Psychological Correction of Aggressive Behavior of Older Preschool Children in Fairy-Tale Therapy Discourse

Психологическая коррекция агрессивного поведения детей старшего дошкольного возраста в сказкотерапевтическом дискурсе

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Abstract

The goal is to study the aggression of children of senior preschool age with the subsequent possibility of its correction by means of fairy-tale therapy. The authors prove that the level of aggression in older preschoolers can be reduced by corrective cycles using fairy-tale therapy. In their research, the authors consider the possibilities of fairy-tale discourse as an interdisciplinary method of psychological correction of aggressive behavior in older preschool children.

Key words: fairy-tale therapy, psychological correction, children of senior preschool age, aggression.

Introduction

One of the most important and acute problems of the modern world is increased aggression among children. Aggression and aggressive behavior of children is a topical subject of study by scientists, both theorists and practitioners. Aggressive situations have been very common in recent years between children and their occurrence can be observed from preschool age.

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The increase in child crime and the increase in the number of children who are prone to aggressive behavior has put forward a new task of studying the psychological conditions that cause this phenomenon. Given the significant number of studies in this area, the main questions that are related to the origins and nature of aggression have not been studied.

For most people, a fairy tale remains one of the best childhood memories for the rest of their lives. These are exciting stories with magic and specific characters, which always ends with the victory of good over evil. But few people know that recently this folk genre is actively used in psychology and pedagogy as an element of the correctional course. In 1997, a new direction in this field was officially registered — fairy-tale therapy, which is currently actively developing and showing good results.

Multidimensional psychological and pedagogical research of the problem of child aggression in Russian psychology and pedagogy has attracted the attention of many authors and is reflected in a number of works (Enikolopov, S. N. (2011), N. D. Levitov, T. G. Rumyantseva); also, the study of aggression and aggressive behavior has attracted the attention of many other researchers, such as Byutner K. (1991), etc.

Increasing the number of children with an increased level of aggression is one of the most pressing problems in the children's collective (Erina et al, 2019). Today, representatives of various approaches offer many interpretations of the definition of aggressive behavior. It can be said that aggression is understood as purposeful infliction of physical or mental damage to another person.

The basis of correctional work with this category of children is based on methods aimed at eliminating the causes of aggressive behavior (Karabulatova et al, 2017). In turn, they should not be limited to working with the external manifestations of this behavior. Working with aggressive children, you should focus not only on individual manifestations, but also on the child's attitude to their own behavior.

One of the most productive ways to correct this behavior is interaction in the story-game form. The above method is a source of valuable diagnostic material that can help the psychologist to understand the problem through the eyes of a child. Productive approaches can be considered corrective forms of fairy-tale therapy, which are based on the constructive interaction of the psychologist and the client.

Fairy-tale therapy is a psychological influence on a person through fairy tales. Fairy-tale therapy is aimed at developing a positive and multi-faceted personality, while it helps to correct some problems, eliminate fears and internal complexes.

It is based on the process of building mental, sometimes even unconscious connections between the characters, plot and actions in a fairy tale and what happens in reality. This is a kind of hint on how to do the right thing, which way to choose and evaluate yourself from the outside. It has no age restrictions. Children are most affected, but when working with adults, sometimes more profound results are found.

In psychology, this is primarily one of the many tools that allow individuals to understand the tangle of their own problems and find the right solutions in a difficult situation.

The process of correction of the studied problems by the method of fairy-tale therapy has already been analyzed in many sources by domestic Russian scientists, A.M. Rumyantseva T. N., Sertakova N. M., and others, in students, monographs. But despite a significant amount of scientific work in this field, the method of psychological correction of aggression in preschool children using fairy-tale therapy remains insufficiently studied in modern psychology.

The creation of new practical tools for working with child aggression is confirmed by the analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature.

Materials and methods

The cognition of the objective reality of the problem being studied was carried out using theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific literature on the research problem, the methodology of "Child through the eyes of an adult” (A. Á. Romanov), method – interviews, questionnaire for parents, developed Lavrentieva G. P. Technique "Cactus" M. A. Panfilova, methods of "drawing a nonexistent animal” test, "the hands of Wagner” (HandTest).

To diagnose the manifestations of aggressive behavior of older preschoolers in the work were used:
method-indirect structuralized observation. The observation was carried out using the method of registering manifestations of aggression "Child through the eyes of an adult" (A. A. Romanov) on 19 signs. This method will allow you to purposefully track the manifestations of aggressive behavior of older preschoolers, situational forms of aggression by the child, the frequency of their manifestations on the scale. Observation allows you to get meaningful, complete information for analysis and further selection of forms of work with identified aggressive children.

2) Method-conversation. Children were asked questions and recorded answers.

3) Survey of parents of aggressive children and caregivers working with them. A questionnaire for parents developed by G. p. Lavrentieva and T. M. Titarenko was used. Parents had to answer twenty questions of statements, where a positive response was evaluated by one point. The conclusion was made based on the total amount of points received. The higher the total amount, the higher the level of aggressiveness of the child on the available scale.

4) Testing to diagnose the qualities of a child's personality: the "Cactus" test by M. A. Panfilov. The child is asked to draw a cactus on paper with the will of the imagination. This technique was used to diagnose aggression.

5) the Technique "drawing a non-existent animal". A common projective technique for diagnosing aggression in children. This method is easy to use and interesting for children, not causing them resistance. The main role in the task is formed in the ability of the child to fantasize and transfer the invented image to paper. Each drawing of the child was analyzed, and the total amount of points was calculated. If the child scored 11-15 points, it means that he had an increased level of aggression; if 7-10 points, a high level of aggression; 4-6 points average level of aggression and 0-3 points weak level of aggression.

6) Wagner's hand Test (HandTest). The test contains scales: aggression, indication, fear, emotionality, communication, dependence, demonstrativeness, disability, active impersonality, passive impersonality, description. The author connects the work of the brain with the development of the function of the hand, since the hand is directly involved in the external activity of a person. Therefore, using this method, it is possible to draw further conclusions about the trends in the activity of the subjects.

The subjects were shown cards with the image of a hand and asked to interpret the content of the action presented in the form of a «freeze frame». The child needs to be told what they think this hand is doing?». If the subject finds it difficult to answer, he is asked the question: "What do you think the person who owns this hand is doing? What can a man do with such a hand? Name all the options you can imagine." The child must give four possible answers to each card.

The use of these methods for the study of aggression in older preschool children makes it possible to obtain a wide and diverse information about the phenomenon under study for its subsequent psychological correction by means of fairy-tale therapy.

The study was conducted based on the State budgetary institution of the Republic of Crimea "Center for social adaptation", located in the Bakhchisaray district, the village Pochtovoe.

This age was chosen, as among children aged 5-6 years, teachers have recently noticed frequent, vivid manifestations of aggression. The study involved 42 children, including 31 who were raised in full families and 11 from incomplete so-called maternal families.

The study was conducted in several stages:

1. Stating stage. The goal of the ascertaining stage of the experiment is to study the aggressive behavior of older preschool children.

At this stage of diagnosing the level of aggression in older preschoolers, methods and techniques were used, which are presented in the second section of the scientific work.

2. Correctional stage. The purpose of the correction stage: to conduct compiled correction cycles for children to change the social behavior of children about the means of oral folk art, author's artistic and didactic fairy tales. Parents and educators were also involved in the correctional stage.

3. The control stage. The goal is to determine the effectiveness of the compiled correction cycles aimed at working with aggression in older preschool children.
Discussion

Aggression is the subject of more psychological research abroad, but Russian research in this area is extremely limited. The works of E. M. Gasparova (1985), S. N. Enikolopov (2011), I. S. Karabulatova (2013), N. D. Levitov (1964), I. V. Mkrtumova (2016), T. G. Rumyantseva (1982), I. P. Savchuk (2019) and other authors outline approaches to the study of some individual issues related to aggression.


In Russia, the problem under consideration has been hushed up for a long time, and there have been few publications in this regard. 60-70 years of interest in this problem decreased. Many researchers began to worry about the problem of psychological and pedagogical work with aggressive children. A. G. Asmolov in the book by K. Byutner "Live with aggressive children" (1991), speaks about the growth of crime among children and adolescents (Asmolov, 2019). However, in the post-Soviet period, the problem of deviations and aggression began to be actively developed by researchers of the post-Soviet space. In turn, American psychologists E. Maccoby and S. Jacklin, addressing the topic of aggression, studied aggressive behavior in representatives of different sexes (Ilyin, 2001). A group of researchers headed by I. V. Mkrtumova (2016) studied the anti-social nature of aggression.

Theories of aggressive behavior of children and adolescents that have received the most widespread and support in the United States are the theory of social learning (Berkowitz, 2012) and cognitive behavioral theory (N. Novako). According to social learning theory, aggressive behaviors are learned either through direct experience or observation. One of the leading Russian specialists in the study of child aggression is G. E. Breslav (2013). When considering the problem of child aggression, special attention is paid to biological factors in scientific works. This was emphasized in their research by Gasparova E. M. (1985), Levitov N. D. (1964), Sears R. (2014), Heckhausen X. (2003) and others. X. Heckhausen extends the classification of Ilyin I. P. (2001) due to the accentuation of parts of the emotional component. Sharing the point of view of L. Berkowitz, they believe that recently there is a tendency to study the phenomenon of aggression, as a complex phenomenon that is formed under the influence of not only biological, but also social, as well as psychological factors (Asadullina et al, 2020, Mkrtumova et al, 2016; Erina et al, 2019; Yuzhanin, 2020; Vorozhbitova et al, 2019).

Systematizing the views of both foreign and domestic scientists on the problem of aggression in children and its further possibility of correction, we have identified the method of fairy-tale therapy, based on the characteristics of age and their leading activity. The fairy tale has always been used, but this method has only recently come into scientific practice only 15-20 years ago. The method was developed recently, in the early 1990s, by the St. Petersburg psychologist Tatyana Zinkevich-Evstigneeva and her colleagues, although fairy tales, myths, legends and legends have been used in world psychological practice since the time of Carl Jung and analytical psychology created by him.

There are a few methods for correcting aggressive behavior of preschool children: drama therapy, phototherapy, mask therapy, music therapy, visual-therapy, and other types of art therapy. According to the research of the authors (Zinkevich-Evstigneeva, 2015; Karabulatova et al, 2017; Khachmazova et al, 2017), fairy-tale therapy discourse is one of the most effective psychocorrective methods for transforming identification matrices of behavior in both adults and children. Storyline constructions in fairy-tale therapy allow the recipient to identify with the main fairy-tale hero, which leads to a decrease in child aggression.

The main research on which the work is based is: fundamental theoretical research that systematizes knowledge about the causes of aggressive behavior (Baron, R., and Richardson, D. 2011; Berkowits, 2012;
Durekova, 2015), research on child aggression (Erina et al, 2019; Polivara, Karabulatova, 2018; Svistunova et al, 2012; Erina, 2019), as well as research in the field of complex fairy-tale therapy (Zinkevich-Evstigneeva, 2015; Sertakova, 2012; Khrustova, Akutina, 2015; Smirnova, 2014).

The children's world is completely different from the adult world. It is special and huge. To prove this, it is enough to remember yourself at a young age. As children, we believed in miracles. The magic surrounds us everywhere.

Therapeutic fairy tales work wonders. They can solve children's problems and cope with emerging life difficulties. Reading fairy tales to children, we become closer and begin to understand each other better.

**Results**

Analysis of the results of the ascertaining stage. Indirect structuralized observation of aggression in children was carried out using the method of A. A. Romanov "Child through the eyes of an adult" (2001).

The severity of situational and personal aggressive reactions was determined by the total number of points for 19 signs.

The obtained data were recorded in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 (from 0 to 65 points)</th>
<th>Level 2 (from 65 to 130 points)</th>
<th>Level 3 (from 130 to 195 points)</th>
<th>Level 4 (from 195 to 260 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 children</td>
<td>18 children</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, for each feature, the points of aggression were calculated. Out of 42 children, 18 children were identified who often have aggressive reactions and need help in mastering their own behavior and emotions. During the follow-up period, 24 children showed no clear, vivid signs of aggression. Children were most often reserved and showed a friendly attitude towards each other (they played together both in the group room and on the walk). It was noted that there was a friendly relationship between these children.

They are happy when they meet each other in kindergarten. As for children who show aggression, the observation revealed that they do not have friends. They move chaotically from groups playing to other groups. It is difficult for them, they are not accepted in games, thus they get angry, break what other children did in the game (sand crafts), as well as take away toys, throw away toys, etc.), spit, show no reaction to the teacher's remark, go away, sit alone.

Continuing his study of aggression in children of preschool age has been used the conversation with children. Children were asked four questions.

The results are presented in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSES aggressive children</th>
<th>RESPONSES non-aggressive children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 girls and 15 boys</td>
<td>19 girls and 5 boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom, dad, uncle, grandmother, brother, sister, friend. (83.3% of boys, 16.6% of girls).</td>
<td>Bandits, hunters, cartoon characters (fosses, dragon, bergens, hyenas) (girls 79%; boys 20.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd fight, call him a &quot;fool,&quot; spit on him, bite him, throw a rock at him. I would have fought.</td>
<td>Would have passed by, remained silent, turned away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No – 61.1% of boys, 16.6% of girls</td>
<td>I would call for help (girls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes-22.2% of boys</td>
<td>I would leave, I would run away, I would step aside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No – 20.8% of boys and 100% girls</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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The analysis of the results of the questionnaire conducted for parents in the work is presented in table 3. 73 parents took part in the survey.

Table 3.
The results of the responses of parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment levels of aggression</th>
<th>Increased level of aggression — 11-15 points.</th>
<th>High level of aggressiveness — 11-15 points.</th>
<th>The average level of aggression is 6-10 points.</th>
<th>Low level of aggressiveness — 1-5 points.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of parents</td>
<td>4 parents (5,5%)</td>
<td>22 parents (30,1%)</td>
<td>47 parents (64,4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most parents 47% believe that children tend to defend themselves, do not allow other children to take away toys, interfere with joint games. They consider their children not aggressive and consider the presence of a weak level of aggression to be the norm.

22 parents noted that their children’s behavior has an average level of aggression. 5.5% of parents consider their children to have a high level of aggression. Children do not listen to them, they snap at their requests and vice versa. Often mumbles and grumbles to himself. Commands, subordinates others, always looking for someone to blame for their failures, easily quarrels, pugnacious, easily irritated. The data obtained cannot be considered objective, since parents tend to belittle, and some exaggerate certain aggressive manifestations of their children. Most often, their children are ideal for parents.

The survey of educators received other indicators for assessing the level of aggression of older preschoolers. 6 children (14%) have a low level of aggression, 12 children (28.57%) are average, 18 children (42.86%) are high and six children (14%) have an increased level of aggression.

The use of the "Cactus" method by M. A. Panfilova (2018) in the experimental study of aggression allowed us to study other personal qualities of a preschool child.

The use of the "Cactus" method by M. A. Panfilova in the experimental study of aggression allowed us to study other personal qualities of a preschool child.

Self-doubt, dependence—a small cactus, shown at the bottom of the leaf – 4 children. Demonstrativeness, the presence of cactus appendages – 6 children. Secrecy, caution – none of the children had this quality reflected in the drawing. 0 children.

Optimism is inherent in 24 children (57.1%). Children used colored pencils; the image of cacti was optimistic. Anxiety was diagnosed in 4 children (9.5%). Children shading the image of cacti with dark pencils. Extroverted—several cacti of different colors are shown – 6 children (14.3%).

Introverted – one cactus is drawn-36 children (85.7%). Personal qualities like "extroverted" and "introverted" gave this indicator because the installation was given "draw a cactus". 18 children (42.9%) drew a cactus in a pot, which indicates that they have a desire for home protection, a sense of family community.

Color interpretation of the drawing reveals how mobile the child’s mind is.

Many children used the green color - 29 children (69%). This color indicates that the child has such personal qualities as: will, determination, love of life, determination, perseverance, and ambition.

The gray color of the pencil symbolizing a neutral attitude to everything that is happening was used by 4 children (9.5%).

Yellow cactus was represented by 4 girls (9.5%). This color stated that they had a fear of being rejected in the group, not accepted into the overall game.

Black pencil was used by 5 children (11.9%). These children tend to contradict adults in everything, perhaps they are too spoiled. The interpretation of the results was clarified using additional questions specified in the methodology.

The "Nonexistent animal" test used helped to investigate forms of aggression in older preschoolers. Non-existent animals were
depicted in a variety of ways, which later gave the following analyzed data.

Of the 42 children examined, it was found that the following forms of aggression were detected in the subjects.

Aggressive defense against people with power and authority was found in 24 children (57.1%), thus prevailing in comparison with other forms of aggression.

Verbal aggression - in 4 children, which is 16.8%. Defense-response aggression - in 14 children, which is 33.3%.

Knowing that aggression has personal qualities that accompany the aggressive behavior of older preschool children, the “Wagner Hands” test was used to study them.

As a result of its application, the following results were obtained that accompany aggressive behavior of preschool children: aggressiveness - 9%, communication - 14.2%, demonstrativeness - 2.2%, dependence - 9.8%, emotionality - 8.9%.

According to the results of the analysis of the test “hands of Wagner”, the following indicators of personal qualities that can provoke aggression were identified.

Clear aggression was detected in 4 children (9.5%). The quality of “communication” was detected in 6 children (14.3%). These children had difficulties in communicating with children, parents, and adults. 1 child (2%) attracted attention by being “demonstrative”. 4 children (9.5%) do not know how to solve complex, conflict situations on their own. Does not know how to work together with children. In 3 children (7.2%), difficulties in interpersonal contacts, isolation from everyone, and a violation in personal quality “emotionality” were tracked.

Thus, during the diagnostics of the ascertaining stage of the study, a category of children who are prone to aggression was identified. They accounted for 42.9% of the total number of respondents (18 children). Then these children took part in the correctional stage of research work.

Corrective work was carried out with 18 children demonstrating aggressive behavior. Parents and educators were involved in the correction stage to change the social behavior of children. Corrective work to change the social behavior of children, including the use of: oral folk art, author’s artistic and didactic fairy tales. The use of the above-mentioned means of fairy-tale therapy in the correction allowed:

1) reduce the level of emotional stress in the child;
2) including the child in fairy-tale stories, where through self-expression the child will learn to build relationships with other children and adults;
3) playing fairy-tale roles, the child of senior preschool age will master the feelings of self-control, self-regulation, will reduce the level of aggression, develop a positive emotional side of its development;
4) the child will form their ability to overcome difficulties.

From April 22 to May 31, the first and second cycles of classes with children were held. The first cycle included the material of oral folk art:

Talk with children about the bad habits of name calling. Leonid Zakharov’s fable “the Butting cow”. The parable “Be happy!”. Daoist parable “the Mirror”. The parable “the Knight and the dragon”. The tale of the “Good fish”. Fairy tale on the contrary. Reading the story of B. Shergina “Rhyme”.

The second cycle included fairy tales for children who show verbal aggression: “Crocodile”, “Hare with a backpack”, “lion Cub at school”, “Mighty oak and little boar”.

From September 7 – October 25, 2019. the third cycle of classes was held.

The third cycle included didactic fairy tales-these are tales of an informative nature. With their help, you can work out a difficult situation for the child, a behavior model, and a system for finding a solution. The paper used fairy tales for children who have impaired communication with their peers and demonstrate increased aggression: “Little bear”, “the Tale of a small Cloud”, as well as invented by educators.

A gym was used for classes, and a carpet was laid out on the floor. During the lesson, children took relaxation poses (sitting, lying down). The instruction was given (to behave quietly and with restraint), because in the process of using the means of fairy-tale therapy, you will need to “listen to yourself”, your feelings, and hear “inner feelings”.

In the process, the children told about their feelings. Children were immersed in a fairy tale.
Lived the role of fairy-tale characters with the transfer to the real actions of children and people (Kabacheck, 2013).

The cycles of classes were repeated a week after the start of classes. Repeated classes evoked positive emotions and behavioral reactions in children. With great pleasure, we analyzed the roles and played them with passion.

After the corrective work was carried out, a control stage was held. The control examination was performed using three methods ("Cactus", "non-Existant animal", "Wagner's Hands").

So, out of 18 children participating in the correctional work and control stage of the study, they showed:

- high level of aggression, continue to demonstrate 3 children (16.6%);
- average level of 9 children (50%);
- low level of 6 children (33.3%).

This indicates a favorable and successful implementation of corrective work on the aggressiveness of older preschool children.

Comparing the results of the ascertaining and control stages of the study (before and after), the correctional cycle of classes with aggressive children, we can talk about tracing the positive dynamics of changes in children's behavior. The corrective stage of the work allowed us to trace the dynamics of reducing the aggressiveness of older preschool children. If at the ascertaining stage of the study, 18 children clearly demonstrated aggression, 8 of them (19%) with a high level of aggression, then after the corrective stage of work, only 3 children did not change their behavior.

They continued to fight, bite, spit, and conflict with both children and adults. The remaining 15 children had changes (9 children (50%) had an average level of aggression. They reduced their aggressive manifestations to others; children became softer, kinder; less began to create conflict situations; more often began to Express emotions of joy and satisfaction, etc.).

6 children (33.3%) generally reduced their aggression. They became calmer than before; responsible for their feelings and actions; began to have internal control; to see and accept both the good and bad in people. These indicators can be explained. The group's teachers were included in the correctional work. They were recommended to actively involve aggressive children in all educational moments, activate them in the classroom (reading fairy tales, playing roles, conversations where they expressed their opinions, gave assessments of the actions of the characters, etc.). Parents were also included, and they were given a consultation for parents "Child aggression in preschool age".

**Conclusion**

So, theoretical study of the problem of aggression in pre-school age in the scientific literature made it possible to study aggression as a problem of modern society, the psychological characteristics of aggression of preschool children, and to consider fair-tales therapy as a method of psychological correction of aggressive behavior (Bolotova, 2019; Konyaev, 2003).

In the experimental part of the work, methods and techniques were used to study the forms and levels of aggression, as well as the main means of fairy-tale therapy were chosen, such as: oral folk art, author's and didactic tales.

We studied the manifestations of forms and levels of aggression in older preschool children. 18 children were identified as showing aggression towards both peers and adults. The conducted correctional cycle of classes aimed at reducing the aggression of children of senior preschool age allowed to reduce aggression in children. Of the 18 aggressive children, only 3 children remain, but 9 children have an average level of aggression, which indicates that corrective work needs to continue. Out of the total number of children participating in correctional work, only six children lowered their aggression to a low level.

The results obtained allow us to speak about the effectiveness of creating a corrective cycle of classes using fairy-tale therapy for older preschool children. Thus, the data obtained are the basis for further research on this problem, including convincing that the establishment of certain causes of increased aggression in children, as well as the use of targeted correctional and developmental activities, really have an impact on reducing the level of aggression in children of older preschool age.

The developed correctional cycle of classes is used in preschool institutions and receives positive feedback from its application.
aimed at reducing children's aggression allowed reducing aggression in children. Of the 18 aggressive children, there are 3 children left, and 9 children have an average level of aggression. The results obtained allow us to speak about the effectiveness of fairy-tale therapy.

The research area consisted of generalization, systematization of views on the problem of aggression of preschool children, presentation of fairy-tale therapy as a method of psychological correction of aggressive behavior of children. The prospects for investigating the problem may lie in a more detailed and detailed study of the process of aggression in children from an early age (Savchuk et al, 2019). It would be interesting to study the psychological climate in the families of these children. Research in this area will prevent the occurrence of aggression in children from an early age and should be continued.

Fairy-tale therapy exists and has been used effectively since ancient times. Knowledge about the world, about the philosophy of life has been passed from mouth to mouth for centuries, and each new generation re-reads and absorbs it (Alekseeva, 2019). Fairy tales tell about the diversity of the world, about the actions of people, where reality is supplemented by magical opportunities and miracles.

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