

# Stories in Children's Literature: An Analysis of Transcendent Language

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**Abstract-** *Children's literature plays an essential role in their development through the use of characters that they become familiar with, which become like friends. Stories have become a useful source of information for increasing reading skills, which are necessary for the development of new words. It is through the fiction literature that is based on real-life where children are able to understand traumatic events and complex ideas. They are able to understand life experiences and diversity of the world that they live in. Even with increased learning through literature, the National Literary Strategy conducted a study of words to show that children need 100 words in order to read a "real" children's book. It is essential to distinguish between 'restrictive texts,' which allow for fewer perceptions to take place for active reader judgment of text that enables critical and thoughtful responses.*

**Keywords-** *Children's Literature; Language; Reading*

Children's literature plays an essential role in their development through the use of characters that they become familiar with, which become like friends. Stories have become a useful source of information and increases reading skills that are necessary for success in their future lives. Reading improves language and the development of new words. Stories are one way to introduce new words and ideas into a child's language. Beginning with a picture book for young children and working to more complex stories as they become adolescents. Stories may help children to learn about concepts such as shapes, size, space, and color. Children's literature has the ability to build compassion and understanding of traumatic events and complex ideas. This can be seen in the reading of fiction.

Fiction is based on real-life, which may help children within their own life experiences. It is through literature, that children are able to understand diversity of the world that they live in. Stories provide for learning to take place as a natural process where actual teaching is not involved. Instead, learning is achieved by reading the story. It is through reading literature, that children may be able to develop imagination. Stories help to develop a child's imagination by first introducing new ideas and ideas about the world around them. It is the fantastical world of different points of view and invented characters in a fantastical and whimsical world. Children's literature has the ability to be realistic and to provide by reading similar situations that children may experience when growing up. However, the importance of children's literature receives little attention. This includes the language of children's literature, yet "Yet the way things are represented, based on complex codes and conventions of language and presuppositions about language, is an important component of texts, and the study of it allows us access to

some of the key processes which shape text production." (Scholes 2-3) Literature has become a transparent medium that relates to both style and linguistics.

## WORDS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The types of words that are used in children's literature has become considerably even more limited than those found in speech. "Children's literature has 50 percent more rare words in them than does adult literature." (Berger, 1977; Brown, 1984) However, children need to learn 61 phonic skills to read the English language, rather than the 150 and 108 respectively.

### The Crucial 100 Words

(From the National Literary Strategy 2005)

- a, about, after, all, am, an, and, are, as, at, away
- back, be, because, big, but, by
- call, came, can, come, could
- did, do, down
- for, from
- get, go, got
- had, has, have, he, her, here, him, his
- in, into, is, it
- last, like, little, live, look
- made, make, me, my
- new, next, not, now
- of, off, old, on, once, one, other, our, out, over
- put
- saw, said, see, she, so, some
- take, that, the, their, them, then, there, they, this, three, time, to, today, too, two
- up, us
- very
- was, we, were, went, what, when, will, with
- you

According to a study conducted by the National Literacy Strategy, “a theoretical basis for teaching reading, found that words beyond the key 100 are used so rarely that the benefits of learning them were minimal.” (2005) Researchers analyzed 850,000 words in a database of adult fiction and nonfiction, and compared children's reading schemes with “real” children's books. Findings suggest that a core of 100 words formed 53% of the 850,000-word database were commonly used when reading literature, which accounted for 43% of the words that children learned.” (National Literacy Strategy), suggesting that children need 100 words key words to read “real” children's books, especially among the differences among children in exposure to literacy. This is especially true in the area of language used within children's literature.

## **CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AS A TRANSPARENT MEDIUM**

Language in children's literature has become a transparent medium thereby showing a limitation in of written genres or of the social processes and movements with which genres and styles interrelate. This includes the linguistics found within stories. The language of fiction written for children readily appears to offer conventionalized discourses by means of which to ‘encode’ content, both the story and the message. The traditional way of ‘*Once Upon a Time*’ not only serves as a formal story onset but also tends to imply that particular narrative forms, with a particulars tock of lexical and syntactic forms, will ensue. But the contents and themes of that fiction are representations of social situations and values, and such social processes are a maze of the linguistic processes which give them expression. In other words, the transactions between writers and readers take place within complex networks of social relations by means of language. Furthermore, within the systems of a language it may be possible for young readers to encounter in their literature an extensive range and variety of language uses.

Textual varieties such as syntax and lexicon will seem familiar will in turn may be less familiar due to the lexicon contains forms or uses specific to a different speech community, depending on the variants of the English language. Books which may be said to have a common theme or topic will differ not just because that theme can be expressed in a different content but because it is expressed through differing linguistic resources. However, writers have many options to select from. Thus fiction offers a large range of generic options, such as the choice between fantasy and realism, with more specific differences within them, such as that between fantasy and the knowable world for fantasy set in an imaginary universe. To make such a choice involves entering into a discourse, a complex of story types and structures, social forms and linguistic practices. That discourse can be said to take on a distinctive style in so far as it is distinguished from other actualizations by recurrent patterns or codes.

These might include choices in lexis and grammar; use, types and frequency of figurative language; characteristic modes of cohesion; orientation of narrative voice towards the text's existents such as events, characters, and setting. Aspects of such a style may be shared by several writers working in the same period and with a common genre, as, for example, contemporary realistic adolescent fiction, but it is usually more personal for the reader.

## **PATTERNS, STYLE, AND NARRATION IN LANGUAGE**

Patterns of a particular style are a selection from a larger linguistic code, however, and exist in a relationship of sameness and difference with a more generalized discourse, a writer remains to some degree subject to the discourse, and the discourse can be said to determine at least part of the meaning of the text. Moreover, a narrative discourse also encodes a reading position which readers will adopt to varying extents, depending on their previous experience of the particular discourse, their similarities to or differences from the writer's language community, their level of linguistic sophistication, and other individual differences. At a more obviously linguistic level, a writer's choices among such options as first/third person narration, single and multiple focalization and direct/indirect speech representation further define the encoded reading position. Between them, the broader elements of genre and the more precise linguistic processes appear to restrict the possibility of wildly deviant readings, though what might be considered more probable readings depends on an acquired recognition of the particular discourse. If that re cognition is not available to readers, the readings they produce may well seem aberrant. The communication which informs the transactions between writers and readers is a specialized aspect of socio-linguistic communication in general. The forms and meanings of reality are constructed in language: by analyzing how language works, we come nearer to knowing how our culture constructs itself, and where we fit into that construction. Language enables individuals to compare their experiences with the experiences of others, a process which has always been a fundamental purpose of children's fiction. The representation of experiences such as growing up, evolving a sense of self, falling in love or into conflict, and so on, occurs in language, and guarantees that the experiences represented are shared with human beings in general. Language can make present the felt experiences of people living in other places and at other times, thus enabling a reader to define his other own subjectivity in terms of perceived potentialities and differences. Finally, the capacity of language to express things beyond everyday reality, such as abstract thought or possible transcendent experiences, is imparted to written texts with all its potentiality for extending the boundaries of intellectual and emotional experience.

Stylistic description can be attempted by means of several methodologies. These range from an impressionistic ‘literary stylistics’, which is characteristic of most

discussions of the language of children's literature, to complex systemic analyses. One example can be found by examining the text of children's fiction through focalization.

## **NARRATOR AND FOCALIZATION IN LITERATURE**

To discuss the textuality of children's fiction one has to begin by considering some assumptions about the nature of language on which it is grounded. Linguists recognize that language is a social semiotic, a culturally patterned system of signs used to communicate about things, ideas or concepts. As a system constructed within culture, it is not founded on any essential bond between a verbal sign and its referent. (Stephens 246–247) It is important to understand, since children's fiction is written and mediated under the contrary, essentialist assumption, and this has major implications both for writing objectives and for the relationships between writers and readers. Fantasy writing in particular is apt to assert the inextricability of word and thing, but the assumption of realistic writing minimizes the distance between life and fiction, or which pivots on the evolution of a character's essential selfhood, along with the presence of the narrator.

The presence of a narrative voice which interprets the scene for the benefit of readers is a characteristic of another linguistic aspect of texts, the presentation of scene and incident through the representation of speech and thought and the strategy of focalization. These are important aspects of point of view in narrative, the facet of narration through which a writer implicitly, but powerfully, controls how readers understand the text. Because readers are willing to surrender themselves to the flow of the discourse, especially by focusing attention on story or content, they are susceptible to the implicit power of point of view. Linguistically, point of view is established by focalization strategies and by conversational pragmatics. Early children's fiction tended to favor narrator focalization, and hence employed character focalization only sporadically, so that it is only fleetingly present in, for instance, focalization is somewhat absent from C. S. Lewis's children's books. Since around the middle of the twentieth century, however, sustained character focalization has become the norm in third-person narration, and hence character subjectivity infiltrates the narrative, linguistically evident through lexis and idioms such as expressions, phrases, and repeated idioms, and syntactic features. The narrative has a potential to achieve a double-voiced effect whereby the cultural preoccupations and ideological positioning that is attributed to a focalizing character, which is visible within the language of narration. Most novels which are third-person narrations now include at least one focalizing character, and this has important implications for the kind of language used, because in the majority of books written for children there is only one such person who is focused on the language, which is a child. Further, as with first-person narrators,

readers will tend to align themselves with that focalizing character's point of view.

The shift from narrator to character focalization is often signaled by verbs whose semantic node is 'perception', and that is so in this example. The text is shaped by the presence of represented thought and by direct or implied acts of seeing. The narrative representation of thought and the references to acts of seeing such as 'looked' develop events within the character's mind but also maintain a separate narrating voice and style.

## **CONCLUSION**

A stylistic examination of children's fiction can show us something very important, namely that a fiction with a high proportion of conversation and a moderately sophisticated use of focalization has access to textual strategies with the potential to offset the limitations which may be implicit in a disinclination to employ the full range of lexical, syntactic and figurative possibilities of written discourse. Stylistic analysis is also never an end in itself, and is best carried out within a frame which considers the relationship of text to genre and to culture. Stylistics on its own cannot determine the relative merits of characters. Language and its significance is influenced by the larger contexts of text and the ability to learn key words is essential to read "real" children's books. Children's literature has the ability to promote active reader judgement of text, as well as enabling critical and thoughtful responses, through the use of stories and the development of realistic characters that children are able to increase their knowledge and understanding of the written word.

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