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DESIGN OF CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS: VISUAL NARRATIVES

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Abstract. Purpose. The objective of this study is to explore the features of designing children's picture books that align with the cognitive characteristics and preferences of children. The aim is to foster their emotional and aesthetic abilities through the study of narrative structures of images and other elements of children's picture books.

Methodology. This paper employs a comprehensive approach that includes the analysis of scholarly works in the fields of graphic design, visual narrative research, and cognitive psychology. Visual analysis and comparative methods are utilized to examine the narrative structure, techniques, and methods employed in children's picture books.

Results. The analysis of graphic arrangements of various elements in children's picture books highlights the following visual narratives, which play a positive role in helping children comprehend the storyline: single-line, thematic juxtaposition, and fractal narrative. The single-line narrative structure is well-suited for creating a clear storyline that corresponds to children's cognitive habits. Thematic juxtaposition enables the simultaneous exploration of multiple storylines, providing children with a multidimensional reading experience. The fractal visual narrative ensures variability in plot development, stimulating imagination. Techniques such as juxtaposition of time and space across different illustrations, highlighting small separate images to control the narrative pace, and others are employed to enhance story progression and reading appeal. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between symbolic systems (text, images, colors) to ensure the completeness of visual narratives in children's publications.

Scientific novelty. The study refines the role of visual narration as the foundation for constructing a story world and presents various types of visual narratives in children's picture books, including the structure of their components, such as text and images. It thoroughly examines the relationship between different narrative forms and techniques of text-image interaction. Approaches are proposed for designing illustrated books, taking into account the cognitive and emotional abilities of the children's audience.

Practical relevance. The findings of the study can be used by designers and illustrators to create children's picture books that align with educational goals and children's interests. Practical recommendations on book design, including options for

organizing multidimensional structures of graphic elements, will help attract children to reading, enhance the appeal of books, and improve learning efficiency.

Keywords: children's picture book, visual narrative, illustration, graphic storytelling, book design, graphic design.

INTRODUCTION

Children's education encompasses various methods, including school education, family education, watching educational videos, and more. Among these methods, reading books stands out as an effective way for children to explore unknown fields. However, due to inherent differences in intelligence, thinking style, and literacy levels between children and adults, the books they read differ significantly from those of adults in terms of form, function, and content. According to cognitive psychology, children tend to prefer visual and pictorial representations of text. Therefore, this paper adopts the method of image narration to conduct research on picture book design for children. By employing a visual analysis approach, this paper comprehensively analyzes the image narrative structure of children's picture books and examines multiple elements involved in the process of image narration. The aim is to summarize the artistic techniques used in image narration in children's picture books and design picture books that are easily accessible and engaging for children.

ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCH

Long D. delved into the fundamental reasons why image narration mimics word-based narration and defined narrative works as an art of imitation, stating that "narrative works are essentially an art of imitating external events through media, transforming them into situational stories" [19]. In his book "What is Illustration? Essential Design Handbook", L. Zeegen discusses the importance of story and the prerequisites for creating a character, emphasizing that understanding the story is the first step in creating a narrative illustration and that the most captivating plots should be identified and presented with the best visual effects through illustrations [16].

Hermanto Y. A. L. asserts that visual stories are a means of conveying information through visual media, highlighting that illustrated stories serve as a visual narrative medium often used to convey stories, with different audiences interpreting the content of stories differently. The educational information contained within picture stories plays a pivotal role in children's development, capable of influencing and shaping their personalities [10].

Moszkowicz J. adopts a clear philosophical approach to storytelling, incorporating a practical understanding of the function of illustration. Through the processes of imitation and metaphor, narrative is proven to be the integration and configuration of historical and fictional meanings. Themes with imitative and metaphorical values are explored, and the potential of illustration is advocated to re-examine the audience from the immediate image to the narrative "elsewhere" [11].

Nodelman P. in his book "Talking Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books", extensively discusses the relationship between pictures and images and the significance of image narration. He underscores that the pictures in a picture book are not merely supplementary to the words but, together with the words, form a complete narrative system. The drawings provide visual enjoyment and enhance the story's appeal through their unique expressive power [12].

In her book "Picture this: How Pictures Work", M. Bang analyzes how images in children's picture books elicit children's resonance and emotional response from the perspective of visual psychology, and believes that the image narration in children's picture books can effectively captivate children's attention and foster their cognitive and emotional development through its characteristics of intuitive, interesting and symbolic [2].

Through meticulous graphic design, picture books can offer children a vibrant and imaginative world. In "Reading Visual Narratives: Image Analysis of Children's Picture Books", Clare Painter conducts an in-depth investigation of image narration in children's picture books using a multimodal discourse analysis framework. She points out that the image narrative of children's picture books is collectively constructed through various symbol systems such as text, image, and color, and that the interaction between these symbol systems is vital to the overall narrative effect of picture books.

Authors Painter C., Martin J. R., Unsworth L. argue that effective image narration requires creators to thoroughly consider the coordination and complementarity between symbol systems during the design process to enhance the

attractiveness and educational value of picture books [13].

Huo Y. employs narrative illustrations to construct picture books from the perspective of popular science children's picture books, identifies the close relationship between popular science children's picture books and narrative illustrations. He focuses on the picture elements and structural elements of narrative illustrations in popular science children's picture books, and conducts research and analysis on the design principles and expression forms of narrative illustrations. Children's popular science picture books are combined with narrative illustrations to present scientific content in an easily understandable manner for children [18].

Hladikova H. explores the characteristics of picture books with both illustrations and texts and their positive impacts on children's psychological and social growth. She deeply analyzes the functions and production processes of the illustration language in picture books, emphasizing that picture books expand children's language and cognitive abilities through rich vocabulary and visual storytelling while guiding imagination, stimulating emotional responses, and promoting children's social understanding and emotional development [8].

PURPOSE

In the design of children's picture books, image narrative serves as a core element and plays a crucial role. Through a synthesis of research findings from various scholars, it has been discovered that image narration not only effectively communicates the story's content but also captivates children's reading interest through intuitive and vivid visual elements. It further promotes their cognitive development, nurtures emotional growth, and ultimately fulfills an educational function. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the image narrative mode and analyze picture expression in children's picture books, with the objective of creating books that align with the cognitive characteristics of children.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the realm of image narrative, the graphic relationship within picture books transcends being a mere textual supplement; it evolves into a comprehensive narrative universe. The essence of picture narration in children's picture books can be defined as the integration of images as spatial elements into the temporal flow of the story, with the objective of conveying the book's information to children through the continuity of images. Consequently, this paper explores the narrative structure of

image narrative in children's picture books, the manner of connecting images, and the interactive dynamics between images and text, with the aim of enhancing the image narrative function of picture books and optimizing the reading experience.

1. Presentation of Image Narrative Structure. The image narrative structure of children's picture books serves as the foundation for the construction of the story framework, determining how the book's information is presented in an image-based format. The analysis and comprehension of this narrative structure can enhance the sequential pattern of narrative rhythm and image processing within picture books, thereby ensuring greater congruence with narrative structure [7; 14]. It is important to investigate the narrative structures of single-line, thematic juxtaposition, and fractal forms in children's picture books.

In the case of the single-line narrative form, the story unfolds with a clear thread. For instance, the sequential single-line structure adheres to chronological or causal logic to propel the story forward, ensuring the plot development is clear and aligns with children's cognitive habits, aiding their comprehension. Additionally, the single-line structure of flashback initially reveals the story's outcome and then traces back to its cause and progression, piquing readers' curiosity and stimulating their reading interest. There is also an episodic single-line structure where, during the story's development, a specific event is inserted or a past event is recalled, with the story resuming after the interlude. For example, Spanish artist Marta Altes' picture book "Five More Minutes" (Fig. 1) employs episodic techniques to express the little fox's lament about time passing too slowly, enriching the story plot.



Fig. 1. Picture Book "Five More Minutes", M. Altes (author-illustrator), Macmillan Children's Books (publisher), 2020 [1]

Narrative form of thematic juxtaposition multiple stories or plot threads around a common theme, disrupting a single chronological order and pursuing a spatial narrative format [11]. These narrative clues lack a specific causal relationship or a clear chronological order; the order of the various clues can be interchangeable without significant differences. For instance, American illustrator Carson Ellis' picture book "Du Iz Tak?" juxtaposes and simultaneously narrates multiple character storylines representing the cycle of life, providing children with a multi-angle reading experience [5].

Fractal narrative form, unlike the narrative form of thematic juxtaposition, diverges at a crucial stage of the story, leading to multiple scenarios. This enhances the complexity and readability of picture book stories, stimulating children's imagination and creativity. For example, in "The Three Little Pigs" (Fig. 2), the pigs can build houses of different materials to resist the big bad wolf's attack, yielding different results and presenting a diversified story world for children. These methods not only enrich the narrative techniques of picture books but also enhance the attractiveness and readability of the stories through different space-time arrangements, providing children with diverse reading experiences and imaginative spaces.

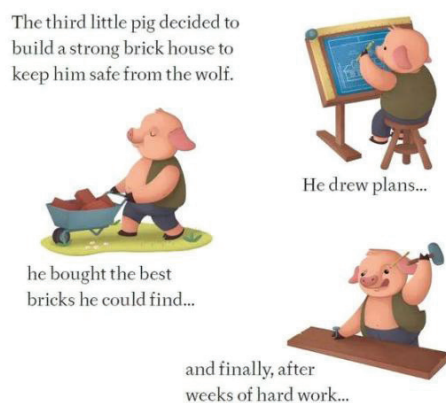


Fig. 2. Picture Book "Three Little Pigs", DK Children (author), Di Lernia G. (illustrator), DK Children (publisher), 2019 [4]

2. Group presentation of image narrative. The grouping method links the narrative imagery of the picture book and influences the coherence of the story and the reading experience. Effective connections between picture book images establish the context of the story, enabling children to comprehend the

entire narrative through visual cues. Common techniques for linking images include montage juxtaposition of time and space and segmenting images to control narrative pacing.

Montage juxtaposition of time and space involves borrowing scenes or images from different time and space. This technique can break the limitations of time and space, making the story scenes smoother and more artistic. For instance, in the picture book "Professional Crocodile" (Fig. 3), Italian artist Giovanna Zoboli integrates a series of consistent actions of the little crocodile and the logical causality of the plot within a wide-spanning image, conveying the behavior of Mr. Crocodile through continuous visual associations.



Fig. 3. Picture Book "Professional Crocodile", Zoboli G. (author), Di Giorgio M. (illustrator), Chronicle Books (publisher), 2017 [17]

When the transition between images is not seamless or the narrative progresses too rapidly or sluggishly, segmenting the image into smaller parts to manage the narrative pace can easily alleviate stiffness and monotony in the visual flow. Simultaneously, combined with textual narration, this approach ensures a smoother progression of the story. For example, in "Franklin's Flying Bookshop" (Fig. 4), a picture book illustrated by English artist Katie Harnett, by segmenting the imagery, tedious plot details are omitted, allowing children to have a clearer grasp of the story's development and mitigating visual fatigue during the reading process.

These two modes of juxtaposition serve to enhance the coherence of the narrative while simultaneously reducing the reading difficulty for children, thereby rendering them indispensable narrative strategies in the creation of picture books.



Fig. 4. Picture book "Franklin's Flying Bookshop", Campbell J. (author), Harnett K. (illustrator), Thames and Hudson (publisher), 2018 [9]

3. Arrangement and presentation of images and text. Images and text are indispensable elements in children's picture books, enhancing the completeness and clarity of story expression. We analyze the parallel relationship between images and words, exploring how language and pictures interact with sensory stimulation to construct a narrative world through both visual and verbal means.

Images and text complement each other, collectively shouldering the task of picture book narration. Images intuitively convey the plot and character depictions, while text offers a more detailed and profound exposition. This combination enables children to comprehend textual meaning through visuals during reading, and when confronted with unclear imagery, they can grasp the story through the accompanying text [6]. American children's author Mo Willems, in his picture book "I love my new toy!: An elephant & piggie book" (Fig. 5), portrays the main characters through expressive facial features and body language. Each expression, utterance, and action within the book tells a story, directly resonating with children's emotions and employing concise language to facilitate their understanding.

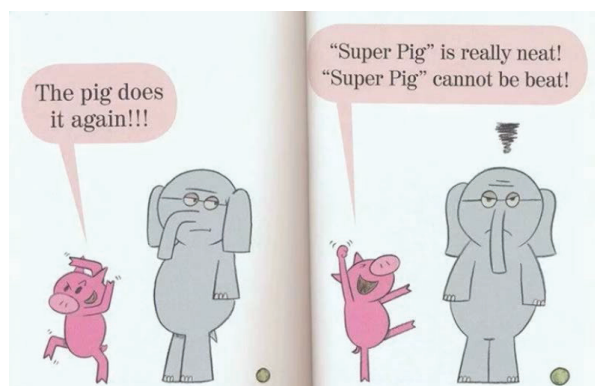


Fig. 5. Picture book "I love my new toy!: An elephant & piggie book", Willems M. (author-illustrator), Hyperion Books for Children (publisher), 2008 [15]

During literature reception, children often exhibit greater interest in elements resembling real-life situations, the use of onomatopoeia with sensory stimulation further captivates children [20]. As a special form of literature intended for young readers, picture books for children must also be crafted using authentic language and terminology that is familiar and accessible to the target audience. Consequently, the utilisation of onomatopoeia can serve to augment the visual impact, capture children's attention, and stimulate their interest in reading. For example, American illustrator Eric Carle employs vivid language descriptions in his picture book "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" (Fig. 6), which enhances the book's entertainment value and encourages reader interaction.

The combination of images and text in picture books creates an intuitive and profound narrative environment. Concurrently, the narrative technique of integrating illustrations with text, coupled with sensory-stimulating linguistic elements, serves to augment children's interest in reading and their capacity for comprehension.

CONCLUSIONS

The image narrative mode and picture expression in children's picture books are crucial elements in constructing the story world. This study examines the narrative of images and the expression of pictures in children's picture books, highlighting the central role of image narrative in picture book design. Exploring different narrative structures, picture association techniques, and the interaction between pictures and images reveals the importance of image narrative in enriching the story and enhancing the reading experience.

Our study identified three main visual narrative structures – linear, thematic juxtaposition, and fractal narratives. Each form plays a specific role in shaping the storyline and enhancing children's understanding and engagement. Linear narratives correspond to cognitive habits, thematic juxtaposition offers multidimensional perspectives, and fractal narratives encourage creativity and imagination. The interaction between symbolic systems (text, images, colors) was found to be central to the creation of effective visual narratives. The study highlights how these elements together create a complex narrative environment that responds to children's cognitive and emotional capacities. Specific visual techniques, such as juxtaposing time and space, segmenting images to control the pace of the narrative, and combining text and images, have been shown



Fig. 6. Picture book «The Very Hungry Caterpillar», Carle E. (author-illustrator), Penguin UK (publisher), 2003 [3]

to improve narrative coherence, reduce reading difficulty, and make books more engaging for children.

The findings highlight the potential of children's picture books to simultaneously serve educational and aesthetic purposes, supporting cognitive, emotional, and social development through carefully crafted visual storytelling. The study provides practical advice for illustrators and designers to create children's books that are not only visually appealing but also cognitively and emotionally enriching.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Лінь Іфен, Герасименко О. Дизайн ілюстрованих дитячих книжок: візуальні наративи

Метою дослідження є вивчення особливостей розробки дизайну ілюстрованих дитячих книжок, які відповідають когнітивним характеристикам і вподобанням дітей, сприяючи розвитку їхніх емоційних та естетичних здібностей на основі дослідження наративної структури зображень та інших елементів ілюстрованих дитячих книжок.

Методологія. Використано комплексний підхід, що включає аналіз наукових праць у сфері графічного дизайну, досліджень візуальних наративів та когнітивної психології. Застосовано візуальний аналіз і порівняльний метод для вивчення образної структури, технік і методів, які використовуються в ілюстрованих дитячих книгах.

Результати дослідження. В результаті аналізу графічного розміщення різних елементів в ілюстрованих дитячих книжках виділено наступні візуальні наративи, які відіграють позитивну роль, допомагаючи дітям зрозуміти сюжетну лінію: однолінійний наратив, тематичне зіставлення та фрактальний наратив. Однолінійна структура візуального наративу підходить для

створення зрозумілого сюжету, що відповідає когнітивним звичкам дітей. Тематичне зіставлення дозволяє розглядати кілька сюжетних ліній одночасно, надаючи дітям багатовимірний досвід читання. Фрактальний візуальний наратив забезпечує варіативність розвитку сюжету, стимулюючи уяву. Для забезпечення розкриття ходу історії та привабливості для читання використовується зіставлення часу та простору на різних ілюстраціях, виділення окремих невеликих зображень для контролю темпу оповіді тощо. Особливу увагу приділено взаємодії між символічними системами (текстом, зображеннями, кольорами) для забезпечення повноти візуальних наративів у виданнях для дітей.

Наукова новизна. Дослідження уточнює роль візуальної нарації як основи для побудови сюжетного світу та представляє різні типи візуальних наративів ілюстрованих дитячих книжок, зокрема структуру їх складових елементів, таких як текст та зображення. Детально розглянуто зв'язок між різними наративними формами та техніками взаємодії тексту і зображень. Запропоновано підходи до розробки дизайну ілюстрованих книжок з урахуванням когнітивних й емоційних здібностей дитячої аудиторії.

Практична значущість. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані дизайнерами та ілюстраторами для створення ілюстрованих дитячих книжок, що відповідають освітнім цілям і інтересам дітей. Практичні рекомендації щодо дизайну книжок, зокрема варіанти організації багатовимірної структури графічних елементів, сприятимуть залученню дітей до читання, підвищенню привабливості книжок та ефективності навчання.

Ключові слова: ілюстрована дитяча книжка, візуальний наратив, ілюстрація, графічне оповідання, дизайн книги, графічний дизайн.

АВТОРСЬКА ДОВІДКА:

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