

## TEACHER'S COMPETENCES FOR USING VISUAL RESPONSE METHODS IN THE LITERARY EDUCATION COMMUNICATION MODEL

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**Abstract/Povzetek** In the article we present the method of visual response to literary texts, using the example of a folk tale from a foreign civilization circle titled “The Story of Caiman”. In considering the perceptions of pupils in the 5th grade of elementary school, our goal is to examine teacher competences for developing the pupils’ ability to perceive, understand and evaluate literary texts and on this basis, to assess the justification of content integration (JCI) in the curriculum of university teacher education. This problem was observed within the framework of the interdisciplinary connection between literature and fine arts, since it is only possible to achieve optimal use of aesthetically designed text as a didactic tool for the externalization of the learner’s dialogue with literary proverbs, thus checking to what extent teachers are trained in these methods (Visual Response Method) in the communication model of literary education.

**Učiteljeve kompetence za uporabo Metode vizualnega odziva v komunikacijskem modelu književne vzgoje**

V članku predstavimo metodo vizualnega odziva (MVO) na literarno besedilo na primeru pravljice tujega civilizacijskega kroga z naslovom *Zgodba o kajmanu*. V kontekstu opravljanja recepcijske vloge učencev 5. razreda osnovne šole je naš cilj proučiti učiteljevo kompetenco za razvijanje učenčeve zmožnosti zaznavanja, razumevanja in vrednotenja literarnih besedil ter na podlagi tega z omenjeno metodo presoditi o upravičenosti vključevanja vsebine v kurikulum univerzitetnega izobraževanja učiteljev. Zastavljeni problem smo opazovali v okviru medpredmetne povezave književnosti in likovne umetnosti, saj je mogoče le na ta način doseči optimalno izrabo estetsko oblikovanih govoric kot didaktične poti (metode) za eksternalizacijo učenčevega dialoga z literarnim besedilom in tako preveriti, do katere mere so učitelji usposobljeni za uporabo omenjene metode (MVO) v komunikacijskem modelu književne vzgoje.

## Introduction

Thesis: The teacher's understanding of the importance of children's artistic language in the communication model of literary education is based on theoretical starting points from psychoanalytical studies, knowledge of the guidelines for children's perception development, didactics of youth literature, art theory and didactics of fine arts. From the theoretical starting points, we infer that pupils need a much wider vocabulary than they have in order to yield a literary-aesthetic experience, given the level of abstract thinking. The method that enables the pupils to develop the capacity for logical thinking with their own activity, the ability to engage in creative dialogue with the literary text and the ability to express literary-historical experience, comes from visual communication and related teacher competences and knowledge of the rules of multicultural texts (Starc, 2011, Haramija and Batič, 2013). We therefore question the extent to which teachers in the communication model of literary education (Kordigel Aberšek, 1994) have the competence to use non-linguistic semiotic functions that require knowledge of various disciplines and their rules. We respond to this in the article by observing the teacher's competences in using visual response methods at the stage of deepening the experience, when pupils express an understanding and evaluation of literary characters, or the ethical message of a folk tale and estimate the modality of the literary text. We are interested in what one of these teachers perceives and how to use this in subsequent reading of the literary text.

### *Words in the reception process of literary texts*

What processes encourage the author's text signals, and how do readers compose their own individual textual meaning? We will find the answer in a relatively new vein of psychoanalytical study with the help of findings from empirical research carried out by Bortolussi and Dixon (2003). Their extensive experimental work yields answers to the question of how readers use their previous knowledge, expectations and beliefs in interacting with the textual characteristics of characterization, how they attach various motives to literary characters, how they form narrative concepts, narrative perspective and a spatial perception of narrative venues. The authors reject the erstwhile assumption of narratology, that the author's message is unequivocally encoded in the text and that the reader's task is to decode this message. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of learning about the principles of perception, learning and thinking as active processes through which a person learns and goes beyond their environment. Psychonarratology is associated with the findings of cognitive psychology, embedded in the broader framework of cognitive science and neuroscience, which forms the basis of multidisciplinary

insight into cognitive processes. Given that the mind cannot be directly observed but can be apprehended with a certain degree of abstraction, Bortolussi and Dixon (2003) conceived and investigated the statistical reader and explained the difference between analysis that begins with words of discourse and analysis that begins with events in the fictional world. A typical discourse approach involves the development of the grammatical structure of the story: formal analysis of the narrative text, by which we recognize the components of the story and the relations between them. In an approach that highlights the fictional world, it is assumed that the ratios of events in the fictional world are comparable to those of events in the real world, and readers should process both in a similar way. The main problem of such an approach is that events often remain undescribed in the text but must be deduced. In addition, the problem arises that, if we align the arrangement of events in relation with events in the fictional world, we neglect the influence of discourse. Therefore, Bortolussi and Dixon (2003) and Nenadić (2014) suggest that the arrangement of events be directed to the reader rather than into the text or the fictional world. They also suggest that we distinguish between textual attributes that provide us with information about events and constructs created by readers to present these events. The narrators play an important role in this process, since they give precise hints about which events or relationships are relevant and important. Bortolussi and Dixon (2003) write about the circumstances of event outcomes as an important source of information about the fictional world, and in their epistemic and index features, they provide information about the narrator's evaluation of these events. According to this information, readers should construct performances, story threads and plans of literary characters.

#### *Word signals in the characterization function of literary characters*

Characterization is also called labelling in Slovene (Kos, et al. 2001; Zupan Sosič, 2017). It is defined by procedures such as character imaging, speech stylization, description of event space, etc. The person's labelling (characterization) determines the depiction of the physical, emotional and moral characteristics of the person (main, secondary, positive, negative, tragic or comic) in the literary section. Another aspect of characterization is motivation. It involves a cascade of causes and motives that guide literary events and thus also the literary character (Zupan Sosič, 2017). Compiling and analysing the nature of a literary character is extremely time-consuming and hard work for the individual; it thus plays a central role in all elementary school lessons in literature (Saksida, 2008). The writer can show the personality of a character indirectly by enumerating their thoughts, feelings and desires, or directly, by rendering characteristic actions, so it becomes difficult to distinguish what is in the story and what in the character's code. On the one hand, we look at the character as the actor and, on the other, consider the action as

illuminating a character's personality. By analysing literary characters, the teacher prepares pupils for thorough reading, in-depth study of literary texts and learning about their own personality (Žagar, 2011) *How do readers construct the nature of a literary character?*

Narratology follows from the assumption that we can describe the personality of other people by listing their characteristics (e.g., kindness, agreeableness, disgruntlement, domineering manner, etc.) and that readers expect such characteristics to be related to how people behave in different contexts. The processes that take place in identifying causal links between a personality trait and a particular action are complex and dependent on the interaction of experience, recall from memory and the inference processes. In general, the relation between personality traits and actions can be interpreted as the probability that readers have certain knowledge and possess mental processes that enable them to judge literary characters and actions in a fictitious world on the basis of probability (Bortolussi and Dixon, 2003). Although there is a consensus on how personality traits are related to actions, it must be emphasized that the details of this link vary from person to person, depending on knowledge and personal experience. Despite the emphasis on the continuity between the implicit personal theory that people use in the real world and the personality theory they use to understand narrative text, we must assume that there are significant differences between these two theories and that these differences also depend on the narrative genre. For example, when we read a detective novel, the likelihood that somebody will commit murder will be much greater than in the real world; in love novels, the likelihood of dramatic love is much greater than in real life. Literary characters and acts in narration are therefore generally unusual. Readers have their own expectations of how the probability of certain characteristics and actions in narrative deviates from these properties and actions in real life. Despite these differences, it can be argued that conceptual analysis of the relation between properties and actions is the same in the fictitious and real worlds (Bortolussi and Dixon, 2003; Nenadić, 2014).

#### *Illustration in the reception process of literary texts*

The reception of literary texts is related to the teacher's competences for dealing with multi-coded texts, since these represent the ability to read critically, which helps to develop receptiveness to a youth literary text and thus to information literacy among young readers (Starč, 2011a). That is why teacher's competence to recognise external judgments by pupils is checked by means of observation, analysis and interpretation of the image, through a personal test from the artistic pedagogical point of view.

The characterization and modality of a literary text and ethical judgment about it can be demonstrated through illustrations, depending on the verbal or artistic code of the message. The illustrator has universal and individual symbols, colours, shapes and visual associations to articulate expressive words, or to extend and upgrade this meaning. Thus, in the survey, we check characterization, modality and ethical judgment through the visual elements of colours, shapes and lines that we accept, emotionally evaluate and express to ourselves. By using colour, we prefer, reject and learn about a personality (Tušak, 2001; Eiseman, 2018). As part of our psychological development, we associate colours with emotions as well as with intellect. Each colour has a meaning that is marked consciously or intuitively. This enables us to recognize their messages and meanings (Trstenjak, 1996). Much of our associative response to colour is related to natural phenomena, cultural, historical and traditional aspects, etc. We must also consider the unconscious response to colour (physiological response), which is influenced by our personal experience associated with this colour. The symbolism of colour develops on the basis of its expressive characteristics. The expressive value of the colour is derived from the tone of the colour, from its lightness or warmth, its dynamism or reticence. For example, yellow is the colour of enlightenment and reason, while red is the colour of emotion and action; blue embodies spirituality and transcendence (Rački, 2014; Kovačev, 1997; Tušak, 2001). In the remaining sections of the study, we observe the visual elements of form in the visual context of permanent geometric structures (square, circle and triangle) and their semiotic significance. Given that we commonly designate shapes as hard, sharp or soft, each art form shows something: the circle is soft and the triangle is sharp (Muhovič, 2015). Finally, the analysis of the character and modality of a literary text and ethical judgment about it is checked through the artistic elements of the lines, since the line is the basis of artistic outlining, a means of delimiting, limiting and dividing forms and spaces (Muhovič, 2015). Art theory says that lines are an artistic expression that can stimulate the viewer to a variety of feelings, since line has multiple symbolism and a psychological effect in relation to direction: the horizontal line functions calmly and passively. It refers to rest, the plane and the horizon. The vertical line functions actively, firmly and with dignity; it also represents alertness, control of the situation, life and growth, since humans are upright beings. The vertical line is detected closer than the horizontal, so in some cases we see these in front and the horizontal ones in the rear. The sloping line works dynamically and means movement. The uniform wavy line is calm, creating a soft, smooth movement, a feeling of tenderness and elegance (Šuštaršič, Butina, Zornik, de Gleria and Skubin, 2011; Muhovič, 2015). Each curve determines its angle. The one-off curve depends on the direction it takes in relation to the vertical or horizontal plane. The curves are supple and give rise to a sense of continuity, smoothness and various tensions. There is less effort in them than in

square shapes consisting of vertical and horizontal lines and angles. They can therefore express softness, grace, sweetness and femininity (Butina, 2000).

*Teacher's competence for evaluating artistic design* Teachers acquire the competences for evaluating fine arts and recognising quality interpretation during their undergraduate education, or while upgrading with various professional seminars and training. In this regard, the teacher's self-initiative and motivation for connecting aesthetically-designed speeches with subjects from different fields of expertise is of utmost importance (Duh and Korošec, 2009). To test the reception of the folk tale, *The Story of Caiman* is used by the teacher specifically for this research, a method of visual response to literary text that combines two interpretative codes. The first part comprises a linguistic code that enables the teacher to perceive and understand the externally made judgments of pupils at the linguistic level of communication. In the second part, the pupils engage with characterization, modality and ethical judgment of *The Story of Caiman*, using the artistic code of colour, shape and line. Semiotic analysis of literary illustrations allows the teacher to perceive and understand the artistic code by which pupils communicate how they understand the literary text. The teacher's ability to read multi-coded texts includes development, verification and evaluation of the pupil's artistic and apprenticeship capabilities. Therefore, in the framework of the artistic code, we check the teacher's competence for evaluating pupils' artistic and appreciation abilities (Duh, 2004; Duh and Zupančič, 2011; Duh, Zupančič and Čagran, 2014). In the perception, understanding and evaluation of illustration quality, we use the artistic and content criteria developed by Zupančič (2012), the criteria for pupil success in the field of art (the solution of the artistic problem and the ability to describe artistic concepts, the implementation of visual arts); we use a scheme available on several websites of elementary schools entitled Criteria for Evaluating and Writing Pupil Achievements (Assessment) in Art Education based on the development of pupils' artistic abilities (Duh, 2004; Herzog, Duh and Batič, 2009; Duh and Zupančič, 2013).

### **Aims and hypotheses**

In the empirical part of the research, we seek to identify and study the competence of elementary education teachers to use the visual response method to the literary text of a folk tale from a foreign civilization titled *The Story of Caiman* (Afriške pripovedke, 1976), in order to ascertain whether teachers can abandon their adult positions and predict how a literary text will be understood and interpreted by pupils in the 5th grade of elementary school.

The folk tale reception and the hypothetical reception of teachers are examined on the linguistic and visual level of interpretation from three perspectives:

- characterization,
- modality and
- moral dilemmas (ethical judgments).

At the linguistic level, we will examine how the pupils assessed the character of literary characters (caiman, human, wild animals and jackal) in terms of whether they were good or bad, stuck to the agreement, did not adhere to the agreement, or were interfering. In the psychology of creation, literary identification indicates the engagement with the world of a literary work, from complete submersion to critical distancing (Zupan Sosič, 2017). The ability of the reader to live in literary events and literary characters, is a characteristic feature of literary characters both positive and negative, and identification with the literary character is important for the reception of a literary work. In this study, we check the identification with the literary character by asking the pupils which of the book's characters they resemble and why, and negative identification with the question, if staging *The Story of Caiman* in class, which of the book's characters they would not want to play.

Characterization of the artistic code is checked by means of the colour, shape and line that are attributed to the literary characters by pupils, and by recognizing the semiotic significance of colour, shape and line in the book illustration of these characters. Teachers check whether they will be able to descend from their adult positions and predict how the character of the tale's literary characters will be assessed by pupils using artistic elements.

The ability to perceive and understand literary time is checked through the concept of modality. Pupils in the 5th grade of elementary school have gained experience during years of schooling with the temporal schemes of fairy-tales. When they hear the words *once upon a time*, they prepare, in their current horizon, a set of expectations from their experiences with fairy-tales, telling them that the events will follow a subjective thinking scheme. On the other hand, the word *today* means that the text should be understood and evaluated in the context of real experience and objective thinking (Kordigel Aberšek, 2008). The subjective and objective mental scheme is illustrated in the concept of modality (Nikolajeva, 2002). We check the perception of literary time at the linguistic level by asking pupils this question: Does *The Story of Caiman* happen *today* or *once upon a time*? The perception of literary time at the visual level is checked through a semiotic analysis of the artistic code in the

illustrations from *The Story of Caiman*. Based on the pupil's perception of literary time, we also examine the teacher's hypothetical perception of the modality of the literary text as received by the pupils.

To highlight the moral dilemma, pupils are asked to pronounce on the behaviour of literary characters, about what is right and what is not; they describe these judgments on the linguistic level, but on the visual level, they express judgment through artistic elements (colour, shape and line) and their symbolic significance. We were interested in whether teachers would be able to descend from their adult positions and predict the moral dilemma expressed by pupils. We integrated the results into the answers to our research questions.

In the study, we set hypotheses in the form of research questions, in which we were interested in whether the teachers were trained to use aesthetically designed proverbs as a didactic tool for recognizing outsourced pupil judgments.

- RQ 1: Does the hypothetical assessment of future elementary education teachers about how pupils evaluate the character of literary characters in the *The Story of Caiman* differ from pupils' assessment?
- RQ 2: Will the teachers perceive that the pupils have missed the ethical message of the folk tale entitled *The Story of Caiman*, when they discuss interpretation, identification and negative identification of literary characters on the language level?
- RQ 3: Will most pupils evaluate literary texts as fantasy and whether teachers' perception of the modality of the literary text will also be perceived?
- RQ 4: Did the teachers assume a pupil's choice of colour type for literary characters -- caiman, human, wild animals, jackal--and their symbolic significance?
- RQ 5: Did the teachers assume a pupil's choice of form for literary characters -- caiman, human, wild animal and jackal-- thereby demonstrating competence for recognizing the symbolic significance of the expressive forms that pupils choose?
- RQ 6: Will the teachers assume the pupil's choice of line and predict their choice of meaning for literary characters (caiman, human, wild animals and jackal) from *The Story of Caiman*?



## Methodology

### *Research method*

The research is based on the descriptive and causal-non-experimental methods of empirical pedagogical research (Sagadin, 1993), in which we combined the quantitative and qualitative methods of pedagogical research: a semi-structured interview with pupils, a questionnaire for teachers and semiotic analysis of the artistic code. In the qualitative semiotic case analysis (Vogrinc, 2008; Bryman, 2016), we collected data by means of a teacher's interpretation of pupils' picture messages (illustrations of literary characters). The emphasis is on describing the situations and the efforts to understand the context in which these situations take place. This method of collecting data requires observation with participation and thus the inclusion of a researcher in the research environment (Aberšek and Kordigel Aberšek, 2019).

### *Sample*

The research is based on a random sample of pupils from three urban (Maribor) elementary schools who were in 5th grade at the time of the research (10 years old). The research sample included 106 (100%) pupils. There were also 40 future teachers (100%) from the 4th year of Elementary Education, who in the summer semester (February, 2019) attended the course Pedagogical Research in the field of social sciences and humanities.

### *Research instrument and method*

We obtained data for analysing the linguistic and artistic code of pupils and future teachers with a specially designed instrumental survey, a semi-structured interview (open questionnaire, supplemented, if needed) for pupils and based on the questionnaire for teachers.

### *Questionnaire for pupils*

The semi-structured questionnaire for pupils includes ten questions. It is divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire examines the comprehension of the literary text on the linguistic level, while the other part is the reception of literary texts using visual elements (colour, shape and line) when pupils illustrate literary characters. At the end of each part of the questionnaire, we connect with a synthesis of the linguistic and artistic code of the message and check the interdependence of the interpretations of the two codes.

### *Questionnaire for teachers*

To the future class teachers, we asked ten questions of an open type in the questionnaire, in which we included four illustrations of literary characters from *The Story of Caiman* (*Afriške pripovedke*, 1976, p. 56-60). We reminded the future teachers that they should read the instructions carefully, consider and correctly complete the questionnaire. Images are interpreted by their feelings about and understanding of the text read. Interpretation was done by identifying the linguistic and artistic code, so that future teachers entered the inferred responses of 5th grade pupils in the questionnaire, which allowed us to test whether they were able to predict hypothetically how pupils would tackle the literary text.

We provided enough time for pupils and teachers to complete the questionnaire. The measurement characteristics of both questionnaires were checked by experimental surveys, and reliability by comparing pupils' responses with illustrations of literary characters, and common interpretation results, with theoretical starting points: psychoanalytics, the legitimacy of the child's receptive development, didactics of youth literature, art theory and didactics of fine arts.

### *Data processing*

Data were processed with the statistical data processing program SPSS (Bratina, 2006), at the level of frequency distribution of data (f, f %). Data is presented in tabular form or the descriptions of interpretations are given. Descriptive data on literary characters and imputed properties (good, bad, disagreement, etc.) were entered in the table, and then for each literary character they verified which were positive and how many, and which were negative and how many in terms of pupil attributions to individual literary characters. In the same way, we obtained information on colour, shape and line for literary characters and the characteristics attributed to these literary characters by pupils, and the selection as also hypothetically foreseen by teachers. Semiotic analysis of artistic codes was given by interpretation of outline and outline artistic elements: colour, shape and line and their symbolic meaning.

## **Results and discussion**

In the survey, we were interested in whether the hypothetical assessment by future teachers of elementary education about how pupils would assess the personality of literary characters in *The Story of Caiman* would differ from the actual assessment by pupils. Results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Positive and negative attributes with which pupils evaluate literary characters and teachers' prediction of pupils' choices.**

Literary character	Assessment of pupils		Predictions of teachers	
	Positive attributes	Negative attributes	Positive attributes	Negative attributes
Caiman	31.2%	68.8%	73.3%	26.7%
Human	57.0%	43.0%	21.4%	78.6%
Wild animals	23.6%	76.4%	84.6%	15.4%
Jackal	69.9%	30.1%	86.4%	13.6%

The results show (Table 1) that the hypothetical assessment by future teachers of elementary education about how pupils will assess the nature of literary characters in *The Story of Caiman* differs for all four literary characters. The discrepancies between the pupils' assessment and that of the teachers' estimates are highest for the literary characters wild animals, since 84.6% of the teachers estimate the wild animals as positive literary characters, while these are identified as positive by only 23.6% of pupils. Among teachers, 15.4% believe that pupils will evaluate the wild animals as negative characters, but 76.4% of the pupils do this. Based on these results, we conclude that most teachers did not descend from their adult positions and read the text as read by pupils of the 5th grade of elementary school. Therefore, we find that future teachers did not demonstrate competence in the use of genre transfer.

In the psychology of creation, literary identification means the engagement with the world of the literary work, from complete submersion to critical distancing (Zupan Sosič, 2017). That's why our next question in the study is whether teachers will perceive that pupils have missed the ethical message of the folk tale *The Story of Caiman*, when they discuss identification and negative identification of literary characters on the linguistic level of interpretation (RQ2). The results are as follows: most pupils identify with the jackal (40.6%) and the human character (38.7%). In the context of negative identification, most pupils would not want to play the caiman (37.7%) or the wild animals (28.3%), which they recognize as the worst characters. These results show that pupils at the linguistic level have missed the ethical message of the folk tale because they recognize the human as good, and the wild animals as bad. Given that literary identification is more engaged with emotion than with reason, pupils usually identify with the familiar. In our case, this literary character is a human being. The wild animals tell the truth about the human character, so the children recognize these as the worst characters, who deserve punishment. Future teachers assumed that the pupils would identify with the human character, since they themselves are human, an assumption which the study confirmed. Given the dual nature of human beings, who can be both good and bad,

teachers estimated that, in the context of negative identification, pupils would point to the human character (48.7%) as the person whom the pupils would not want to play. This is contrary to the pupil's actual assessment. Future teachers did not perceive that the pupils would miss the folk tale's ethical message; therefore, we conclude that they have only a limited degree of competence in detecting genre transfer, in which they should have been able to guess the identification and negative identification of pupils with literary figures in *The Story of Caiman*. With this conclusion, we answered RQ 2.

In the third research question, we asked whether most pupils would evaluate the literary text as fantastic, and whether the pupil's assessment of the modality of the literary text would also be perceived by teachers. The capacity for perceiving and understanding literary time was checked by an evaluation of the concept of modality. The following conclusions were reached: Most pupils (94.3%) rated the literary text as fantastic. This answer was also foreseen by 97.4% of teachers.

Based on the results of the study, we find that most pupils evaluated the literary text as fantastic, which was assumed by most teachers. How can we explain that most pupils perceived literary time? Pupils in the 5th grade of elementary school gain experience with literary time by reading fairy-tales during schooling. When they hear the words *once upon a time*, they prepare in their current horizon a set of expectations from their experiences with fairy-tales, telling them that the events will follow a subjective thinking scheme (Kordigel, 2004; Kordigel Aberšek, 2008). These future teachers have demonstrated competence for assessing the modality of literary texts, and that they can abandon their adult positions and anticipate the pupil's reception of literary time. With these arguments, we answered RQ 3.

In the context of the artistic colour code, we were interested in whether teachers could guess the pupil's choice of colour type for each literary character--caiman, human, wild animal or jackal-- and their symbolic significance (RQ4). The results of the study for the human and the wild animals are presented in Tables 2 and 3; for the caiman and jackal, these are presented descriptively. For ease of interpretation, the colours were combined into three colour types: warm colours (yellow, orange, red and brown), cool colours (blue, green and purple) and achromatic colours (white, grey and black). We found that most pupils (48.1%) chose cool colours for the Caiman, and 97.4% of teachers assumed that pupils would choose warm colours for the same character.

**Table 2: Pupil assessment and teachers' predictions of colour type selection for the human character**

The type of colour for the literary character human		Pupil	Teacher	Total
Warm colours	% pupil/ teacher	50 47.2%	5 12.8%	55 37.9%
Cool colours	% pupil/ teacher	38 35.8%	34 87.2%	72 49.7%
Achromatic colours	% pupil/ teacher	18 17.0%	0 0.0%	18 12.4%
Total	% pupil/ teacher	106 100.0%	39 100.0%	145 100.0%

We can see (Table 2) that most pupils (47.2%) see the human character as being a warm colour, while most teachers (87.2%) assume that pupils would choose cold colours for the human character.

**Table 3: Assessment of pupils and teachers' foresight regarding the choice of colour for the wild animal character.**

Type of colour for the wild animal character		Pupil	Teacher	Total
Warm colours	% pupil/ teacher	52 49.1%	5 12.8%	57 39.3%
Cool colours	% pupil/ teacher	38 35.8%	33 84.6%	71 49.0%
Achromatic colours	% pupil/ teacher	16 15.1%	1 2.6%	17 11.7%
Total	% pupil/ teacher	106 100.0%	39 100.0%	145 100.0%

We find (Table 3) that most pupils (49.1%) chose warm colours for the wild animals, while most teachers (84.6%) assumed that pupils would choose cold colours for the same literary character. In the colour choice for the jackal, the results are dispersed into two categories: 44.3% of pupils picked warm colours and 38.7% cool colours. Most teachers (89.7.4%) assumed that pupils would choose cool colours for the jackal.

Based on the results (Tables 2 and 3 and the description of interpretation for the caiman and jackal), we find that the choice of colour type among pupils and teachers' predictions varies in the case of three literary characters (caiman, humans and wild animals) and partly in the case of the jackal. For the reception of *The Story of Caiman*, it is crucial for pupils to recognize the wild animals as good literary characters, and that in this case the human is bad. The choice of warm colours for

the wild animals can indicate that the pupils recognize these as good literary characters. Based on semiotic analysis of the illustrations of the wild animals, this claim can be confirmed (see Figure 1: artistic interpretation by the pupil, coded F 10 BI). Future teachers do not perceive the choice of colour types; therefore, we conclude that they need additional knowledge about the symbolic meaning of colours and their psychological effect in communication (Trstenjak, 1996; Tušak, 2001; Kovačev, 1997; Eiseman, 2018). With this argument, we answered RQ 4.

In order to facilitate the interpretation of the outsider judgments of pupils, we included in the analysis the semiotic value of shape and line with which pupils interpret the character of literary characters in *The Story of Caiman*. RQ 5: Did the teachers correctly project a pupil's choice of form for the caiman, human, wild animals and jackal, thereby demonstrating competence for recognizing the symbolic significance of the forms that pupils choose?

The results of the study show that most pupils (34.9%) choose the square for the wild animals, which was projected by more than half the teachers surveyed (56.4%). For the jackal, most pupils (47.2%) choose the circle, which was guessed by almost three-quarters of the teachers (71.8%). In the case of the other two (caiman and human), the pupil's assessment and the teachers' guesses vary. According to the results of the research and the fact that the teachers could guess the choice of form for the wild animals (who bear the story's ethical message), we believe that these future teachers display some of the competences concerning the symbolic meaning of the forms. We thus answered the research question RQ 5.

In the final research question, we checked whether teachers could infer the pupil's choice of line and predict their choice of meaning for the characters (caiman, human, wild animals and jackal) in the story. The results are presented for each literary character in Tables 2 to 5.

**Table 4: Caiman, attributed form of lines and their significance-**

Literary character:	Pupil's choice of shape:	The meaning that pupils attribute to the chosen line format	Teacher evaluation of the choice of form:	Teacher's interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the line shape
Caiman	Vertical + oblique	vertical: kindness, determination, trust, sincerity, willingness to help, perseverance, as well: disagreement, arbitrariness, contemptibility;	wavy + vertical	Wavy: kindness and justice, as well as danger and contrition; Vertical: honesty, openness, and disagreement.

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Oblique: meddling, quarrelling, does not stick to the agreement, and to a lesser extent: honesty, tolerance and trust.

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The results of Table 4 show that teachers did project the pupil's choice of a vertical line for the caiman and predicted both the positive (sincerity, honesty) and the negative meaning: these do not agree. The theory (Šuštaršič et al., 2011; Muhovič, 2015) teaches us that vertical lines function actively, as hard and dignified, and represent alertness, control of the situation, life and growth. By selecting the line and its meaning, the teachers demonstrated competence in recognizing the character codes of the pupil's interpretation of the caiman. We conclude that it is easier for teachers to step down from their adult positions if we allow them to evaluate pupils' externalized judgment with the help of visual elements (e.g. lines).

**Table 5: The human character, attributed forms of lines and their significance.**

Literary character:	Pupil's choice of shape:	The meaning that pupils attribute to the chosen line format	Teacher evaluation of the choice of form:	Teacher's interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the line shape
human	vertical + oblique	Vertical: kindness, determination, trust, honesty, willingness to help, perseverance as well as: no agreement, arbitrariness, squabble + oblique: meddling, quarrelling, does not stick to the agreement, and to a lesser extent: honesty, tolerance and trust.	Corrugated + vertical + horizontal.	wavy: does not stick to the deal, danger; vertical: does not agree, arbitrariness; Horizontal: interference.

The results show (Table 5) that teachers assumed pupils would choose a vertical line for the human character and predicted its negative meaning: arbitrariness and disagreement. This line selection and attribution of traits may indicate that the pupils understood that in *The Story of Caiman*, the bad character was the human being, which the teachers also assumed. Given the results from teachers, compared with art theory saying the vertical line is active, hard, and dignified, and also represents control of the situation (Šuštaršič et al., 2011), we can conclude that future teachers demonstrate partial competence in identifying the pupil's artistic codes for interpreting the human character, if we enable them to make the choice by means of the semiotic meaning of the artistic elements (lines).

The results show (Table 6) that teachers did not predict the pupil's choice of line shape for the wild animals but overlooked the overall positive characteristic (kindness) and the negative properties (interference and contrition).

**Table 6: The wild animal characters, attributed line shapes and their meaning.**

Literary character	Pupil's choice of shape:	The meaning that pupils attribute to the chosen line format	Art theory (according to Šuštaršič et al., 2011).	Teacher evaluation of the choice of form:	Teacher's prediction of the meaning of the form
Wild animals	oblique + wavy	Inclined: kindness, determination, trust, sincerity, willingness to help, perseverance, as well: disagreement, arbitrariness, contemptibility; wavy: willingness to help, fairness, but also: disagreement, arbitrariness, interference, vigilance, vicious circle.	oblique the line works dynamically and represents movement; Even a wavy line is subdued, creating a soft and fluid movement, instilling a sense of tenderness and elegance.	vertical + horizontal	vertical: interference, contrition, negative character, as well as: fairness and confusion: Horizontal: kindness.

The pupil's indirect selection of traits for the wild animals (i.e. by selecting a line for the character and then attributing the trait of the character to that line) clearly indicates that the pupils understood that the wild animals were good characters, which the teachers also assumed (kindness).

The results of Table 7 show that teachers did project the pupil's choice of a horizontal line for the jackal and anticipated both their positive (kindness) and negative (disagreement) meanings and thus the dual nature of the literary character. Fine art theory (Šuštaršič et al., 2011; Muhovič, 2015) teaches us that horizontal lines are calm and passive, which can be linked to a positive assessment of the jackal,



which the pupils say is "a kind (calm) lawyer who will solve the problem". By choosing the horizontal line and its meaning (fairness, honesty), teachers have demonstrated competence for identifying the artistic codes of the pupil's interpretation of the jackal.

**Table 7: The jackal character, the attributes of the lines and their significance.**

Literary character	Pupil's choice of shape:	The meaning that pupils attribute to the chosen line format	Art theory (according to Suštarsic et al., 2011).	Teacher evaluation of the choice of form:	Teacher's prediction of the meaning of the form
Jackal	horizontal + vertical	Horizontal: kindness, honesty, friendship, perseverance, as well: it does not agree, it interferes; vertical: kindness, determination, trust, sincerity, willingness to help, perseverance, as well: disagreement, arbitrariness, arrogance.	The horizontal line functions as calm, serene, and passive. + Vertical the line works actively, as hard, dignified, but also represents alertness, control, life and growth.	horizontal + wavy	Horizontal: fairness, kindness, honesty, anticipation of events; wavy: Arrogance and danger, as well as justice.

Based on the results of the research, we conclude that teachers and pupils can more easily determine the nature of literary characters if we allow them to express this indirectly (by selecting the colour, shape and line for the character, which are then attributed to it. The limitations expressed in the partial interpretation and recognition of the literary characters indicate that, in order to identify the semiotic code of colour, shape and line, teachers would need a broader range of competences than they have. On this basis, it would be sensible to assess the incorporation of the visual response method (MRL) into the curriculum of university teacher education.

*Perception of character, modality and ethical judgment in a folk tale of a foreign civilization circle from the perspective of multimodality*

We suggest including reader-centred semiotics in the context of character perception, modality and ethical judgment of *The Story of Caiman* (Culler, 1975; Eco, 1979), as the science of sign systems (Zupan Sosič, 2017, p. 28), which argues that

the potential for interaction between text and picture is infinite, as they encourage readers to activate knowledge, experience and expectations (Nikolajeva, 2003; Pantaleo, 2005, Nikolajeva and Scott, 2006). A semiotic approach to literary works therefore emphasizes the construction of literary meaning using common codes (linguistic and artistic), which implies the need for integrating multimodal texts into the educational process. Therefore, we present an example of the analysis of language and visual arts, by examining the productive literary-didactic method of visual response of pupils to literary texts, especially for this research; we will examine how pupils in the 5th grade of elementary school interpreted the *The Story of Caiman*.

The method of visual response is presented using the example of interpretation of the wild animal character, because these are the bearers of the ethical message in *The Story of Caiman*.

At the linguistic level, pupils gave 23.6% positive and 76.4% negative characteristics to the wild animals. Among the positive characteristics, they point out that the animals are good and friendly. Among the negative features, they say the animals are unfriendly and bad, do not adhere to agreements, are rude, interfering and evil. Below are some of the pupils' statements:

- *"They think only of themselves".*
- *"They stick to their own kind."*
- *"Fake friendly, wild and savage."*
- *"Decisive, cheering only for their friends".*
- *"They speak when they are not asked."*
- *"They are interfering."*

These facts show that the pupils learned that the wild animals were the worst literary characters, and thus at the level of linguistic communication completely miss the ethical message of the folk tale from the foreign civilization. Next, we will present how the pupils understood the folk tale when we allowed them to use illustration for their interpretation.



**Figure 1: By the water: wild animals, human and jackal (Pupil code F 10 BI).**

The assumption on interpreting the artistic code of the illustration reveals that a pupil who has expressed verbally that wild animals are bad characters ("*Unfriendly: giraffe, monkey and lion.*") clearly shows that he has understood the folk tale's ethical message at an abstract level of thought when the teacher allowed him to use animals in the illustration (picture) to offer his interpretation. We can claim this because the wild animals--giraffe, monkey and lion--are painted yellow, orange and brown. The colour brown indicates simplicity, practicality and is an expression of strength. It is the most typical earth colour and symbolizes stability, as well as modesty and humility (Muhovič, 2015; Eiseman, 2018). To improve communication skills, the colour orange will be helpful to the wild animals (Tušak, 2001). This is confirmed by the vivid expressions of the animals, which are cheerful and friendly. According to the relationships in the picture book, highlighted by Nikolajeva (2003), Pantaleo (2005) and Haramija and Batič (2013) in the study of multi-code texts, we find that interdependence or complementarity between the linguistic code and the artistic code provides the teacher with deeper insight into the pupil's perception of the literary text and thus an understanding of the ethical message of this folk tale.

## Conclusion

The teacher, as an expert, should be familiar with the path that enables pupils to develop through their own activity the capacity for logical thinking, the meaning-creating ability and the ability to engage in creative dialogue with the literary text. To achieve this goal, the teacher needs a tool; we have therefore developed a productive, literary-didactic method of pupil visual response to literary texts, as a didactic method for guiding the teacher through the stages of recognizing elements of the linguistic and artistic code through which pupils communicate how they understand literary texts. Analysis of both codes reveals to the teacher which elements the pupils have detected, and which elements might have been overlooked if the teacher had not given a cue. Literature data are acquired by pupils from the

text, their own experiences and the fictional world (Bortolussi and Dixon, 2003; Grosman, 2011), by constantly updating, developing or completely replacing the concept of the nature of literary characters with a more appropriate one. This way of creating a mental scheme about the character of literary characters and their moral behaviour enables pupils to formulate an ethical judgment of *The Story of Caiman* so that they understand that wild animals are good literary characters and that, in this case, a human is a bad literary character. We conclude, therefore, that the reader observes a certain act and determines the nature of a literary character on the basis of information about characteristics that appear in the actions of that character and derives from previous evidence about this trait (based on the past conduct of this literary character) (Bortolussi and Dixon, 2003). With the help of this procedure, teachers enable the pupil to create mental and emotional operations more typical of an adult reader (Kordigel Aberšek, 2008).

According to analysis of results from our study of teachers' understanding of the importance of children's art in the communication model of literary education, teachers should use a much wider range of competences to understand and use the Visual Response Method as a didactic tool for externalising the learner's dialogue with literary texts. In modern media society, the treatment of multicultural texts in formal education is indispensable and is therefore already part of the curriculum, which enables the achievement of information literacy goals in both subject areas (Kordigel Aberšek, 1999/2000; Program osnovna šola. Slovenščina, 2011; Likovna vzgoja, 2011; Batič, Herzog in Duh, 2009). These are implemented by teachers who have the competence to read multi-code texts. Based on the answers to all six questions in the survey and their results, we find that future teachers are only partly qualified to use the Visual Response Method, although the results show that the artistic code makes it easier to descend from their adult position and thus perceive the genre transfer of the literary texts. There is an opportunity to improve the situation in our teaching practice by including productive literary-didactic methods in the curriculum of permanent continuing teacher education.

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