mentions in a 2002 interview on *The Lord of the Rings* movies (Manufacturing Intellect, 2016), he had read the books when he was 18 years old, and intended to "honour" Tolkien's writings by approaching the movies with possibly the same attitude and perspective as the author himself. During the interview, he points out two major factors to support this argument. He emphasizes the importance of perceiving the world Tolkien created as a mythology, not as a fictional world on a different planet, but rather a "mythic prehistory of Europe". Therefore, Jackson arranged the visual aesthetics as if he was filming a historic movie, and with the combination of New Zealand's "unspoiled and primitive European landscapes", as he describes the country where the trilogy was filmed, he managed to realize his vision of the Middle-earth and transfer it into the screen. The second major factor that seems to correspond with Tolkien's approach is the motivation for creating the work in the manner they did. As Tolkien himself wrote in his letter to Milton Waldman in 1951 (Tolkien, 1999, p. xiii), one of the reasons why he created his mythology was that he had always felt England, and English language in particular, did not seem to have any significant and original stories that would resemble (from the perspective of a type) legends and myths of the cultures such as Greek, Scandinavian, Finnish, Germanic, etc.. Whereas Tolkien's motivation appears to be his country and language's deficiency of this kind of stories, Jackson argues in a similar manner about the quality of fantasy movies in general. He explains that his intentions were to give the movies authenticity and a certain level of seriousness, just as Tolkien wrote his books, because he apparently had always been of opinion that the movie industry had not produced any successful, authentic, and significant fantasy movies that would be respected as a serious movie art (Manufacturing Intellect, 2016).

1.2.2 Alternations, cuts, and criticism

As already briefly mentioned above, even such critically and publicly acclaimed adaptation as this did not avoid several cuts and alternations that do not correspond with Tolkien's original version. This resulted into various studies and essays that compare, criticize, and comment on this matter. This subchapter will address the major differences between the movies and the books and their possible purposes.

"While both cinema and literature are narrative arts, the fact remains that cinema can only show what literature has to tell… Word play and association create linguistic effects which quite simply can never appear in an image, even with an exact representation of the setting and objects within the passage" (Goldie, 2016, p. 5). This quotation suggests that even when both, a movie and a book, present the audience with an identical story, it is more or less impossible to expect the same results. They are different mediums by their nature, and both utilize a different communication approach as a main method of transmitting information (Kirpikli, 2014, p. 144). In his article *The Monstrosity of the Gaze: Critical Problems with a Film Adaptation of The Lord of the Rings,* Harl (2007, pp. 67, 68) indicates that the power of the language as the main medium of the books might be the reason why Jackson decided to open the trilogy in the way he did. The first movie, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Jackson, 2001), begins with approximately 30 seconds of black screen with no images, complemented only by a monologue of Galadriel (Cate Blanchett). The voice-over is then augmented by the first scenes that depict the history of One Ring, but the fact that the voice and the language is presented before the images might imply that during the beginning part, Jackson emphasizes the language as the dominant element.

The seven-minutes long opening of the *Fellowship of the Ring* movie might also serve as an example of yet another aspect that seems to occur throughout the whole trilogy. As Shippey (2005, pp. 413 - 414) points out, Jackson quite frequently seems to manipulate with timelines in the sense of positioning certain moments of the story into different scenes than they appear in the books. Whereas the movie introduces more or less a complete history of the One Ring at the very beginning though Galadriel's prologue (Jackson, 2001), the book presents majority of these information much later, during the council of Elrond in Rivendell (Tolkien, 2014a, pp. 233 – 263). Practically the same situation seems to appear towards the end of the second movie, *The Two Towers,* during the destruction of Isengard by the Ents (Jackson, 2002). This sequence, together with Theoden's victory at Helm's Deep and Samwise's speech in the voice-over (Jackson, 2002), could possibly be labelled as the "climax" of the second film. In

the books however, the reader is acquainted with this part through retrospective, when the characters of Merry and Pippin describe the events to the company that arrives from Helm's Deep (Tolkien, 2014, pp. 550 – 561). On this matter, Shippey (2005, p. 414) argues that for a movie, it is an obvious choice to show the events chronologically, in "real-time", as it is more engaging for the audience than watching characters retell the story in retrospective.

In this matter, he also highlights the shifting of a dialogue between Gandalf and Frodo in Shire from "The Shadow of the Past" chapter, specifically the exchange that goes as follows:

"'I wish it need not have happened in my time,' said Frodo. 'So do I,' said Gandalf, 'and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.'" (Tolkien, 2014a, p. 50).

In *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Jackson, 2001), this dialog appears as well. However, Jackson situates the exchange between the two characters in the sequence, in which the Fellowship travels through the dark mines of Moria (Shippey, 2005, pp. 416 – 417). Placing the scene in such a dark setting might possibly be explained as Jackson's approach towards the problem that a movie generally has to show what literature tells. According to Goldie (20016, p. 6), a parallel formula between the language of the books and the tone and colours of the movies' scenes may be noticed. As the story progresses, the language of Tolkien's narrative gradually becomes more serious, archaic, and severe. A similar phenomenon can be observed with the movies, in which Jackson compensates the absence of literature's descriptions and language with darker and grimmer visual images. That might be the reason why the conversation is shifted into the darkness of Moria. Jackson might have been of opinion that the visual aesthetics of the surroundings may better correspond with the tone of the dialog.

As the sources suggest, the major portion of the criticism the trilogy receives appears to be towards the more radical cuts in the story that might impoverish the nature and complexity of the original narrative, and alternations of some characters that do not seem to correspond, or faithfully represent Tolkien's original intentions. Regarding the cuts, the most prominent examples might probably be "The Scouring of the Shire", and the sequence that involves the character of Tom Bombadil. Mendyk (2021, pp. 8 – 9) claims that by removing "The Scouring of the Shire" from *The Return of the King* (Jackson, 2003), the film excludes a part of Tolkien's life incorporated into the story, which indicates that even a victory has its consequences, as the destroyed Shire at the end of the third book (Tolkien, 2014c, pp. 975 – 997) most likely represents England after World War I, irrevocably changed in Tolkien's eyes by the war and industrialization. Whereas the role of Tom Bombadil in the first book (Tolkien, 2014a) may not mirror Tolkien's real life as "The Scouring of the Shire" seems to do, his omission from the first

movie (Jackson, 2001) might reduce the broader context of the world the story takes place in. To a certain degree, Bombadil provides hints on extensive history and wide context of Middle-earth, which might emphasize Tolkien's philosophy of perceiving *The Lord of the Rings* as a part of mythology, not as an independent story (Mendyk, 2021, pp. 3 – 4).

However, despite removing these chapters from the main part of the narrative, it eventually seems that they were not completely ignored. As Shippey (2005, p. 417) points out, Jackson transferred several Bombadil's quotes to Treebeard, and the scene in which Merry and Pippin are captured by the roots of Old Man Willow, just to be saved by Tom Bombadil several moments later (Tolkien, 2014a, pp. 115 – 118), has also been relocated to the Treebeard sequence in *Two Towers* (Jackson, 2002). Meanwhile, "The Scouring of the Shire" appears to be outlined during the scene, in which Frodo looks into the mirror of Galadriel. The destroyed Shire is depicted as the fate that would be fulfilled if Frodo would fail to destroy the Ring (Mendyk, 2021, pp. 8 – 9).

The character alternations may be possibly the most effectively represented though the examples of Arwen and Saruman. In the movies, the character of Saruman and his story line turn out to be highly reduced and simplified. As the result of such decisions, the films portray him as relatively a one-dimensional villain, who simply allied Sauron as his servant, whereas the book version of Saruman does not serve Sauron, but rather cooperates with him for his own benefits. Saruman might possibly be Tolkien's primal example of the rise of evil and the motivations behind it, but due to the simplification, the original properties of this character are more or less lost in the movies (Mendyk, 2021, pp. 5 – 7). As an opposite to Saruman, the character who, on the other hand, acquired a role of a greater significance than in the books is Arwen. The movies depict Arwen more frequently and, especially in the first movie (Jackson, 2001), as a strong female character who actively fights against evil, as she saves wounded Frodo from the Ringwraiths in a scene where she replaces the character of Glorfindel, who appears in the original writings (Goldie, 2016, pp. 9, 10). The romantic relationship between Arwen, an Elven princess, and Aragorn, the human heir to the throne of Gondor, seems to be emphasised as well. Kirpikli (2014, p.145) and Goldie (2016, p. 9) both mention the commercial side of the movies as one of the reasons. They suggest that an incorporated and intensified love story of one of the main characters (Aragorn) might be more appealing to a broader cinematic audience. However, Jackson argues that the extension of the role of Arwen was not entirely for commercial reasons, even though he does not explicitly deny the commercial aspect either. He states that with this decision, they intended to showcase the tragic, "bittersweet" side of the love story between a mortal man and an immortal Elven princess as well, pointing out that it might

add value to the storyline, especially in the movie as the form of media (Manufacturing Intelect, 2016).

1.3 *Rings of Power* TV series by Amazon

In 2018, approximately 15 years after the release of Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Amazon company announced that a contract for a new TV series adaptation based on Tolkien's writings has been concluded with the author's estate (Gamespot.com, 2018). Jennifer Salke, the head of Amazon Studios, commented on the matter as follows:

"It's not a remaking of the movies, and it's not a whole new thing. It's something in between. It's not, 'Oh, it's "Lord of the Rings" but you don't recognize anything in it,' but it's not totally familiar to you either. So it's original." (Indiewire.com, 2018).

Despite the fact that the rights for adapting Tolkien's work cost Amazon 250 million US dollars (Winteriscoming.net, 2020), they did not manage to obtain permission for using such works as *The Silmarillion, Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth,* and *The History of Middle-earth*, all of which contain a significant amount of information regarding the Second age, the time period in which the narrative of the TV series is set. Therefore, the story of the show is based mainly on the references from *The Lord of the Rings* novels, specifically on the appendices of the third book, *The Return of the King* (Imdb.com, 2024a).

Shooting began in 2019 in New Zealand, and with the budged, which includes the $250 million contract for the rights as well, of 1 billion US dollars for five seasons (Gamespot.com, 2020), the project is currently (March 2024) regarded as the highest-priced TV series of all time (Pop, 2022, p. 12). The first episode of the eight-part season one was released on September 1, 2022, and with the duration of approximately one hour per episode, the first season contains circa eight hours of narrative material (Imdb.com, 2024a). As the name of the series suggests, *Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* narrates the story of the origins and creation of magical rings, including the Sauron's One Ring (Cnet.com, 2022). This indicates that within the chronological context of Tolkien's writings, the narratives of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Rings of Power* are separated by several thousands of years, as the forging of the rings of power dates back to 1590 – 1600 of the Second age, whereas the War of the Ring depicted in *The Lord of the Rings* novels is set in years 3018 – 3019 of the Third Age (Tolkien, 2014c, pp. 1059, 1065 – 1070).

1.3.1 Controversy, criticism, and ratings

Regardless the high-budget production, a great amount of people has apparently confronted the project right from the beginning, criticising its certain aspects almost immediately after the first announcements, thus a several years before the first episode was even released. As already mentioned above, Amazon does not have access to the entire catalogue of Tolkien's writings, therefore, the series appears to be fairly limited in terms of source material, which provides the producers a fair amount of space for modifications and new additions (Larsen, 2023a, p. 2). The possibility that the series would significantly deviate from the canon apparently resulted into a considerable tension between the fans of Tolkien's legendarium and Amazon studios (Pop, 2022, p. 21). However, the showrunners of the series Patrick McKay and J. D. Payne expressed in an interview that "We felt like there was a story here. You know, Tolkien's second age has some amazing events in it, and we started like, you know, sort of tapping the ground... and we said this is Tolkien's great untold epic" (HeyUGuys, 2022). This suggests that in contrast to some of the Tolkien's fans, they might have considered the gaps in the sources rather as a positive element or an opportunity to incorporate their own creativity and ideas into the narrative.

Possibly even a greater wave of criticism that arose prior to the releasement of the series itself appeared after the casting announcements and releasement of the first trailers. Studio's plans for introducing rather an inclusive and multicultural casting, such as actors of black skin colour playing Elves (Ismael Cruz Cordova as Arondil), Harfoot Hobbits (Lenny Henry as Sadoc Burrows), or Dwarves (Sophia Nomvete as Princess Disa) (Imdb.com, 2024a), seemed to encounter rather negative reactions, when some of the fans publicly confronted the studio's casting decisions, claiming that characters of such appearance lack the fidelity of the original works. These reactions appeared to be even amplified by the fact, that these characters are not part of the Tolkien's original canon, but new characters added by the filmmakers. As a reaction, the producers of the series simply labelled this protesting part of the fandom as racist (Pop, 2022, pp. 18, 19, 21, 32).

When the series finally aired on the streaming platforms in 2022, it was not only the racial diversity of the cast that allegedly provoked passionate feedback. Another aspect that a portion of the fans had a problem with was alleged modern progressive political agenda, particularly depicted through the feminist propaganda. Galadriel, the main character played by Morfydd Clark (Imdb.com, 2024a), was even reportedly sarcastically described as "Guyladriel", "Karen" or "Mary Sue", due to some of the character's behaviour throughout the

series (Pop, 2022, p. 19). In fact, every storyline in the series appears to have a more or less dominant female character (Galadriel, Nori) and a character of black colour (Arondir, Sadoc), or both of these aspects mixed together in one character (Queen Regent Miriel, Princess Disa) (McKay, Payne, 2022). Pop (2022. pp. 19, 20) comments that due to combination of all these elements and filmmaking decisions, a part of the fandom appear to consider the series overly politically correct with an intention to "force" diversity and modern society issues and propaganda into the story, which, according to this group of fans, resulted into the show and its creators "destroying" the original narrative and Tolkien's visions.

Regarding the aspect of the storytelling and chronology, the series indeed seems to alternate, mix, and compress several storylines and timelines of The Second Age (Larsen, 2023a, p. 7) (some of which being originally separated even by millennia) into a single narrative taking place simultaneously. A major example might be the last episode of the first season (Amazon Studios, *Alloyed*, 2022), which depicts the creation of the Three Elven Rings of power, a 1590 of The Second Age event (Tolkien, 2014c, p. 1058). The very same episode also reveals the character of The Stranger, portrayed by Danie Weyman (Imdb.com, 2024a), as one of the Istari, and despite the fact that is it not explicitly stated in the series, several indications seem to highly suggest that the character is Gandalf himself (Larsen, 2023a, p. 11). However, according to the appendices in *The Return of the King* (Tolkien, 2014c, p. 1059), the arrival of the Istari dates around the year 1000 of The Third Age, therefore, nearly 3000 years after the forging of the Three Rings. In addition, the series also simultaneously depicts storylines of Elendil and Isildur, portrayed by Lloyd Owen and Maxim Baldry (Imdb.com, 2024a), which appears to be yet another case of compressing and mixing different periods of the history of Tolkien's mythology into one, as Elendil's and Isildur's lives are situated around the events at the end of The Second Age, which ended in 3441 by the defeat of Sauron by The Last Alliance of Elves and Men, led by Elendil himself, who perished during the event, and Gil-Galad (Tolkien, 2014c, p. 1059). Such examples of filmmaking and casting decisions seem to confirm some of the prior to the series' release online speculations of the fans who voiced their opinions that the show might be rather unfaithful to the original materials (Larsen, 2023a, p. 2).

Regardless the speculations, controversy, and criticism that had preceded the release of the series, the first numbers suggested a great success when the show finally premiered. According to data published by Amazon, *The Rings of Power* managed to gain a record 25 million spectators within the first 24 hours, which ranks it as the most successful premiere of Amazon Prime Video up to date (Variety.com, 2022). However, according to Forbes.com (2023), the following development as the show progressed apparently did not manage to be as

successful as the first 24 hours after the premiere, as the viewership declined with each episode, resulting in only 37% of the audience who watched the first episode actually finishing the first season. This information might suggest that a great amount of people watched the first episode or two rather from curiosity or to confirm their presumptions about the "negative" aspects of the show than from genuine interest and enthusiasm of being a fan of the series. Nevertheless, Jennifer Salke does not seem to perceive the decline in the viewership as a failure, stating that "This desire to paint the show as anything less than a success – it's not reflective of any conversation I'm having internally," adding "That's a huge opportunity for us. The first season required a lot of setting up." (Forbes.com, 2023), which indicates that she attributes the decline in numbers to the slower tempo of the first season, resulting from introducing the world and the characters.

In addition, an aspect that seems to project rather ambiguous results in the matter of public reception of the series are the ratings. Approximately a year and a half after its release (spring 2024), the overall international rating of the show on IMDb.com (2024a) is 7.0 out of 10 stars with total number of roughly 350 000 evaluations by registered users. Such rating might be generally perceived as above average; however, a more detailed graph (see Figure 1) showcases that the greatest percentage of votes acquire the two polar opposites – 23.6% (83 000 votes) for ten out of ten stars, and 16,3% (57 000 votes) for one out of ten stars, with the rest of the votes being distributed among the remaining options, which suggests that the community of viewers probably does not share an united opinion regarding the quality of the project. Another world known website that focuses on ratings of movies and TV series is Rottentomatoes.com (2024). This website provides not only the audience score, but also the ratings of critics, which is yet another indicator of reception and, in some cases, might provide the contrast between the average consumer audience and the critics, who presumably rate the cinematic work not only on their subjective feelings, but also rather on several technical aspects. In the case of *The Rings of Power*, the contrast between the two types of ratings seems to be quite significant. The average audience score on the website projects the number of 38%, whereas the average Tomatometer, which is the critics' score, is 83% by April 2024 (Rottentomatoes.com, 2024). These almost opposite ratings once again imply the ambiguity on the perception of the show, together with possible different opinions on the indicators of quality regarding the certain types of spectators.

2. The Lord of the Rings vs The Rings of Power

As stated in the introduction of this work, Amazon's *The Rings of Power* seems to resemble Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* adaptation in several aspects, some of which being more obvious than the others, despite the fact that due to the rights policy, the series and the trilogy cannot be legally connected to each other as parts of the same cinematic universe (Screenrant.com, 2022a). This chapter will describe possible reasons behind this creative decision and introduce the most significant elements in which the showrunners appear to follow, at least to a certain level, the New Line Cinema's version.

Peter Jackson's movies achieved a major success among the broad audience as well as critical acclaim. Therefore, his vision of Middle-earth established a certain idea of visual aesthetics and overall atmosphere of Tolkien's world, which, to a great amount of people actually became the embodiment of Middle-earth, almost to a canonical degree (Shippey, 2005, p. 411; Screenrant.com, 2022a). Considering the impact the movies has made, it seems highly unlikely that any new adaptation of Tolkien's writings would avoid a comparison to Jackson's work. Ismael Cruz Cordova, who portrays the character of Arondir in the series, even claims in an interview that the comparisons between these two projects are "inevitable" and adds that "…you have to welcome them, you have to celebrate them, I think." (MTV News, 2022). The showrunners seem to be aware of this reality as well. Patrick McKay states "Anyone approaching *Lord of the Rings* on screen would be wrong not to think about how wonderfully right [Jackson] got so much of it," but also expresses the attitude that "…we're admirers from afar, that's it. *The Rings of Power* doesn't try to compete with him." (Digitalspy.com, 2022). This approach suggests that the creators of the series might have made a conclusion that it would be a wiser choice to build the show on an already well-established, respected, and appreciated franchise, rather than creating something entirely new that might put their work into a position of competitors in the eyes of the audience. In fact, they do not deny it when a host of an interview for HeyUGuys (2022) YouTube channel proclaims: "…and you're following obviously the books, you're following Peter Jackson on everything else.". A presumption that *The Rings of Power* would eventually mirror some aspects of Jackson's movies might have possibly been concluded even before the release of first trailers and the first season itself, due to the information such as the filming location being New Zealand or Amazon cooperating with John Howe and Howard Shore, who both significantly contributed to the New Line Cinema's *The Lord of the Rings* (Movieweb.com, 2022; Screenrant.com, 2022a; WatchMojo.com, 2022).

2.1 Visuals, commercial reasons, and New Zealand

The speculations regarding the series building on Jackson's visual aesthetics were more or less confirmed when the official trailers were released. Web Screenrant.com (2022a) points out the resemblance between the architecture of Númenor shown in the teaser trailer (Prime Video, 2022) and designs of New Line Cinema's movies, and also adds an observation that "Sweeping shots over the hills of New Zealand could've been plucked straight from 2001's *The Fellowship of the Ring…*". The shots that highlight the landscapes of New Zealand proved to be one of the signature and most prominent features of the trilogy concerning visuals (Leota, 2024, p. 47), by which Jackson presumably substituted Tolkien's vast and artistic descriptions that a movie as a form of media is not able to provide (Goldie, 2016, p. 5). This suggests that what resembles the movies are not only the designs, but filming techniques and camera work seem to be inspired by it as well. Subsequently, the episodes of the first season introduced several new locations, providing a significant portion of material for design comparisons. In addition to already mentioned Númenor, another major example of similar architecture and atmosphere could be Amazon's depiction of Lindon, the capital of the High Elves (see Figure 2) in comparison to Jackson's portrayal of Rivendell (see Figure 3). As a counterpoint to the matching similarities could be mentioned the appearance of the mines of Moria, or Khazad-dûm how it is called in *The Rings of Power*. In this case, the series introduces a location that the audience is familiar with, but in a different form. Whereas *The Lord of the rings* (Jackson, 2001) introduced the Dwarven kingdom as an inhospitable place, destroyed and occupied by Orcs, *The Rings of Power* (McKay, Payne, 2022) depicts the realm in its peak of glory and majesty (WatchMojo.com, 2022). Therefore, this might be an example of the TV show using something that the viewers already know because it had a significant role in Jackson's adaptations, and are to a certain degree familiar with its backstory, which means it needs not much of an introduction, but providing it a new, refreshing, and completely opposite appearance.

Screensrant.com (2022) also points out the commercial side of the project in a sense that considering the great amount of money the company had invested in it, an attempt to build a completely new and original appearance of Middle-earth might have been regarded as highly hazardous with an unpredictable probability of success. In other words, Amazon probably decided to adopt a cautious approach to minimalize the potential risk that the audience would not accept their version of Tolkien's world, hence, the creators might have made a conclusion

that using Jackson's successful and established design as a foundation would be the safest option to prevent financial failure.

The choice of filming the first season of the show in New Zealand may possibly be perceived as a partially financial decision as well. Tzanelli (2007, pp. 23, 27) points out that with the showcase of nature and scenery throughout Frodo's and Sam's journey as a mediator, Jackson's trilogy "created a massive tourist industry in New Zealand,". Therefore, 21st century New Zealand became a tourist attraction and a holiday destination that people apparently often connect with Tolkien's fictional world and Jackson's adaptation. *The Lord of the Rings* developed into being a part of New Zealand's culture and identity, and, with the help of *The Hobbit* trilogy filmed there as well approximately ten years later, the public interest in fantasy-themed tourism remains relevant even up to this day (Leotta, 2024, pp. 48-49). Thus, selecting New Zealand as a filming location for a new Tolkien-based adaptation does not provide only the identical places, aesthetics and atmosphere that Jackson's trilogy features, it seemingly has a certain real-world overlap as well, which might possibly increase the public interest even to a greater degree. Leotta (2024. Pp. 43, 51) argues that the element of tourism and New Zealand's popularity as a destination had an important role in negotiations with Amazon, which resulted into the permission to film the first season in the islands, so the both sides would profit from the cooperation – the company would have access to the same locations as Jackson, while New Zealand might profit from increasing the popularity as a tourist destination even more. However, it seems that these expectations have not been completely fulfilled and the release of the series did not manage to increase the tourist interest in New Zealand in the manner Jackson's movies did, which might also be one of the reasons why the second season of *The Rings of Power* is not going to be filmed in New Zealand (Leotta, 2024, p. 51).

2.2 Characters

In a similar manner as with the locations, *The Rings of Power* presents a number of characters that has already been introduced in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Possibly the most notable among them might be the characters of Elrond, Galadriel, and the main antagonist Sauron. Due to their longevity, these characters may be seen, along with the visuals discussed above, as the links to Jackson's movies as they are parts of the both stories, despite the fact that their roles appear to be relatively different in both cases, with the series providing them a greater significance and amount of screen time (Cnet.com, 2022; Polygon.com, 2022; Screenrant.com, 2022b). However, it is apparently not only the presence itself of these characters that connects

them to the movies. Larsen (2023a, p. 8) presents an idea that the actors and overall appearance of the characters were deliberately chosen and designed to resemble these characters as they were portrayed in Jackson's movies, only in younger versions. Regarding Sauron, both adaptations portray him in a different manner. Jackson (2001, 2002, 2003) depicts him as a fiery eye located at the top of a tower, while Amazon (McKay, Payne, 2022) portrays Sauron through the character of Halbrand, which is revealed in the last episode of the season one (Amazon Studios, *Alloyed*, 2022). However, both projects also contain prologues at the beginning of the story (Jackson, 2001; Amazon Studios, *A Shadow of the Past*, 2022) in which is Sauron shown in an armour as a leader of an army. In this case, the series' design (see figure 4) seems to highly resemble Jackson's prologue version of Sauron (see figure 5).

Regardless all these similarities, speculations, and unofficial connections between the two projects, there actually is one particular case of a character that does not only resemble something that Jackson established, but is completely identical, and that is Balrog. The audience have an opportunity to witness Balrog's brief appearances in the episodes five and seven of the series (see Figure 6), called *Partings* and *The Eye* (McKay, Payne, 2022). The design appears to be fully duplicating the version from *The Fellowship of the Ring* (see Figure 7) (Jackson, 2001). The reasoning behind that and why it apparently is legally possible might be the inclusion of John Howe into both projects. He was one of the concept artists for Jackson's movies, so this specific design of Balrog is said to be partially his work (Festivalartandbooks.com, 2022), and, as already mentioned above, he is part of *The Rings of Power*'s creative team as well. Therefore, the showrunners might have decided that there is no reason to alternate Balrog's design since its creator is a member of their production.

In addition, the series (McKay, Payne, 2022) also presents a storyline that includes the Hobbits, more specifically Harfoots, one of the three ancestor breeds of the Third Age Hobbits from the Shire (Tolkien, 2014a, p. 3), despite the fact that, according to Tolkien's appendixes in *The Return of the King* (Tolkien, 2014c), this race did not seem to have any significant role until the end of the third age, and was not included in forging of the rings of power either. According to web Screenrant.com (2022b), the Harfoots in *The Rings of Power*, in a similar manner as in *The Lord of the Rings*, represent a simple, ordinary life, and the concealed strength and importance of it. The showrunner Patrick McKay, nevertheless, provides a relatively less complex explanation for the presence of the Harfoots in the series by declaring: "But really, does it feel like Middle-earth if you don't have hobbits or something like hobbits in it?" (Vanityfair.com, 2022), which indicates that the reason for that decision was the immense popularity of the Hobbits among the fandom, undoubtedly established not only by the books

themselves but by the Jackson's trilogies as well, to a degree that excluding them might have had a negative impact on the perception, popularity, and therefore the commercial success of the series.

3. Tolkien's writings and adaptations of his work in ELT

All three works in question, i.e., Tolkien's writings, in this particular case *The Lord of the Rings* novels, Peter Jackson's movie trilogy adaptation produced by New Line Cinema, and Amazon Studio's *The Rings of Power*, appear to be, from a pedagogical perspective, suitable to be classified as authentic materials. Harmer (2007, p. 273) defines authentic materials as "…language where no concessions are made to foreign speakers. It is normal, natural language used by native or competent speakers of a language. This is what our students encounter (or will encounter) in real life if they come into contact with target-language speakers, and, precisely because it is authentic, it is unlikely to be simplified or spoken slowly.".

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2001), which is an international document that establishes general standards and outcomes of teaching and learning second and foreign languages in Europe and which also serves as a fundamental source for the "Foreign Language" chapters in Czech framework educational programmes, emphasises, throughout its entire length, the importance of placing the language into the real-life context, and thus exposing the learners to authentic materials, tasks and communication as frequently as possible in order to develop key competences and to learn the language in the presumably most efficient and practical manner. For this reason, it specifically recommends using materials such as videos, watching and listening to TV, unmodified, authentic texts, or listening to conversations of native speakers (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2001, p. 143). Novels, movies and TV series, which are the materials that is paper is concerned with, undoubtedly belong to the examples of recommended materials stated above, as their subcategories.

However, despite being authentic materials and recommended forms of media, the question that might emerge is whether the Tolkien's writings and adaptations of his works are suitable and appropriate materials for primary and lower secondary learners. According to Harmer (2007, p. 273), teachers need to select authentic materials in a careful manner in order not to demotivate their learners, which would be the opposite outcome of the whole concept of using them. One might argue that Tolkien-based materials might not be suitable for learners whose level of English is still at the lower levels of the scale. These arguments might be based on the complexity of the language used in the novels, such as frequent usage of archaisms, overly broad descriptions or difficulty in orientation due to several different storylines. Regarding the adaptations, Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* could be considered excessively lengthy with difficult language as well, while *The Rings of Power* may confuse the learners

since it is divided into several episodes and the story is set in a completely different time period than the remaining two cases.

On the other hand, it is the complexity that, with the implementation of effective strategies, methods, and guidance of the teacher, may have the potential to transform these materials into a powerful teaching tool from which the learners might benefit. The advantage of Tolkien-themed lessons may be the topic's versatility and number of options and resources available due to the popularity of the works. Books and movies are different categories of media, and therefore, there is a possibility that they might develop different areas of the learners' language competences and complement each other. John Golden (2001, p. 61) highly recommends combining movies and literature forms, emphasising possible improvement of the lesson's dynamics and that every learner has a different style of learning, hence by incorporating both types of media into the lesson should provide every member of the class opportunity to learn by their preferred approach. Guest (1997, p. 178) also adds the option of comparing the movies and literature that are directly connected to each other, i.e. adaptations, pointing out the contrasts that the learners may be able to examine. Considering this approach, the possibility to connect, compare, examine and use *The Lord of the Rings* novels with not one, but two adaptations, each of which representing a different time period of their creation, yet connected to a certain degree, might provide the teacher a significant range of opportunities how to utilize these materials in an English lesson.

The usage of the excerpts from the books, as a form of authentic written texts, would presumably logically gravitate towards the development of reading skills and reading comprehension. *The Lord of the Rings* novels (Tolkien, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c) provide variety of different aspects typical for written texts, such as traditional third person narratives, poems, detailed descriptions and dialogs. If chosen carefully and with respect to the particular learners in question, these elements might improve the reading skills, comprehension, spelling, extent the vocabulary, introduce or contextualize a certain grammar (Ur, 2012, pp. 28 – 30), and, as discussed in the chapter one of this work, improve the imagination.

Despite the fact that, as Tolkien himself seemed to suggest (see chapter one), the movies and other visual-based forms do not appear to stimulate the imagination at the same level as written literature, the didactic potential of these forms of materials does not necessarily needs to be inferior. A video format, which naturally includes movie or TV show clips, offers a narrative in a different perspective than books, in an audio-visual form. It is the presence of sounds and image that differentiate a movie from written literature, which indicates a reorientation of focus from reading to listening, in regards of the language skills. The power of

image should not be underestimated in relation to language comprehension, learning, and acquisition, especially not the visuals in movies. Children and non-native speakers in general seem to have a significant tendency to depend on visuals, which apparently help them with comprehension and interpretation of presented language (Golden, 2001, p. xiii; Çakir, 2006, p. 2). In addition, apart from providing the language systems (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) in an auditory form, cinema clips also present viewers with a number of supplementary elements such as suprasegmental features of language (e.g. intonation and rhythm), non-verbal communication (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, and overall emotions), and general settings and environment of the presented scene (the number of participants of communication, their age, sex, appearance etc.), which establishes the real language use in a certain context for the learners (Çakir, 2006, pp. 2, 4-5; Golden, 2001, p. xiv; Harmer, 2007, p. 308). Considering *The Lord of the Rings* movies and *The Rings of Power* TV series appear to heavily rely on the visual presentation of Middle-earth, the statement "…cinema can only show what literature has to tell" from chapter one might actually be beneficial from the didactic perspective. However, Scrivener (2005, p. 350) emphasises that using video materials should not position the learners into the passive role, i.e. the learners should not only sit and watch movie the clips without doing anything additional. He suggests using the excerpts strategically to actively engage and challenge the learners in order to practice not only reception, but their perception skills as well by doing activities such as for example re-writing a dialog, participating in discussions, comparing, drawing, answering questions etc. (Scrivener, 2005, pp. 351 – 353).

   Ur (2012, p. 223) also point out the possible positive impact of utilizing rather modern and popular works, which *The Lord of the Rings* novels and the adaptations undoubtedly are, on motivation. Scrivener (2005, p. 337) mentions that "There is much academic speculation that students learn language best when they forget about studying the grammar and get totally involved in the content itself.". This suggests that it is crucial for the content to be interesting, enjoyable and motivating, as Harmer (2007, p. 98) declares the factor of motivation as "essential to success". Considering the popularity of movies and TV shows as a form of media in combination with *The Lord of the Rings'* legacy in modern pop culture, it might be assumed that the adaptations (and the novels as well) may be suitable sources of materials that the learners could possibly consider to be enjoyable and motivating as well as visually pleasing, interesting and enlightening.

PRACTICAL PART

4. Preface to practical part

The following part of the thesis is focused on the practical usage of Tolkien-based materials, with a specific emphasis on the adaptations of his work that were discussed in the theoretical part of this paper above, in English language classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language. An applied research, conducted through four lesson plans, attempts to approach the issue of application of this topic into ELT from multiple perspectives, examining whether it is possible and appropriate to use this topic and materials at all in the first place, whether is it flexible enough to be linked to the thematic units that the learners are dealing with at the time, whether and how language skills and language systems could be presented, taught and practiced through it, what are the opinions and attitudes of the learners towards the implementation of these materials and topic into their English lessons and how it affects their motivation and interests, and whether are learners at primary and lower secondary level aware of and affected by the context surrounding the adaptations that might influence their perception of the topic and the projects themselves.

4.1 Methodology

As already mentioned above, four lesson plans were created for the purpose of the practical part. These lesson plans were performed in authentic environment of a lower secondary school's English lessons. During the lessons, three major methods of data collection were applied – observation, questionnaires, and statistical analysis.

The observation was applied in the participant form simultaneously as the lessons were performed. The results of the observation are included and expressed in the "Commentary, reflection, and analysis" part below each lesson's procedure description. The majority of the above stated issues, mainly those concerned with the direct language teaching and practicing, that the practical part attempts to examine are explained and answered by this method. The "Improvement suggestions" paragraphs are derived from the findings of the observation as well.

The questionnaire method was utilized to examine the attitudes, opinions and basic overview of the learners' experience regarding the topic. As the four lesson plans were applied in two classes, i.e. two lessons in each class, two questionnaires had been created. The first questionnaire is pre-lessons and, as the name suggests, the learners fulfilled the questionnaire at the beginning of the first of the two lessons, prior to the lesson plans' performances. This questionnaire contains the following YES or NO questions:

1. Do you like watching movies/TV shows?

2. Do you like reading?

3. Do you like fantasy as a genre?

4. Have you ever watched Lord of the Rings?

5. Have you ever watched The Rings of Power?

6. Have you ever read something written by Tolkien?

The second questionnaire is post-lessons that the learners fulfilled at the end of the second lesson, after all tasks were completed, and it contains following YES or NO questions:

1. Was the lesson 1 enjoyable for you?

2. Was the lesson 2 enjoyable for you?

3. Were the lessons demanding?

4. After the lessons, would you like to watch the movies/the Tv show now (or again, in case you already have)?

5. Would you be interested in reading Tolkien's books?

6. Do you think movies and TV series should be part of the English lessons more often?

7. Do you think literature should be part of the lessons more often?

The questions in the questionnaires are also partially designed in a manner that it is possible to compare the results, so it might provide an overview whether the lessons had an impact on the learner's attitude towards the topic and their opinion whether these types of materials are effective regarding the English lessons.

To examine whether or to what extent the age and awareness of the context surrounding the adaptations (which was discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis) might influence opinions and attitudes of the learners towards the cinematic works, a "Preference presentation" (see figure 14) in which the learners are asked to choose between the two provided options, in this case two pictures (one from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and the second from *The Rings of Power* TV series) that are related in a certain manner, had been constructed. Each of the learners in the asked classes expressed which of the two options they preferred on each slide of the presentation and answered possible additional questions to justify their choice. The results of this activity were recorded and subsequently sorted in a table that showcases the class's preferred choices in percentage form.

4.2 Learners

The lesson plans we applied in two classes of different grades. Two lessons plans were designed for 6th graders and two for 8th graders with respect to the thematic and grammatical units they were concerned with at that time. The reason was to examine whether the topic and the materials would be effective on different levels of the lower secondary school, and how the age and language proficiency of the learners affect the effectiveness of it, as well as the overall awareness and popularity of the topic among today's children.

Both classes contained more boys than girls – 6th grade consisted of eleven learners in total, seven of them being boys and four being girls, and 8th grade contained sixteen learners, consisting of nine boys and seven girls.

In terms of behaviour, neither of the two classes manifested any serious misbehaving issues, except of some occasional disrupting and shouting, which occurred more in the 8th grade as that class appeared to be more talkative.

For the specific purpose of the "Preference presentation" activity, one more class was added into research and that was 3rd grade. This class was examined only in regards of this specific activity, no entire Tolkien-based lesson plan was performed in this class. The reason for adding 3rd grade learners to participate on this part of research was to extend the age range of the respondents to discover whether these primary level learners of significantly lower age, who had been presumed to most likely never seen any Tolkien-based adaptation, would provide results that would be significantly different than the older learners, who might have already been influenced by their previous knowledge or awareness of the topic.

5. Lesson plans and their analyses

5.1 Lesson Plan 1

Class: 6th grade

Number of learners: 11 (7 boys, 4 girls)

Topic: Poetry, past tense

Time duration: 45 minutes

Expected outcomes:

- After the lesson, learners will be able to describe the poetry as a genre and express their opinions on this matter
- Learners will be able to identify past tense and its forms in a text
- Learners will be able to produce a short, written text utilizing past tense

Teaching aids, supplementary materials: A printed paper with the transcription of the poem, computer and internet, YouTube videos, computer and internet, a questionnaire

Lesson procedure:

Introduction (max. 5 minutes)

The greetings between the teacher (T) and the learners (Ls)

T introduces himself and provides Ls general information about the upcoming lesson regarding its topic and purpose

Ls are given the introductory, pre-lessons questionnaire to fulfil

Warm up activity and pre-reading (max. 10 minutes)

Brainstorming – T introduces a series of terms and the Ls' task is to say the first association word that surfaces in their thoughts. The words in question are: *literature, poems, movies, fantasy, reading.*

Then follows a brief discussion regarding reading and poetry. T asks simple questions and, depending on the class's reaction, further developing them.

Examples of the questions:

- *Do you like to read? / What do you like about reading? / What do you not like about reading?*
- *Do you have a favourite book / story / poem / blog / anything else?*
- *In oppose to reading, do you like movies and TV series? / Do you have a favourite one?*
- *Can you think of any poem you remember? / Do you have a favourite poem?*
- *What do you think are the main differences between poetry and short stories?*

After the discussion, the teacher gives a very short lecture on poetry, names several famous poets and explains why a poem might be useful for learning English.

<u>Reading activity and working with the poem</u> (~ 15 minutes)

The transcription of the poem:

Gil-galad was an Elven-king.
Of him the harpers sadly sing:
the last whose realm was fair and free
between the Mountains and the Sea.

His sword was long, his lance was keen,
his shining helm afar was seen;
the countless stars of heaven's field
were mirrored in his silver shield.

But long ago he rode away,
and where he dwelleth none can say;
for into darkness fell his star
in Mordor where the shadows are.

       (Tolkien, 2014a, p. 181)

Each learner is provided with a copy of this poem, and T also projects the poem on the board. Subsequently, the learners have time to read the poem by their own, followed by chain reading when each students reads one or two lines (to establish the correct pronunciation).

A discussion about the poem's meaning to verify the Ls' comprehension and to let them express their opinions on it – *Does it tell a story? / About whom? / How does this character look like? / Is he dead or alive? Is it a happy story or a sad one?* etc.

The learners are also presented with the pictures (see figures 8 and 9) of Gil-galad from *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* movie (Jackson, 2001) and *The Rings of Power* (McKay, Payne, 2022) TV series, and are asked whether these versions resemble how they imagined the character after reading the poem or not, whether they like their appearances in the adaptations and which of the two they prefer.

To contextualize the poem, T tells Ls a small amount of information regarding Tolkien and his work.

The structure of the poem is addressed as well – *How many verses does it have? / How many lines are in each verse? / Can you identify the rhyming pattern?*

Analysis of the poem from grammatical perspective with focus on tenses – *Does the poem tell a story from the past, or is it happening now, or is it a prediction of the future? –* Learners attempt to identify words in the poem that indicate the past tense and to deduce when "was" and when "were" are used.

The poem also contains irregular verbs, so the learners are being introduced to this concept as well.

Post-reading activity (10 – 15 minutes)

Utilizing the information and knowledge from the previous part of the lesson.

Ls are given a choice whether they wish to work individually or in pairs, and their task is to attempt writing their own short poem (they are recommended to use Tolkien's pattern and structure, but it is not necessary). The poem should tell s simple story from the past, utilising past tense words and forms.

When finished, the learners have an opportunity to present their work to the rest of the class.

Ending the lesson (~ 5 minutes)

If the students are interested, T presents them a sung version of the poem from YouTube as a reward for their effort (Clamavi De Profundis, 2017).

T thanks L for their cooperation, summarise the main points of the lesson, answers the remaining questions if there are any and says goodbye.

Commentary, reflection and analysis:

This lesson was constructed predominantly on the original piece of Tolkien's literature rather than on the adaptations this thesis is primarily concerned with. There are two major arguments that might justify such decision. First, I wanted to introduce the learners to the Tolkien's franchise in the order it was created, which means starting with literature, so the learners are aware of the fact that the original cannon are written books, not the movies, and to provide them a chance to employ their imagination in order to build a certain idea about this fantasy world that would be their own, without it being influenced by the movies or the TV series. This of course does not apply to every learner in this class since a number of them had already been familiar with *The Lord of the Rings*, but as the results of the questionnaire (see below) indicate, a significant number of the learners had never encountered the works prior to

our lessons to a greater extent than being aware of its existence. Moreover, the choice of the poem is partially related to this issue as well, because the character of Gil-galad has rather an insignificant role in the Jackson's movie trilogy, so it was assumed that this poem would introduce something new even to the learners who had previously watched the movies. The second major reason for the decision to start with a literature-oriented lesson was that I wanted to have a control sample that I would be able to compare to the lessons in which the adaptations would be the dominant part of the lesson. In other words, the idea of this strategy was to examine whether there would be a significant difference in the learners' motivation, interest, and willingness to participate when a lesson is primarily focused on written literature and when a lesson utilizes mainly visual-based materials, i.e. the adaptations.

The selected poem, *The Fall of Gil-galad* was extracted in its original, non-modified form from the first *The Lord of the Rings* novel, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The poem was evaluated as suitable for the purpose of this lesson as it might be argued that it is relatively short with a simple, straightforward rhyming pattern, but it simultaneously contains several features that appeared to correspond with the learners' thematic unit at that time.

When I informed the learners that the topic of the lesson would be related to *The Lord of the Rings*, an interesting spectrum of reaction appeared. Some of the learners started cheering and saying quotes such as *"Nice!"* and *"Cool!"*, some reacted in a neutral manner, and several unexpected responses appeared as well, for example *"Is that similar to Harry Potter?"* or *"And who is The Lord of the Rings?"*, which indicated that the class's knowledge regarding this particular topic would be unequal.

The following brainstorming and discussion more or less confirmed the presumption based on the reactions to revealing the topic that the class contains learners who are familiar and interested in this subject area, learners who do not know it at all, and learners who appeared to be in the middle of the spectrum. Nevertheless, the activities seemed to fulfil their purpose, as the class became more talkative after several minutes. Majority of the learners expressed that they prefer watching movies, TV series and videos over reading, and some of them labelled reading, and especially poetry as "boring", "too time consuming" or "not interesting". However, when they were asked an additional question whether they like songs and lyrics, most of the learners' answers were positive, but they argued that song lyrics are not the same as "classic" poetry in their opinion.

The activity that involved working with *The Fall of Gil-galad* poem turned out to result in rather ambiguous manner. On the positive side, the learners cooperated and worked well regarding the grammar aspect. They were able to identify the past tense words and the pattern

behind that. Two of the learners appeared to be familiar with the concept of irregular verbs, so I asked them to introduce it to the rest of the class in their own words. However, some of the vocabulary turned out to be quite demanding for them, so several less proficient learners had problems with understanding the meaning of certain lines. To at least partially compensate for this problem, I embraced the opportunity to explain to the learners that sometimes it is not a necessity to understand every single word in a written text, but it is the overall meaning (and in case of poems feelings and emotions as well) that are often more important.

In general, the learners seemed to be more interested in the context of the poem, asking several questions when provided information about Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings* as a whole, including the adaptations. When they were presented with the two pictures of Gil-galad, the majority of the class agreed they preferred *The Rings of Power*'s version, justifying their decision by the arguments regarding the quality of the pictures itself or that they liked his golden, shiny robe that he is wearing in the picture.

An interesting reaction accompanied the announcement that their task would be writing their own poem. They were surprised and some of them seemed to be even scarred, saying that they had never done this in an English class before. They were explained that it was not a test and it did not have to be a "magnificent work of art", I tried to encourage them to be creative, even "funny and silly" if they wanted. In the end, they were not able to produce long poems, but majority of the pairs would fulfil the requirement to use past tense, and some of their rhymes were good and creative.

Playing the sung version of the poem appeared to be quite successful. The learners expressed that they had liked the poem as a song more than the written version, arguing it had better atmosphere. They even asked whether there are more songs from *The Lord of the Rings* and when they were informed that they indeed are, they demanded to listen to another song next lesson, so I consider the ending of the lesson relatively successful.

Overall, in terms of language skills, this lesson covered all four of them. The least emphasized skill was probably listening, which was represented only through the song, whereas a greater emphasis was put on reading comprehension (the poem), speaking (brainstorming, the discussion, expressing their opinions) and writing (writing their own poems).

All three language systems were represented as well, as the poem was used to demonstrate the grammatical aspect of past tense, provided new vocabulary within a context, with the learners also practicing its pronunciation.

Questionnaire analysis:

The question	YES	NO
1. Do you like watching movies/TV shows?	90,1 % (10/11)	9,1 % (1/11)
2. Do you like reading?	18,2 % (2/11)	81,8 % (9/11)
3. Do you like fantasy as a genre?	63,6 % (7/11)	27,3 % (3/11)
4. Have you ever watched Lord of the Rings?	45,5 % (5/11)	54,5 % (6/11)
5. Have you ever watched The Rings of Power?	9,1 % (1/11)	90,1 % (10/11)
6. Have you ever read something written by Tolkien?	9,1 % (1/11)	90,1 % (10/11)

The data from the questionnaire depict that in this class, there is undeniable dominance of movie/TV shows over reading as a preferred form of media. Considering the ratio of 90,1 % of the learners liking movies and 81,8 % of the learners not liking reading, it more or less indicates that planning lessons that are based exclusively on literacy texts might be rather ineffective, especially in cases where the literature can be accompanied by its existing cinematic adaptations.

The questionnaire also reveals that despite the fact that more than a half of the class appear to be enjoyers of fantasy as a genre, not even 50 % watched *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy. However, out of the three options of encountering Tolkien's world that this questionnaire presents, Jackson's movie trilogy still remains the dominant mediator of stories from Middle-earth, as only 9,1 % seem to be familiar with the remaining two options, regardless *The Rings of Power* being more recent and modern work.

Improvement suggestions:

Considering that the learners did not seem to be very enthusiastic about reading and poetry, I would probably dedicate less time to directly working with the poem and rather add another activity that might make the lesson more dynamic and make the learners more active, for example a role play or any other task that would utilize drama.

Based on the experience, I would recommend re-positioning of the sung version of the poem to an earlier stage of the lesson plan to motivate the students into working with it.

However, I still consider the lesson to be rather successful as it served its purpose in terms of expected outcomes for the learners and our own research, but the fact that it did not appear to be very motivating for the students because this class basically does not contain readers suggests that the lesson might be more effective if applied to a class that the teacher knows and is aware of their interest in reading.

5.2 Lesson plan 2

Class: 6th grade

Number of learners: 11 (7 boys, 4 girls)

Topic: Traveling, directions, past tense

Time duration: 45 minutes

Expected outcomes:

- At the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to understand and also produce directions and guidance in both, written and spoken forms
- Pupils will be able to comprehend and produce a text that serves as instructions in the past tense
- Pupils will be able to describe and justify their decision-making process
- Pupils will be able to express their opinions on the subjects that they are presented with

Teaching aids, supplementary materials: stationaries, printed maps, printed pictures from the movies, a questionnaire

Lesson procedure:

Introduction (max. 5 minutes)

- The greetings between the teacher (T) and the learners (Ls)
- T asks Ls to try to recap the previous lesson that was concerned with Tolkien in their own words to get them talking a bit
- T provides Ls general information about the upcoming lesson regarding its topic and purpose

Warm-up activity – A journey preparations (max. 5 minutes)

T asks learners to make pairs (and one group of three) and get a piece of paper and a pen.

The task for the learners is to brainstorm and create a list of things and necessities they would take with them if they were about to undergo a long and dangerous journey by foot, similar to Frodo's and Sam's adventure.

The teacher introduces the situation: *Now imagine that you are in a medieval fantasy world and must go across the whole land to fulfil a certain quest. You are going to travel by foot and the journey will take two months. There will be various terrains and obstacles that you will have to overcome, and the journey might be dangerous because there are many enemies that are searching for you, so you need to be as inconspicuous and careful as possible. What*

things are you going to take with you that will help you with the journey? Make a list of them.
Remember, it is a medieval fantasy world, so there are no such things as smartphones. However,
there is magic, so don't be afraid to be creative with it if you like.

After providing the Ls with some time to work on their lists, the pairs will compare their ideas. T (or the peers as well) might ask the Ls to explain or justify some of their ideas.

Working with the map and pictures (~ 15 minutes)

The learners can either stay in the pairs in which they completed the previous activity, or they can mix and create new pairs (and one group of three)

The teacher provides each pair with a map of Middle-earth (see figure 10). The map is also projected on the screen (if possible)

Then, T slowly and clearly reads a text that describes the journey of Frodo and Sam from *The Lord of the Rings* movie (see figure 11) in terms of directions, places they visited, and in some cases what situation they encountered there. Ls' task is to listen carefully and draw the described journey in their maps, ideally in a distinctive colour so it is clearly identifiable. The text is read twice so every pair have a fair chance to draw the journey correctly.

Afterwards, T provides Ls with the written version of the text that was read. First, the Ls have the opportunity to verify the accuracy of their drawings and make corrections if needed, as they are given time to quickly go through the text. T then hands out several pictures from the movies (see figure 12). Learners are instructed to go through the text and through their journeys drawings and match the situations portrayed in the pictures with the places on the maps.

When finished, T asks several control questions to verify Ls' accuracy in their drawings and matching pictures and that they understand what happened in these situations. (e.g. *What happened in the Weathertop when the Hobbits encountered the black riders? / With whom they met in Lothlórien?*).

Writing – "An alternative way" (10 – 15 minutes)

T provides a simple overview of the rest of the map, explains the most significant places and what to expect there.

Ls are asked to attempt to plan another, alternative route for the Hobbits that might potentially be safer or faster (or both), and draw it on a map, ideally using a different colour than they used while they were drawing the original path, and also to write a short paragraph in which they briefly describe the journey and the reasons for the decisions they made.

The pairs then present their new, alternative paths to the rest of the class.

<u>Preferences presentation</u> (~ 5 minutes)

Ls are presented with the PowerPoint presentation (see figure 14) that juxtaposes the characters from *The Lord of the Rings* movies and *The Rings of Power* TV series

Ls provide their opinions on the characters and in each case select the version they prefer

<u>Ending the lesson</u> (max. 5 minutes)

The learners are given the second, post-lessons questionnaire to fulfil

T thanks L for their cooperation, summarises the main points of the lesson, answers the remaining questions if there are any and says goodbye.

Commentary, reflection and analysis:

This lesson is deliberately built in a different manner than the previous lesson with this class. It is more focused on the cinematic versions of Tolkien's work rather than on his authentic written texts, putting a great emphasis on communication and cooperation. Moreover, the nature of the lesson (or at least of its main part) intentionally corresponded with the thematic unit the learners were dealing with in their textbooks at the time, which was travelling.

During the introduction part, the previous lesson was reminded and recapped, with the addition of a promised *Lord of the Rings* song that the learners had been previously asking for. For this purpose, I decided to choose *Edge of Night*, the Pippin's song from *The Return of the King* movie which is not a sung version of any original Tolkien's poem. It was written and performed for the purpose of the movie, which I considered quite fitting since this lesson is more adaptations-oriented, so I hoped it might set the right atmosphere, and to my personal delight it really did. The learners appeared to enjoy the song, despite it being sad, and started asking further details.

The warm-up activity appeared to follow the success of the song. The learners seemed they are enjoying their personal discussions about what to take or not take for the journey, although frequent reminders that they use English exclusively were needed, as they were often shifting into Czech. The result was a pleasant scale of ideas from the expected ones such as a sword, matches, water bags etc. to really creative and entertaining ideas, for example an invisibility cloak, self-cooking pots or even a dog.

The learners seemed to enjoy working with the maps as well. However, since the map of Middle-earth is relatively detailed and complicated, several moments when the learners became confused appeared, so in final, the map needed to be read not twice, but three times. The learners also displayed problems with orientation regarding cardinal points, especially

confusing whether east is to the left or to the right and vice versa with the west direction. Nevertheless, after some time, every pair managed to draw their route more or less correctly.

Nonetheless, the learners showcased a great interest in the pictures that they were handed after drawing the route (see figure 12). They were originally meant to only accompany the map, but since the children became interested in them to a greater extent than had been expected and started asking questions, a nice discussion that was even accompanied by a number of short movie excerpts from YouTube that depicted some of the scenes portrayed in the pictures - to provide further context to them – ensued. The discussion and learners' interest were welcomed, as it could be connected to the control questions to verify the learners' comprehension of the text.

Due to the unexpected discussion and time pressure, the part in which the learners were supposed to plan an alternative route for the Hobbits had to be reduced in term of time span. Nevertheless, pupils managed to design their routes, but as they became excited while working on them, I had to frequently calm them down because they were often shouting and interrupting others, so the activity turned out to be slightly chaotic and disorganized.

The results for the preferences presentation can be found, together with the table, below.

This lesson, in a similar manner as the previous one, managed to cover all four skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing. However, the approach, used materials and the distribution ration of these skills appear to be rather different. The communicative and interactive nature of the lesson suggest that the most represented skill might have been speaking, followed by listening (the song, the video excerpts, listening to the direction instruction), while writing and reading were not represented in the identical amount, but they were still present nevertheless (in verifying the correctness of the drawn route, matching pictures according to events described in the text and writing their own short paragraph describing their alternative plan).

In terms of the language systems, the past tense grammar was practiced via the instruction text, and the lesson provided a great amount of new vocabulary through the videos and texts that learners also practiced pronouncing during the discussions.

Overall, I rate this lesson as more successful than the first one, as learners seemed more invested motivated and interested in the topic and to participate in the tasks as well.

Questionnaire analysis:

The question	YES	NO
1. Was the lesson 1 enjoyable for you?	54,5 % (6/11)	45,5 % (5/11)
2. Was the lesson 2 enjoyable for you?	90,1 % (10/11)	9,1 % (1/11)
3. Were the lessons demanding?	45,5 % (5/11)	54,5 % (6/11)
4. After the lessons, would you like to watch the movies/the Tv show now (or again, in case you already have)?	81,8 % (9/11)	18,2 % (2/11)
5. Would you be interested in reading Tolkien's books?	36,4 % (4/11)	63,6 % (7/11)
6. Do you think movies and TV series should be part of the English lessons more often?	90,1 % (10/11)	9,1 % (1/11)
7. Do you think literature should be part of the lessons more often?	36,4 % (4/11)	63,6 % (7/11)

The results of the post-lessons questionnaire confirm both, my impression which I gained during the second lesson, i.e. that the lesson number two was more successful and interesting for the learners, and also the presumption that by including the movies, together with other visual-based materials (the pictures and maps), the learners would enjoy the lesson to a greater extend. This is furthermore basically confirmed by the fact that majority of the learners in this particular class are of an opinion that the movies should be a frequent part of the English lessons, which cannot be stated, according to the result, about literature, as only slightly more what one third think so.

For me personally, a pleasant result showcases also the question number four, as the majority of the students replied that they would be interested in watching the adaptations, which I consider a great success, because the pre-lesson questionnaire displayed that a lower percentage of the learners had been originally interested in fantasy genre.

However, the same could be said about the question number five as well, as the pre-lesson questionnaire results state that only two learners had been interested in reading, while the post-lesson questionnaire displays that four members of the class would be willing to read Tolkien's books, which is still a minority of the class, but compared to the pre-lessons questionnaire, it is an improvement. This of course cannot be applied to reading literature in general, but I still perceive it as progress.

Improvement suggestions:

Considering the amount of time that was spent on drawing the Hobbits' route according to instructions and that the learners had problems with cardinal points, I would probably simplify the text, or reduce the number of the individual points on map, so the activity would not consume that much of time.

As the learners became quite interested in the pictures and movie excerpts, a similar reaction might be expected in other classes as well, so the teacher might open the YouTube clips in tabs at the beginning of the lesson or prior to the activity (for example when the learners are working on their own), so when the activity is actually happening, the teacher would not have to spend time searching for the videos. It might make the lesson more smooth, effective, and it would not disrupt its dynamics.

5.3 Lesson plan 3

Class: 8th grade

Number of learners: 16 (9 boys, 7 girls)

Topic: Imagination and storytelling, adjectives

Time duration: 45 minutes

Expected outcomes:

- At the end of the lesson, learners will be able to discuss on the topics regarding movies, express their opinions on it (in particular on fantasy genre and *The Lord of the Rings*) and compare provided samples

- Learners will be able to identify and understand adjectives in a spoken text presented to them, and correctly spell them in their written form

- Learners will be able to write a short narrative text on the topic of movie plot

Teaching aids, supplementary materials: computer and data projector, worksheets with transcriptions, a questionnaire

Lesson procedure:

Introduction (max. 5 minutes)

The greetings between the teacher (T) and the learners (Ls)

T introduces himself and provides Ls general information about the upcoming lesson regarding its topic and purpose

Ls are given the introductory, pre-lessons questionnaire to fulfil

<u>Video and speaking part</u> (~ 20 minutes)

Introduction to the topic by discussing literature, movies, Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings*. T asks learners questions regarding their attitudes towards the topics, whether they have read something written by Tolkien (or any other fantasy literature), whether they have seen the movies and the TV series, their opinions on it etc.

Teacher plays the opening sequences (the prologues narrated by the character of Galadriel) from *The Fellowship of the Rings* (My movie clips Archive, 2021) and *The Rings of Power* (r/LOTR on Prime, 2022) adaptations. Learners are asked to make notes about anything they consider interesting or confusing, even if it is a minor detail.

The following discussion is focused on the comparison of the two clips, noted observations of the learners and the questions they might ask. T opens the discussion with general questions such as *Are there any obvious similarities? / Which of the clips do you find more visually pleasing? / What do you think are the main differences between the clips in terms of the topic? What aspects did you like the most? Is there something you did not enjoy?* etc. and encourages the learners to develop discussion and ask further questions.

<u>Reading and listening part</u> (~ 10 minutes)

The learners are asked to select, as the whole class, the video clip that they enjoyed more out of the two and with which they would like to work in the following activity (a democratic vote for which clip receives more votes).

According to the clip that is chosen (T is ready for both options), the teacher hands out a worksheet (see figure 13) that contains the transcript of a section of the Galadriel's monologue, with some of the words missing (primarily adjectives, as they are part of the Ls' unit at the time).

The learners read through the text and are given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the text if they have any.

T plays the part of the clip that corresponds with the transcribed text and Ls' task is to fill in the missing words. The clip is played twice so the learners can check or change their answers. During the activity, the teacher monitors the class and possibly helps the Ls with the spelling in case they need help. Afterwards, T and L check the answers and the T answers additional questions.

<u>Writing part</u> (~ 10 minutes)

In the following activity, the learners are asked to think about what was said in the prologue and to write a short paragraph about how the story might continue or end (or both).

Learners, who are familiar with *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Rings of Power* story can either summarise the plot or write their own alternative version, and readers who are not familiar with the work should think of possible options what might happen next. Ls can work either individually or in pairs, and subsequently present their writings to the rest of the class.

Ending the lesson (max. 5 minutes)

T thanks L for their cooperation, summarises the main points of the lesson, answers the remaining questions if there are any and says goodbye.

Commentary, reflection and analysis:

The tasks for this lesson had been chosen, as it was with the 6th graders, with respect to the class's at that time current topic, which was imagination and storytelling, so logically, it seemed to be a great opportunity to take advantage of it and to connect such theme with Tolkien and the adaptations. The grammar topic assigned to the thematic unit was "adjectives", which I attempted to incorporate into the lessons as well.

The class proved to be very talkative since the very beginning and they seemed to be pleased when I announced that we would work with movies' excerpts. Several learners welcomed the topic of *The Lord of the Rings* with a great enthusiasm.

During the discussion was revealed that, in contrast to the 6th grade, every member of the class had at least some minimal knowledge regarding Tolkien, his work or the adaptation. Even the learners who had never seen the movies knew names such as Gandalf and Frodo or knew that there was this creature called Gollum.

After playing both of the prologues, an interesting discussion followed. The learners pointed out that the clips appear to be similar in structures, and asked whether the clips were narrated by the same character. They noticed that the same antagonist, Sauron, appears in both clips as well, and some of the learners asked questions about Morgoth, as he was mentioned in *The Rings of Power* trailer. However, the question that was the most interesting, at least from the subjective perspective, was when one of the learners asked the reason why the names of the characters were pronounced with such "a weird" accent. I did not expect such question, but it was a pleasant surprise which also indicated good listening skills, so I attempted to provide a satisfactory answer, referring to the different languages that outlined the origins and rules for some of the names Tolkien had created.

When the learners were asked to select one of the clips to work with in the following activity, the prologue that received more votes was *The Rings of Power*'s. That was another rather unexpected result, as a number of learners, predominantly those who claimed to like

Jackson's movies, had expressed their criticism towards the series, even declaring it to be "trash" or "cringe". As the reasons of their selection were provided arguments that the clip was highly visually pleasing and that, opposite to the trilogy prologue, it was something new. The task itself in which they were listening and filling in the blank spaces proceeded more or less without any significant issues, except a number of spelling mistakes or not knowing certain vocabulary.

During the writing part, the majority of the learners decided to work in pairs. It turned out that they were not quite used to produce creative writing or writing narratives in general, which resulted into the activity consuming more time and the learners did not seem to enjoy it to the same degree as the previous activities, but they managed to fulfil the task anyway.

This lesson managed to cover all four skills in more or less balanced manner, as well as to connect them to the thematic and grammar unit of the 8th graders. Speaking was represented and practiced via the discussions related to Tolkien's mythology and its adaptations, listening and reading was connected during the activity in which the learners worked with the transcription of the prologue, and the final part of the lesson covered writing, as they were supposed to employ their creativity and outline a story that would follow the prologue.

The language systems were included throughout the whole lesson. The grammar aspect in the form of adjectives was practiced mainly through the prologue worksheet as majority of the omitted words were adjectives. The prologues also introduced a portion of vocabulary related to storytelling, and pronunciation even received special attention after the unexpected question from one of the learners that was described above.

Questionnaire analysis:

The question	YES	NO
1. Do you like watching movies/Tv shows?	100% (16/16)	0% (0/16)
2. Do you like reading?	37,5 % (6/16)	62,5 % (10/16)
3. Do you like fantasy as a genre?	62,5 % (10/16)	37,5 % (6/16)
4. Have you ever watched Lord of the Rings?	50 % (8/16)	50 % (8/16)
5. Have you ever watched The Rings of Power?	18,75 % (3/16)	81,25 % (13/16)
6. Have you ever read something written by Tolkien?	12,5 % (2/16)	87,5 % (14/16)

In comparison to the 6th graders, the overall results of the questionnaire showcase that the 8th graders appear to have a slightly greater experience with Tolkien and adaptations of his work, as well as they seem to be more interested in reading, despite the fact that the class is still

predominantly comprised of non-readers. The percentage that appears to be more or less equal is the class's overall interest in fantasy genre, and the amount of learners actually reading a work written by Tolkien. Overall, it still clearly outlines the dominance of audio-visual format over written literature in terms of learners' preferences.

Improvement suggestions

The majority of this lesson did not contain any significant problems. The learners were interested in the topic and participated actively. The only problematic part of this lesson appeared to be the writing task, as the learners had issues to transfer their ideas into a structured, written narrative. A number of the learners also seemed to have problems with creativity and inspiration, so in that regard, I would suggest that for this activity, the teacher might have prepared a bank of ideas or very general scenarios (maybe only the final fates of the characters) that the learners who are lost may use as a foundation or just an inspiration, and build their narratives on it.

5.4 Lesson plan 4

Class: 8th grade

Number of learners: 16 (9 boys, 7 girls)

Topic: Imagination and storytelling, adjectives

Time duration: 45 minutes

Expected outcomes:

- At the end of the lesson, learners will be able to provide detailed description and comparison of provided pictures, utilizing a technique of systematic analysis
- Learners will be able to express and justify their opinions regarding presented questions and visual materials
- Learners will be able to produce a short, simple narrative text in a written form, based on a certain, concrete topic that they further develop

Teaching aids, supplementary materials: computer and data projector, a questionnaire, stationaries

Lesson procedure:

Introduction (max. 5 minutes)

- The greetings between the teacher (T) and the learners (Ls)
- T asks Ls to try to recap the previous lesson that was concerned with Tolkien in their own words to get them talking a bit

- T provides Ls general information about the upcoming lesson regarding its topic and purpose

<u>Warm-up activity – "Would you rather" game</u> (~ 5 minutes)

T asks several questions with the formula "Would you rather A or B" regarding movies, literature, fantasy, imagination etc.

Learners choose between the two options and may justify their choice if they would like
The questions:

- *Would you rather read a really long book that provides a complex and detailed story or watch a two-hour movie that omits a lot of important parts but is less time-consuming and easier to comprehend?*
- *In a fantasy world, would you rather be an elf or a dwarf?*
- *Would you rather be the brave hero or mastermind villain in a movie?*
- *Would you rather remember all your dreams (even the bad ones) or forget all dreams as soon as you wake up?*
- *Would you rather watch a movie with amazing storytelling and writing but with bad visual effects or a movie that has amazing visuals but bad storytelling and writing?*
- *Would you rather live for a thousand years but experience a lot of wars and conflicts, or eighty years that are full of peace and prosperity?*
- *Would you rather spend 20 years writing a one single book that ends up being respected and celebrated, or would you rather release 20 books in 20 years that earn you money but are considered poor quality or average at best?*
- *In a fantasy world, would you rather be the best swordsman that ever lived or the most powerful wizard?*
- *Would you rather read only books for the rest of your live without being able to watch movies or would you rather watch only movies for the rest of your live without being able to read a single book?*
- *Would you rather have a magical ring that gives you wisdom or a magical ring that makes you rich?*

After answering these questions, each learner is asked to create one "Would you rather…" question on their own. When they have their questions, they can share it with the rest of the class if they want

<u>A picture analysis</u> (10 – 15 minutes)

Learners are given a choice of two pictures (see figure 14). One picture is from Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* adaptation, the second is from *The Rings of Power* TV series. Ls choose with which of the two pictures they wish to work.

The selected picture is projected on screen and a picture analysis follows. The technique that the Ls utilize is Observe – Reflect – Question. In the "observe" phase, Ls are stating claims that are 100% true about the picture (e.g. *There are two people in the picture*), in "reflect" phase, Ls are expressing their presumption that they believe is true (e.g. *The man might be a king*), and in the "question" phase, they formulate questions that they wish to be answered. After the analysis is finished, the teacher reveals the supplementary information about the picture and answers the questions, so the Ls' idea about the picture is complete.

Following the analysis, both pictures are projected on the screen and Ls' try to compare them. They might point out similarities, differences, elements they find confusing, express their opinions on which picture they prefer etc.

<u>Writing a short story</u> (10 – 15 minutes)

The second picture, the one that was not chosen and analysed in the previous task, is now projected on the screen. The Ls are asked to look at the picture, get inspired aby anything that they are able to see and consider interesting in the picture (it might be the picture as a whole, a character, a building, or even the smallest, minor detail in the background), and to write a short story (half to a whole A5 page) based on the element they have chosen.

The story might be directly related to the theme of the picture, or it can follow a completely different direction, that is up to the learners, they are given creative freedom in this regard.

The only condition that the learners are assigned with is that they should use at least three adjectives in -ed or -ing forms (e.g. *exciting, amazed*).

The Ls then share their stories with the rest of the class.

<u>Preferences presentation</u> (~ 5 minutes)

Ls are presented with the PowerPoint presentation that juxtaposes the characters from *The Lord of the Rings* movies and *The Rings of Power* TV series

Ls provide their opinions on the characters and in each case select the version they prefer

<u>Ending the lesson</u> (max. 5 minutes)

The learners are given the second, post-lessons questionnaire to fulfil

T thanks L for their cooperation, summarises the main points of the lesson, answers the remaining questions if there are any and says goodbye.

Commentary, reflection and analysis:

The purpose of the warm-up game was not only to energize the learners and to shift their minds into the mode of English language, but also to support their creative thinking and extend the horizons of their imagination since a number of them seemed to lack the inspiration during the previous lesson. All of the learners were familiar with "Would you rather..." game and appeared to enjoy answering the questions. They became so invested in the game that towards the end of this activity, several minor arguments over some of the choices happened between certain learners, so I had to calm the class down and restore the discipline. Bur in regards of speaking, the activity served its purpose rather well.

After being presented with the two pictures and given the opportunity to select one, this time, in contrast to the previous lesson, the learners chose the picture from *The Lord of the Rings* movies. They stated that they were "feeling tired" that day and the picture provides more relaxed and cozy feeling.

The learners appeared to be quite interested in the picture analysis technique as they claimed that none of them had never encountered it before, so it was a completely new and different strategy how to approach looking at and describing pictures. However, at the beginning, several learners seemed to have difficulty to distinguish between the "observe" and "reflect" phases of the analysis, frequently merging them together, so they needed to be reminded several times before they finally understood and were able to analyse the picture, applying the desired procedure.

During the comparison of the two pictures, they were given more freedom in terms of what to state about the two pictures. The learners compared the obvious differences (e.g. that the first picture is situated inside of a building, while the second is situated outside etc.) without any particular issues except now knowing certain concrete expressions sometimes.

When I announced that they would write another piece of narrative text, the reactions were not very enthusiastic, but after the explanation of the task, they seemed to like this writing activity more than the one from the previous lesson. Some of the learners attempted to utilize more elements that could be seen in the picture, while others developed their narratives into something completely different such as dreams or a complicated love story. However, despite the fact that they were supposed to implement at least three adjectives to their story, a portion of the learners seemed to forgot or ignore this rule, whereas in some cases, the learners appeared to overuse the adjectives, so this aspect of the task turned out to be slightly complicated.

The results for the preferences presentation activity that followed the writing task can be found, together with the table, below.

This lesson was not as balanced as the previous in terms of covering all four language skills. Speaking and writing appear to be the dominant parts of the lesson, while reading and listening were less represented and not as practiced. In other words, this lesson was primarily focused on learners' active production rather than passive reception.

Regarding the language systems, the vocabulary and pronunciation seemed to be practiced to a greater extent than a grammar aspect, especially after a number of learners omitted the implementation of adjectives into the writing task.

Questionnaire analysis:

The question	YES	NO
1. Was the lesson 1 enjoyable for you?	75 % (12/16)	25 % (4/16)
2. Was the lesson 2 enjoyable for you?	68,8 % (11/16)	31,2 % (5/16)
3. Were the lessons demanding?	37,5 % (6/16)	62,5 % (10/16)
4. After the lessons, would you like to watch the movies/the Tv show now (or again, in case you already have)?	75 % (12/16)	25 % (4/16)
5. Would you be interested in reading Tolkien's books?	43,8 % (7/16)	56,2 % (9/16)
6. Do you think movies and TV series should be part of the English lessons more often?	87,5 % (14/16)	12,5 % (2/16)
7. Do you think literature should be part of the lessons more often?	43,8 % (7/16)	56,2 % (9/16)

The results showcase that regarding the level of enjoyment from the learnes' perspective, the lessons in 8th grade appear to be more balanced than the lessons in 6th grade, with only slightly over one third of the class considering the lessons "demanding". We can also observe an increase in learners' interests in relation to both, watching the adaptations and reading the books, despite the increase in the "reading" category being rather minor. A fact which also might be considered interesting to point out is the percentage of learners, who are of opinion that literature should be a frequent par of English lesson is equal to the percentage to learners' whose answer to the question number five was positive as well.

Improvement suggestions:

Despite the majority of the learners apparently enjoyed the lesson, several improvements to the lesson could be applied nevertheless.

In the picture analysis activity, the teacher might provide the learners with a printed template that outlines the individual phases of the analysis and into which the learners would be able to write their notes. It might also help the learners with understanding the differences between the phases of the analysis and to help them orientate withing the task.

To ensure that the learners will implement the adjectives into their writings, the rule might be written on the board during the activity so everyone is able to clearly see it, or the learners can be instructed to write the rule directly into the paper they are writing on.

A brief whole class brainstorming prior to the writing activity either on adjectives or creative ideas might be helpful as well.

5.5 The "Preference presentation" results

Presentation slide	3rd grade preference	6th grade preference	8th grade preference
Legolas vs Arondir	Legolas (76,9 %)	Legolas (90,1 %)	Legolas (87,5 %)
Elrond 1 vs Elrond 2	Eldrond 2 (61,5 %)	Elrond 1 (72,7 %)	Elrond 1 (81,3 %)
Galadriel 1 vs Galadriel 2	Galadriel 1 (53,8 %)	Galadriel 2 (54,6 %)	Galadriel 1 (68,8 %)
Minas Tirith vs Númenor	Númenor (69,2 %)	Minas Tirith (54,6 %)	Númenor (62,5 %)
Halbrand vs Sauron	Halbrand (61,5 %)	Sauron (63,6 %)	Sauron (56,3 %)
Frodo vs Nori	Nori (53,8 %)	Frodo (72,7 %)	Frodo (81,3 %)

Considering the general, overall macro results of the activity, presumably the most significant and noticeable differences in choices may be observed between the 3rd graders and the other two classes in question. While the results in 6th and 8th grades showcase the dominance of Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, in 3rd grade it appear to be *The Rings of Power* pictures that the learners predominantly preferred.

The only choice that remains constant throughout the whole spectrum is the preference of Legolas over Arondir. However, the reasons for choosing one over the other appear not to be as consistent as the final results. When asked why they chose Legolas, 3rd graders' were predominantly referring to the design of the costume in a sense that the green is "happier" colour than black and grey and that it associates with woods and nature, with some of the learners adding that an Elf looks better with long hair. The minority who chose Arondir mostly agreed

that his facial expression in the picture "looks interesting" and they would have liked to know the reasons why he looked so concerned. In case of 6th and especially 8th graders, the reasons for choosing Legolas over Arondir seemed to be, in some of the cases, more radical and not purely costume-oriented, scaling from some of the learners arguing Legolas simply being "better looking", "typical elf", or "a classic" to several learners declaring even that "Elves should not be black" or "have short hair", which, among other things, undoubtedly indicated the connection to general stereotypes regarding the appearance of Elves.

In a similar manner (i.e. the "correct" way how an Elf should look like) was in 6th and 8th grades justified the choice of "Elrond 1" (*The Lord of the Rings* movies) over Elrond 2 *(The Rings of Power* series), with learners arguing that Hugo Weaving's version looks "more mature" and "noble" for an Elf, while the Amazon's version seems to be "too young looking for an Elf" or "like a boy". In contrast, the 3rd graders chose Robert' Aramayo's "Elrond 2" version, because they were of opinion that he looked more "friendly", "positive" and "less scary".

The difference between boys' and girls' preferences, another factor besides the age of learners that might influence the choices, appeared to be the most prominent when selecting between the two versions of Galadriel, and also between Sauron and Halbrand. In the classes where the majority of learners consisted of boys, the preference of Sauron, depicted in his war armour, concluded as dominant, despite the fact that the majority of girls voted for Halbrand. The reasons of 3rd graders regarding the choice of Halbrand over Sauron were justified in a similar manner as in the Elrond's case. The choice of Galadriel seemed to be influenced by this gender aspect as well, as girls in general appeared to vote for "lady" or "princess-like" version of Galadriel (i.e. Cate Blanchett's movie version), emphasizing her elegance, noble appearance, and "beautiful dress". An exception in this formula was the 8th grade where the choices of both genders were mixed, and the crucial element turned out to be whether the learners were familiar with the adaptations or not. Majority of learners who had seen Jackson's movies and possessed some general awareness of *The Rings of Power* voted for Blanchett's Galadriel regardless their gender, claiming that Clarke's presentation of Galadriel was "annoying".

In conclusion, it appears that the age and gender of the learners together with their knowledge regarding Tolkien's adaptations showcases a direct proportion to their choices. Learners who were not familiar with the adaptations, their background, criticism and the controversy surrounding the Amazon series appeared to be more open minded in the process of choosing between the two options, as they were not influenced by the factors of "real world" surrounding the projects. The most significant contrast seemed to be between the 3rd and 8th graders, as the younger children based their votes almost exclusively on the pictures themselves,

i.e. the visuals, while the older respondents frequently justified their choices by arguments that could not be found in the pictures and required some additional knowledge.

Conclusion

The major success of J. R. R. Tolkien's 20th century novels and Peter Jackson's movie adaptations filmed at the turn of the millennium ensured a long-lasting popularity of this fantasy franchise that, together with the recent years' increased general public recognition of fantasy genre, resulted into Amazon Studios' *The Rings of Power*, a new TV series adapting Tolkien's work. However, regardless a number of different circumstances of its creation as well as the fact that the show is not officially nor legally connected to Jackson's adaptations, *The Rings of Power* still visually, aesthetically and atmospherically resembles and attempts to follow and maintain Jackson's established design of Middle-earth.

Nevertheless, from a different, educational perspective, the existence of these two adaptations, with addition of the original Tolkien's novels, might be perceived as a rich source of materials with educational potential, due to such reasons as their authenticity, various forms of language delivery (e.g. spoken x written), visually appealing scenes that situate the language within a context, or the overall popularity of movies and television among the young population, with special attention to the current increase of fantasy-based film.

The thesis examined this topic from both, artistic/filmmaking and educational perspectives to provide extensive context and understanding of the topic into detail. The educational perspective was further enhanced by the practical part of the thesis that studied and verified the didactic potential of the adaptations in real world environment.

In theoretical part, the chapter one examined adapting Tolkien's work from the perspectives of all three creators – Tolkien himself, Peter Jackson, and Amazon studios. The first subchapter provided and described the ambiguous attitude and complicated relationship of Tolkien towards people adapting his work, and based on the sources and evidence concluded that the author himself would probably be, at least to a certain degree, rather critical towards the modern-day screen adaptations. The following subchapters are focused on the adaptations, addressed the commercial sides of the projects, the visions of the creators themselves, and also the public reception and criticism. In this regard, these subchapters point out that while Jackson appeared to be criticized mainly for cuts and alternations of characters and several minor storylines, *The Rings of Power* received criticism for the lack of fidelity to the source materials and incorporating the real world modern political agenda and forced "correctness" into the work.

The chapter number two, concerned with the issue of *The Rings of Power* deliberately resembling Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings*, concluded that the main reason for this

phenomenon might be the commercial side of the project with Amazon simply building on something that has already been successfully established rather than risking the commercial failure by introducing a new design that might not be accepted by the fandom.

Third chapter explained the educational potential of the works in theory, outlined possible pros (such as authenticity, context, personal interest of the learners, audio-visual forms of language etc.) of and cons (difficulty of the language and complexity of the overall story) of using the adaptations in English language classrooms, and provided foundation for the practical part of this paper.

The practical part consisting of four lesson plans that applied the theory of using Tolkien's adaptations in the classroom into the practice with intention to verify the overall effectiveness of it. The lessons were performed in 6th and 8th grade, utilizing several different types of activities, materials and strategies. The research utilized observation as the main method of data collection, accompanied by questionnaires and statistical analysis.

The results of the research showcase that if the materials and activities are carefully selected and explained, Tolkien's adaptations might be a useful tool to teach and practice all four language skills as well as the language systems. The data obtained from the questionnaires and statistical analysis provide general opinions and awareness of the learners regarding the lessons and the adaptations themselves, indicating that the lessons had generally positive impact on learners' motivation and attitude, with 8th graders seemingly enjoying the lessons slightly more.

In conclusion, the topic of adapting Tolkien's work in modern world context is a complex and extensive issue that showcases that nothing in the world is perfect. This of course applies to the education process as well. Despite the fact that the research showcases rather positive results, and therefore the answer to the question whether it is appropriate and effective to use Tolkien's adaptations in the classroom might be "Yes, it is.", not everything worked perfectly, and considering the overall complexity of this topic, the emphasis on the importance of a careful choice of materials in order not to overwhelm and demotivate the learners must be made.

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Appendices

Figure 1: The graph of IMDb audience ratings of *The Rings of Power* TV series from March 2024 (Imdb.com, Pán Prstenů: Prsteny moci, Ratings)

IMDb rating

The IMDb rating is weighted to help keep it reliable. Learn more

IMDb RATING	YOUR RATING
★ **7.0**/10 350K	☆ Rate

User ratings

FILTER BY COUNTRY
Countries with the most ratings

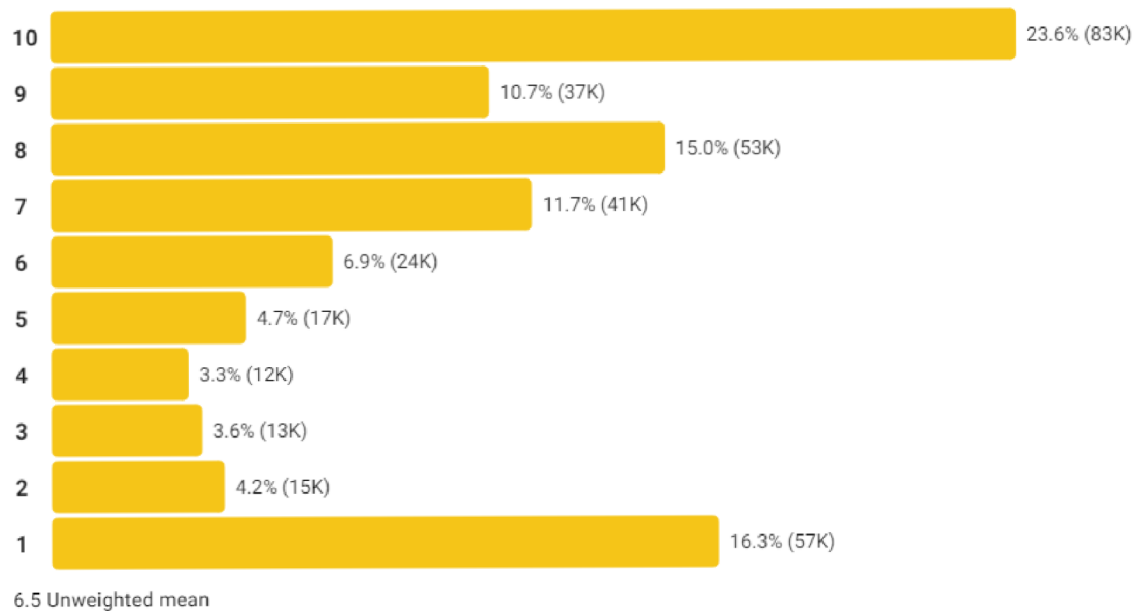United States | United Kingdom | Turkey | Germany | Brazil

Rating	Percentage (Count)
10	23.6% (83K)
9	10.7% (37K)
8	15.0% (53K)
7	11.7% (41K)
6	6.9% (24K)
5	4.7% (17K)
4	3.3% (12K)
3	3.6% (13K)
2	4.2% (15K)
1	16.3% (57K)

6.5 Unweighted mean

Figure 2: Lindon, the capital of the High Elves, *The Rings of Power*, 2022 (Screenshot, Dostupné z:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aABPxGleUE&ab_channel=TheRingsofPower)

Figure 3: Rivendell, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, 2001 (Screenshot, Dostupné z:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmDl8YjwIG8&t=1s&ab_channel=%D0%A1%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%8B%D1%87)

Figure 4: Sauron in *The Rings of Power*, episode 1 prologue, 2022 (Tvtropes.com, Characters: Rings of Power: Sauron)

Figure 5: Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* prologue (Nerdist.com, Sauron's history in Middle-Earth Explained)

Figure 6: Balrog's appearance in *The Rings of Power*, episode 7 – *The Eye* (Denofgeek.com, The Rings of Power: How the Balrog Changes Lord of the Rings Canon)

Figure 7: Balrog in *The Fellowship of the Ring* movie, 2001 (Ranker.com, Lore Details About Balrogs That The 'Lord of the Rings' Don't Tell You)

Figure 8: Gil-galad, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* movie prologue (Laurel Callahan, 2021)

Figure 9: Gil-galad, *The Rings of Power* TV series (Wegotthiscovered.com, 2022)

Figure 10: A map of Middle-earth for the practical part (Pinterest.com)

Figure 11: A text describing Frodo's and Sam's journey, printed and used during the practical part

The journey of Frodo and Sam began in Hobbiton, their home located in the Shire. They headed to east and reached Bree, a small village near the border of the Shire. In Bree, they met a mysterious man named Aragorn for the first time and teamed up with him. Aragorn, who is a ranger, led the Hobbits further east until they reached a place called Weathertop, where they were attacked by the black riders who even managed to stab Frodo. The only hope for Frodo was an Elven place called Rivendell, so they hurried to get there as quickly as possible. In Rivendell, a group of 9 companions called the fellowship of the ring was formed. They set off the Rivendell and headed south to the Moria gate, an entrance to the dwarven kingdom under the mountains where they met Balrog, a dangerous fire demon. After going through the mountains, they reached Lórien, another Elven realm where they met lady Galadriel. She gave the fellowship boats, so they sailed down the river to south to Falls of Rauros, where they fought the Orcs who killed Boromir, a human warrior, with arrows. After escaping the Orcs, Frodo and Sam left the fellowship and headed east, where they met Gollum, a weird creature who led them to the Dead Marches. They continued south and met Faramir and his group of soldiers captured

and took them to the town of Osgiliath, where they met the black riders again, this time riding flying creatures similar to dragons. After they were released, Gollum let them through the passage of Minas Morgul, where they had to fight Shelob, a giant and very ugly spider. In Mordor, they finally reached Orodruin, a big volcano where the Ring could be destroyed.

Figure 12: Pictures from *The Lord of the Rings* movies to accompany the activity with the map of Middle earth

Aragorn in the village of Bree (Screenshot, Jackson, 2001)

Weathertop, the Black riders attack the Hobbits (Screenshot, Jackson 2001)

The Fellowship meets lady Galadriel (Screenshot, Jackson, 2001)

The Fellowship of the Ring in Rivendell (Screenshot, Jackson 2001)

Moria Gate (Screenshot, 2001)

Balrog of Moria (Ranker.com, Lore Details About Balrogs That The 'Lord of the Rings' Don't Tell You)

The Fellowship sailing down the river Anduin to Falls of Rauros (Screenshot, Jackson, 2001)

Frodo and the Black riders in Osgiliath (Screenshot, Jackson 2002)
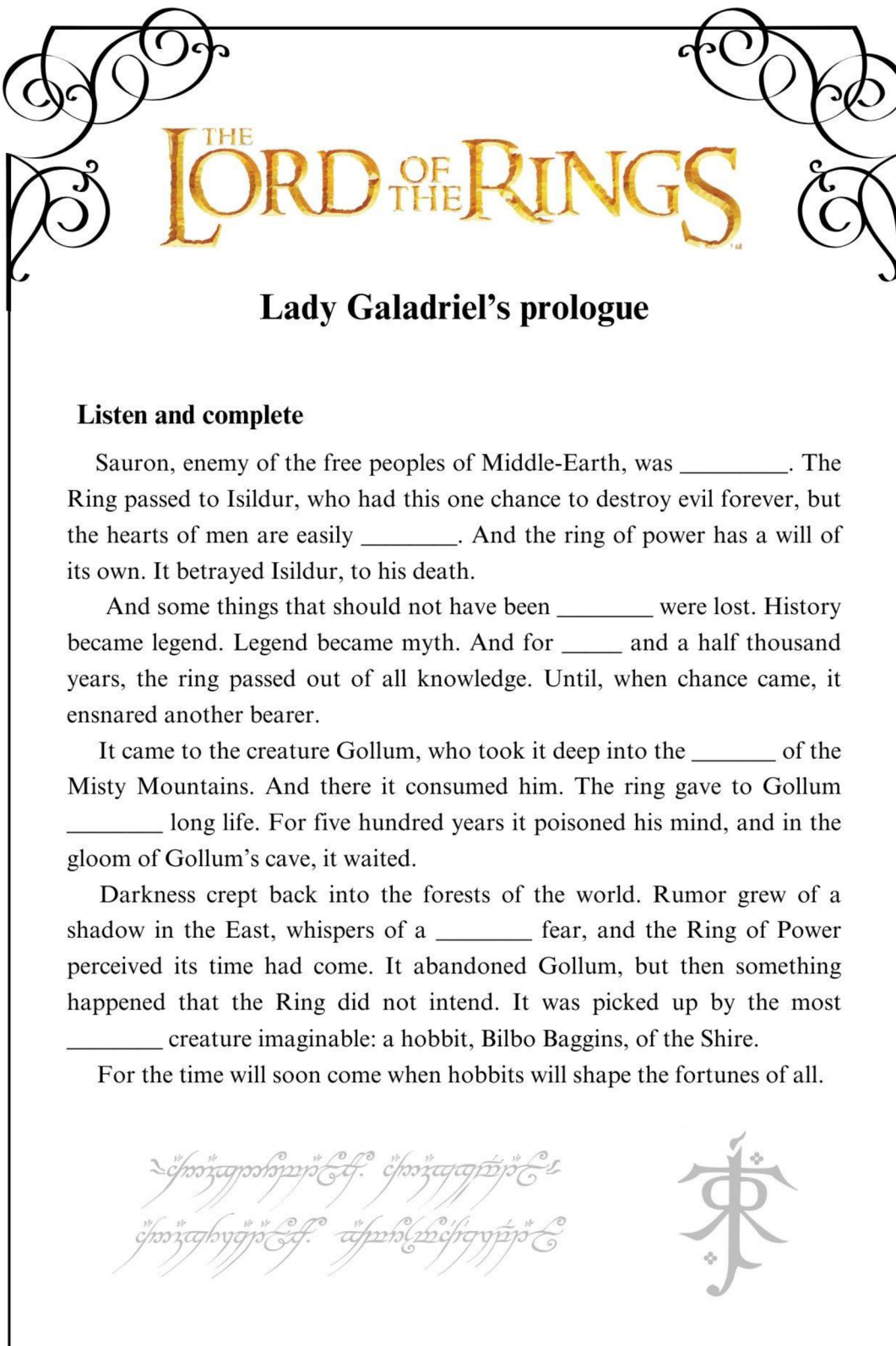
Sam fighting Shelob (Screenshot, Jackson, 2003)

Orodruin (Screenshot, Jackson, 2003)

Figure 13: Worksheets with the transcriptions of Galadriel's prologues

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Lady Galadriel's prologue

Listen and complete

Sauron, enemy of the free peoples of Middle-Earth, was _____. The Ring passed to Isildur, who had this one chance to destroy evil forever, but the hearts of men are easily _____. And the ring of power has a will of its own. It betrayed Isildur, to his death.

And some things that should not have been _____ were lost. History became legend. Legend became myth. And for _____ and a half thousand years, the ring passed out of all knowledge. Until, when chance came, it ensnared another bearer.

It came to the creature Gollum, who took it deep into the _____ of the Misty Mountains. And there it consumed him. The ring gave to Gollum _____ long life. For five hundred years it poisoned his mind, and in the gloom of Gollum's cave, it waited.

Darkness crept back into the forests of the world. Rumor grew of a shadow in the East, whispers of a _____ fear, and the Ring of Power perceived its time had come. It abandoned Gollum, but then something happened that the Ring did not intend. It was picked up by the most _____ creature imaginable: a hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, of the Shire.

For the time will soon come when hobbits will shape the fortunes of all.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS
THE RINGS OF POWER

Lady Galadriel's prologue

Listen and complete

We had no word for death. For we thought our joys would be _____. We thought our light would never dim. So when the Great Foe, Morgoth, destroyed the very light of our home… We resisted. And a _____ of Elves went to war. We left Valinor, our home, and journeyed to a _____ realm. One filled with untold perils and strange creatures beyond count. A place known as Middle-earth.

They said it would be over _____, but the war left Middle-earth in ruin. And would last centuries. Now, we learned many words for death. In the end, Morgoth would be _____. But not before much sorrow. For his Orcs had spread to every corner of Middle-earth, multiplying ever greater under the command of his most devoted servant, a _____ and cunning sorcerer. They called him Sauron.

My brother vowed to seek him out and destroy him. But Sauron found him first and marked his flesh with a symbol. One whose meaning even our _____ could not discern. And there, in the darkness, his vow became mine. And so, we hunted. To the ends of the Earth we hunted Sauron. But the trail grew _____. Year gave way to year. Century gave way to century. And for many Elves, the pain of those days passed out of thought and _____. More and more of our kind began to believe that Sauron was but a memory. And the threat, at last, was ended. I wish I could be one of them.

Figure 13: Pictures for "Lesson plan 4" – the picture analysis, comparison and the writing activities
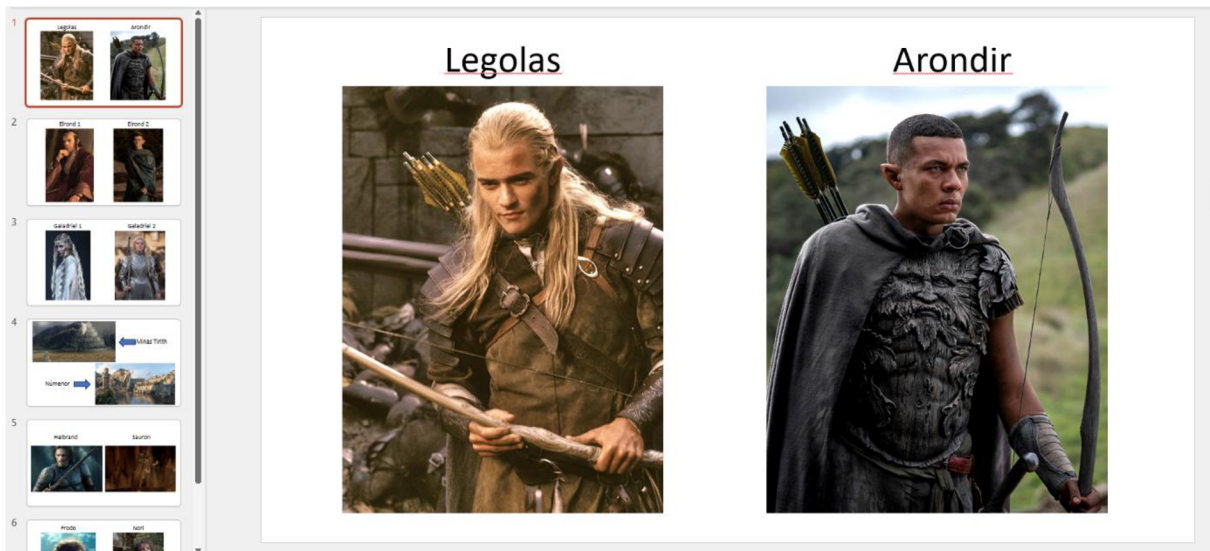

Gandalf and Bilbo in Bag End (Imdb.com, 2024b)
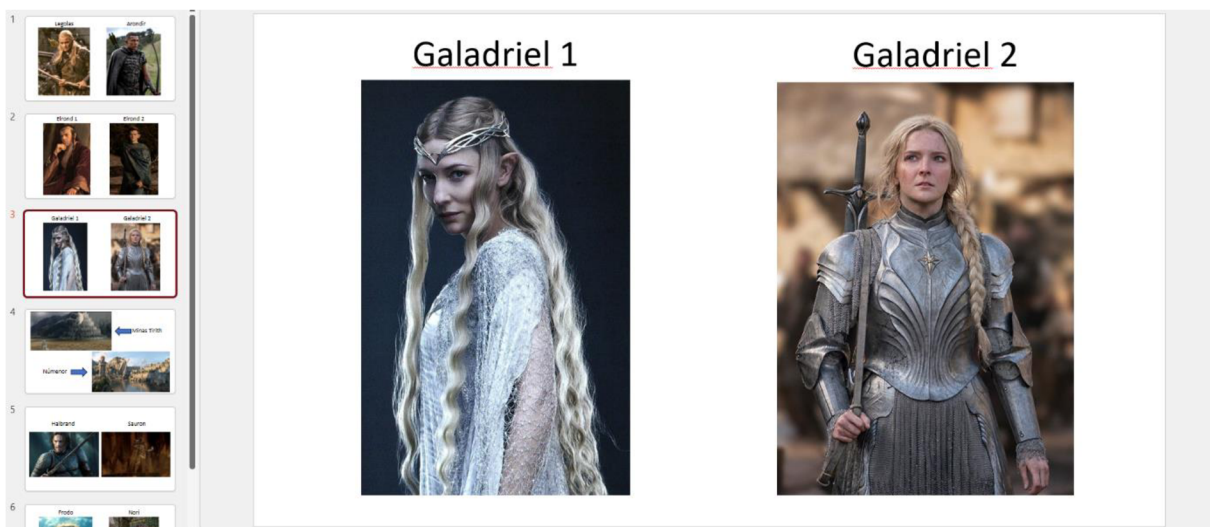

Galadriel and Elendil in Númenor (Imdb.com, 2024a)

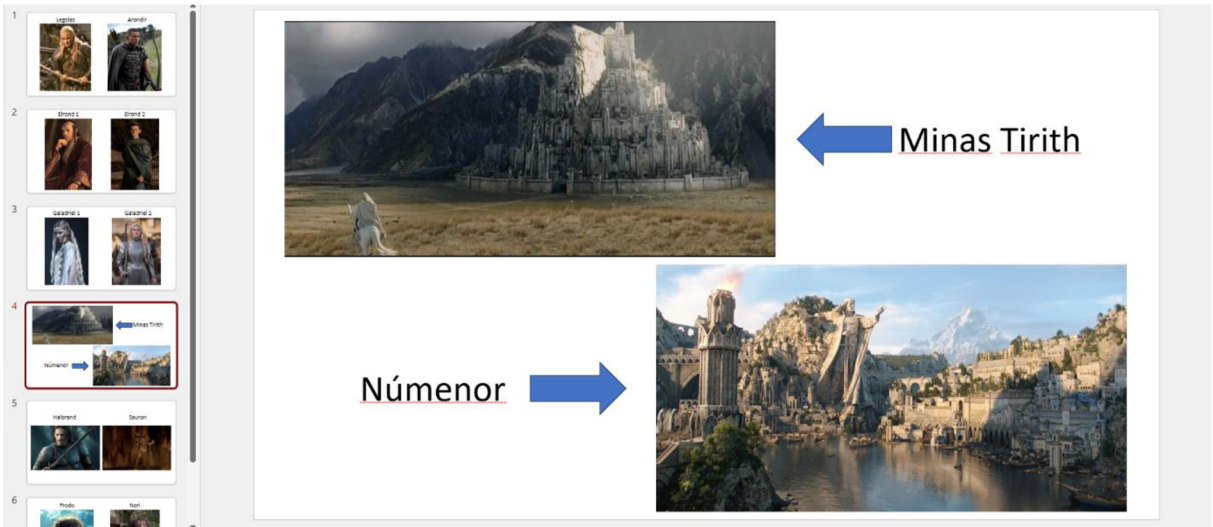Figure 14: The "Preference presentation" PowerPoint slides (Screenshots)
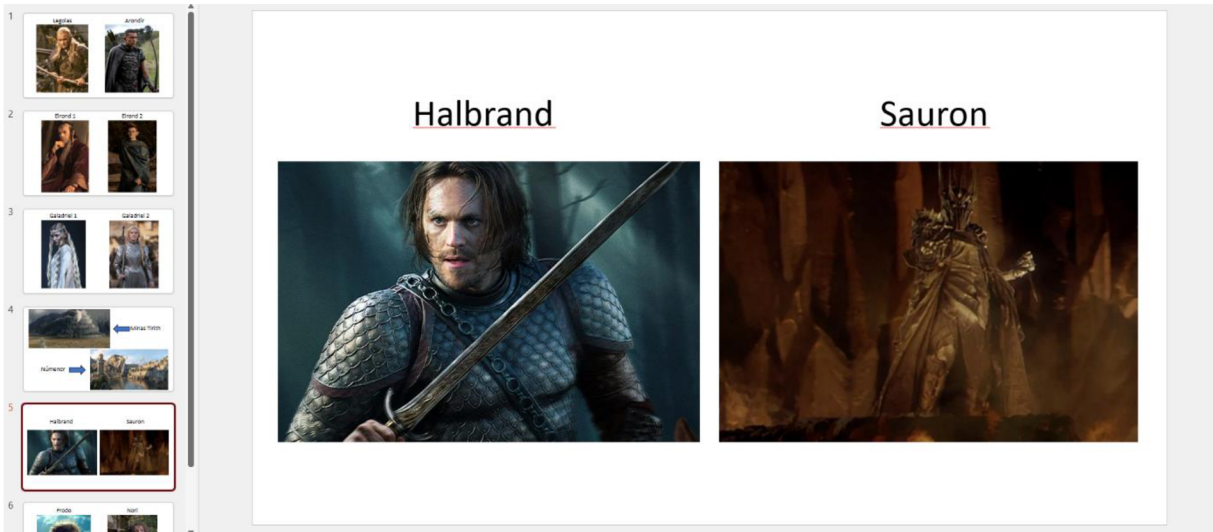

Picture 1: Legolas vs Arondir

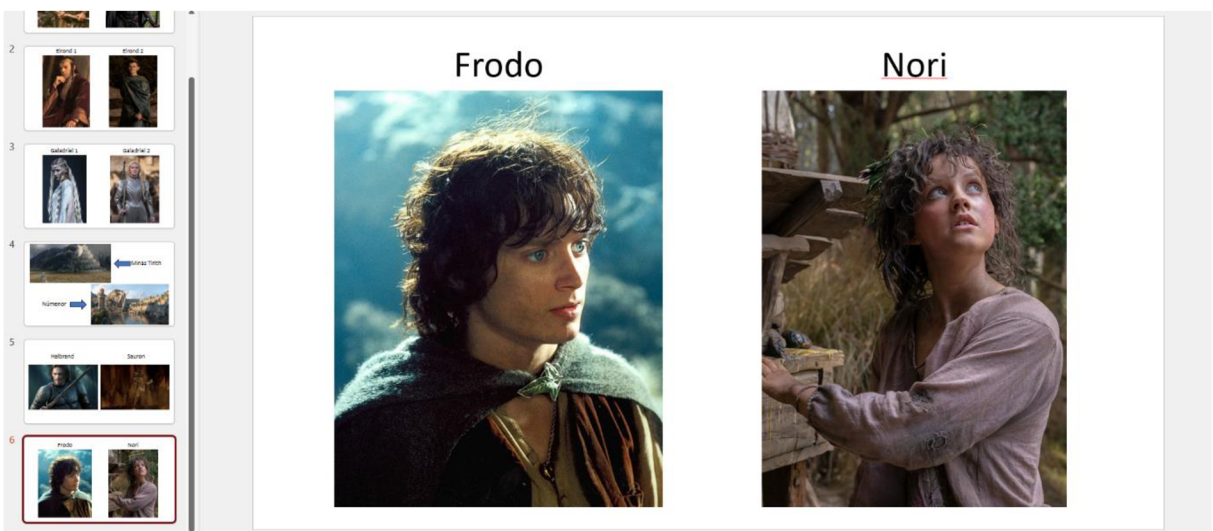Picture 2: Elrond 1 vs Elrond 2

Picture 3: Galadriel 1 vs Galadriel 2

Picture 4: Minas Tirith vs Númenor

Picture 5: Halbrand vs Sauron

Picture 6: Frodo vs Nori

Resumé

Diplomová práce byla zaměřena na moderní filmové adaptace Tolkienových děl a na jejich možné uplatnění ve výuce. Teoretická část práce poskytla detailní rozbor těchto adaptací, nastínila okolnosti jejich vzniku, pohledy samotných tvůrců na tato díla a divácké přijetí a kritiku. Zároveň také porovnala tato dvě díla mezi sebou v kontextu především jejich vizuálních stránek a očividných podobností. Poslední kapitola teoretické části se poté zabývala možností využití těchto děl ve výuce anglického jazyka na školách, přičemž nastínila jejich didaktický potenciál a případné klady a zápory v rámci tohoto využití. Na poslední kapitolu teoretické části následně navazovala část praktická, která teorii didaktického potenciálu těchto děl ověřovala aplikací čtyř předem připravených plánů vyučovacích jednotek o délce 45 minut do hodin anglického jazyka v kontextu druhého stupně základní školy. Cílem bylo zjistit, zda je možné a vhodné tyto adaptace využít v rámci výuky anglického jazyka, jakým způsobem se dají propojit s právě probíranými tematickými okruhy, jestli se implementací těchto děl do vyučovacích hodin dají rozvíjet jazykové dovednosti a systémy a také jestli jejich zapojení do výuky přispívá k motivaci žáků a zvýšení jejich zájmu o dané téma i o jazyk samotný. Pomocí metod pozorování, dotazníků a statistické analýzy bylo zjištěno, že při vhodném výběru konkrétních materiálů a způsobu použití lze filmové adaptace Tolkienových děl efektivně využít ve výuce anglického jazyka a to způsobem, který zaujme a bude bavit i žáky samotné.