

**UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI**  
**PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA**

Ústav cizích jazyků  
Sekce anglického jazyka

Diplomová práce

**Roald Dahl's selected texts and their application in ELT  
using modern information communication technologies**

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Studijní obor: Speciální pedagogika pro 2. stupeň základních škol a pro  
střední školy a učitelství anglického jazyka pro 2. stupeň základních škol

Akademický rok: 2020/2021

Čestné prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracovala samostatně pod odborným vedením Mgr. Petra Anténeho, M. A., Ph.D., s využitím zdrojů, které jsou řádně uvedeny v bibliografii.

V Olomouci, 8. 12. 2021

..... podpis



### Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the supervisor of my diploma thesis, Mgr. Petr Anténe, M. A., Ph.D., for providing guidance, support and helping me to finalise this work. I would also like to thank my family who always supported me over the long years of my distance learning.

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## Abstract

This diploma thesis tries to explain the importance of literature as authentic reading material in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly the use of selected texts by internationally acclaimed British author Roald Dahl.

To make the learning process innovative, engaging and motivating for learners, the main objective of the diploma thesis is the focus on the use of information communication technologies in the modern ELT classroom. To understand the learning process through literature, it is necessary to be aware of the theoretical-methodological background of language teaching and its approaches, as well as Roald Dahl's use of language. Roald Dahl is well known for his use of inventive and distinctive language, and learners can engage with this to help discover how language works. By using his texts in the ELT classroom, learners are presented with the opportunity to extend their language acquisition.

*'Words', he said, 'is oh such a twitch-tickling problem to me all my life.  
So you must simply try to be patient and stop squibbling.  
As I am telling you before, I know exactly what words I am wanting to say,  
but somehow or other they is always getting squiff-squiddled around'.  
(Roald Dahl, *The BFG*)*

## Introduction

The term literature is frequently used at schools and in daily lives. When teachers are asked to define literature, many will trot out an almost dictionary-like description. Literature is pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems (OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com, 2020). However, when teachers are asked how they use English literature in English Language Teaching, it is a different matter. There is a difference between the use of English literature by teachers in English-speaking countries and those who teach English to speakers of other languages. Literature should be used as authentic reading material within the ELT classroom, especially in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Literature provides learners with the opportunity to benefit from English acquisition by exposing them to unmodified language, developing their language awareness and encouraging greater interaction, class discussion and the sharing of opinions.

Teaching through literature is a field of study currently developing rapidly, and many websites offer activities to encourage pupils to read. To inspire a young generation's interest in reading, teachers need to familiarise themselves with modern methods of capturing the interest of their pupils. The modern era has a wide range of possibilities to capture the interest of young readers through media and communication technologies. One of the aims of the diploma thesis is to explore the possibility of using English websites and other English material set up predominately for native speakers in the ELT classroom for speakers of other languages.

When children are asked if they have heard of the author Roald Dahl, many of them will shake their heads. Of course, there will always be one or two keen readers in the class who will be familiar with his written work. However, when the names of movies

such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The BFG* or *Matilda* are mentioned, children's eyes open wide and they start to engage in discussion about which films they have seen and what they liked or disliked about them, and they can retell the plot and remember the unusual occurrences. For a generation of children with almost unlimited access to new technologies, literature is not just about reading books, it is about transforming that literature into a new, interactive way of storytelling – the use of literature through modern media. Some argue this is not literature, but others argue that it is a new way of getting the young generation introduced to classical stories. To make a movie, website, interactive game or other means of projection, the words still have to be written first. And what is literature? Valued works of art through words but nowadays also through pictures in which the characters come alive.

Roald Dahl's children's books are widely used in literacy and English lessons in English-speaking countries. There are many websites that provide teachers with materials to make the lessons more interesting and enjoyable. They offer a wide range of lesson plans, printable activities and interactive experiences.

Therefore, the first part of the diploma thesis is mainly descriptive with the focus on the different theoretical approaches to teaching English through literature as well as the use of modern technologies. It also compares the use of selected Roald Dahl's texts in ELT for native English speakers with ELT in the classroom for speakers of other languages using the many accessible websites featuring the author's work.

The second part of the diploma thesis is focused on language teaching practice using literature, namely Roald Dahl's selected texts – *The BFG* and "Genesis and Catastrophe" in the ELT lessons for speakers of other languages. The author of the diploma thesis will examine whether the authentic reading material and the use of information communication technologies make the learning process more innovative, engaging and motivating for learners.

In the final part, the author will present findings from both the theoretical and practical parts of the thesis and present two of Roald Dahl's selected texts through lesson plans. Although the lessons plans are aimed at two different age groups of learners, both include the use of communication technologies appropriate to the capabilities of the

learners. Both extracts are in agreement with the Framework Educational Programme for Primary Education in the Czech Republic.

## 1. Theoretical part

This part of the diploma thesis aims to set a platform for English Language Teaching (ELT) through authentic reading material with the use of information communication technologies. It will discuss the benefits of ELT through selected literature as well as introduce the benefit of using modern information communication technologies in the modern English classroom. The focus of the theoretical part is mainly to set the theoretical background on the features of authentic reading material, especially selected Roald Dahl's text. It will discuss Dahl's distinctive writing style, his choice of words and other language features of his writing style. It will also analyse the benefits of using modern information communication technology (ICT) in ELT. The author of the diploma thesis wants to provide evidence of the benefits of using ICT in conjunction with literature as authentic reading material in the modern English classroom for speakers of other languages. Supportive arguments will be provided at the end of the theoretical part.

### 1.1. Teaching languages with the use of modern technologies

Modern information and communication technologies provide wide-ranging opportunities for English Language Teaching, with the internet offering access to teaching materials on a variety of topics. The English language has become the means of world communication, and many young people are highly motivated to master it. For teachers, the internet has become the ultimate source of an almost unlimited supply of teaching materials. It also offers them the opportunity to share their teaching aids through websites with other teachers. It was pointed out by Windeatt, Hardisty and Eastment (2000) that *'The internet is begging to transform language learning, first of all by making available to teachers and students an enormous range of information and resources. Information, on virtually any subject, and resources, including articles, stories, poems, books, videos and audio clips, music, and millions of images, are all only a few mouse clicks away – as long as you know how to find them'* (Windeatt, Hardisty & Eastment, 2000, p. 6).

Technologies have become a widespread means of communication among people and the young generation of users are often more accomplished than older generations. This trend can be seen in the school environment as Dudeney and Hockly (2007) state '*... teachers are often far less skilled and knowledgeable than their own students when it comes to using current technology*' (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007, p. 5). Therefore, it is important to develop teacher training in this field in order that they can make education attractive and interesting to learners.

The use of ICT in language teaching has been developing since the early 1980s and has progressed from the original use of simple tapes and video recorders to today's complex modern media. Although it is still not sufficiently utilised by language teachers, many learners use modern media to search out additional information or new vocabulary to practice and enhance their understanding and speaking performance.

English teachers need to be aware that today's generation is engaged in the global world via communication technologies. Many of the computer games they play, the videos they watch and the songs they listen to are predominately in English. They communicate with each other by text or instant messaging, use social networking, download music and movies, make and upload videos or use Internet searches without hesitation. Needless to say, the technological devices they use, such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops etc., operate mainly in English. This means they are able to operate within a language even before they fully understand what each word or sentence means, usually using visual or auditory clues.

As Solomon and Schrum (2007) claim '*In some ways, students today are ahead of their elders. Technology is second nature to them and they accept and use it without question. Schools lag behind*' (Solomon & Schrum, 2007, p. 17). Windeatt et al. (2000) adds, '*As the means of communication, the internet allows students around the world to interact with one another cheaply, quickly and reliably, opening up the classroom to the real world in a way which has never been possible*' (Windeatt et al., 2000, p. 6). For this reason, English teachers should be able to use the benefits of communication technologies to their full potential to stir learners' interest in language study. Furthermore, Windeatt et al. (2000) point out, '*Because the internet is such a powerful*

*tool for information and communication, there can be much more integration of computer work into the language curriculum. Both teachers and students can start to use the internet as a source of material for learning and teaching in the same way as they currently use books, magazines, newspapers, television, audio, and video.'* (Windeatt et al., 2000, p. 6).

Technological devices can be used within any ELT lesson, not only those specifically focused on computer work. Teachers should employ them as an assisting aid for all lessons, providing, of course, that their school has accessible ICT equipment. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic aims to include ICT as usual practice in schools, stating *'The Digital Education Strategy until 2020 (hereinafter SDV) is a document approved on 12 November 2014 by Government Resolution No. 927/2014, which focuses on creating suitable conditions and setting processes that will lead to goals, methods and forms of education corresponding to the current state of knowledge, the requirements of social life and the work market, influenced by the development of digital technologies and the information society. The mission of SDV is to initiate changes both in the field of methods and forms of education and in the field of educational goals'* (MŠMT, 2013).

It is often claimed that computers should be used in the language classroom for their potential to motivate, and that teachers should draw on their experiences as educators in using the Internet with their learners (Windeatt et al., 2000, p. 7). However, to be able to use technology within a language classroom, teachers need to have a basic understanding of how to operate it and be able to communicate its purpose to learners.

The internet is a vast source for language learning and it has many advantages, such as easy access to websites that provide information and resources for both teachers and learners. As indicated by Dudeney & Hockly (2007), *'For teachers, having good search skills means finding useful resources quickly, speeding up lesson planning and facilitating web use in class. For learners, it means being able to quickly accomplish web-based tasks, thus ensuring that the technology enhances the learning experience rather than implementing it'* (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007, p. 29). There are two questions connected to English teaching. The first is whether to use ELT websites for learners of other languages or whether to use authentic text websites in language teaching.

The second question for teachers of English to speakers of other languages is whether it is possible to use authentic websites as well as authentic reading material for English native learners. According to Dudeney & Hockly (2007), using authentic websites and texts has the benefit of being able to use technology without it being in real life situation: *'A well-designed task will allow learners to deal with authentic tasks, guiding them through not only the text but also the layout and navigation problems that may otherwise impact on their learning experience'* and *'...also provide an ideal opportunity to work through the issues of total comprehension'* (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007, p. 28). ELT websites also provide valuable opportunities for more controlled language work and are often a great help to learners who need to brush up on certain aspects of the language according to Dudeney & Hockly (2007, p. 29).

For speakers of other languages, it is essential to develop all aspects of the language – reading, listening, writing, speaking and memory skills, and information communication technologies are an essential part of that process in the modern world. Young learners today approach their learning primarily through gadgets such as computers and mobile devices with connection to the internet. As Solomon & Schrum (2007) argue, *'It allows students to record vocabulary, conduct question and answer conversation, check pronunciation, and store their learning exercise for instant replay evaluation. [...] students can brainstorm topics.'* (Solomon & Schrum, 2007, p. 95). Furthermore, according to Solomon & Schrum (2007, p. 95) educators have been talking about and working towards teaching media literacy since the first motion pictures entered the classroom. Motivating learners is one of the key elements of successful language acquisition, and using movies within a language classroom is currently one of the motivating factors to which learners, even ESOL learners, seem to respond. Donaghy (2014) sees film and TV shows as an integral part of students' lives so it makes perfect sense to bring them into the language classroom. Films, as a motivator, also make the language learning process more entertaining and enjoyable (Donaghy, 2014). He says that *'Another benefit of using film is that it provides a source of authentic and varied language. The film provides students with examples of English used in 'real' situations outside the classroom, particularly interactive language – the language of real-life conversation'* and he emphasises the visual context, describing it as *'an invaluable language teaching tool, enabling learners to understand more by*

*interpreting the language*' (Donaghy, 2014). Donaghy also emphasises the importance of the film or TV shows in class discussions, debates and social issues (Donaghy, 2014). He continues: *'Given the benefits of using film in the language learning classroom, it is not surprising that many teachers are keen to use film with their students, and an increasing number of them are successfully integrating film into the language-learning syllabus* (Donaghy, 2014). One of the benefits of bringing film into the ESOL, and teaching through this method, is that teachers can introduce literary masterpieces to learners.

Films can be used in ELT to provide learners with correct pronunciation and intonation, but they also provide other important information such as spelling in subtitles while watching what is happening. Films are powerful because they provide background sounds and other unspoken noises which is also important for comprehending the language. Therefore, using movies to teach English literature can provide learners with almost the full set of language skills, such as listening, reading, and speaking subskills such as intonation and pronunciation.

Since the start of the Covid19 pandemic, many schools around the world have had to adapt to the challenge of providing distance learning through computers, tablets, laptops, smartphones and other devices. Learners have had to adapt to studying from home and many schools in the Czech Republic have had to engage with technology and online platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams for their lesson planning and teaching. This requirement to use newer technologies showed whether schools were well equipped and whether teachers were well prepared, as many had to master the technologies to provide online teaching.

Coincidentally, in January 2021, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic issued its revised Framework Educational Program for Primary Education. The revision sets out to modernise digital education to make it fit for the 21st century. The modified framework introduces the educational area of I.C.T. and the development of digital literacy of pupils that is included at the level of key competence (MŠMT, 2013). Hence, as this change brings new ways in conjoining information technologies with other subjects which should appear in the new

framework of the curriculum at schools, it should project in using information technologies in ELT.

## 1.2. Language teaching through authentic reading material

Languages are taught primarily in terms of four skills – the receptive skills of reading and listening and the productive skills of speaking and writing. Reading and listening are skills that can develop and widen a learner's understanding of a language by exposing the learner to new vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical features. Reading is a complex process that combines many single processes simultaneously, such as decoding letter combinations and applying them to the lexical meaning. Reading provides learners with a rich and rewarding learning experience. Through authentic material in both print and/or digital formats, teachers can encourage learners to develop more than just reading skills. A material is authentic when it contains an authentic text. According to Cunningsworth & Tomlinson (1989), an authentic text is a text which is not written or spoken for language teaching purposes. A newspaper article, a rock song, a novel, a radio interview and a traditional fairy story are examples of authentic texts.

According to Watkins, being a proficient reader in just one language is enormously empowering, while having the ability to do that in more than one language enhances that empowerment (Watkins, 2017, p. 1). He says that in second language learning contexts, reading is not just a means of maintaining social interaction: '*...in recent years, non-native speakers need to be able to read in a second language (primarily English) to understand the international and global world of modern media and other issues*' (Watkins, 2017, p. 1). Altbach and Knight (2007) cited in Watkins (2017, p. 1) claim that there is a need for many ESOL learners to develop a high level of reading proficiency in languages other than their first language. For this reason, it is essential to encourage, as well as provide opportunities for, young learners to become engaged in reading and understand that this helps them to improve their English skills. One of the ways to achieve this is through authentic reading material such as children's English literature.

According to Hunt '*Children's literature is a remarkable area of writing: it is one of the roots of western culture, it is enjoyed passionately by adults as well as by children, and it has exercised huge talents over hundreds of years. It involves and integrates words*

*and pictures, it overlaps into other modes –video, oral storytelling – and other forms. For both adults and children, it serves the purpose that 'literature' is frequently claimed to serve: it absorbs, it possesses, and is possessed; its demands are very immediate, involving and powerful'* (Hunt, 1994, p. 1). Hunt also points out that children's writers are in a position of singular responsibility in conveying cultural values rather than simply telling a story. He adds that children's books are an essential tool in reading education and are thus prey to a whole area of educational and psychological influences that other literature escapes (Hunt, 1994, p. 3).

Through literature, children gain irreplaceable educational and social values as well as enhance their language learning by developing literacy skills, critical thinking and enriching their imagination. Hence children's writers stand alongside parents and teachers in playing an important role in children's development and their enthusiasm for learning.

### 1.3. Author - Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl is one of the most celebrated British authors of the past century, having written more than twenty children's books as well as many shorts stories for adults, play scripts and film screenplays.

Dahl was born on 13th September 1916 in Llandaff, Wales. His parents, Harald Dahl and Sofie Magdalene Hesselberg, were Norwegian and they named Dahl after Roald Amundsen, the first man to reach the South Pole four years previously.

As a young boy, Dahl experienced tragedy with the death of both his older sister, Astri, and his father. He was sent to Repton, a co-educational independent boarding school for pupils aged thirteen to eighteen, where he experienced many bizarre and memorable events that would later influence his fiction. One such incident was when pupils were invited to trial chocolate bars – this proved the inspiration for the famous children's story *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 2020).

On leaving school, Dahl's desire to travel saw him go to Canada and East Africa, where he worked for an oil company. Following the outbreak of World War Two, he enlisted in the Royal Air Force and received severe injuries to his head and back when his Gladiator plane crash-landed in the Western Desert in September 1940. It took six months for him to recover from his injuries, but he returned to action to participate in The Battle of Athens. Later, after a posting to Washington, he supplied intelligence to MI6. His experiences from WWII had a profound influence on his short stories and adult fiction, such as *Going Solo*, *Boy* and his first short story *Shot Down Over Libya*, also known as *Piece of Cake*. (Dahl, 2020).

In 1953 Dahl married Patricia Neal, an American actress with whom he had five children. They divorced after 30 years, and he later married Felicity "Liccy" Crosland.

Dahl's first publishing venture was a story originally intended as an animated Walt Disney film. Its full title was *Walt Disney: The Gremlins – A Royal Air Force Story by Flight Lieutenant Roald Dahl*, but this was more commonly known as *The Gremlins*. Disney decided against releasing a film but published the book.

For the first twenty years of his active writing, Dahl's focus was on adult short stories. Richard Dalby said, *'His macabre "contest cruel" have been reprinted many times, and were successfully televised in 1979-80 as 'Tales of the Unexpected'. They are among the most memorable written by a British author over the past half-century'* (Dalby, 1994).

However, once his children's novel *James and the Giant Peach* was published in 1961 in the United States, Dahl concentrated primarily on writing for children. His most successful works included *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The BFG* and *Matilda*. He combined this with writing screenplays for the films *You Only Live Twice* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, as well as adult short stories such as *Kiss Kiss*.

In the 1980s, he published two autobiographical books: *Boy* (1984) and *Going Solo* (1986). *Boy* is a memoir of Roald Dahl's childhood and contains some hilariously true stories such as the great mouse plot of 1924, when an eight-year-old Dahl and his gobstopper-loving friends took just revenge on the disgusting sweetshop owner Mrs Pratchett (Dahl, 2020).

Dahl's children's books had their origins in the bedtime stories he told to his four daughters and son. Dahl insisted that inventing stories night after night was perfect practice for his trade, and he told the New York Times Book Review: *'Children are ... highly critical. And they lose interest so quickly. You have to keep things ticking along. And if you think a child is getting bored, you must think up something that jolts it back. Something that tickles. You have to know what children like'* (Encyclopaedia of World Biography, 2020).

Dahl's books attracted frequent criticism over his rough treatment of adults but he explained in the New York Times Book Review that the children who wrote to him always pick out the most gruesome events as the favourite parts of the books. They enjoyed the fantasy and did not relate it to real life. Dahl often commented that the key to his success with children was that he joined with them against adults (Encyclopaedia of World Biography, 2020). Roald Dahl remains incredibly popular among children and his books still sell around one million copies each year.

He died at the age of 74 on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1990 and was buried in the parish church of St Peter and St Paul in Great Missenden, the village in Buckinghamshire where the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre is situated.

## 1.4. Roald Dahl's contribution to literature

Among his most acclaimed works were his children's books including the novels *The BFG*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, *James and the Giant Peach* and *The Witches*. His books have sold more than 200 million copies (O'Brien, 2016) and several have been adapted for theatrical and cinematic productions, although Roald Dahl said that he despised the films adaptations that were released during his lifetime (Biography, 2014).

Dahl is mostly celebrated for his children's stories, and his distinctive style of writing often appealed directly to child readers over the heads of parents, teachers and librarians. J. Briggs & D. Butts (2008) claim that Dahl's work aroused a certain amount of criticism because his imaginative and creative plots contained realistic portrayals of strange characters and crazy involutions in which children could be cruel and harsh to adults, and his stories often had unexpected endings and menacing environments (Briggs & Butts, 2008). Dahl claimed that children had a cruder sense of humour than adults and that he was merely trying to appeal to his readership (Biography, 2014).

According to Hunt, Dahl's work is best summed up by Elizabeth Hammill as '*The most widely-read contemporary children's author whose popularity stems, in part, from his ability to realise in fiction children's innermost dreams, and to offer subversive, gruesomely satisfying, sometimes comic solutions to their nightmares. His ... heroes tend to be underdogs – the poor, the bullied, the hunted, the orphans – whose lives are transformed by the fantastic, sometimes disconcerting events for the stories*' (Hammill cited in Hunt, 1994, p. 20).

Furthermore, Hunt points out that Dahl's books are energetic, vulgar, violent, and often farcical in their darkness. Dahl appears to be wholly on the side of anarchy, and he is equally popular with those adults who are just as delighted as children to see, for example, 'farting' referred to – and thus, in a sense, legitimised – in text. His prejudices are obvious, although in later books a rather brutal brand of pantomime justice is wreaked upon, generally, the adult world and Dahl's macabre sense of humour has greater play. The majority of reviews have been enthusiastic along the lines of 'children

adore...'. Some, however, have not been persuaded, and an alternative viewpoint was presented by Michele Landsberg, who accused Dahl of racism, sexism, sadism, and a generally unhealthy attitude (Hunt, 1994, p. 23).

Though sometimes controversial, Roald Dahl has been referred to as “one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20th century” (Roald Dahl, 2021). Many of his books were made, some even remade, into films, TV specials or stage plays. Dahl wrote the script for some, including *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* in 1971, the *James and the Giant Peach* TV special in 1973, which in 1996 was produced as an animated musical film. Dahl’s legacy also continues in many stage adaptations and musicals such as *Matilda* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, as well as in the classic tales *Fantastic Mr Fox* or *The Witches*, which offer a new dimension to his creativity, play with words and inspirational characters.

#### 1.4.1. Adult literature

Roald Dahl was not only an author of best-selling children’s books, he was also an accomplished writer of adult short stories. Amreading said ‘*Although people tend to think of Dahl only as a writer of children’s fiction, he was a prolific and often controversial producer of adult fiction and some of his collections of short stories are among the filthiest, darkest, and most twisted stories*’ (Amreading, 2016).

Among his offerings for adults were four books of short stories. The first, *Over to You*, was published in 1946 and featured ten unconventional combat stories based on his experiences in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. This was followed by *Kiss Kiss* (1959), *Someone Like You* (1953) and his final collection, *Switch Bitch* (1974), which included four longer stories of sexual indiscretion first published in *Playboy Magazine*. As with his children’s fiction, his adult stories rely heavily on witty plots, suspense and twisted endings. Ulin supports this by saying ‘*Dahl’s adult literature relies heavily on wicked twists: the sickly infant, saved, who grows up to be Adolf Hitler; the visitor to a taxidermist’s bed-and-breakfast who discovers, too late, the taste of bitter almonds in his tea. This is not the Dahl of the children’s books, but, at*

*the same time, of course, it is. Here, too, we find the irreverent pleasure in the telling, the attitude of moral justice, the pointedness of the voice'* (Ulin, 2016).

These stories feature imaginative and creative plots that offer a satirical view of society that was not always popular but was always challenging. After reading Dahl's second collection *Someone Like You*, Noel Coward, the English playwright, actor and director acclaimed for his wit, wrote in his diary: *'The stories are brilliant and his imagination is fabulous. Unfortunately, there is in all of them an underlying streak of cruelty and macabre unpleasantness, and a curiously adolescent emphasis on sex'* (Hourican, 2016).

His longer works of adult fiction were less successful. His first long work of adult fiction, *Sometimes Never*, was published in 1949 but both reviews and sales were weak, and the publication of *My Uncle Oswald* exactly thirty years later finally proved to the world that Dahl was incapable of writing a successful novel for adults (The Adult Fiction of Roald Dahl, 2020).

## 1.4.2. Children's literature

Roald Dahl's first book for children was *Walt Disney: The Gremlins – A Royal Air Force Story by Flight Lieutenant Roald Dahl*, which was more commonly known as *The Gremlins*. Published in 1943, it was originally intended for production as an animated Walt Disney film. Disney decided against releasing a film but went ahead with publishing the book and around 50,000 copies were printed worldwide.

It was a further eighteen years before his second children's book was published, *James and the Giant Peach*, and from then onwards Dahl became the most successful children's author in the world as a host of best-selling novels followed, including works such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The BFG*, *The Witches* and *Matilda*, all of which were later made into big-budget movies. *James and the Giant Peach* had its origins in the bedtime stories that Roald Dahl told to his children. Some adult readers complained of being deeply disturbed by it (Anderson, 2016). The controversy has never gone away and among the charges against him have been that of racism,

profanity, references to drugs and drink, sexual innuendo and the complex and inverted relationship between adults and children. Amanda Craig, the children's book critic, was clear in her reason as to why Dahl's works were so popular among younger readers '*He was unequivocal that it is the good, young and kind who triumph over the old, greedy and the wicked*' (De Castella, 2011).

However, the popularity of his children's novels requires further explanation than just the simplicity of that statement, for it was the complexity of the badness of his adult characters that proved so enrapturing to his young readers. Leskiewicz remarks '*It's often suggested that Dahl's lasting appeal is a result of his exceptional talent for wriggling his way into children's fantasies and fears and laying them out on the page with anarchic delight. Adult villains are drawn in terrifying detail, before they are exposed as liars and hypocrites, and brought tumbling down with retributive justice, either by sudden magic or the superior acuity of the children they mistreat*' (Leskiewicz, 2014).

Dahl was clear in his mind about his uncompromising attitude to adults and children. '*In my factory, I make things to please children. I don't care about adults*' is a quote from an early draft of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 1982) and demonstrated his view on the adult-child relationship. The family as a dysfunctional unit is a common theme and he opposes the conventional ideology of parents being essential for a child's wellbeing and development. Dahl had an unsentimental, frequently subversive view of families (Gulli, 2016), possibly rooted in his father's early death. In *The BFG*, the giant asks Sophie, an orphan, whether she misses not having parents, and she replies '*Not really because I never knew them*' (Dahl, 1982). Several of his main characters enjoy relationships with adults outside of the family unit, and these are often an individual who appreciates that child's special qualities and allows them to bloom (Gulli, 2016) Examples of such characters are the giant (*The BFG*), Willy Wonka (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*) and Miss Honey (*Matilda*).

Over thirty years, Dahl wrote over twenty books for children with his final novel being *The Minpins*, which was published in 1991, the year following his death. He also published three books of children's poetry, *Revolting Rhymes*, *Dirty Beasts* and *Rhyme Stew*, while his novels contain many comic songs and poetry.

Although Dahl claimed many writing achievements over his lifetime, there has been some objection raised by adult readers regarding his children's literature. Hahn states that some adult readers find his stories a mixture of the glutinous and the cruel (Hahn, 2015, p. 151). Dahl was also accused of anti-Semitism after comments in 1983 in the *New Statesman* and later in 1990 when he said: '*There is a trait in the Jewish character that does provoke animosity, maybe it's a kind of lack of generosity towards non-Jews. I mean, there's always a reason why anti-anything crops up anywhere...Even a stinker like Hitler didn't just pick on them for no reason*' (Sherwood, 2020).

It was not until thirty years after his death that his family apologised for 'the lasting and understandable hurt' caused by the anti-Semitic comments of the author (Roald Dahl's website, 2020). Their statement was published on the Official Roald Dahl's website in December 2020.

In spite of the controversy, Hahn admires Dahl's energy, imaginative inventiveness in character and language, and the consummate storytelling skills that have kept him on bestselling charts to this day. His books are still regularly cited on lists of favourites, and regularly adapted for stage and screen (Hahn, 2015, p. 152).

### 1.4.3. Quentin Blake and his illustrations in Dahl's books

Quentin Blake (\*1932) is a British illustrator whose spindly, eccentric line drawings are instantly recognisable and suited to both children's and adult books. Blake was brought up in Kent and studied at Downing College, Cambridge before working as a teacher of French. He had no artistic training, but from 1949 he began to contribute cartoons to the magazine *Punch* and attended life classes at Chelsea School of Art. In 1957 he became a freelance illustrator and was eventually appointed Head of the Department of Illustration at the Royal College of Art.

He began to illustrate children's books in the 1960s and by the 1970s was in demand for books by authors such as Joan Aiken, Russell Hoban and Roald Dahl. More recently he has illustrated bestselling novels by David Walliams. During his

distinguished career, he has won the Hans Christian Andersen Award and the Eleanor Farjeon Award, and he was named the UK's first Children's Laureate when the scheme was established in 1999. He was a keen supporter and trustee of the House of Illustration, which opened in London in 2014 with an exhibition of Blake's work (Hahn, 2015, p. 73).

The first book Blake illustrated for Dahl was *The Enormous Crocodile* and he subsequently went back to provide illustrations for earlier works. The two men's work has become very closely entwined in the reader's mind (Hahn, 2015, p. 73). Blake's distinctive spikily energetic pictures are closely associated with all of Dahl's inventive prose and to most readers are now inseparable. Blake's illustrations are also the main visual feature of the Official Roald Dahl's Website.

## 1.5. Roald Dahl's work in English lessons in English speaking countries

Hahn implies that almost everything about children's literature has undergone a dramatic change. If we leave aside the obvious overhauling of the publishing world, the advent of the internet, shifts in the role of children's writers and in particular their relationship with their readers, there is a sheer volume of books to contend with (Hahn, 2015, p. xi).

However, Roald Dahl's children's literature and his remarkable writing style is deeply set and enjoyed throughout English speaking countries. Dahl's books are appreciated by both children and adults alike as they serve not only an educational purpose but tackle social issues and are commercially very successful. Dahl's books are used extensively for teaching purposes across subjects such as literacy, creative writing, maths, science or PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education). His books are among suggested reading material for primary and secondary school-aged children in the UK (School Reading List - Recommended books for children, 2021).

Many websites offer ready-made lesson plans or other activities designed for use in the English classroom across the key stages in schools in the UK and US. Many of these ELT materials are downloadable without payment although there are some that are chargeable. All of the activities are connected to Dahl's stories and deal with different topics across various subjects, either made by professional website developers or by teachers themselves. Several of these ELT activities are interconnected with films or other modern technology interactive devices such as games, quizzes or questionnaires. The sites are commonly used throughout English speaking countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Many international schools whose curriculums are based on the British or US education system also use Dahl's stories.

The question arises whether these free teaching aids could be used and are suitable for ESOL classrooms, and whether foreign pupils and students would understand Dahl's writing. His specific humour, nonsense and fun play with words may not be

appropriate for presentation to non-native speakers who might find his English difficult to comprehend.

Hahn argues that the English-speaking world continues to be a huge explorer of writing for children and teenagers, with translations of English-language writing appearing in bookshops around the world and subtitled versions of the tie-in films showing in local cinemas. The scale is staggering (Hahn, 2015, p. xi). It can be assumed that many non-native English speakers are familiar with Dahl's work through modern media, and that it is not necessary to fully understand every word to follow and comprehend the storyline. Hahn continues: '*The number of books being published for children in the English-speaking world, and almost everywhere else, has exploded, and their profile has, too. Children's writers and children's books make the news pages ... major characters are seen as brands for massive commercial exploitation*' (Hahn, 2015, p. xi). For this reason, many young readers are drawn to Dahl's books and other media forms of his stories regardless of whether or not they fully understand the entire content.

According to Hunt, '*Children's literature seems at first sight to be a simple idea: books written for children, books read by children*' (Hahn, 2015, p. xi). Dahl as one of the international bestselling children's authors can be enjoyed by children in and outside classrooms around the world.

Dahl's writing style, supported by Blake's illustrations, can be integrated into all forms of multimodal learning as the words combine with pictures, audio, video and film strips, computer games and much more to support English language acquisition.

### 1.5.1. ICT and Multimodal learning

Multimodal learning is a teaching concept that uses a variety of senses during learning, including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic sensors. This enables the learner to understand and remember more. In English language teaching, this technique can be applied through the use of activities such as role-play, pictures, illustrations and other props as well as information and communication technologies such as music,

animation or other video clips. All of these can increase interaction and communication and enhance a learner's digital literacy skills.

Multimodal learning in English language teaching using modern media is one of the newer methods used within English classrooms throughout the world. As the Covid-19 pandemic spread throughout the globe, many teachers were forced behind computer screens. This form of remote teaching has meant that educators have been compelled to use multimedia and ICT tools to keep their learners motivated and focused. Teachers have to ensure that they are well prepared and organised for online teaching, which can be time consuming, but this is also an opportunity for them because they can use the online resources and observe the innovative way in which others teach.

There are a number of websites that offer teachers online resources and advice on the learning process in multimodal learning. These frequently provide links to additional interactive learning sites that can further assist teachers.

Research by Meiwei Sun discovered that when a multimodal English learning system was designed for online teaching, it improved the students' English learning ability and had a significant effect on students with scores in the middle or lower levels. At the same time, this system increased the students' English learning interest and enhanced their self-confidence. This experiment proved the effectiveness and efficiency of multimodal online learning systems (Sun, 2015).

Multimodal learning has been essential during the Covid-19 pandemic because not only ELT but the entire education system had to be transferred online. Despite the difficulties in setting this up, it provided teachers with the opportunity to employ all forms of modern technology to assist their learners. This form of teaching is certain to feature in the classrooms of the future, and teacher training in all the latest technology updates is essential to manage and maintain online education to a high standard.

## 1.5.2. The Official Roald Dahl's Website

The Official Roald Dahl website [www.roalddahl.com](http://www.roalddahl.com) is dedicated to the author and his works. It states on its home page '*This website is devoted to both types of his writing and features resources for everyone from young readers to school teachers to older devotees*' (The Official Roald Dahl's Website, n.d.). The website is run by Roald Dahl fans and offers a range of Dahl's texts, information about Dahl's characters from different stories and interesting features and activities to encourage and assist with children's reading and learning requirements. The visual features, built around Quentin Blake's illustrations, are bright and colourful to appeal to young visitors, although the website aims to support teachers, kids and parents alike.

The main menu provides information about the home page, where Roald Dahl's stories can be browsed by story or character. The bookmarks bar at the top of the browser window includes information about Roald Dahl, a timeline of his life, his life experiences and a publication history of his books. There is a bookmark promoting World Book Day, which is packed with printable activities and interesting ideas on how to celebrate World Book Day as well as an interactive quiz for children. Other bookmarks include a team partnership with the Natural History Museum, where users can scroll down different animals from Dahl's stories to find interactive information about their natural habitat and life. The category 'Create and learn' provides educators with resources for the classroom, some with recorded extras that bring Dahl's magical storylines to life. The lesson plans follow different themes or characters from his most renowned books and include activities supported by the UK or US curriculum for both school-aged children and pre-schoolers. These classroom activities include interactive comprehension exercises, audio recordings and suggestions for story projects. Other bookmarks include a link to the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre in Buckinghamshire in the UK, a house where Dahl lived and wrote his stories; the Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity that aims to help and empower seriously ill children to lead an enhanced life. '*One way we do this is through establishing specialist Roald Dahl Nurses in hospitals and communities across the UK; shop to purchase Roald Dahl's merchandise and a blog with up to date stories*' (The Official Roald Dahl's Website, n.d.).

Asif Ali (2019) said in his website review *'Each section is filled with amazing stuff and you get a lot of options to keep digging into the fascinating Dahl world. For instance, go to the biography section and you can read an interview with Roald and there's even a quiz to test your knowledge about the great man himself...So basically, the website is a great way of paying tribute to this legendary writer by exploring his characters, stories, quizzes, news and events (Ali, 2019).*

This website supports ELT teachers who can use it to make their literacy lessons more interesting and fun. It offers a wide range of materials, such as lesson plans and activities for children, some of which are interactive.

### 1.5.3. Activities and resources available on other websites

Throughout English speaking countries, Roald Dahl's children's books are widely used in literacy and creative writing lessons as well as in other subjects. Teachers can draw interactive resources, such as colouring pages, activity sheets, challenge cards and a reading comprehension activity (some with the bonus of attractive illustration based on Quentin Blake's drawings, from a variety of internet sites that provide activities based on Dahl's work. This helps teachers with lesson preparation, saves time and makes the lessons engaging, interesting and entertaining for learners, besides drawing children's attention to Dahl's written work. Websites such as [www.roalddahlfans.com](http://www.roalddahlfans.com), [www.twinkl.co.uk](http://www.twinkl.co.uk) or [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) offer more than just a pure list of reading materials and contain lesson plans, video sketches or interactive activities that are an innovative feature of contemporary online education. Some of these teaching tips and materials provide free downloadable materials while others are for the use of members only. Some of these sites are run by teachers and the resources and activities are editable to suit the individual needs of teachers or their students.

The global pandemic has substantially increased demand for enhanced online learning tools. For many educators, the pandemic triggered the need to create new strategies for delivering knowledge and testing abilities through newer teaching methods.

Throughout the world, schools and education institutions are discovering new platforms for digital learning.

The multimodality in ELT is available for educators through the use of tools such as online textbooks, video sketches, audio recordings, interactive worksheets, PDFs, PowerPoint presentations, podcasts, blogs and much more. Therefore, teachers extend their lessons beyond the use of textbooks and pen and paper to motivate learners to learn.

Online teaching requires a well-planned and integrated lesson plan aimed at specific learners to capture their attention and encourage their learning. The learning material available online should be designed to suit the needs of a wide range of learners.

## 1.6. Roald Dahl's work in English teaching for speakers of other languages

Storytelling has been a means of communication for centuries and it was not so long ago when teachers around the world did not use computers, PowerPoint presentations, interactive whiteboards or other technical devices. Knowledge was passed on through storytelling because it was recognised that the use of stories was a powerful source of spreading information.

Employing stories in the ELT classroom serves multiple purposes. It catches the interest of the learners, keeps them motivated and focused, helps their engagement and, through the use of appropriate teaching materials, ensures that the story is memorable. Teaching a second language through stories has the potential to develop all the essential skills needed to acquire the language.

Listening skills are obtained by listening to stories, which is not only enjoyable and entertaining but also a productive way of understanding the language structure, pronunciation and intonation. Through reading activities, learners benefit from extending their vocabulary and grammar. Using stories also helps to facilitate speaking skills as it provides the opportunity to talk about the story and describe the setting, characters and illustrations. Follow-up activities can include creative writing through which learners can strengthen their newly learned vocabulary and learn new spellings and sentence structure.

*According to Saxby 'The experience of reading or listening to a story allows us to escape our own lives for a moment and live in another one in a fun and safe way. In the same magical experience, a goldmine of language may be learned, so do encourage your child to read stories in their second language as well as their first (Saxby, 2021)!*

The experience of reading stories in a foreign language builds a learner's self-confidence in reading and understanding. They relate to the characters and story setting as part of a subconscious learning process, and using Roald Dahl's stories in

ESOL encourages this progression. Teachers can evoke and target a range of vocabulary simply by picking up one of Dahl's books and letting the learners talk about Blake's illustration on the front cover. Such an activity draws learners into the story and leaves them eager to find out more. By using picture prompts and other interactive resources, new and unfamiliar vocabulary can be explained as a part of the pre-reading stage of a reading lesson. In addition, describing some of the characters by using a range of adjectives can motivate the learners to read. Depending on their level of English and their age, it is possible for learners to produce full sentences based on the descriptions.

Dahl's stories are mostly very short, and have been selected for their powerful impact and because they offer many possibilities for creative activities in upper-intermediate and advanced level classrooms. The stories can, therefore, be used to stimulate reading and fluency skills, as well as to explore literary aspects of English.

Stories can provide a highly motivating, engaging and realistic source of genuine language interaction in the classroom. They are 'living language' in which the teacher (or student storyteller) becomes the source of language, and the listeners are actively involved in understanding.

### 1.6.1. Reading comprehension

The understanding of reading and its interpretation is classified as reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is a complex system. For ELT it is necessary to carefully select the reading material so that learners can decode what they have to read and then, on the basis of learned vocabulary, link it to what they already know to better understand what they have read. In ELT reading, comprehension is an interactive process in which the learner needs to be supported before, during and after the reading of the selected text. Through this comprehension process, learners are broadening their knowledge and skills on their way to becoming competent and enthusiastic readers.

Reading involves a complex of cognitive processes such as understanding of phonemes, the individual pieces of language; engaging phonics knowledge by connecting letters; distinguishing sounds and words and its use to contain the meaning of the text and its comprehension.

Each segment of the reading process cannot function separately, hence it is important to understand its complexity. The two segments that make up the reading process are vocabulary knowledge and whole-text understanding. The full selected texts will make sense only if its segments (words) make sense. Therefore, when teaching young learners, there is a need to continually teach new words and phrases. When teaching English through reading, it is necessary to support the development of overall perception of the full text. In the ELT classroom, this can be implemented through a variety of learning strategies; for example, multimodal learning processes and with the use of a variety of learning materials that include modern information technology and its various devices.

Barret's taxonomy is a guide for teachers to support the learning of their learners. It can be applied to language acquisition through reading. Barret in his taxonomy of reading comprehension identified five types of comprehension that are literal – comprehension, reorganisation, inferential, evaluation and appreciation (Barrett Taxonomy, 2021).

Learners apply different comprehension strategies according to the type of learning process they prefer. Jeremy Harmer (2017) discusses the different learning styles of students, saying that everyone responds to stimuli such as photos, pictures, sounds, music, and movement but that some things prove more stimulating to students than others. Harmer cites Richard Bandler and John Grinder's neuro-linguistic programming theory which states that everyone has a stimulus (e.g. visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic) to which they respond to above all others. Students who have a visual preference will remember things better if they see them. Those with an auditory preference are more likely to recall things they hear. Kinaesthetic learners are influenced by activity and learn best when involved with some type of physical activity, such as moving around or rearranging items with their hands. Most students respond to all types of stimuli, but

one input method is typically more powerful than the others in facilitating better learning and recall (Harmer, 2017, p. 16).

Harmer (2017) further points out *'There has been frequent discussion about what kinds of reading texts are suitable for English language students. The greatest controversy has centred on whether the texts should be 'authentic' or not'*. He continues: *'The topics and types of reading text are worth considering too. Should our students always read factual encyclopaedia-type texts or should we expose them to novels and short stories?'* (Harmer, 2017, p. 17). Harmer concludes that reading texts in the classroom is beneficial for language acquisition and as a model for future writing, for language study and for practice in the skill of reading (Harmer, 2017, p.17).

Readers use many different text comprehension strategies to obtain reading comprehension. These include monitoring for understanding, answering and generating questions, summarising and being aware of and using a text's structure to aid comprehension. These reading strategies should be facilitated over a period of time by continuous practice and reinforcement. Many learners need encouragement from teachers to develop their strategies for decoding the text and interpreting its meaning. The reading material produced or/and offered by teachers should be carefully selected. It should be challenging as well as appealing to the reader. Textbooks, books, magazine and newspaper articles and website texts may be used to make reading stimulating.

Reading comprehension is essential to everyday life and English literacy is becoming increasingly part of the global technical world. According to Harmer *'To get the maximum benefit from their reading, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading. It is designed to enable students to develop specific receptive skills such as reading for gist, reading for specific information, reading for detailed comprehension or reading for inference and attitude'* (Harmer, 2015, p. 283).

Through reading, learners acquire new vocabulary, grasp meaning, recall details and understand the scope and concept of the full text in English. Selecting authentic reading materials such as stories or novels teaches learners to think critically and comprehend the range of English. Penny Ur (2010) says: *'Books are very user-friendly*

*'packages' of material: they are light, easily scanned, easily stacked and do not need hardware or electricity. They are still the most convenient and popular method of packaging large texts, and library of them is arguably the best way for learners to acquire a wide experience of foreign language reading'* (Ur, 2010, p. 190).

In principle, Ur (2010) is in favour of including literature in courses, not only as a rich source of language but also for its intrinsic educational and aesthetic value and its contribution to motivation and enjoyment. The problems of length, difficulty and alien content are very real. *'I attempt to solve them by careful selection of texts or, occasionally, by using only a part of the long text'* (Ur, 2010, p. 202).

## 1.6.2. Writing skills

Writing skills are an essential part of communication. They help the author to communicate ideas to a large audience and help learners to develop, practise and improve a variety of skills. In the ESOL classroom, this is a tool to discover and practise new vocabulary and experience various writing styles. Although ELT mainly uses writing as a tool for teaching in learning, in the long term writing skills become an important and essential part of obtained language skills and are essential to each learner. Harmer (2015) asserts the need for distinction in ELT is the need to make a distinction between writing-for learning and writing-for-writing if we are to promote writing skills (Harmer, 2015, p. 330). Teaching writing skills is a part of each syllabus, and by integrating these skills into ELT lessons, learners enhance their understanding of the language.

Creative writing is a form of artistic expression created through the writer's imagination. Through the use of imagery, narrative and suspense in creative writing, the author conveys meaning in various forms such as stories, novels, poetry, scripts, screenplays or drama. Gaffield-Vile cited in Harmer says that creative writing is *'a journey of self-discovery, and self-discovery promotes effective learning'* (Gaffield-Vile, 1998 cited in Harmer, p. 328). Creative writing contrasts with pragmatic forms of writing, such as factual writing.

Promoting creative writing in learners includes providing sufficient time for the pre-writing stage, which includes the brainstorming of writing ideas. ELT also includes providing a rich and motivating environment, offering a range of vocabulary and other writing prompts such as pictures or artefacts. According to Harmer (2015) *'Pictures can provide stimulation for writing-habit activities'* (Harmer, 2015, p. 328).

During the writing process, learners seek support and encouragement. Writing requires practise and writing skills need strategies and time. Penny Ur urges teachers to support their learners as ... *'most people feel pride in their work and want it to be read'* (Ur, 1996 cited in Harmer, 2015, p. 328). Harmer (2015) adds that *'This sense of achievement is significantly more marked for creative writing than for other standard written products'* (Harmer, 2015, p. 328).

Harmer (2015) continues: *'In language classes, teachers and students can take advantage of the presence of others to make writing a cooperative activity, with great benefit to all those involved'* (Harmer, 2015, p. 328). According to Harmer, writing activity is a co-operative process involving all the learners in one particular group and that is something which all parties involved can benefit from. Using computers or other technological devices could be particularly beneficial for the final result. He states *'Cooperative writing is immensely successful if students are writing on the computer. If the screen is big enough, everyone can see what is being created, and everyone can make small changes both during the initial writing process and also later on. Students and teachers can also e-mail each other, of course... anyone can modify entries, so the student writing on the internet (or intranet), can alter things that are there, and gradually co-construct a final finished product'* (Harmer, 2015, p. 329).

Each learner prefers a different learning style. Multimodal learning systems can help all learners, regardless of whether they prefer visual, audio or kinaesthetic stimuli, can become better writers. Similarly, some learners like to work on their own while others thrive in open co-operative classrooms. It is a teacher's responsibility to offer an inspirational classroom environment to promote writing skills. According to Ur (2010) *'Written discourse is fixed and stable so the reading can be done at whatever time, speed and level of thoroughness the individual reader wishes'* (Ur, 2010, p. 159). In current online education, modern communication technologies offer a range of

recourses, options and ideas to provide a stimulating learning environment which can be used for promoting and developing writing skills suited to each learner.

Penny Ur (2010) says '*The purpose of writing, in principle, is the expression of ideas, conveying message to the reader; so the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing. On the other hand, the writer also needs to pay some attention to formal aspects: neat handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, as well as acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary*' (Ur, 2010, p. 163). This should be observed in each ELT classroom to continue learning progress.

## 2. Practical part

This part of the diploma thesis focuses on the practical side of language teaching practice using literature through authentic reading material and information communication technologies. Roald Dahl's selected texts *The BFG* and "Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story" are specifically selected and examined for their use in ELT lessons for speakers of other languages. These texts were chosen for teaching purposes in primary school (*The BFG*) and lower secondary school ("Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story"). The author of the thesis believes that the use of authentic texts in conjunction with information communication technologies makes the learning process more innovative, engaging and motivating for learners.

In the final part, the author presents findings from both the theoretical and practical parts of the thesis and presents lesson plans constructed around Roald Dahl's selected texts. Although the lesson plans aim at two different age groups of learners, each includes the use of communication technologies appropriate to the capabilities of the learners. Both extracts are in agreement with the Framework Educational Programme for Primary Education in the Czech Republic.

### 2.1. *The BFG*

*The BFG* is an initialism for The Big Friendly Giant, an imaginative children's work of fiction first published in 1982. The story is written in an accessible and comprehensible style by Roald Dahl and was originally illustrated by Quentin Blake. It tells the story of a giant who captures dreams and gives the good ones to children. The idea originated in an earlier Dahl's work, *Danny, the Champion of the World* (1975), in which Danny's father invented the character of the BFG to entertain Danny. Dahl also told this story to his own children at bedtime.

The characters are portrayed as delightfully good (the giant and Sophie) or awfully bad (the other giants). The good and bad is the main theme of the story, and the reader is presented with philosophical questions concerning human nature and behaviour. Such issues are presented by fictional characters who have supernatural powers and whose

behaviour carefully draws readers (children and adults alike) into considering the consequences of each character's behaviour. The main themes draw attention to issues such as friendship, language and communication, appearance, injustice, cunning and cleverness, vulnerability and the supernatural.

The book is dedicated to Dahl's daughter Olivia, who died at the age of seven in 1962. However, the main character, Sophie, was named after Dahl's late mother, who told her son fascinating bedtime stories, and his granddaughter Sophie Dahl (\*1977), who later also became a novelist.

This is a reader-friendly novel in which the giant uses an enchanting vocabulary containing neologisms, which are newly invented words that have since been integrated into mainstream English. '*Don't gobblefunk around with words*', the giant instructed Sophie (p. 28). To 'gobblefunk around' means to play around with words and is a technique used by Dahl in many of his books. Other words invented by Dahl and used for the first time in *The BFG* include whizzpopping, squibbling and hopscotch. Dahl was a true master of gobblefunk, and his inventive vocabulary contains a witty humour that contributes to making *The BFG* a magical experience for the reader.

The novel has retained its popularity, and as of 2009, had sold 37 million copies in UK editions, with more than one million copies sold around the world each year. An animated adaptation was shown on television in 1989 with David Jason providing the voice of the giant and Amanda Root the voice of Sophie. It has also been adapted as a theatrical production, while a cinematic Disney live-action adaptation, directed by Steven Spielberg, was released in 2016.

### 2.1.1. Plot

*The BFG* starts with a young girl, Sophie, lying in bed in an unpleasant orphanage. Unable to sleep, the eight-year-old girl looks out of the window to see a giant man walking in the street. He is carrying a suitcase and what looks like a trumpet. Sophie, shocked, runs back to her bed and attempts to hide, but the giant has seen her and reaches through the window to pick her up.

Carrying Sophie in his huge hand, the giant runs away, getting faster and faster, until he arrives at a huge cave. Once inside, he puts Sophie on an exceptionally tall table. She begs for her life and, at least initially, he does little to curtail her fear as he tells her that most giants eat human beings. Dahl's idiosyncratic language is introduced as he calls human beings 'human beans'. *'Just because I is a giant, you think I is a man-gobbling cannybull!' he shouted. 'You is about right! Giants is all cannybully and murderful! And they does gobble up human beans!'* (p. 25). He tells Sophie that people from Greece taste greasy, those from Panama taste like hats, the Welsh are fishy, and the Danes taste like dogs. There are many more amusing comparisons.

Sophie fears the worst and, expecting to be eaten, she asks the giant what type of human he eats. *'Me!' shouted the Giant, his mighty voice making the glass jars rattle on their shelves. 'Me gobbling up human beans! This I never! The others, yes! All the others is gobbling them up every night, but not me! I is a freaky Giant! I is a nice and jumbly Giant! I is the only nice and jumbly Giant in Giant Country! I is THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT! I is the BFG'* (p. 30). Sophie's relief is palpable and in the ensuing conversation she garners sympathy when telling the giant that she is an orphan (like many of Dahl's protagonists).

Sophie asks the giant why he took her if he has no intention of eating her, and he says he could not leave her because she has seen him, and the humans might try to put him in a zoo. Because of this, she cannot leave his cave. He tells Sophie that the reason he carries a suitcase and trumpet is because he catches dreams so he can give the good ones to children all around the world and destroy the bad ones. The giant has enormous ears. *'They is allowing me to hear absolutely every single twiddly little thing ... I am hearing all the secret whisperings of the world!'* (p. 43) he tells Sophie proudly.

The giant says that he eats only snozzcumpers, which are disgusting vegetables that taste of frogskins. *'Here is the repulsant snozzcumber!' cried the BFG, waving it about. 'I squoggle it! I mispise it! I dispunge it! But because I is refusing to gobble up human beans like the other giants, I must spend my life guzzling up icky-poo snozzcumpers instead. If I don't, I will be nothing but skin and groans'* (p. 50). He takes her to the cave

entrance to show her the other giants, who all appear to be bigger than the Big Friendly Giant. Another giant, the Bloodbottler, storms into the cave. Sophie hides in a snozzcumber but the Bloodbottler takes a huge bite and Sophie only escapes being eaten when he spits her out. The Bloodbottler says he is off to eat humans from Chile because they are 'chilly' and that other giants are going to eat English schoolchildren.

The Big Friendly Giant tells Sophie he would like to make the giants disappear and Sophie says that she will help him. He gives Sophie a drink called frobscottle, which tastes delicious but causes extreme flatulence (Whiz poppers). *'A whizzpopper!' cried the BFG, beaming at her. 'Us giants is making whizzpoppers all the time! Whizzpopping is a sign of happiness. It is music in our ears! You surely is not telling me that a little whizzpopping is forbidden among human beans?'* (p. 67). The Big Friendly Giant takes Sophie to Dream Country to show her his collection of dreams and catch some dreams. Sophie tells him to give the Queen of England a dream that shows the malevolent nature of the giants. He helps Sophie to get into the Queen's palace bedroom, and when the Queen wakes up after a dream about the giants, Sophie explains that the dream was real, and the Queen says she will help to get rid of the giants.

A giant pit is constructed, and with the help of the BFG, the giants are lured into a trap where they can no longer eat people, only snozzcubmers.

Finally, the Big Friendly Giant and Sophie go to live in a mansion where Sophie teaches him how to read and write, and he starts to write a book with an ingenious ending, *'It is right here. You've just finished reading it.'* (p. 207).

## 2.1.2 Characters

### *The BFG*

Although the TV, film, stage and picture book adaptations of this Dahl classic have provided many images of the giant, his true appearance was not fully explained in the original book, although the book cover picture showed what appeared to be a very tall and elderly man. He is a tall, thin giant with a superhuman hearing who can move at impressive speed. He collects and mixes good dreams that he distributes to children

at night. The BFG has a gentle nature, and after befriending little orphan Sophie, they establish an understanding that shows in Sophie's attempts to educate the Big Friendly Giant and he is becoming protective of Sophie. Like Sophie, the giant is a vulnerable and oppressed character. He lives in a land in which he is considerably smaller and opposite in character to the other giants, while at the same time he worries about being captured and put on display in a zoo.

His language is always muddled and funny, and this causes difficulties for him with figures of authority such as the heads of the Army and the Air Force. However, he is a more complex and intelligent creature than his language conveys.

### Sophie

Sophie is a kind-hearted protagonist, the little orphaned girl who becomes an international heroine with the help of the BFG. The BFG's true gentle nature and their warm friendship prove to be beneficial to them both.

### The Giants

By virtue of the Big Friendly Giant snatching Sophie from the orphanage window and running off with her, the early impression is that this giant is bad. However, Dahl introduces us to the true nature of the BFG and reveals the genuine villains of the book – nine larger and more fearsome giants who eat humans and have a particular liking for children. These giants are twice the size and girth of the BFG, and whereas the BFG dresses in typical human 'old man' attire, these giants wear skirt-like coverings around their waists.

The puns that populate the BFG's language help to inform the reader that each giant has its own particular flavour of humans – Turks taste like turkey, Greeks are too greasy (so no giants visit that country), the Danes taste like dogs, the Welsh taste like fish, people from Panama taste like hats and people from Jersey taste like cardigans. The two primary giants are the Fleshlumpeater and the Bloodbottler. The Fleshlumpeater is the leader, and he is the largest and most mean-spirited. He does not appreciate the BFG betraying the giants and attempts to kill him. Second in command to the Fleshlumpeater is the Bloodbottler. He is the smartest of the giants and has a fondness for human blood, and it is he who bursts into the BFG's home and

almost eats Sophie when she hides in the snozzcumber. He is brought down by Sophie's bravery and sharpness in the climax to the story, and readers no doubt cheer the demise of a giant who was happy to sup on their blood.

Seven other giants feature, all with different characteristics but readily identifiable by their names. For example, the Bonecruncher crunches up two humans for dinner each night and the Meatripper pretends to be a tree so that he can pick up humans as they walk beneath him. The other giants are the Childchewer, the Butcher Boy, the Maidmasher, the Gizzardgulper and the Manhugger.

#### Other characters

##### Mrs Clonkers

She is the director of Sophie's orphanage who is described by Sophie as a cruel and cold woman who locks the children in a dark cellar without anything to eat or drink. Her name is only mentioned once, and Sophie has a conversation with the BFG in which Dahl uses his creative language to paint a picture of her as "rotten old rotrasper" and a "filthy old fizzwiggler" (p. 39).

##### The Queen

The British monarch is drawn into Sophie's and the BFG's plan to ensnare the giants. She proves to be a decisive and bold leader who shows compassion to the two main protagonists by inviting them to live at the palace after the giants are trapped.

##### The Heads of the Army and the Air Force

These are two bombastic officers who are in charge of capturing the giants. Neither are sympathetic to the BFG when he mixes up his words and the Army General insultingly says, '*Why doesn't he speak clearly?*' (p. 177) They are the type of grown-ups who the BFG was referencing when he said, '*Human beans is the only animals that is killing their own kind*' (p. 78). Hence the BFG proves to be a more complex and intelligent creature than his language conveys, and is shown to be more compassionate than many adult humans.

### 2.1.3 Themes

As with all Roald Dahl's stories for young readers, there are themes to *The BFG* that advocate for the underdog against those with far more power and control. The themes in *The BFG* are similar to those in many of Dahl's other tales, and include subjects that are at the very heart of the relationship between children and adults, the good and bad, the underdog and the powerful.

*The BFG* has seven main themes running throughout its story, and these are discussed below.

#### Injustice

The unfairness of life is shown early in the story when Sophie reveals that the girls are locked in the orphanage cellar with no food. The early part of the story also details the injustices suffered by someone far bigger and stronger than an eight-year-old girl. The Big Friendly Giant's sense of injustice is revealed in his fear of being locked in a zoo by humans, and although he seems incredibly tall and powerful compared to Sophie, she soon discovers that the BFG is so small compared to the other giants that he describes himself as a 'runt'. The sense of injustice is further demonstrated when they arrive in Giant Country and the BFG's home is invaded by the aggressive and much bigger Bloodbottler, and when the giants throw the BFG around. As underdogs in their respective spheres, Sophie and the BFG discover a commonality that bonds them and helps them to overcome their problems together.

#### Morality and Ethics

The giants could have been presented as simple huge and terrifying creatures with little noteworthy substance, but Dahl uses their relationship with Sophie and the BFG to highlight issues of greed, bullying, selfishness, and revenge. In conversation with Sophie, the BFG says that humans should not be too quick to judge the giants, however bad she might think their behaviour is because, after all, humans kill humans and, as he says, "suit themselves". He says that humans would have had no qualms about putting him into a zoo should they catch him. As always with Dahl, there are layers of complexity to his characters, and the BFG is both a villain (i.e. in 'stealing' Sophie) and a victim (i.e. in being bullied and tormented by the other giants). Among

other moral issues tackled by Dahl is the BFG and the Queen being in agreement that two wrongs do not make a right.

### Appearances

To convey the full drama of his story, Dahl's physical descriptions reflect the nature of the characters and places within *The BFG*. The owner of the orphanage, Mrs Clonkers, is a cruel and vindictive woman who locks her girls in the cellar *'for a day and night without anything to eat or drink'* (p. 39) and the orphanage is a cold and heartless place where Sophie feels nobody will worry much about her going missing in the middle of the night. The people-eating giants are horribly ugly and monster-like creatures who prey on humans and kidnap children to eat. As for the two main characters, readers are immediately drawn to Sophie because of Dahl's description of her as a vulnerable and parentless orphan who is not cared for by Mrs Clonkers. *The BFG* is originally described in negative language – for example his giant teeth when Sophie fears he is about to eat her – but later is portrayed in softer tones. As for the places, Giant Country is a barren desert where the only living things besides giants are Snozzcumpers, while Dream Country is full of mist to reflect the fantasies of that place.

### Language and Communication

Dahl uses the BFG's language to soften attitudes towards him after his initial portrayal as a child snatcher. A lot of the humour in the book comes from the BFG's language – Dahl uses synonyms, rhymes, and suffixes to manufacture words that sound alike or rhyme and demonstrate that the BFG does not have full control of his language. He appears more childlike than adult, and this makes him a more sympathetic and likeable character. His sensitivity about his muddled language shows itself when Sophie initially corrects him, and this leads to her becoming his translator, teacher and good friend. *'Words', he said, 'is oh such a twitch-tickling problem to me all my life. So you must simply try to be patient and stop squibbling. As I am telling you before, I know exactly what words I am wanting to say, but somehow or other they is always getting squiff-squiddled around'* (p. 53). Many of the BFG's words are real words that are used incorrectly or confused.

### Friendship

Dahl initially presents the BFG as a threat to Sophie – it appears he is going to eat her. However, from such a rocky start, a friendship develops in which trust and help for each other are fundamental factors. Sophie helps the BFG with his language and to reassure him when he is feeling unsure of himself, while the BFG provides protection and comfort for Sophie, providing her with the love and attention that she has been deprived of as an orphan. Their bond deepens as they outsmart the Fleshlumpeater, and in a reversal of their roles, when they arrive in London it is Sophie who stands up for the BFG and wants everyone to see him as she does. Their parting on the windowsill of the Queen's bedroom demonstrates the affection between them.

### Cunning and Cleverness

Sophie is a small and vulnerable orphan girl. The BFG is a 'runt' compared to the other giants. Both are much smaller and more powerless than the other characters in the story, which means that to achieve their goals they have to use cunning and cleverness. For Dahl, this means going to the very top of society and planning for the pair to involve the Queen of England in their scheme to stop the giants. When the Army and Navy get involved in the attempt to trap the giants, it is not them but the BFG who provides the creative solutions to their dilemma. For young readers, the message is clear – do not limit yourself by what you can't do but aim big, think 'outside the box' and chase your dreams.

### The Supernatural

From start to finish, this is a story of the supernatural – the BFG himself, the giants, Giant Country and Dream Country. Dahl asks his readers to use their imagination as to how Giant Country or Dream Country came into being. The BFG tells Sophie that there is a lot in the universe that we do not yet know, and just because we cannot see it does not mean that it does not exist.

### Vulnerability

Sophie and the BFG are among the smallest and weakest of their own species. They lack control over their lives and are vulnerable to the power of those who have greater control, strength, and resources than they have. Sophie is the smallest and most vulnerable of all the characters, yet she instigates the plot to capture the giants. Dahl

clearly demonstrates to young readers that just because they are smaller and weaker than those bigger than them, they can still succeed by employing the right tools.

## 2.1.4 Use of language

The use of language is an essential feature of the linguistically playful children's book. According to Susan Rennie, Dahl invented more than 300 words from '*biffsquiggled*' to '*whizzpopping*', in the language known as '*gobblefunk*' (Rennie, 2021). Dahl's play with words is a feature in which the adult reader can appreciate its playfulness and inventiveness while children can learn about how language works. Dahl's wordplay is always aimed at entertaining them (Rennie, 2021).

Dahl's linguistic inventions are rarely totally nonsensical words. He employs morphological features that include (Rennie, 2021):

- Reduplication – a word-formation process in which all or part is repeated to convey some form of meaning, e.g. '*thingalingaling*' or '*ucky-mucky*'.
- Spoonerism – swapping the first letters of words in a phrase, e.g. '*catastorous disastrophe*' or '*jipping and skumping*'.
- Malapropism – the use of a made-up word that rhymes with, or sounds like, the original word, e.g. '*scrambled dregs*' or '*bellypopper*'.
- Onomatopoeia – a figure of speech in which words evoke the actual sound of the thing they refer to or describe, e.g. '*whizzpopper*' or '*hopscotchy*'.
- Portmanteau words – words that derive from the blending of two or more words or parts of words, e.g. '*rotsome*' (gruesome and rotten) or '*delumptious*' (delicious and scrumptious).
- Alliterative phonaesthesia – clusters of sounds that are associated with specific meanings, e.g. '*Squinky squiddler*' (something small, squashy and insignificant) or '*troggy little twit*' (referencing someone who is vile and horrible by evoking a troll).

Simon Horobin (2021) affirms that these processes of associating sounds and senses and disassembling and recombining word elements to recover their meanings are valuable processes in promoting a child's understanding of word structure – what

linguists call morphology. Studies of [child psychology and education](#) have shown the importance of play in putting a child's developing linguistic skills into practice. Children have a natural propensity to play with language from an early age, as seen in the nonsense rhymes that accompany playground games, an enjoyment of riddles, puns, knock-knock jokes and so on (Horobin, 2021). The linguist David Crystal explains: *'Language play actually helps you learn your language'* (Crystal cited in Horobin, 2021).

### 2.1.5 Conclusion

Although *The BFG* is primarily written as a story for children, there are aspects that an adult reader can appreciate. Moral values are weaved throughout the plot and philosophical questions about human nature and behaviour are raised. This is conveyed through fictional characters with supernatural powers, but children and adults are drawn into thinking about consequences of each character's behaviour. Dahl focuses attention on friendship, language and communication, appearances, injustice, cunning and cleverness, the supernatural and vulnerability.

The essence of his children's stories is the diversity of characters searching for hope and happiness. The diversity of characters in his adult fiction is broader, with Dahl typically focussing on the darker elements of humanity. He exposes human conscience, moral dilemmas and allows the reader to make judgments about the situations he describes. *'For all that such turnabouts come off as punchlines, it would be inaccurate to say that Dahl writes without a heart. As with his books for children, his adult stories are marked by conscience, by a moral center that extends beyond mere payback, leading to moments of unexpected depth'* (Ullin, 2016).

It can be said that for both adults and children, Dahl wrote with one common thread – imagination without boundaries.

*The BFG* is acclaimed for its playful and innovative language – 'gobblefunking'. Reading *The BFG* and using Dahl's texts in the language classroom can benefit young learners by inspiring them to be more creative in their own writing. Rennie (2021) quotes Dahl, who once said that he did not want his readers to get so bored that they

closed their book and watched television. His joyfully inventive use of language is one method employed to ensure that this would never happen (Rennie, 2021). Children need to discover the joy of gobblefunking.

## 2.2 Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story

“Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story” was first published in Roald Dahl's collection of eleven short stories *Kiss Kiss* in the USA in 1959 by Alfred Knopf. Many of the stories were previously published in a variety of magazines and in the book *Someone Like You* (1953) and later in the collections *Tales of the Unexpected* (1979) and *More Tales of the Unexpected* (1980). “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story” is sometimes also known as “A Fine Son”.

Some of Dahl's short stories were made into a British television series in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This proved so popular that other writers were employed by the Anglia TV company to write new episodes that took the total number of programmes to 112.

Although Dahl is best known as a children's author, in these short stories he demonstrates his ability to write for adults. The publishers of the Penguin edition (2011) describe his stories for adults as dark and disturbing as he frequently explores the sinister side of human nature: the cunning, sly, selfish part of every human that leads into the territory of the unexpected and unsettling, leaving the reader with unease (*Kiss Kiss*, 2011).

Being individual stories, each plot is different, although there are common themes to several stories and, as with Dahl's stories for children, he often argues the case for, and takes sides with, the underdog. In spite of the wide range of varied storylines, they are generally caustic and acerbic sketches with a narrative of mystery, suspense and revenge. Many of the themes have a similar thread to Dahl's stories for children, in particular the revenge of outsiders, the oppressed and those who are lied to and betrayed by those with greater power and control. Most of these stories feature themes of revenge involving a husband or wife seeking retribution for a betrayal or with the oppressed or wronged looking to seeking settlement with their tormentor or bully.

### 2.2.1 Plot

Genesis: *Noun. The origin of something, when it is begun or starts to exist.* ("genesis", 2021).

Catastrophe: *Noun. A sudden event that causes very great trouble or destruction.* ("catastrophe", 2021).

Dahl's introduction to this story says this is a factual account of the birth of Adolf Hitler, who was later to become dictator of Germany and responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of people throughout Europe. However, there are no records of the events as referenced by Dahl, so even though Hitler and his parents are historical figures this is a dramatic interpretation of the birth of the fourth child to Klara and Alois Hitler. The identity of the protagonists is, however, initially hidden from the reader and only gradually revealed.

The narrative begins with an unnamed mother having just given birth to a baby boy. The mother is clearly distressed and seeks reassurance that her baby is fine. She asks the doctor whether he is still crying and why he has stopped crying. She insists that she wishes to see her son, and the doctor tells her that he is in an adjacent room being washed and readied for her. The doctor tells the woman to relax and to close her eyes. The woman tells the doctor that she had previously given birth to three children in 18 months, but all had died. That is why she is so concerned for this one. The woman and her husband are new to the town and the doctor, having only met them that day, is disorientated by her revelation. The woman is gentle and religious, while her husband is a drunkard who works at a customs house on the border. It is rumoured that she is his third wife.

The woman tells the doctor a little more about the deaths of her infant sons Gustav and Otto. When her daughter Ida, a beautiful child, was born, she regularly put her ear to the baby's chest at night to check that she was breathing. She was already pregnant again when her daughter died. In the wake of that tragedy, the husband decided to move the family to Braunau.

She worries that her dead children had an inherent condition that caused their demise. She recalls that when Otto was born, her husband looked into the cradle and asked why all of his children were '*so small and weak*' (p. 203). The baby died three days later.

As the conversation continues, the mother reveals that she is to name her son Adolf – thus introducing the reader to one of the most infamous men of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The innkeeper's wife carries the baby, wrapped in a white woollen shawl, into the room and remarks on his lovely hands and long, delicate fingers. The new mother eventually looks at her baby and smiles.

The woman's husband arrives, and the doctor congratulates him on the birth of his son. The innkeeper's wife says that their son has *'the most marvellous pair of lungs'* (p. 206) but Alois says that the boy is too small and will soon die like his other children. Klara cries and the doctor nudges Alois towards his wife. Alois kisses Klara on the cheek and the story ends with Klara begging God to be merciful and preserve her son's life.

Unlike in many of Dahl's stories, there is no sudden twist to the story, and the reader's knowledge of what is to come over the next fifty years, eventually leading to the Second World War, makes the ending powerful and disturbing. Dahl uses language that provides subtle contrasts between the infant the baby is and the man he will become: *'So small and weak'* (p. 203) – Adolf Hitler was small in stature but was not a weak person. *'The most marvellous pair of lungs'* – Hitler was a fulsome orator who certainly demonstrated that he possessed a good pair of lungs (p. 206).

### 2.2.2 Characters

There are two primary protagonists, the doctor and the young woman. The new-born baby is central to the plot but does not contribute to the dialogue. The husband adds to the dramatic conclusion to the story, while the primary function of the innkeeper's wife's is to expose the true nature of the other characters.

The doctor

The doctor remains nameless throughout the text, but he is the prompt for much of the young woman's storytelling. He is a sympathetic and patient man who tries diligently to reassure the young mother and inject her with some optimism. *'He is a little small, perhaps. But the small ones are often a lot tougher than the big ones. Just imagine, Frau Hitler, this time next year he will be almost learning how to walk. Isn't that a lovely*

*thought?*' (p. 203). However, his interactions with the drunken husband show a steely side to his personality that is not immediately obvious. *'Now you listen to me,'* (p. 207) he firmly tells the husband when the man complains that this baby will share the fate of their previous children. When the husband shows reluctance to kiss his wife, the doctor takes the husband by the shoulder and *'...squeezed harder, signalling to him urgently through fingers and thumb. At last, reluctantly, the husband bent down and kissed his wife lightly on the cheek'* (p. 207).

Klara (mother and wife)

Klara is the mother of the new baby, but any joy at his birth is tempered by past tragedies that have seen three previous children die. Her grief is such that she is in a state of nervous flux over the new arrival, and with the baby being washed and cleaned outside of her sight we are witnesses to her panic. She appears to be understandably neurotic. She is convinced that the child she has just delivered is also destined to die and requires constant reassurance, which the doctor provides but which her husband undermines. The story ends with her asking God to care for her son.

Alois (husband and father)

Alois appears later in the story, although we have been introduced to him earlier when the innkeeper's wife, who assists with the delivery, tells the doctor that he is *'...an arrogant, overbearing, bullying little drunkard'* (p. 200). It is revealed that the husband and wife had arrived quite suddenly at the inn *'...with one trunk and one suitcase about three months ago'* (p. 200), thus prompting speculation that there is something suspicious about his past. Alois smells of alcohol and is reluctant to engage with both his wife and his son, and he causes distress by predicting that the baby will follow the same path as the previous three ones. He complains that the baby is *'...so small and weak'* (p. 203) and when the doctor tries to reassure him, he says *'It's no good lying, Doctor, I know what it means. It's going to be the same all over again'* (p. 207).

The only time it is possible to feel any compassion for him is when the narrator describes him as seemingly *'...bewildered and stricken'* (p. 207). Perhaps past experiences have taken a toll on him as well.

The innkeeper's wife

Another character without a name, her part is smaller but significant in moving the story along. She is the one who reveals to the doctor that Alois Hitler is '*...an arrogant, overbearing, bullying little drunkard*' (p. 200) and when Alois laments his child's size and perceived health, she cries, '*What are you trying to do? Talk him into his grave?*' (p. 207). She helps bring mother and baby together after Klara is worried about touching the son that she fears will be too feeble to survive. '*Now you can lie there and look at him to your heart's content*' (p. 205), she says to Klara as she lays the baby at her side. She continues to point out the baby's good attributes. '*He has the most lovely hands! Such long delicate fingers!*' (p. 205). And when Klara is still hesitant to cradle him, she urges, '*Go on! He won't bite you!*' (p. 205).

Adolfus (new-born baby)

In spite of the baby's obvious lack of dialogue, he is the central character. At first, the reader is encouraged to empathise with a baby being born into a troubled family, with the mother grieving for her three dead children and daring to hope that this baby will survive. '*I have prayed and prayed that he will live, Doctor*' (p. 200). When the doctor says of course he will live, she replies, '*None of my other ones lived*' (p. 200). However, once the reader is made aware that the baby is actually Adolf Hitler, the future dictator of Germany and architect of the Second World War, the dynamics change. The reader wants the mother's prayer to be answered but the question is does one want this baby to live and grow into the monster he will become? It is this dilemma that is the crux of the matter and makes the story as compelling as any of the stories with their savage twists.

### 2.2.3 Themes

Roald Dahl takes a historical event, the birth of Adolf Hitler, and builds a short story on the themes of tragedy (the death of three previous children), stress and panic (the mother's concern for her new-born son), relationships (religious wife and drunken husband) and the ethical implications of garnering sympathy for the mother of a baby who, should it survive, will go on to become a brutal dictator responsible for genocide. The theme of tragedy is most obvious in the opening paragraphs with the mother clearly traumatised.

*'I have prayed and prayed that he will live, Doctor.'*

*'Of course he will live. What are you talking about?'*

*'The others didn't.'*

*'What?'*

*'None of my other ones lived, Doctor.'* (p. 200)

At this point, the identity of her new-born son is not known, and the reader's sympathy is with a young woman who has lost three children and is clearly fraught with concern. There is an element of tragedy in the relationship between the religious woman and her drunken husband, but the greatest tragedy is the revelation that this baby is Adolf Hitler, and should he survive he will grow to become responsible for many millions of tragedies. Towards the end of the story, as the mother prays for her son's survival, it is tempting to wish that the baby dies.

As with many of Dahl's stories for both adults and children, there is an element of ambiguity. The introduction to the story obscures the true nature of events, and it is only after several paragraphs that it becomes obvious that the woman has given birth. The ambiguity continues as it is revealed that after three dead children, the one who will survive is Adolf Hitler. Dahl's technique in obscuring the characters and circumstances allows for dramatic surprises as the story unfolds.

The story is written in third person narrative and uses a compassionate tone to generate sympathy for Klara, the mother, both for losing three children and for being trapped in a marriage to an alcoholic. Much of the story is told in direct speech with the primary interaction between the doctor and the wife and supporting interchanges between the doctor and the husband, the innkeeper's wife and both the mother and the husband, and the wife and the husband.

There is heavy dramatic irony running throughout. The reader is obviously aware of Hitler's adult life and is presented with statements about the new baby that are meant to be reassuring to the mother but actually have a darker connotation. The reader is aware that many of the characters' statements about baby Adolf turn out to be true. The doctor says that, *'The small ones are often a lot tougher than the big ones'* (p. 203) and, Hitler grows up to be a tyrant; the innkeeper's wife comments on the baby's

*'marvellous pair of lungs'* and one of Hitler's traits as a leader was his long and energetic speeches; and Adolf's father comments, in reference to the three dead children, *'It's going to be the same all over again'* (p. 207) – the irony being that Hitler grows into nothing like anyone has seen before.

Although Hitler is now known as an evil dictator, he was born to a loving mother who prays to God for her to be merciful to him. The final irony is that had God not been merciful to Hitler, millions of other lives would possibly have been saved.

## 2.2.4 Use of language

Dahl's literary devices in his adult prose, especially in his short stories, include imaginative writing, tone, and mood. He provides the reader with a vivid description of all of his characters, which is similar to his stories for children. These characters are often conventional, thus making it easy to picture and identify with them, although they often have strange habits, inclinations or predispositions. Dahl uses direct speech; thus, the characters' vocabulary corresponds with the characters' traits through the register of vocabulary. The stories are often wrapped in mystery or surprise, and a common feature throughout Dahl's writing is a dark humour that can provoke mixed emotions for the reader. From the narrative perspective, Dahl uses omniscient point of view, or unobtrusive or selective third-person narrative.

In "Genesis and Catastrophe: A true story" Dahl encourages concern for the characters and their ordeal. However, after increasing the sense of suspense and animation, there is an unexpected twist towards its climax. The resolution is deliberately absent in this short story, so the reader can form their own opinion.

Dahl's prose for both children and adults is addictive. He structures a vast range of emotion within the individual characters and the intimate moments he shares with his readers are unique. However, the twists and turns to the plot ensure that his stories are provocative and ruthless.

## 2.2.5 Conclusion

“Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story” is a masterpiece of a short story with the sting in the tail. It is a sinister story in which Dahl delves into darker side of human nature. A baby is born to worried parents who have lost three young babies prior to its birth, but the suspense as to whether the baby survives is overtaken by events just to unfold. “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story” is part of short story collection titled *Kiss Kiss* (1959) that includes other stories of a scheming and often appalling nature. In most of these stories, the reader’s expectations are dashed by a shocking discovery or revelation.

## 2.3 Lesson plans

In this subchapter, the author of the thesis applies theoretical findings into the lesson plans. Teaching literature with the help of modern technologies is the central point of reference for both lesson plans, and website references are included directly within the lesson plans. The text extracts have been carefully selected according to the age and ability of the learners. Each lesson plan is provided with introductory information. The lesson plans are provided in the appendices. They follow the order of the theoretical part so the first one is for *The BFG* – similes for the younger learners – followed by the second lesson plan for older learners – “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”.

### 2.3.1 Lesson plan I. *The BFG* (extracts)

The author of this diploma thesis considers this book as one of the key literature materials for the teaching of English to both native speakers and in ESOL. The range of language employed ensures that ESOL learners can benefit by extending their vocabulary, either concentrating on adjectives full of neologisms or the grammar errors in BFG’s speech. This is suitable for primary school learners.

### 2.3.2 Lesson plan II. “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”

The author of this thesis considers this story to be an appropriate source of information and implementing features of British literature for ELT classroom. The topic suggested can be classified as multicultural and cross-curricular approach, using the CLIL

(content and language integrated learning) method. The content is relevant for the learners in lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. It offers the learners an insight into a part of history and encourages them to think and discuss the formation of moral character and irreversibility of time.

## Conclusion

Although Roald Dahl is more widely recognised for his children's fiction, he is the author of a number of startling short stories for adults. In these stories, he developed themes of fear and black humour, fantasy and reality, expected and unexpected twists, suspense and unpredictable endings. The author of this thesis came to appreciate and evaluate his prose as authentic reading material in the English language classroom for speakers of other languages used in conjunction with communication information technologies. The presented theoretical background shows the value of Dahl's unique writing style and its potential to be used as a teaching material in ELC. Dahl's writing style contains many neologisms, adjectives, twisted and playfully sounding words and his stories are a fascinating source for helping to teach and encourage reading and writing. They help learners to acquire new vocabulary, appreciate grammar and develop a greater understanding of English.

It has been verified in this thesis that the current generation of learners, especially in the light of global pandemic, has adapted to a learning process in which the responsibility for learning has been passed directly to the learners. Literature supported by modern communication applications and devices is one of the teaching methods that teachers can provide and adapt for learners of all ages. Multimodal learning alongside with communication technologies and digital devices make teaching literature engaging, innovative and motivating for the learners.

The author of this thesis applied the theoretical approaches to teaching into two lesson plans using selected authentic texts by Roald Dahl. These lesson plans were aimed at different age groups of learners following the Framework Educational Programme for Primary Education in the Czech Republic. The lesson plans were conscientiously selected and presented to the learners taking into consideration their reading and listening skills. The range of technological devices and their application in the learning process was carefully selected to work simultaneously in ensuring the full potential of English acquisition via multimodal learning.

The thesis contributes to the assumption that authentic reading material, such as literature, is an important teaching material in language acquisition. It also instinctively provides cultural awareness, critical thinking, and creativity, and helps learners to appreciate the scope and variety of English language.

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## **List of Appendices:**

1. Appendix 1: Lesson Plan I – *The BFG* (extracts)
2. Appendix 2: Extract I – *The BFG*
3. Appendix 3: Lesson Plan II – “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”
4. Appendix 4: Extract II – “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”

# Appendix 1: Lesson Plan I. – *The BFG*

## Introduction

In this integrated skills lesson (reading, writing, listening, speaking), learners will learn about similes. First, they will watch and listen to a movie trailer and say what they have seen and heard. Then they will read clues and complete a book-themed crossword recalling body parts vocabulary. The learners will then read a simple extract from the book and work further with the body parts vocabulary finding and creating similes. Finally, they will take a Kahoot quiz about *The BFG*. There will be an optional activity of recording their reading.

\*This lesson plan can be used in one or two lessons depending on the number of learners in the class and their language abilities.

\*\* The teaching materials are freely accessible on the Internet.

## Topic *The BFG*

### Aims

- To teach learners about Roald Dahl's *The BFG*
- To practise and extend vocabulary related to books
- To practise the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking)
- To practise similes

### Age group

Lower primary learners

### Level

A1, A2

### Time

45 to 90 minutes

### Materials

'*The BFG*' book, text handouts, crossword worksheet, simile worksheet, computer, interactive whiteboard, whiteboard markers, pens, mobile phones or tablets

## Procedure

### 1. Warmer (5 minutes)

Use the computer and interactive whiteboard to present the topic with a clip on YouTube Disney's *The BFG* – official trailer. Write *The BFG* on the board a to explain the abbreviations BFG (Big Friendly Giant), show the book *The BFG* and introduce the author Roald Dahl. Ask learners to brainstorm ideas about what they have seen and encourage learners to describe the giant. Write the words on the whiteboard/board.

\*The trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ0Bey4YUGI>

### 2. Crossword worksheet - Body parts (5 - 10 minutes)

Learners work individually to complete their body parts crosswords. They have to read the clues and write the answers in the grid, they can use picture clues. When they finish, learners compare their answers with a partner before prompting the answers aloud around the class. Ask '*What do the words have in common?*' – Body parts

\*The crossword can be created on the website page <https://www.mes-english.com/toolsforeducators/crossword/crosswordq.php?p=bodyparts>

### 3. Work with the text (10 – 30 minutes)

Ask learners to read the model text from the book (Appendix 2: Extract I.). Give learners a few minutes to read and ask them if there are any words or phrases they don't understand, explain them and add them to the whiteboard. Choose a learner/s to read the text extracts aloud.

Ask learners to find body parts in the text, keep adding them to the words written on the board.

Ask one or more learners to come to the board and circle all the body parts words and erase all the other words. In the text ask the learners to find adjectives describing those words (e.g. an enormous long pale wrinkly face, a huge hand ...). Praise the learner who finds a simile or point it out (eg. the nose

was as sharp as a knife, an arm as thick as a tree-trunk... ). Explain what a simile is – as ... as.

Handout simile worksheet and let learners make up their own similes with the words from the text.

\*It is a good idea to model the activity first. Learners complete their similes and can add illustrations. Monitor their activity and writing. Help where necessary.

\*\* Alternatively interactive worksheet for the whole class can be created at: <https://www.liveworksheets.com/search.asp?content=similes>

#### **4. Kahoot quiz time (30 – 42 minutes)**

Set up *The BFG* Kahoot on the interactive whiteboard and let the learners connect with their mobile phones (individually or in pairs/groups). Play the Kahoot quiz reading out loud the questions and allow enough time to answer.

\*The Kahoot: <https://create.kahoot.it/details/60216208-6ead-47fc-98e4-22ca64a1af09>

#### **5. Whole class discussion (3 minutes)**

Ask each learner to read aloud their best simile. Can you imagine the giant looking like that? Can you draw him?

#### **Optional follow up task**

Learners draw their own giant, using the similes from the previous activity, and write a few sentences to describe him/her.

#### **Classroom English**

- Watch, listen and remember.
- Can you describe the giant?
- Who is the author? Who is the illustrator?
- Work in pairs.
- Share your ideas.
- Come to the board and write it.
- Today, we are going to talk about similes.
- Read this text silently.
- Read it out loud.

- Write your own ideas.
- Set up your phones for Kahoot.
- Can you imagine the giant looking like that? Can you draw him?

## **Appendix 2: Extract I. – *The BFG* (text extracts)**

DAHL, R. *The BFG*. London: Puffin Books, 1982, 207 p, pbk. ISBN 0140315977.

In the moonlight, Sophie caught a glimpse of an enormous long pale wrinkly face with the most enormous ears. The nose was as sharp as a knife, and above the nose there were two bright flashing eyes, and the eyes were staring straight at Sophie. There was a fierce and devilish look about them. (p. 7)

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The next moment, a huge hand with pale fingers came snaking in through the window. This was followed by an arm, an arm as thick as a tree-trunk, and the arm, the hand, the fingers were reaching out across the room towards Sophie's bed. (p. 9)

## **Appendix 3: Lesson Plan II – “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”**

### **Introduction**

This lesson may be useful as an introductory lesson to Roald Dahl. In this lesson, learners are introduced to Dahl’s work and share the knowledge that they already have of him with a mind map and quiz activities at the beginning of the lesson. Further on the learners will read, analyse and discuss the main dilemma in this authentic text. After an introduction, they will read and listen to the first part of the story, discuss their understanding and suggest how the story continues. Then the readers read and listen again up to the line ‘*Just imagine, Frau Hitler...*’ Again the learners will discuss their findings, following their discussion the teacher prompts them to predict the next part of the story.

At the end they will watch a part of the movie adaptation.

\*This lesson plan can be used as two 45 minute lessons.

\*\* The author of the thesis has used her own online teaching material – Microsoft Teams Forms questionnaire. The other teaching materials are freely accessible on the Internet.

**Topic** “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”

### **Aims**

- To read, analyse and talk about English literature
- To practise and extend vocabulary related to a particular text
- To express expectations, predict future development and justify opinions about the learners’ findings

### **Age group**

Upper primary learners

### **Level**

A2, B1

## Time

90 minutes

## Materials

Computer, overhead projector, mobile phones or tablets, blackboard/whiteboard, marker pens, CD-Player, text handouts, pens, book *Kiss Kiss*, Microsoft Teams access

## Procedure

### 1. Warmer (5 - 10 minutes)

Write an anagram of ROALD DAHL (e.g. HAROLD LAD) on the board and have a race with pairs of learners who can work out the name of a famous British author first. You can give clues (e.g. the number of letters in the first name and surname or hinting the initial letters).

Once the name ROALD DAHL is established as a topic, write it in the middle of the board and ask the learners what they know and write a few ideas around the name. Once they are introduced to how a mind map works, ask them to make a few groups around the classroom and produce their own mind maps (e.g. names of books/movies, characters, settings, catch phrases...).

Sum up their ideas and introduce the author Roald Dahl and the title of the story.

### 2. Vocabulary worksheet (10 - 25 minutes)

Learners work individually to match the words from the story to their meaning. When they finish, learners compare their answers and check pronunciation using the Quizlet flashcards on the interactive whiteboard.

\*The worksheet can be created and published on <https://en.islcollective.com/>

\*The Quizlet flashcards <https://quizlet.com/328755077/vocab-from-genesis-and-catastrophe-a-true-story-flash-cards/>

### 3. Work with the text (25 – 40 minutes)

Hand out the text and ask learners to read and listen to the text from the book (Appendix 4: Extract II.). After reading the first part of the story check the understanding, explain any difficult words if needed (write them on the board) and ask the learners to give suggestions what might happen next.

Learners continue to listen to and read the next part of the story up to the line 'Just imagine, Frau Hitler...' Give the learners a minute to comprehend the information then have a class discussion about the findings. Ask the learners what they think might happen in the rest of the story.

**4. Whole class discussion (40 – 45 minutes)**

Ask the learners how do they feel about the story? Were there some interesting/shocking elements? What do you think will happen next?

**5. Follow up by watching the story as a short film or continue reading it with an audio recording. (5 – 15 minutes)**

\*Audio recording can be obtained at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgTmPbeQg0w>

\*\*The film can be obtained at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BaxETNnLZI>

**6. Crossroads quiz time (15 - 30 minutes)**

Set up Crossroads on the interactive whiteboard and ask learners to take turns to read out loud and fill in the activities on the Crossroads web page.

- Genesis and Catastrophe 1: Choose the correct answer.

\*at <https://crossroads.portfolio.no/read/f97154c3-dec9-4a0e-84a1-4d3f23090144>

- Genesis and Catastrophe 2: click on the adjectives and nouns in the selected text.

\*at <https://crossroads.portfolio.no/read/2e0d4273-b679-4672-8a0e-3ea4e03b8f47#a>

- Genesis and Catastrophe 3: Match the words and phrases.

\*at <https://crossroads.portfolio.no/read/6aac4904-4dff-4014-9877-8fc7368a3c32#a>

**7. Whole class discussion (30 - 40 minutes)**

Ask each learner which part of the story had an effect on them. Why? Ask them to read it aloud. Did the 'revelation' changed the way they felt about the baby? In what way?

### **8. Optional follow up task/ homework set up (40 – 45 minutes)**

To fill in Microsoft Teams Forms questionnaire:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SuXU8RudJEKCKr7n2cbkCTArJEQZQMhGuHedN2htPKVUM1RSOVBIRDNPQk5CN0FaVTMyMVU1RldVNC4u>

### **Classroom English**

- Work in pairs and solve the anagram.
- What do you know about Roald Dahl and his work?
- Work in a group of 3 – 4. Make a mind map.
- Share your ideas with the rest of the class.
- Can you match the words to their meanings? Use an online dictionary if unsure.
- Check your findings on the Quizlet flashcards.
- Read and listen to the beginning of the story.
- What is the story about?
- How many characters are there? Who do you think is the main character in this story?
- How is the mother feeling?
- What do you think is going to happen next in the story?
- Will there be any other characters?
- Share your ideas.
- Read and listen to the second part of the story.
- What have you just found out?
- Do you speak German? What does 'Frau' mean?
- What is the story about?
- Read the title again.
- Watch the end of the story.
- What do you know about the baby?

- How do you feel about the story?
- Why is it called Genesis and Catastrophe?

## Appendix 2: Extract II. – “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”

DAHL, R. *Kiss Kiss*. Penguin Books, 2011. ISBN 0241955343.

### “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”

Roald Dahl

“Everything is normal,” the doctor was saying.

“Just lie back and relax.” His voice was miles away in the distance and he seemed to be shouting at her.

“You have a son.”

“What?”

“You have a fine son. You understand that, don’t you? A fine son. Did you hear him crying?”

“Is he all right, Doctor?”

“Of course he is all right,”

“Please let me see him.”

“You’ll see him in a moment.”

“You are certain he is all right?”

“I am quite certain.”

“Is he still crying?”

“Try to rest. There is nothing to worry about.”

“Why has he stopped crying, Doctor? What happened?”

“Don’t excite yourself, please. Everything is normal.”

“I want to see him. Please let me see him.”

“Dear lady,” the doctor said, patting her hand. “You have a fine strong healthy child. Don’t you believe me when I tell you that?”

“What is the woman over there doing to him?”

“Your baby is being made to look pretty for you,” the doctor said. “We are giving him a little wash, that is all. You must spare us a moment or two for that.”

“You swear he is all right?”

“I swear it. Now lie back and relax. Close your eyes. Go on, close your eyes.

That’s right. That’s better. Good girl ...” (p. 199 - 200)

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"I have prayed and prayed that he will live, Doctor.

"Of course he will live. What are you talking about?"

"The others didn't."

"What?"

"None of my other ones lived, Doctor."

The doctor stood beside the bed looking down at the pale exhausted face of the young woman. He had never seen her before today. She and her husband were new people in the town. The innkeeper's wife, who had come up to assist in the delivery, had told him that the husband worked at the local customs-house on the border and that the two of them had arrived quite suddenly at the inn with one trunk and one suitcase about three months ago. The husband was a drunkard, the innkeeper's wife had said, an arrogant, overbearing, bullying little drunkard, but the young woman was gentle and religious. And she was very sad. She never smiled. In the few weeks that she had been here, the innkeeper's wife had never once seen her smile. Also there was a rumour that this was the husband's third marriage, that one wife had died and that the other had divorced him for unsavoury reasons. But that was only a rumour.

The doctor bent down and pulled the sheet up a little higher over the patient's chest. "You have nothing to worry about," he said gently. "This is a perfectly normal baby."

"That's exactly what they told me about the others. But I lost them all, Doctor. In the last eighteen months I have lost all three of my children, so you mustn't blame me for being anxious."

"Three?"

"This is my fourth. . . in four years."

The doctor shifted his feet uneasily on the bare floor.

"I don't think you know what it means, Doctor, to lose them all, all three of them, slowly, separately, one by one. I keep seeing them. I can see Gustav's face now as clearly as if he were lying here beside me in the bed. Gustav was a lovely boy, Doctor. But he was always ill. It is terrible when they are always ill and there is nothing you can do to help them."

"I know."

The woman opened her eyes, stared up at the doctor for a few seconds, then closed them again.

“My little girl was called Ida. She died a few days before Christmas. That is only four months ago. I just wish you could have seen Ida, Doctor.”

“You have a new one now.”

“But Ida was so beautiful.”

“Yes,” the doctor said. “I know.”

“How can you know?” she cried.

“I am sure that she was a lovely child. But this new one is also like that.” The doctor turned away from the bed and walked over to the window and stood there looking out. It was a wet grey April afternoon, and across the street he could see the red roofs of the houses and the huge raindrops splashing on the tiles.

“Ida was two years old, Doctor. . . and she was so beautiful I was never able to take my eyes off her from the time I dressed her in the morning until she was safe in bed again at night. I used to live in holy terror of something happening to that child. Gustav had gone and my little Otto had also gone and she was all I had left. Sometimes I used to get up in the night and creep over to the cradle and put my ear close to her mouth just to make sure that she was breathing.

“Try to rest,” the doctor said, going back to the bed. “Please try to rest.” The woman’s face was white and bloodless, and there was a slight bluish-grey tinge around the nostrils and the mouth. A few strands of damp hair hung down over her forehead, sticking to the skin.

“When she died. . . I was already pregnant again when that happened, Doctor. This new one was a good four months on its way when Ida died. ‘I don’t want it!’ I shouted after the funeral. ‘I won’t have it! I have buried enough children!’ And my husband... he was strolling among the guests with a big glass of beer in his hand ... he turned around quickly and said, ‘I have news for you, Kiara, I have good news.’ Can you imagine that, Doctor? We have just buried our third child and he stands there with a glass of beer in his hand and tells me that he has good news, ‘Today I have been posted to Braunau,’ he says, ‘so you can start packing at once. This will be a new start for you, Kiara,’ he says. ‘It will be a new place and you can have a new doctor ...’”

“Please don’t talk any more.”

“You are the new doctor, aren’t you, Doctor?”

“That’s right.”

“And here we are in Braunau.”

“I am frightened, Doctor.”

“Try not to be frightened.”

“What chance can the fourth one have now?”

“You must stop thinking like that.”

“I can’t help it. I am certain there is something inherited that causes my children to die in this way. There must be.”

“That is nonsense.”

“Do you know what my husband said to me when Otto was born, Doctor? He came into the room and he looked into the cradle where Otto was lying and he said, ‘Why do all my children have to be so small and weak?’”

“I am sure he didn’t say that.”

“He put his head right into Otto’s cradle as though he were examining a tiny insect and he said, ‘All I am saying is why can’t they be better specimens? That’s all I am saying.’ And three days after that, Otto was dead. We baptized him quickly on the third day and he died the same evening. And then Gustav died. And then Ida died. All of them died, Doctor. . . and suddenly the whole house was empty.”

“Don’t think about it now.”

“Is this one so very small?”

“He is a normal child.”

“But small?”

“He is a little small, perhaps. But the small ones are often a lot tougher than the big ones. Just imagine, Frau Hitler, this time next year he will be almost learning how to walk. Isn’t that a lovely thought?” (p. 200 – 203)

## Annotation

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<b>Název práce:</b>	Vybrané texty Roalda Dahla a jejich aplikace v ELT při využití moderních informačních a komunikačních technologií
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Roald Dahl's selected texts and their application in ELT using modern information communication technologies
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Cílem diplomové práce je zhodnotit vybrané texty a dílo britského autora Roalda Dahla a aplikovat vybrané texty z jeho tvorby do výuky anglického jazyka s využitím komunikačních technologií. Práce potvrzuje, že i v současném technologickém světě je literatura vhodným výukovým prostředkem k pochopení anglického jazyka a kulturních rozdílů i k rozvoji kritického myšlení a kreativity.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	literatura, ELT, ESOL, komunikační technologie, multimodální výuka, Roald Dahl
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The aim of the diploma thesis is to evaluate selected texts and the work of the British author Roald Dahl and to apply selected texts from his work to ELT using communication technologies. The thesis confirms that even in today's technological world, literature is a suitable and valued teaching tool for understanding the English language and cultural differences, as well as for the development of critical thinking and creativity.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	literature, ELT, ESOL, communication technologies, multimodal learning, Roald Dahl

<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	Lesson plan I – <i>The BFG</i> Lesson plan II – “Genesis and Catastrophe: A True Story”
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	60 stran
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	anglický

## Resumé

Autorka se v této diplomové práci pokusila zhodnotit vybrané texty a dílo Roalda Dahla, britského spisovatele, který přispěl do fondu světové literatury tvorbou jak pro děti a mládež, tak i pro dospělé. Jeho texty jsou v současnosti hojně využívány k výuce anglického jazyka v anglofonních zemích. Důvodem je především autorova bohatá jazyková tvořivost plná originálních novotvarů a výjimečné jazykové vynalézavosti. Dahlovu tvorbu po dospělé i děti a mládež pojí dějová nápaditost a napínavost příběhu. Toho autorka diplomové práce využívá a s oporou v teoretických poznatcích získaných z mnoha zdrojů s texty pracuje a provádí jejich rozbor. Cílem diplomové práce je analyzovat vybrané texty a prezentovat jejich využití v hodinách anglického jazyka na základní škole s využitím moderních komunikačních technologií.