

Moya Guijarro, Arsenio Jesús (2014). *A Multimodal Analysis of Picture Books for Children. A Systemic Functional Approach*. London: Equinox. 297 pages.

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The book *A Multimodal Analysis of Picture Books for Children. A Systemic Functional Approach* is an essential contribution to multimodal discourse studies because of the deep analysis of the intersemiosis between verbal and visual elements in a sample of nine picture books for children of different ages. The frameworks of Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Social Semiotics are applied to the genre of children's tales in order to offer a clear identification of the verbal and visual strategies available to the writer and the illustrator. The combination between the verbal and the visual aspects in previous analyses of picture books has normally been neglected. In this sense, the book offers an innovative aspect of study by analysing the intersemiosis between verbal and visual modes to express representational, interpersonal and textual meanings.

The book has a clear structure and organization, which can be seen in the topics covered in each of the nine chapters and in the conclusions the author presents after some of the chapters and at the end of the book. *A Multimodal Analysis of Picture Books for Children* is divided into nine chapters. The author analyses the ideational, interpersonal and textual choices used by the writer in order to create meaning in picture books in the different chapters. Having done that, Professor Moya compares them with the corresponding representational, interactive and compositional choices used by the illustrator. However, the book does not apply the visual systems proposed by Painter et al. (2013). The application of these systems of representation, interaction and composition could have been very useful to analyse the meaning created from the intersemiosis between the images and the written text in the picture books intended for children in different stages of cognitive development. The author points out that his book was finished just when Painter's et al.'s book was published.

The author makes clear that there are three different stages of cognitive development in children (Piaget, 1981, 1984): sensory-motor stage (0-2 years old), pre-operational stage (3-6 years old) and concrete operations stage (7-9 years old). Each of the stages is illustrated with the analysis of three tales. There is a very clear description of the common characteristics that define the stories that have been included in each stage of cognitive development and it is highlighted that the written text as well as the illustrations play a fundamental function in the construction of the plot. These stories are not limited to the British or North American scope, as the book also incorporates tales written in other countries of the Commonwealth. The nine selected books include some contemporary classics such as the following: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902) by Beatrix Potter, *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) by Maurice Sendak or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (1969).

In chapter 1 the author presents an introduction which outlines the scope of the book, its structure and its motivation. This section also offers the main characteristics of picture books as a genre. Chapter 2 justifies why SFG and Visual Social Semiotics are appropriate frameworks for a textual and visual study of picture books. The sociocultural adequacy of these approaches and their metafunctional orientations are pointed out. The author explains the reasons why he has chosen SFL instead of Functional Discourse Grammar or the Cardiff Grammar: SFL provides a model to describe how verbal language is used to create experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings simultaneously. Moreover, there are also references to the other main approaches to multimodal studies, i.e., Multimodal Discourse Analysis (O'Halloran, 2004, 2005) and Multimodal Interactional Analysis (Norris, 2004). The approach followed in this book is based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Social Semiotics because it is regarded as an approach that offers an appropriate framework to analyse other non-verbal semiotic modes which can also be assigned representational, interactive and compositional meanings. The revision of the bibliography done in this chapter is excellent; also, Professor Moya's clarity in reference to the main differences between the different approaches under consideration is outstanding.

Chapter 3, 4 and 5 analyse in detail the theoretical perspectives used for the study focusing on the categories used by Halliday (2004) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) within the representational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. The author discusses the three metafunctions and focuses on one representative case study in order to exemplify each of them. In this sense, these chapters use examples extracted from the tales analysed; they are commented on so that the main theoretical aspects are clearly illustrated. The chapters finish with the analysis of the intersemiosis of verbal and visual elements in three specific tales intended for young children followed by some conclusions: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (chapter 3), *Where the Wild Things Are* (chapter 4) and *Gorilla* (chapter 5).

The analysis presented in chapter 3 offers a clear view of the main aspects used to offer a representation of reality in the verbiage and in the visual mode as well as the synergy of images and words. The analysis presented in chapter 4 concentrates on the interpersonal and interactive meanings. Therefore, interpersonal choices are analysed in the verbiage and interactive ones are observed in the illustrations. Furthermore, this chapter offers an overview of the meaning that is born out of the interplay of images and words in picture books. Chapter 5 concentrates on the textual metafunction and on the analysis of composition in images, which are studied in the tale *Gorilla*. This chapter offers some figures to illustrate the main aspects presented in the analysis.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 show how the three metafunctions operate in relation to age appropriateness. The author analyses all the tales in detail in order to identify the main choices used by writers and illustrators to convey representational, interpersonal and textual meanings. Chapter 6 analyses the verbal and the visual intermodal relations in all nine picture books selected for study within a representational perspective. This chapter shows how the written and the visual mode complement each other in different

ways to express representational meanings in picture books for children in different stages of cognitive development.

Chapter 7 explores the verbal and visual choices available for writers and illustrators to generate interaction between the different characters that appear in the nine picture books analysed and between these characters and the child-reader. The main aspects analysed in this chapter are the following: a) the mood structures and the expressions of modality used by writers; b) the relations of contact, distance and perspective in the visuals; c) the ways in which the verbal and the visual mode complement each other; d) and finally, attention is paid to how the age factor may influence the interpersonal and interactive strategies used by writers and illustrators.

Chapter 8 concentrates on observing how images and words are co-deployed to create coherent messages in the nine picture books selected for analysis. In order to do so, the organization of information in the verbal component is studied to observe how the tales are coherently organized. Moreover, the compositional meaning of the picture books is explored in the visual mode and compared to the information found in the verbal mode. In this sense, aspects of theme and thematic progression, information value, framing and salience are observed in the images and in the written text. This chapter ends paying attention to the influence of age factor in the choice of the different verbal and linguistic choices. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 offer some figures with clear examples that help readers understand the features explained in the book.

Finally, chapter 9 summarizes the main ideas discussed in the book and the main results obtained. This chapter emphasizes the importance of the age factor on a picture book's creation. However, the statistical analysis done with the statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) clearly shows that, although age influences the choices of writers and illustrators, gender is also an essential factor in the internal organization of the tales. This way, the author of the book shows how genre plays an important role in the representational, interpersonal and textual choices made by writers and illustrators in picture books intended for children in different stages of cognitive development. The book also provides teachers and mediators with specific tools that may help them select the most appropriate reading materials for their young learners. This last chapter emphasizes the potential of picture books to encourage reading among young children. Another of the main ideas highlighted in this book is that good picture books are a richer experience than the sum of their independent components. This justifies the use of a multimodal perspective in order to identify the main verbal and visual strategies available to writers and illustrators to create interesting and appropriate picture books for a specific readership.

The bibliography is complete and updated. All in all, his book constitutes an invaluable contribution to the task of providing empirical clues to classify picture books according to the age groups for whom they are initially intended. The way in which the author uses the tools offered by SFG and Visual Social Semiotics clearly exemplifies these two theoretical models of analysis in picture books and, in turn, offers a critical study of the difficulties the analyst may encounter when applying them to real samples of language.

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