

The potential of visual storytelling for developing literary competence

Il potenziale dello storytelling visivo per lo sviluppo della literary competence

di Smiljana Narančić Kovač

Abstract

This paper focuses on the narrative and metanarrative meanings found in the visual discourse of the picturebook, which represent the potential contribution of visual storytelling to the development of young readers' literary competence. The visual discourse also communicates figurative meanings and uses medium-related strategies in accordance with its multimodal nature as a means of meaning-making. This potential is fulfilled when the reader understands specific meanings or recognises a specific narrative strategy. An analysis of visual discourses of several picturebooks offers examples of medium-specific strategies used to express conventional narrative meanings.

Keywords:

**literary competence, medium-specific narrative strategies,
multimodality, picturebook, visual discourse**

Questo contributo si focalizza sui significati narrativi e meta-narrativi che si possono rintracciare nel discorso visivo degli albi illustrati, come emblema del potenziale contributo della narrazione visiva allo sviluppo della literary competence dei giovani lettori. Inoltre, il discorso visivo comunica significati figurativi usando strategie medium-specifiche in accordo con la sua natura multimodale, che si pone come mezzo di costruzione di significato. Tale potenziale si realizza quando il lettore comprende i significati specifici o riconosce una strategia narrativa peculiare. L'analisi del discorso visivo di diversi albi illustrati vuole offrire esempi proprio delle strategie medium-specifiche usate per esprimere significati narrativi convenzionali.

Parole chiave:

**literary competence, strategie narrative medium-specifiche,
multimodalità, albo illustrato, discorso visivo**

7

studi e ricerche

The potential of visual storytelling for developing literary competence

1. Foundations

1.1 *Literary competence*

Understanding narrative concepts is closely related to the idea of literary competence, explained by Jonathan Culler as the knowledge of conventions by which fictions are read and assimilated (and shared) by readers of literature (Culler, 2002, p. 132). He introduces the term in parallel to linguistic competence and clarifies that it involves reading a text as literature: “one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse” (Culler, 2002, p. 132). In other words, a competent reader of literature can recognise a literary text and knows what to expect in its different forms. Literary competence embraces narrative competence (Berman, 1995; Dobson, 2005), which means that recipients of narratives share certain experiences and knowledge which help them navigate and understand narrative texts.

8

1.2 *Literary understanding and children reading picturebooks*

Culler claims that literary competence is achieved through “acquaintance with a range of literature and in many cases some form of guidance” (Culler, 2002, p. 141), and that understanding literature depends on mastery of conventions and the experience of the system (Culler, 2002, p. 132). Literary understanding is the notion often used in the context of children’s reading.

Lawrence R. Sipe observes that literary understanding has often been understood as knowledge of plot, settings, characters, and theme as the basic elements of the narrative needed to understand how the story works, but that it can be “conceptualised in a broader, richer and more textured way” (Sipe, 2000, p. 252). This insight is understood as guidance in the present research. Sipe introduces the theory of literary understanding of young children as a social construction. It consists of five facets (analytical, intertextual, personal, transparent and performative), which constitute enactments of three basic literary impulses: hermeneutic, personalising and aesthetic. He defines literary understanding as “the dynamic process whereby these three impulses are activated and synergistically interact with each other” (Sipe, 2000, p. 271).

Research into the reception of picturebooks based on this analytical model has shown that even very young children are successful in deciphering narrative meanings from picturebook discourses, and particularly from the visual layer. Sandie Mourão (2013) found that the analysis of narrative meaning was an essential part of the response to picturebooks of young learners

of English, and that all five of Sipe's facets were represented in their responses. Coosje van der Pol studied how children aged 4-6 develop their narrative (literary) understanding and gather knowledge of the ways the stories are structured (Van der Pol, 2012, p. 94). In connection with the idea of the main character, some children demonstrated only an intuitive understanding of the concept, showing they were still in the pre-reflective stage of understanding this notion (Van der Pol, 2012, pp. 98-99). This "emergent literary competence" can be developed by appropriate activities and "literary conversations" (Van der Pol, 2012, p. 105).

Children are generally successful in (re)constructing narrative meanings from pictures, even if gaps in picturebook discourses are, as Clementine Beauvais puts it, "adult-orchestrated" (Beauvais, 2015, para 24). Her point is that gaps, understood as the central feature of the picturebook as a medium (Beauvais, 2015, para 1), guide the reader towards certain interpretations (Beauvais, 2015, para 27). They are didactic gaps as the effort a reader puts into deciphering them is guided by adult intention (Beauvais, 2015, para 22 ff). Yet, this didacticism enables the child reader not only to discover narrative meanings, but also to encounter metanarrative meanings. This experience offers insight into how the narrative text functions and improves the reader's literary competence.

Margaret Meek reports that the difficulties of inexperienced readers "lie not in the words but in understanding something that lies behind the words, embedded in the sense. It's usually an oblique reference to something the writer takes for granted that the reader will understand" (Meek, 1988, p. 20). Visual clues may help here. Even young learners of English as a foreign language successfully use visual clues to reconstruct a story through discussion, tend to raise issues and provide commentary, and demonstrate their narrative understanding (Hanžić, Narančić Kovač, 2008; Mourão, 2013; 2015).

Research into children's responses to the visual discourses of narrative picturebooks mostly provides encouraging results. Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles report that in their research child readers were "fascinated rather than daunted or confused by the playful postmodern elements of intertextuality, intratextuality and metafiction" (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, p. 129). Elementary pupils in Sylvia Pantaleo's study "communicated their understanding about how the designer created and manipulated the visual text to connote meaning", while "the multimodal materials and learning experiences" afforded them "opportunities to develop their knowledge about the meaning potential of various elements of art and design and to learn a concomitant metalanguage" (Pantaleo, 2014, p. 162).

Some concepts are considered difficult for young children. Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (1999, p. 158). suggests that children only acquire a full understanding of irony when they are about nine. However, she argues that ironic picturebooks, which demonstrate an incongruity of words and pictures, show that irony is a communicative process and a relational strategy, a matter of concepts rather than merely words, and that, therefore, the irony in picturebooks might help "in facilitating the child's first encounter with this concept" (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 1999, p. 176).

Crawford and Hade found that children respond by constructing unconventional interpretation when they lack experience related to a visual sign (Crawford, Hade, 2000, pp. 73–74). Still, the authors' findings show that “young readers become actively involved in their readings of wordless texts; they interpret signs, construct meaning, and offer responses” and that wordless books invite readers “to transact with these visual texts and engage in active story construction by mediating the complex layers of intertextual material” (Crawford, Hade, 2000, p. 78). Arizpe and Styles record that young children, for instance, failed to understand the snail depicted ahead of the traffic jam as an implication of how slowly the traffic moved (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, pp. 36–37). Yet, they “had no difficulty in analysing most of the metaphors” (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, p. 40). The authors also emphasise that they could “watch the children working through their particular zone of proximal development into deeper understanding” (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, p. 45).

Research into responses to visual narratives shows that children are generally receptive to new ideas and notions presented in the visual discourses of picturebooks, including those constituent of literary competence, both at the narrative and the metanarrative levels. Further, the focus is on the semiotic features of the narrative picturebook and its multimodality, which allows for manifold narrative strategies.

1.3 *Medium-specific strategies and multimodality*

Stories can be told by various kinds of discourses, which employ different media. They use media-specific techniques and strategies to achieve the same or similar narrative effects and meanings. Medium-specific concepts “are explicitly developed for a certain medium, but they can occasionally be extended to other media through a metaphoric transfer” (Ryan, Thon, 2014, p. 4). According to Mieke Bal, the way in which “different interpretations are suggested to the reader is medium-bound, but the principle of meaning-production is the same for verbal and visual art” (Bal, 1997, p. 164). This study focuses on narrative meanings as expressed in the visual discourse of the picturebook through a medium-induced transfer from natural language as the medium of literature.

The semiotic model of the narrative picturebook (Narančić Kovač, 2017), based on Chatman's model of the narrative (Chatman, 1978, p. 26), shows that each of the picturebook discourses (verbal and visual) fully performs its narrative role, participating in the telling of the same story. The multimodal nature of the picturebook is generally acknowledged, in the sense that it presents a “multimodal ensemble”, embracing “written language, visual images and overall design” (Serafini, 2014, p. 73), or that it is a “bimodal story” in which “complementary systems of image and language are laid out” (Painter, Martin, Unsworth, 2013, p. 156). Discourses in the picturebook exchange features, and both become multimodal on their own terms (Narančić Kovač, 2015, p. 203).

Nina Nørgaard analyses “meaning-potential of the visual aspect of printed verbal language” (Nørgaard, 2009, p. 142), and the “semiotic how and what of typography” (Nørgaard, 2009, p. 144). She discovers the presence of “literary meaning beyond that of word meaning” (Nørgaard, 2009, p. 159). Rosemary Ross Johnston sees multimodality as a general feature of both verbal and visual texts. She argues that while natural language has the power to create mental images, visual narrative discourses have the power to constitute “mental pictures that carry words, that indeed unleash ideas that are articulated in the mind in words” (Ross Johnston, 2012, p. 422). Considering picturebook discourses, Joseph Schwarcz analyses printed words “as visual elements” of the picturebook (Schwarcz, 1982, pp. 65-76) and discusses their elements representing “visual sound” (Schwarcz, 1982, pp. 77-85). His results point to the multimodality of the verbal discourse. This does not seem to puzzle young readers; Pantaleo reports that the children in her study “understood how meaning was intended and conveyed by the typography” (Pantaleo, 2014, p. 161).

The specific means of expression of picturebook discourses demonstrate that their storytelling potential is rooted in their multimodality. In *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* (Taback, 1999), the letters of the protagonist’s name on the cover are combined from pieces of cloth. This refers to his trade (a tailor) and to the ability to make “something from nothing”, or from very little. The verbal picturebook discourse conveys additional meanings through typographic experimentation, and becomes more complex and multimodal. In a similar way, picturebook visual discourse may adopt features of linguistic narration. In *Knuffle Bunny, Too* (Willems, 2007), panels are cut by the recto page edge to be continued on the verso of the same page, just as sentences are divided between successive page spreads, a convention of organising the verbal discourse in picturebooks. The visual discourse may be simple, but when it fulfils its potential, it becomes “manifold, multi-stranded, likely to embrace parallel points of view, exceptionally interactive, and challenging for the reader” (Narančić Kovač, 2015, p. 440). In *Fish is Fish* (Lionni, 1970), a character’s perspective is shown in the visual discourse by a visual speech cloud depicting how Fish is imagining an animal he has never seen, based on his friend Frog’s description. The cow looks like a large fish with horns, four legs, an udder and seaweed hanging from its mouth.

This expressive variation is often extended by thematic density: “Pictures in picturebooks can perform as windows on unfamiliar cultural contexts, as an opening for the imaginative and thoughtful understanding of otherness” (Bland, 2013, p. 35). Books with pictures are far from being a mere preliterate form of storytelling (Meek, 1988, p. 25), and wordless picturebooks “demand sophisticated narrative skills” (Graham, 1998, p. 32). As Sipe puts it, “A semiotic theoretical perspective on picturebooks, then, carries with it the implication that the literary understanding of picturebooks includes learning to read the visual text of the illustrational sequence according to the conventionally presented system of codes, along with verbal signs” (Sipe, 2008, p. 18).

While narrative concepts and strategies of verbal narration are described

in literary theory, particularly in the theory of the narrative, the potential of visual storytelling is sometimes described in terms of fine arts metalanguage in early picturebook research, albeit interpreted as narratively relevant (e.g. Doonan, 1993). The basic elements of visual depiction are interpreted as visual codes (Moebius, 1990; Nodelman, 1988), opening the door towards more specific insights. The visual-verbal essay *Picture This!* in the form of the picturebook by Molly Bang (2000) is especially revealing. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) inspired numerous picturebook scholars by offering a new model of visual storytelling. They put the description of the visual grammar into focus and analysed the ways in which visual discourses convey messages, offering clues as to how pictures convey movement and action, which imply a time shift. Such meanings were often considered contrary to the nature of visual representation, based upon the distinction between temporal (e.g. natural language) and spatial (e.g. pictures) media, traced back to Gottfried Ephraim Lessing (1893).

The semiotic approach to the picturebook suggests that both discourses express the same narrative ideas, concepts and meta-narrative meanings needed to tell a story, and that they invent medium-specific strategies and techniques to accomplish the task. These different strategies are used by two different narrators. Picturebook scholars often assign the narrator only to the verbal discourse, presuming that the pictures somehow narrate the story, but in lieu of a narrator. The narrator in classical narratology is defined as a theoretical construct, only metaphorically accepted as a person, “voice” or “the narrating instance”, and refers to “the entire set of conditions (human, temporal, spatial) out of which a narrative statement is produced” (Genette, 1980, p. 31, n. 10). The narrator is “present as source, guarantor, and organizer of the narrative, as analyst and commentator, as stylist [...] and particularly – as we well know – as producer of ‘metaphors’” (Genette, 1980, p. 161). The narrator (metaphorically) performs the act of telling, chooses and organises narrative information, and belongs to the discourse of the narrative, not to the story (Chatman, 1990, p. 123). The narrator is a narrative constant present in every discourse, and thus there are two narrators in the picturebook (Narančić Kovač, 2015, pp. 131–135). The visual narrator includes a sophisticated and rich repertoire of strategies and techniques to convey not only information about the story, but also more specific narrative meanings that belong to the way the story is told.

2. The visual discourse and its potential

Figurative meanings were detected in the visual discourse of picturebooks in the early stages of picturebook research. Schwarcz refers to this phenomenon as the “visualisation of figurative language” (Schwarcz, 1982, p. 49) and explains that pictures, by their own means, transform a verbal metaphor into a visual metaphor (Schwarcz, 1982, p. 51). Doonan shows that images in picturebooks function as the visual equivalent of simile, metaphor and intertext-

tuality (Doonan, 1996, pp. 231-232).¹ We extend this list with other narrative strategies, such as visual direct speech and first person narrative, and with those used to express a point of view, visual embedding, etc. Further, examples of figurative language and narrative and metanarrative meanings are provided to demonstrate the versatility of the visual discourse of picturebooks and its potential for developing literary competence.

2.1 *Figurative language*

In *Willy the Wimp* (Browne, 1985), Millie is attacked by “suburban gorillas”, visually represented as humanised animals – gorillas. This is a visual pun because both meanings (“big apes” and “bullies”) are simultaneously visually conveyed. In *A Picture for Harold’s Room* (Johnson, 1960), Harold is in bed and draws up the covers, drawing them with his purple crayon and at once covering himself to be warm.

In *Zoo* (Browne, 1992), a boy is shown sitting and pondering as the shadows of cage bars fall over him: he feels as if he were in a cage. In *Willy the Wimp*, the gorillas run away when Willy appears. We see Willy’s shadow falling into the panel. It has the shape of a gorilla. Willy is a chimpanzee, but he is as strong as a gorilla. These are visual similes.

In *Joseph*, the copyright page and the title page include stitches along the margins. The needle with the remaining thread is shown as pierced through the page. This is a visual metaphor – sewing stands for making picturebooks, and this picturebook is sewn. In *Piggybook* (Browne, 1986), the father and two sons turn into three pigs wearing human clothes. The shadow of trees seen through the window takes the shape of a wolf and the visual metaphor is combined with an intertextual reference to the traditional tale. It points to the characters’ feelings of insecurity and anxiety. The characters look like pigs, see pigs everywhere, feel like pigs. The connotative meanings include being dirty and untidy, self-centred and unfair to the women in their family: the mother. They are surrounded by everyday objects which all look like versions of pigs. The visual narrator focalises narration through the characters, by means of visual internal focalisation.

In *Gorilla* (Browne, 1983), an image of a chimpanzee is divided by blank spaces into three frames, and the spaces between them, normally semantically empty, adopt the visual meaning of cage bars. As such, they are a symbol of captivity. In *Zoo*, a panel showing a gorilla’s head is divided into four smaller panels, and the blank space forms a cross over the picture, as a religious symbol and a symbol of sacrifice and martyrdom. Browne himself has referred to this presentation as his “first crucifixion” (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, p. 42). Children reading this picturebook failed to recognise the religious context, but

1 Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) dedicate a chapter to figurative language, metafiction, and intertext.

they spotted other aspects, such as the gorilla's human trait in his "grandpa's eyes" (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, p. 43).

Perhaps the most frequent proverbial expression in visual discourses of picturebooks is "when pigs fly". It is a special case of intertextuality established between the verbal and the visual medium. Flying pigs appear in the visual discourses of *Piggybook*, *Charlotte's Piggy Bank* (McKee, 1996), *The Three Pigs* (Wiesner, 1991), *Tuesday* (Wiesner, 1991), and many more, foregrounding the fictionality of the storyworld.

2.2 Metanarrative meanings

The visual discourse of the picturebook offers implicit lessons about plots, their structure and their temporal and logical sequences. Picturebook narrators foreground these issues by disrupting narrative sequences, as in *Black and White* (Macaulay, 1990) and *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 1998), or by adopting circular plots, as in *Joseph* and *Why the Chicken Crossed the Road* (Macaulay, 1987). Multi-stranded plots are common in visual discourses. Some visual narrators add running stories to the main storyline. In the visual discourse of *All by Myself* (Meyer, 1983), a mouse follows the clumsy protagonist around and reacts to his little accidents. Parallel storylines sometimes appear throughout the visual discourse. In *Something from Nothing* (Gilman, 1992), a family of mice spend their days in the basement of a house in which the human family of the protagonist lives. Parallel storylines and characters multiply in the hotel shown in the visual discourse of *The Great Green Mouse Disaster* (Waddell, Dupasquier, 1981). In *The Three Pigs*, a multiplication of plots is presented as parallel storyworlds standing in rows of images in an empty internarrative space. Characters move into and out of their own storyworlds and visit others, which is a visual metalepsis², the transgression of a narrative level (Genette, 1980, p. 234).

Anno's Aesop (Anno, 1989) offers a special case of visual embedding. The visual narrator does not show the fox and his son who read an illustrated book of fables in the framing story. Instead, we are only shown the pages of the book. It is simultaneously visually embedded and visually frames several short narratives (fables). In *Wolves* (Gravett, 2005), the embedded story is also represented as a book. This time the protagonist, a rabbit, is shown in the visual discourse of the framing story and the framed book he reads looks exactly like the real reader's book. The rabbit enters his book and the two books merge, which is again metalepsis, only conveyed by a different strategy from that in *The Three Pigs*. The embedding in *Wolves* is also a case of mise-en-abyme, a framing where the embedding item is the same as the embedded

2 This and other narrative strategies also demonstrate metafiction. Metafictional devices used in the visual discourses of picturebooks are many and are well researched, as is their reception by children (e.g. Pantaleo, 2010). Thus, they are not included in this study.

item. A more consistent example of *mise-en-abyme* is found in *My Book* (Maris, 1986), where the visual narrator shows a child reading the same picturebook as the real reader, opened on the double-page spread showing the child reading the same picturebook etc. This narrative witticism appears rather often in the visual discourses of picturebooks.

Reporting a character's view in the visual discourse can be named visual reported speech. It can be combined with zero focalisation, when we read a letter in the hero's hands as if through his eyes in *Mr Big* (Vere, 2008). It can also be combined with internal focalisation, when the visual narrator shows the hand that has moved aside a black curtain at the basement window to reveal a dismal street, a bicycle-rider and menacing sky in *Woolvs in the Sitee* (Wild, Spudvilas, 2007). The reader shares the view with the protagonist, but also understands that the scene is shown through his internal eye, revealing feelings of confusion and fear that blur his vision.

Consistent homodiegetic narration (first-person narrative) in visual discourse is rare, but can be found. It appears when visual reported speech is extended. This happens in *Anno's Aesop*. Two further examples are *Now We Can Go* (Jonas, 1986)³, where a child moves toys from a box into a bag (the visual narrator shows the progress as seen by the protagonist) and *My Book*, where a child is coming home, and the reader follows her as she approaches the house, opens the door, enters her room, looks at her toys, and goes to bed. Only then is the child shown, and the visual telling is transferred to another narrator.

2.3. Specific narrative meanings

Focalisation, or point of view, has already been mentioned. The strategies adopted by the visual narrator to convey focalisation may be different, but lead to similar effects. External focalisation, when narrative information is limited, but cannot be assigned to any of the characters (Genette, 1980, pp. 189-190), can be achieved, for instance, by showing segments of a scene, or by giving too much information which hides the important aspects. This happens in the visual discourse of *Charlotte's Piggy Bank*, where, for instance, a double-page spread shows a park with numerous people engaged in different activities. The reader faces the challenge of finding the protagonist, and detects other parallel storylines told exclusively by the visual narrator.

To achieve internal focalisation, the visual narrator may, for instance, use colours, or modify the elements and characteristics of the depicted space. Such strategies can be found in *Gorilla*. Hannah is sitting at the table across from her father in a kitchen shown in dominant light blue, reminiscent of ice. The narrative meanings of Hannah feeling distanced from her father and

3 For a discussion of *Now We Can Go*, see Perry Nodelman's paper "The Eye and the I: Identification and first-person narratives in picture books" (1991).

lonely are successfully conveyed. In another panel, Hannah shares a meal with the Gorilla, and now the colours are warm: brown, reddish and yellow. Hanna's now different state of mind is evident: she feels safe and relaxed. When she is surrounded by darkness, sitting alone in the corner of an empty room with a TV set shedding the only light on her, fear, insecurity and loneliness are detected again, now conveyed through a different visual narrative strategy (Nikolajeva, Scott, 2001, p. 190). In *Voices in the Park*, Browne uses more strategies to depict the character's loneliness and insecurity. Charley is standing on an empty path in the park, everything is far away, the trees are bare, and their crowns are in the shape of his mother's hat. The tops of the street lamps are also shaped like hats. The mother's presence is oppressive. The boy lacks confidence and feels insecure. The mother's shadow falls into the panel, over the boy, the hat shape visible on the path, reinforcing her dominance over her son. He has no shadow, although the sun rays fall on his head and right shoulder. The reader understands that Charley feels distanced and insignificant. In another frame, two children face each other, sitting on a bench. The park behind them is divided into two sections by a lamp post. Charley's section is darker; the weather is cloudy and two people ride the same bike pedalling in opposite directions. Smudge's section is sunny, with two pretty trees in bloom and an inviting castle in the distance. This panel exemplifies the simultaneous representation of double focalisation, i.e. polymodality (Genette, 1980, p. 198 ff).

Some of the most obvious examples of polymodality can be found in *Lily Takes a Walk* (Kitamura, 1987). While Lily enjoys her walk, Nicky, her dog, becomes frightened by the sights on the way, mostly monsters which are products of his imagination. For example, he visually constructs the monster combining a street lamp, the moon and the clock on the church tower. The mastery of the artist lies in the way this "monster" is presented, so that both interpretations derived from different perspectives (real objects vs. an imagined monster) can be clearly detected in the visual discourse. Arizpe and Styles report that the presence of different perspectives (Lily's and Nicky's) was promptly understood by the children in their study (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, p. 17 ff).

These visual narrative strategies are used to develop individual characters, reveal their traits and demonstrate their different perspectives, i.e. to express complex and multi-layered narrative meanings. Still, the strategies used by the visual narrator are not prescribed. Their versatility depends on the author's inventiveness.

Final thoughts

The potential for an easy understanding of narrative concepts and narrative meanings lies in the immediacy of their visual presentation. Visual narrative strategies are directly suggestive of narrative meanings. Our analysis has shown that they are versatile and that their repertoire is not conclusive. The expressive potential of the visual discourse in picturebooks is enhanced by its ingrained multimodality.

The encounters of young readers with visual discourses in picturebooks enrich their reading experience and enhance their visual literacy. It is in this sense that the picturebook is “a key means of apprenticeship into literacy, literature and social values” (Painter, Martin, Unsworth, 2013, p. 3). The concepts develop in the reader’s understanding through exposure and careful guidance that encourages “in-depth interpretation and understanding through talk and collaborative discussion (Arizpe, Styles, 2016, p. 181). Young readers’ literary understanding grows through meaningful participation in narrative communication, which improves their literary competence. In the hands of competent mediators, (visual) texts really seem to teach what readers learn (Meek, 1988).

References

- Anno M. (1989). *Anno’s Aesop: A Book of Fables by Aesop and Mr. Fox*. New York: Orchard Books.
- Arizpe E., Styles M. (2016²). *Children Reading Picturebooks: Interpreting Visual Texts*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Bal M. (1997²). *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press (Originally published in 1985).
- Bang M. (2000). *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. San Francisco: SeaStar Books.
- Beauvais C. (2015). What’s in “the gap”? A glance down the central concept of picturebook theory. *Nordic Journal of ChildLit Aesthetics*, 6. doi:10.3402/blft.v6.26969.
- Berman R.A. (1995). Narrative Competence and Storytelling Performance: How Children Tell Stories in Different Contexts. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 5 (4), pp. 285–313.
- Bland J. (2013). *Children’s Literature and Learner Empowerment*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Browne A. (1983). *Gorilla*. London: Julia MacRae.
- Browne A. (1985). *Willy the Wimp*. London: Julia MacRae.
- Browne A. (1986). *Piggybook*. London: Julia MacRae.
- Browne A. (1992). *Zoo*. London: Julia MacRae.
- Browne A. (1998). *Voices in the Park*. London: Picture Corgi Books.
- Chatman S. (1978). *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.
- Chatman S. (1990). *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.
- Crawford P.A., Hade D.D. (2000). Inside the picture, outside the frame: Semiotics and the reading of wordless picture books. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 15 (1), pp. 66–80. doi:10.1080/02568540009594776.
- Culler J. (2002). *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London, New York: Routledge (Originally published in 1975).
- Dobson S. (2005). Narrative Competence and the Enhancement of Literacy: Some Theoretical Reflections. *Seminar.net*, 1(2), 1–14.
- Doonan J. (1993). *Looking at Pictures in Picture Books*. Stroud:Thimble Press.
- Doonan J. (1996). The Modern Picture Book. In P. Hunt (Ed.), *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature* (pp. 231–241). London, New York: Routledge.

- Genette G. (1980). *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. (J. E. Lewin, Trans.) Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (Originally published in 1972).
- Gilman P. (1992). *Something from Nothing*. New York: Scholastic.
- Graham J. (1998). Turning the visual into the verbal: children reading wordless books. In J.E. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the Picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 25–43). London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Gravett E. (2005). *Wolves*. London: Macmillan Children's Books.
- Hanžić S., Narančić Kovač S. (2008). Čitanje slika i nastanak priče – studija slučaja. In D. Pavličević-Franić, A. Bežen (Eds.), *Rano učenje hrvatskoga jezika (RUHJ)* (pp. 66–80). Zagreb: ECNSI & Učiteljski fakultet.
- Johnson C. (1960). *A Picture for Harold's Room*. New York: Harper Trophy.
- Johnston R.R. (2012). Graphic trinities: languages, literature, and words-in-pictures in Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*. *Visual Communication*, 11 (4), pp. 421–441. doi:-10.1177/1470357212454091.
- Jonas A. (1986). *Now We Can Go: A Memory Game for Young Children*. New York: Greenwillow.
- Kitamura, S. (1987). *Lily Takes a Walk*. New York: Dutton.
- Kress G., van Leeuwen T. (2006²). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London i New York: Routledge.
- Kümmerling-Meibauer B. (1999). Metalinguistic awareness and the child's developing concept of irony: The relationship between pictures and text in ironic picture books. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 23 (2), pp. 157–183.
- Lessing G.E. (1893). *Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*. Stuttgart: G. J. Göschen'sche Verlagshandlung. Retrieved from <https://books.google.ie/books?id=177OAAAAMAAJ> (Originally published in 1766).
- Lionni L. (1970). *Fish is Fish*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Macaulay D. (1987). *Why the Chicken Crossed the Road*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Macaulay D. (1990). *Black and White*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Maris R. (1986). *My Book*. London: Puffin.
- McKee D. (1996). *Charlotte's Piggy Bank*. London: Andersen Press.
- Meek, M. (1988). *How Texts Teach What Readers Learn*. Lockwood: Thimble Press.
- Meyer M. (1983). *All by Myself*. New York: A Golden Book.
- Moebius W. (1990). Introduction to picturebook codes. In P. Hunt (Ed.), *Children's Literature: The Development of Criticism* (pp. 131–148). London and New York: Routledge (Originally published in 1986).
- Mourão S. (2013). Understanding Response to Picturebooks. *Encuentro*, 22, pp. 98–114.
- Mourão S. (2015). Response to picturebooks: a case for valuing children's linguistic repertoires during repeated read alouds. In S. Mourão, M. Lourenço (Eds.), *Early years second language education: international perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 62–77). London, New York: Routledge.
- Narančić Kovač S. (2015). *Jedna priča - dva pripovjedača: slikovnica kao pripovijed*. Zagreb: ArTresor.
- Narančić Kovač S. (2017, forthcoming). Picturebooks and Narratology. In B. Kümmerling-Meibauer (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Nikolajeva M., Scott C. (2001). *How Picturebooks Work*. New York, London: Garland.
- Nodelman P. (1988). *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

- Nodelman P. (1991). The Eye and the I: Identification and first-person narratives in picture books. *Children's Literature*, 19, pp. 1-31.
- Nørgaard N. (2009). The Semiotics of Typography in Literary Texts: A Multimodal Approach. *Orbis Litterarum*, 64 (2), pp. 141-160.
- Painter C., Martin J.R., Unsworth L. (2013). *Reading Visual Narratives: Image Analysis of Children's Picture Books*. Sheffield and Bristol, CT: Equinox Publishing.
- Pantaleo S. (2010). Developing Narrative Competence Through Reading and Writing Metafictional Texts. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 49 (3), pp. 264-281.
- Pantaleo S. (2014). Elementary Students Consider the “What” and “How” of Typography in Picturebooks. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 20 (2), pp. 144-166. doi:13614541.2014.929450.
- Ryan M.-L., Thon J.-N. (Eds.) (2014). *Storyworlds Across Media: Towards a Media-conscious Narratology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Schwarcz J.H. (1982). *Ways of the Illustrator: Visual Communication in Children's Literature*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Serafini, F. (2014). *Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Teaching Multimodal Literacy*. New York, London: Teachers College Press.
- Sipe L.R. (2000). The construction of literary understanding by first and second graders in oral response to picture storybook read-alouds. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 35 (2), pp. 252-275.
- Sipe L.R. (2008). *Storytime: Young Children's Literary Understanding in the Classroom*. New York, London: Teachers College Press.
- Taback S. (1999). *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*. New York: Viking.
- Van der Pol C. (2012). Reading Picturebooks as Literature: Four-to-Six-Year-Old Children and the Development of Literary Competence. *Children's Literature in Education*, 43 (1), pp. 93-106. doi:DOI 10.1007/s10583-011-9149-9.
- Vere E. (2008). *Mr Big*. London: Penguin Books.
- Waddell M., Dupasquie P. (1981). *The Great Green Mouse Disaster*. London: Andersen Press.
- Wiesner D. (1991). *The Three Pigs*. New York: Clarion Books.
- Wiesner D. (1991). *Tuesday*. New York: Clarion Books.
- Wild M., Spudvilas A. (2007). *Woolvs in the Sitee*. Asheville, NC: Front Street.
- Willems M. (2007). *Knuffle Bunny, Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*. New York: Hyperion Books.

SE