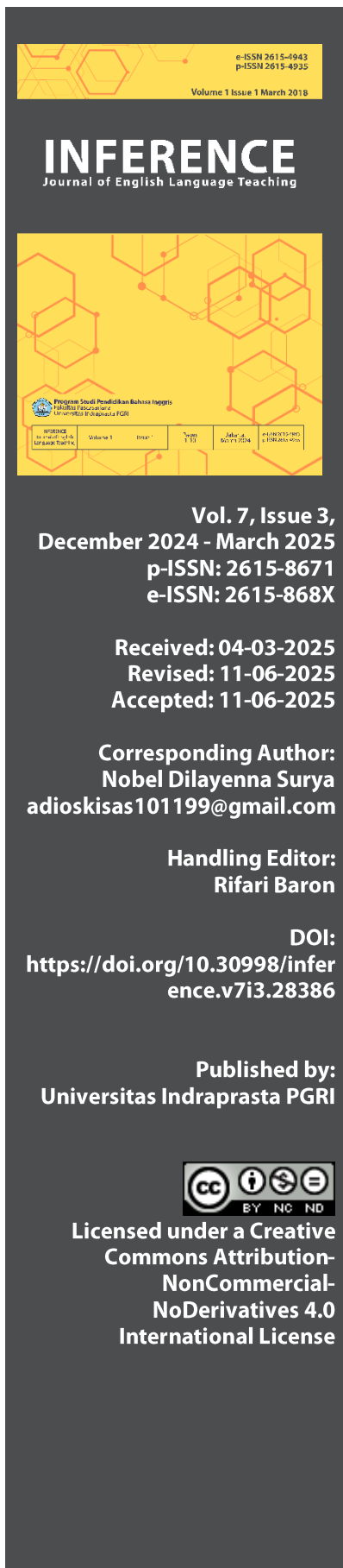




RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Critical Multimodal Analysis of Text and Images in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and *The Witches*

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Abstract: This thesis investigates the multimodal analysis of text and illustrations in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and *The Witches*. It explores the relationship between text and illustrations in constructing themes, characters, and narrative experience, using a multimodal framework based on representational, interactional, and compositional meanings. The findings reveal that illustrations in both novels significantly enhance the narrative. In *Matilda*, they emphasize Matilda's intelligence, power, and resilience while highlighting her parents' oppressive behavior. In *The Witches*, illustrations intensify danger and fear through grotesque depictions of the witches. Both novels demonstrate the synergy between text and illustrations in creating emotional impact, clarifying themes, and enriching the reading experience. This study underscores the importance of illustrations in children's literature as tools that contribute meaningfully to readers' understanding, rather than mere decorative elements.

Keywords: Multimodal analysis, Matilda, The Witches, Roald dahl, Children literature.

Analisis Multimodal Kritis Terhadap Teks dan Gambar dalam *Matilda* dan *The Witches* Karya Roald Dahl

Abstrak: Tesis ini menyelidiki analisis multimodal terhadap teks dan ilustrasi dalam *Matilda* dan *The Witches* karya Roald Dahl. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi hubungan antara teks dan ilustrasi dalam membangun tema, karakter, dan pengalaman naratif, dengan menggunakan kerangka multimodal berdasarkan makna representational, interaksional, dan komposisional. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa ilustrasi dalam kedua novel ini secara signifikan meningkatkan narasi. Dalam *Matilda*, ilustrasi menekankan kecerdasan, kekuatan, dan ketahanan Matilda, sekaligus menyoroti perilaku menindas orang tuanya. Dalam *The Witches*, ilustrasi memperburuk bahaya dan ketakutan melalui gambaran grotesque tentang para penyihir. Kedua novel ini menunjukkan sinergi antara teks dan ilustrasi dalam menciptakan dampak emosional, memperjelas tema, dan memperkaya pengalaman membaca. Studi ini menegaskan pentingnya ilustrasi dalam sastra anak-anak sebagai alat yang memberikan kontribusi bermakna bagi pemahaman pembaca, bukan sekadar elemen dekoratif.

Kata kunci: Analisis multimodal, Matilda, The Witches, Roald Dahl, Sastra anak-anak

Introduction

Communication serves as a fundamental means of sharing ideas, thoughts, and emotions, often conveyed through various media. Literature is one such medium, where novels act as a form of narrative communication that presents stories with diverse characters, plots, and themes. Among these, children's literature holds a special place, offering not only entertainment but also significant educational and developmental value. Two notable examples of children's literature are Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988) and *The Witches* (1983), which combine compelling narratives with Quentin Blake's distinctive illustrations to create rich, multimodal storytelling experiences.

Matilda tells the story of an exceptionally intelligent young girl navigating life with neglectful parents and an oppressive school environment. Her resilience and love of learning make her an inspiring protagonist. In contrast, *The Witches* follows the adventures of a boy who uncovers a secret society of witches with sinister plans, highlighting themes of courage and cleverness. Both novels use illustrations not just as decorative elements but as integral components that enhance character development, theme portrayal, and narrative depth.

Despite extensive research on Roald Dahl's works, prior studies have largely focused on textual analysis, often neglecting the interplay between text and illustrations. Similarly, while multimodal analysis has gained attention, it has primarily been applied to modern visual media, leaving a gap in exploring how classic children's literature utilizes multimodal elements. Addressing this gap, this research critically analyses the interaction between text and illustrations in *Matilda* and *The Witches* to uncover how these elements collaboratively construct themes and characters, shape reader interpretation, and enrich storytelling.

The research questions guiding this study include:

1. How do text and illustrations interact to construct themes and characters? What role do illustrations play in shaping the reader's interpretation of the narrative?
2. How does the multimodal interaction enhance storytelling and emphasize themes such as intelligence, power, and resilience?

This study is important because it highlights the role of visual literacy in children's literature, demonstrating how illustrations contribute to deeper reader engagement and understanding. By analyzing these novels through a multimodal lens, this research provides insights into how visual and verbal elements work together to create impactful narratives. Such insights are valuable not only for literary scholars but also for educators and parents seeking to foster critical thinking and comprehension skills in young readers.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a critical multimodal analysis approach to examine the interaction between text and illustrations in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and *The Witches*. The methodology is grounded in the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Michael Halliday (2006) and multimodal analysis by Kress (2010), focusing on representational, interactional, and compositional meanings to explore how verbal and visual elements work together to construct themes, characters, and narrative experiences.

The subjects of this research are two novels by Roald Dahl: *Matilda* (1988) and *The Witches* (1983). *Matilda* consists of 233 pages divided into 21 chapters, featuring 116 illustrations by Quentin Blake, while *The Witches* contains 208 pages across 22 chapters, accompanied by 96 illustrations. These novels were chosen due to their rich use of text and illustrations, which collaboratively enhance the storytelling experience.

The study took place over a period of two months, from September to October 2024. This time frame allowed for thorough data collection, analysis, and synthesis of findings. Primary data for this study were collected from the written text and illustrations in the physical copies of *Matilda* and *The Witches* published by Penguin Group. Key scenes and illustrations were selected based on their relevance to the research questions, particularly those addressing themes of intelligence, power, and

resilience. Secondary data were sourced from scholarly books and journal articles related to multimodal analysis, visual literacy, and children's literature.

The data analysis process followed three main steps:

1. **Identifying Key Elements:** Textual passages and corresponding illustrations were examined to identify key themes and character representations.
2. **Applying SFL and Multimodal Theory:** Representational, interactional, and compositional meanings were analyzed to understand how text and illustrations interact to convey meaning.
3. **Synthesizing Findings:** The results were contextualized within existing research to validate the analysis and draw comprehensive conclusions.

The primary instrument for this research was the researcher, who used theoretical frameworks and coding templates to ensure systematic analysis. Annotation templates were employed to organize key textual and visual data, while visual analysis guides were used to interpret the illustrations in relation to the text. These tools facilitated consistent and reliable analysis throughout the study. By providing detailed information on the methodology, this study ensures that its findings are verifiable and opens opportunities for further research on the interplay between text and illustrations in children's literature.

Results and Discussion

Interaction Between Text and Illustrations in Matilda

The interaction between text and illustrations in *Matilda* reveals three central themes: intelligence, power, and resilience.

1. Intelligence

Matilda's intelligence is emphasized both verbally and visually. For example, text passages describe her reading advanced books at a young age, and corresponding illustrations depict her holding oversized books, symbolizing her intellectual curiosity and maturity. This interplay demonstrates how illustrations enhance the textual narrative by visually reinforcing her exceptional cognitive abilities. Here the example:

Text:

"Matilda at the age of three years old; she had taught herself to read by studying newspapers and magazines that lay around the house. Then, at the age of four years old, she could read fast and well and she naturally began hankering after books"(Dahl, 1988p.5).

Illustration:



Matilda reading newspaper
(Dahl, 1988 p. 5)

Analysis:

Roald Dahl describes Matilda's intelligence through her ability to teach herself to read by the age of three and she became passionate about reading books. The accompanying illustration depicts Matilda holding a large newspaper. Her small figure seemed insignificant

next to the immense size of the paper. Therefore, this illustration symbolizes her intellectual ambition and maturity.

This visual reinforces the textual portrayal of Matilda as an intellectually precocious child. The newspaper, traditionally associated with adult readers and complex information. However, in this case highlight her exceptional intellectual maturity, contrasting societal expectations of her age group. The oversized nature of the newspaper relative to her small stature visually amplifies the theme of intelligence, suggesting that her intellectual capabilities far surpass her physical appearance.

Furthermore, the choice to depict Matilda engrossed in newspaper emphasizes her insatiable curiosity. While other children might engage in typical childhood activities. Matilda's focus on acquiring knowledge underscores her determination and sets her apart as an extraordinary individual. This interplay between text and illustration demonstrates how her intelligence not only defines her character but also serves as a tool for empowerment, enabling her to navigate and overcome the challenges posed by her dismissive and oppressive family environment. In conclusion, this interplay between text and illustrations viewed through the lens of representational theory. This theory helps to construct a clear image of Matilda's intelligence further enhancing the themes of the novel.

2. Power

Power is explored through characters such as Miss Trunchbull, whose intimidating physicality is highlighted in both text and visuals. Textual descriptions of her dominance and aggression are complemented by illustrations that exaggerate her towering figure and harsh demeanour, symbolizing the oppressive nature of her authority. This interaction underscores the theme of power as both a tool for control and a force to be challenged. Here the example:

Text:

"I don't give a tinker's toot what your mummy thinks!" the Trunchbull yelled, and with that she lunged forward and grabbed hold of Amanda's pigtails in her right fist and lifted the girls clear off the ground. Then she started swinging her round and round her head, faster and faster and Amanda was screaming blue murder and the Trunchbull was yelling, "I'll give you pigtails, you little rat!" (Dahl, 1988 p. 108).

Illustration:



Miss Trunchbull throwing Amanda
(Dahl, 1988 p. 109)

Analysis:

In the text, Miss Trunchbull's actions display her use of physical power to intimidate and control. The description of her lifting Amanda by the pigtails and swinging her around demonstrates the physical abuse she exerts over others, particularly children. The choice of

words like “yelled,” “grabbed hold,” and “screaming blue murder” emphasizes the violence and fear surrounding Miss Trunchbull's presence. Her dialogue, “I don't give a tinker's toot what your mummy thinks!” reveals her disregard for authority figures outside of her own, emphasizing her dominant and oppressive attitude. The textual representation of Miss Trunchbull's power is one of intimidation and control, where her strength is used not for protection or care, but to instill fear.

In the accompanying illustration, we see Miss Trunchbull throwing Amanda, which visually reinforces the oppressive power described in the text. The image likely depicts her large, towering figure in contrast to Amanda's smaller, helpless form, symbolizing the imbalance of power. The physical disparity between the two characters visually emphasizes Miss Trunchbull's dominance. The violent action of throwing Amanda further reinforces the theme of power being used to control and harm. The exaggerated size of Miss Trunchbull in the illustration adds to the feeling of her being an overpowering, almost monstrous figure, amplifying the sense of fear and oppression.

Through the combination of text and illustration, we see a clear representation of oppressive power. The text conveys the emotional and physical violence of Miss Trunchbull's actions, while the illustration complements and amplifies this by visually presenting her as a towering, imposing figure, thus enhancing the audience's understanding of her overwhelming control over others. This interplay between words and images creates a powerful representation of Miss Trunchbull's abuse of power, aligning with the central theme in *Matilda* that power can be used to oppress others. The visual and verbal representations of power help to construct an understanding of Miss Trunchbull as a character who exerts control through fear and violence, making her one of the most prominent representations of oppressive power in the novel. Together, the text and illustration offer a comprehensive representation of the oppressive power wielded by Miss Trunchbull. The textual description of violence and intimidation is visually reinforced by the illustration of Miss Trunchbull's domineering figure, emphasizing the theme that power can be oppressive.

3. Resilience

Matilda's resilience is shown in her ability to withstand negativity and keep moving forward. This section will present examples from the text and illustrations to highlight how resilience is depicted in the story. These multimodal elements work together to convey the message that resilience can triumph over oppression. Here the example:

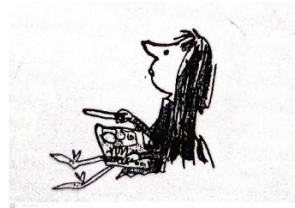
Text:

“Mummy, Matilda said, would you mind if I ate my supper in the dining-room so I could read my book? The father glanced up sharply, “I would mind! He snapped. ‘Supper is a family gathering and no one leaves the table till it's over! But we're not at the table, Matilda said. We never are. We're always eating off our knee and watching the telly. What's wrong with watching the telly, may I ask? The father said. His voice had suddenly become soft and dangerous. Matilda didn't trust herself to answer him, so She keeps quiet. She could feel anger boiling up inside her. She knew it was wrong to hate her parents like this, but she was finding it very hard not to do so. All the reading she had done had given her a view of life that they had never seen.” (Matilda, 1988 p. 22-23).

Illustrations:



Matilda and her father
(Dahl, 1988 p. 22-23)



Analysis:

The text portrays Matilda's emotional strength when faced with her father's dominance. Although anger builds within her, she controls her emotions. She refrains from responding negatively, showing maturity beyond her age. Her inner resolve allows her to maintain her values such as her love for reading despite her father's dismissive attitude. In the illustrations, Mr. Wormwood as Matilda's father emphasize his authority with his stern expression and relaxed posture reflecting his sense of control over the household. Meanwhile, Matilda shows her calm demeanor contrasts with the text's description of her inner frustrations. This visual depiction underscores her resilience.

The interaction between the text and illustration highlights Matilda's resilience. The text reveals her internal struggle while the illustration depicts her outward calmness. Therefore, the text and illustration work together to create a fuller picture of Matilda's ability to stay composed and true to herself under challenging circumstances. This example shows how Matilda endures her father's unfair treatment without losing her focus or composure. Her emotional strength is evident in both her actions and demeanor. The combination of the text and illustration reinforces the theme of resilience.

Interaction Between Text and Illustrations in The Witches

In *The Witches*, the interaction between text and illustrations highlights central themes such as **intelligence, power, and resilience**.

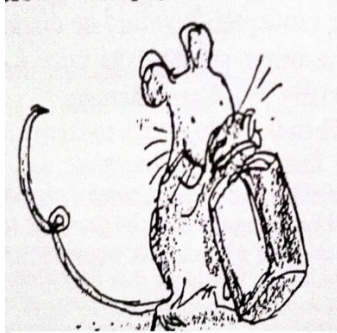
1. Intelligence

The text describes characters like young protagonist, who is brave and resilient, while the illustrations visually reinforce these themes. Here the example:

Teks:

"Don't forget you'll be carrying the bottle, she said, "so you won't be nearly so quick and nippy. "I can run quite fast standing up with the bottle in my arms, I said". "I did it just now, don't you remember? I came all the way up from The Grand High Witch's room carrying it". "What about unscrewing the top? She said "that might be difficult for you. "Let me try, I said. I took hold of the little bottle and using both my front paws, I found I was able to unscrew the cap quite easily. "That's great, my grandmother said". "You really are a very clever mouse" (Dahl, 1983 p. 156).

Illustration:



The Plan
(Dahl, 1983 p. 156)

Analysis:

In this text, the conversation between the boy (now a mouse) and his grandmother shows how the character uses his intelligence to solve a physical challenge. Even though his body has changed into a mouse, he still demonstrates practical intelligence by opening the bottle with his paws. This highlights practical intelligence, where intelligence is not only about thinking but also about adapting and using available physical skills to solve problems. The illustration that shows the mouse opening the bottle with his paws supports this idea. It visually represents the action, showing the boy, now a mouse, using his paws to twist the cap off the bottle. This emphasizes his dexterity and intelligence, despite being a small mouse. The illustration helps to reinforce the idea that the character can still act smart and capable, even in his transformed state.

Using representational meaning, the text and illustration work together to show intelligence in both physical and intellectual contexts. The text describes how the boy confidently talks about his ability to open the bottle, despite his transformation. The illustration strengthens this idea by showing him performing the action visually, demonstrating his ability to overcome obstacles using skills that a mouse should not typically possess. The connection between the illustration and text communicates two key ideas: adaptation and practical intelligence. In the text, we learn that the boy uses both his intelligence and physical abilities to complete a task. The illustration shows this action visually, making the message clearer. Together, they teach the reader that intelligence is not just about knowledge, but also about adapting to and overcoming challenges, even when in the form of a mouse.

In this analysis of representational meaning, the text and illustration work together to convey the theme of intelligence. The text tells us about the character's ability to solve problems, while the illustration shows the physical execution of that intelligence. Their interaction strengthens the idea that practical intelligence and adaptation are essential when facing challenges.

2. Power

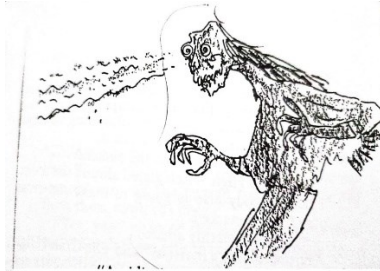
In *The Witches*, power is a central theme embodied by the Grand High Witch. Her power is portrayed as both supernatural and authoritarian. Here the example:

Text:

“A moment later, a stream of sparks that looked like tiny white-hot metal-flings came shooting out of the Grand High Witch's eyes and flew straight towards the one who had dared to speak. I saw the sparks striking against her and burrowing into her and she screamed a horrible

howling scream and a puff of smoke rose up around her. A smell of burning meat filled the room (Dahl, 1983 p. 75)".

Illustration:



The Grand High Witches
(Dahl, 1983 p. 75)

Analysis:

In the passage, the Grand High Witch's power is depicted through both textual and visual elements. The representational meaning in this scene focuses on how her supernatural power is portrayed, emphasizing her dominance and the fear she instills in others. The description of sparks flying from the Grand High Witch's eyes and her victim's reaction is a vivid visual representation of her power. The sparks are shown as "tiny white-hot metal-flings," a strong image that associates her power with something sharp and dangerous. This visual element creates a sense of her power being not only overwhelming but physically harmful, as the sparks strike the victim and burrow into her. The result is a "horrible howling scream" and the appearance of "a puff of smoke" around the victim, reinforcing the idea that the Grand High Witch's power is both destructive and terrifying.

The text reinforces the supernatural nature of the Grand High Witch's power. Words like "a stream of sparks" and "a puff of smoke" present her as a figure who can manipulate forces beyond the ordinary, reinforcing her role as the villain. The physical response of the victim, screaming and burning, further symbolizes the destructive nature of the power. The mention of "a smell of burning meat" enhances the sensory experience of the violence, showing that her power is not just magical but also harmful and corporeal.

Through the interaction between the text and the illustrations, the Grand High Witch's power is presented as an all-encompassing, terrifying force. The representational meaning conveyed here is that power, in the form of the Grand High Witch, is used to inflict pain and establish dominance over others. The contrast between the Witch's supernatural power and the victim's vulnerability is clear, and it highlights how power in the novel is depicted as oppressive and destructive. This analysis demonstrates how the text and illustration work together to convey the theme of power as it relates to the Grand High Witch, focusing on her ability to dominate and instill fear through supernatural means.

3. Resilience

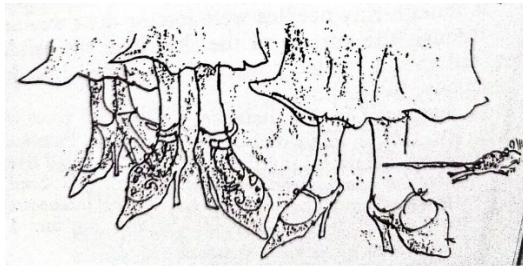
In *The Witches*, resilience is a central theme that is reflected in how the protagonist, the boy, faces difficulties. Despite the dangers and terror posed by witches, particularly the Grand High Witch, he does not give up. Even though he is turned into a mouse and is in constant danger, he continues to fight and outsmart the witches. The boy's resilience is shown in his determination to overcome obstacles and protect those he cares about, especially his grandmother. Here the example:

Text:

"At the moment, I realized that I was not a little boy any longer. I was a mouse. But I wasn't going to wait for that. I was off across the platform like a

streak of lighting! I was astonished at my own speed! I leapt over witches' feet right and left and in no time at all I was down the steps and on to the floor of the Ballroom itself and skittering off among the rows of chairs. What I especially liked was the fact that I made no sound at all as I ran. It is not a bad thing after all, I thought myself, to be tiny as well as speedy when there is a bunch of dangerous females after females after your blood" (Dahl, 1983 p. 116-117).

Illustration:



The boy turns into a mouse
(Dahl, 1983 p. 116)

Analysis:

In the illustration, the mouse is shown running between the witches' feet, emphasizing his small size and speed. The visual strengthens the idea that he is using these qualities to avoid danger. The text shows how the boy does not give up after turning into a mouse. Even though the situation is scary and full of danger, he escapes with agility and intelligence. This highlights the theme of resilience.

The illustration supports this by showing how the mouse is fast and nimble, running between the witches' feet. The image highlights his resilience, as he uses his small size and speed to survive. The text describes how the boy runs and avoids danger, while the illustration visually shows this moment, focusing on the witches' feet and the mouse running quickly. The text and illustration work together to emphasize the theme of resilience.

The visual of the mouse running quickly and silently communicates resilience clearly and dramatically, supporting the text, which describes the boy's determination to survive despite the challenging situation. Overall, the text and illustration complement each other. The illustration provides a deep visual understanding and supports the text by showing how the character survives through resilience and speed in the face of danger.

The role of illustrations in shaping reader's interpretation of the narrative in *Matilda*

In children's literature, illustrations are crucial in complementing and enhancing the narrative, influencing how readers perceive and interpret the story. In *Matilda* by Roald Dahl, Quentin Blake's illustrations go beyond decoration, deepening the reader's understanding of characters, emotions, and key themes. This section explores how the illustrations in *Matilda* interact with the text to shape the reader's interpretation. By examining visual cues, we can uncover how these images guide perception and meaning. Multimodal theory, particularly interactional meaning, is applied to analyze how illustrations engage readers, such as through characters facing the reader or facial expressions that establish an emotional connection.

Text:

"The boy was slowing down now. There was no doubt about that. But kept pushing the stuff into his mouth with the dogged perseverance of a long-distance runner who has sighted the finishing line and knows he must keep going. As the very last mouthful disappeared, a tremendous cheer rose up from the audience and children were leaping on their chairs and yelling and

clapping and shouting “well done, Brucie! Good for you, Brucie! You’ve won a gold medal, Brucie!” (Dahl, 1988 p. 125).

Illustration:



The student’s celebration for Bruce Bogtrotter’s cake challenge
(Dahl, 1988 p. 125)

Analysis:

The interaction between Bruce and the children watching his challenge shows emotional involvement and social support. The children around Bruce demonstrate solidarity and appreciation for his effort. They do not just watch but actively participate in the celebration through cheering and clapping. The text describes how the students interact with Bruce in a motivating and supportive way. For example, phrases like “well done, Brucie!” emphasize the supportive and enthusiastic interaction. The children cheering and clapping show strong group participation, highlighting the importance of social interaction in creating a positive emotional experience for Bruce.

The phrases “Good for you, Brucie!” and “You’ve won a gold medal, Brucie!” show how these words function as forms of social recognition. Here, verbal interaction aims to appreciate Bruce’s effort and success. This shows that verbal interaction serves the purpose of acknowledging his achievement in the challenge. An illustration showing the students jumping on their chairs and cheering helps clarify their emotional involvement in this interaction. Then, the students facing toward the readers. Through the picture, readers can better feel how this social support enriches Bruce’s experience. The social interaction in the text is more vivid through this visual representation, showing how the group supports the individual in a challenging moment. In this analysis, interactional meaning shows how verbal and non-verbal interactions reveal a strong and dynamic social relationship between Bruce and his peers. The illustration provides richer emotional content, reinforcing the feelings of social support and participation reflected in the text. Together, the text and illustration create a deeper social interaction experience, demonstrating the importance of social involvement in shaping the character’s experiences in this narrative.

The role of illustrations in shaping reader’s interpretation of the narrative in *The Witches*

In children’s literature, illustrations enhance the reader’s understanding of the story, beyond being decorative. In *The Witches* by Roald Dahl, Quentin Blake’s illustrations are essential in shaping the reader’s perception of characters, emotions, and key themes. This section explores how the illustrations interact with the text to influence interpretation, highlighting themes of power, fear, and resilience through visual cues like posture, facial expressions, and character interactions. Multimodal theory, especially interactional meaning, is used to analyze how illustrations build an emotional connection by engaging the reader, conveying internal states through character expressions and direct interaction.

Text:

“Kindly examine the picture opposite. Which lady is the witch? That is a difficult question, but it is one that every child must try to answer (Dahl, 1983 p. 10)”.

Illustration:



Two women
(Dahl, 1983 p. 11)

Analysis:

In this example from *The Witches*, the text and illustration interact in a way that invites the reader to engage actively with the narrative. The question "Which lady is the witch?" directly engages the reader, prompting them to analyze the image and decide based on the visual clues provided. This creates an interaction between the reader and the illustration, as they are encouraged to scrutinize the image closely and consider the subtle differences between the two women. The use of the phrase "Kindly examine the picture opposite" and the question "Which lady is the witch?" engages the reader directly. The reader is not merely a passive observer but is invited to participate in the narrative by identifying the witch based on their own observations. This creates a sense of involvement and responsibility in the reading experience.

The illustration shows two women facing the reader, and the visual focus is on their faces. This posture and the facial expressions are key to how the interactional meaning is conveyed. Although the two women appear physically similar, their expressions, which are likely subtle but distinct, contribute to the tension between the ordinary and the sinister. The facial expression of the witch might evoke a sense of discomfort or unease, creating an emotional interaction between the image and the reader.

The illustration's ambiguity—showing two identical figures yet subtly hinting at one being a witch—elicits curiosity. The reader is compelled to decide, and the engagement goes beyond just looking at the image; it also involves interpreting it in the context of the text. This invites the reader to connect emotionally, building suspense as they ponder which woman is the witch.

By having both women face the reader, the illustration creates a more personal connection. The reader is not merely observing the scene from a distance but is invited into the decision-making process. This interaction draws them into the mystery of the story and the theme of deception. In summary, the illustration's interaction with the text shapes the reader's experience, making them an active participant in the story. Through facial expressions, posture, and direct engagement, the image amplifies the reader's emotional and intellectual involvement, helping to highlight the mystery and tension in the narrative.

The interaction between text and illustration in enhancing storytelling and emphasizing key themes in Matilda

This section examines how the interaction between text and illustrations enhances the narrative in *Matilda* and emphasizes key themes like intelligence, power, and resilience. The combination of words and images creates a richer narrative experience, with illustrations actively reinforcing these themes. By analyzing specific examples, this section explores how visual elements blend with the text to deepen the reader's understanding of the story's central messages. Multimodal theory is used to analyze how the interaction strengthens the narrative, while compositional theory is applied to explore how visual elements such as layout and focus create balance and unity between text and illustrations.

Text:

“For some reason everyone now looked at the Trunchbull. The woman's face had turned white as snow and her mouth was opening and shutting like a halibut out of water and giving out a series of strangled gasps. The chalk stopped writing. It hovered for few moments then suddenly it dropped to the floor with a tinkle and broke in two. Wilfred who had managed to resume his seat in the front row screamed miss Trunchbull has fallen down. Miss Trunchbull is on the floor” (Dahl, 1988 216-217).

Illustrations:



The chalk writing by itself
(Dahl, 1988 p. 216-217)



Miss Trunchbull was shocked
(Dahl, 1988 p. 216)



The chalk is falling and broke into two
(Dahl, 1988 p. 217)



Miss Trunchbull fainted
(Dahl, 1988 p. 218)

Analysis:

In this illustration, Miss Trunchbull is shown shocked and fainting, while the chalk that was writing on the board suddenly falls. The position of Miss Trunchbull's body, which is shocked and unstable, shows her loss of control and power. The chalk moving on its own represents a force that she cannot control. The illustration seems to emphasize the falling chalk, suggesting that it is an important element in the scene. The chalk moving on its own indicates the presence of something stronger (Matilda's powers) that is affecting the situation.

Miss Trunchbull's shocked face and open mouth show her inability to deal with something she cannot control. This suggests an imbalance between her physical power and the intelligence shown by Matilda. The text describes the moment when the chalk falls and Miss Trunchbull is shocked. Words like "The woman's face had turned white as snow" and "her mouth was opening and shutting like a halibut" describe her strong physical reaction. These are reinforced by the illustration that shows Miss Trunchbull's shocked face and the falling chalk, emphasizing that this character has lost control.

The text also shows how Miss Trunchbull's physical strength fades quickly ("The chalk stopped writing... and broke in two"). The visual of the chalk moving on its own gives the impression that a greater force (Matilda's intelligence) has replaced her physical power. The combination of text and image clarifies the contrast between physical strength and intelligence, showing how intelligence can overcome existing power. Overall, this compositional analysis shows how the combination of text and illustration creates a deeper meaning about the themes of power, intelligence, and resilience in *Matilda*.

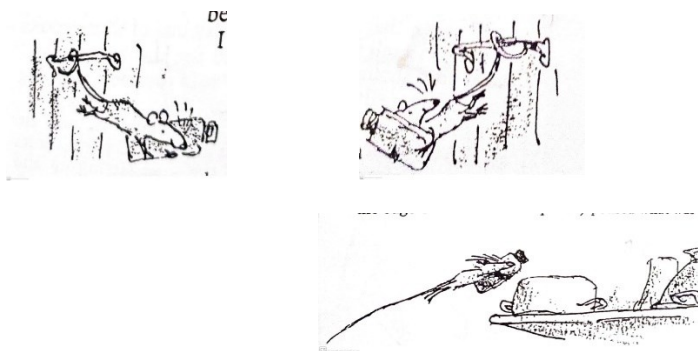
The interaction between text and illustration in enhancing storytelling and emphasizing key themes in The Witches

This section examines how the interaction between text and illustrations enhances the narrative in *The Witches* and emphasizes key themes such as power and resilience. The combination of words and images offers a richer storytelling experience, where illustrations actively reinforce these themes. By analyzing specific examples, this section explores how visual elements integrate with the text to deepen the reader's understanding of the central messages. Multimodal theory is used to analyze how the interaction between text and illustrations strengthens the narrative, while compositional meaning theory is applied to examine how visual elements like layout and focus create balance and unity between text and illustrations.

Text:

"A great idea came to me! Once again, I jumped up and hooked my tail around the handle of the garbage-bin. Then, hanging upside down, I began to swing. Higher and higher I swung. I was remembering the trapeze artist in the circus I had seen last Easter and the way he had got the trapeze swinging higher and higher and higher and had then let go and gone flying through the air. So just at the right moment, at the top of my swing, I let go with my tail and went soaring clear across the kitchen and made a perfect landing in the middle shelf" (Dahl, 1983 p. 166).

Illustrations:



In the kitchen
(Dahl, 1983 p. 166-167)

Analysis:

The interaction between text and illustration in the scene where the boy swings with his tail in *The Witches* contributes to the enhancement of the narrative, reinforcing the theme of resilience. According to the compositional theory, the layout and focus of the illustration play a significant role in guiding the reader's interpretation of the action. In this case, the illustration of the boy swinging and landing on the middle shelf emphasizes the dynamic movement, which is crucial to understanding the boy's resourcefulness and determination to succeed despite his challenging situation.

The focus on the boy's tail gripping the garbage bin handle highlights his ingenuity, while the wide angle of the illustration captures the full motion of his swing, conveying a sense of freedom and courage. This visual framing strengthens the text's message that the boy is actively taking control of his circumstances, symbolizing his resilience. The balance between text and illustration in this scene supports the theme of resilience by showing the boy's ability to adapt to his new form and use his unique abilities to his advantage. The visual representation of this action, combined with the text's description of the boy's clever thinking, underscores his intelligence and determination.

This interaction between text and illustration works together to deepen the reader's understanding of the boy's growth and emphasizes his resilience in overcoming challenges. The way the layout is designed directs attention to the key elements of the scene, creating unity between the two modes and enhancing the narrative's focus on resilience.

Conclusions

This research explores how the interaction between text and illustrations in *Matilda* and *The Witches* contributes to the development of key themes like intelligence, resilience, and power, while also shaping character development. In *Matilda*, illustrations highlight her intelligence and resilience, particularly in scenes showing her reading and standing up to her oppressive parents. In *The Witches*, illustrations amplify the theme of fear through grotesque depictions of witches, while also showcasing the bravery and resilience of the protagonists. Both novels use illustrations to emphasize power dynamics, with *Matilda* using her intelligence and telekinetic abilities, and the witches exerting control over others.

The illustrations also enrich character development, visually representing traits like confidence and resourcefulness. In *Matilda*, her growth from a neglected child to a confident figure is shown, while in *The Witches*, the boy and his grandmother's determination is emphasized through visual cues. Illustrations engage readers emotionally by using techniques like characters facing directly toward them, creating a stronger connection and enhancing themes such as resilience in *Matilda* and fear in *The Witches*. This study highlights how illustrations complement the text, making themes more impactful and deepening reader engagement.

The findings align with previous research, expanding on how text and illustrations together construct narrative meaning. The study suggests that examining the interaction between text and illustrations is crucial for understanding children's literature and offers valuable insights for education and future research. Limitations include the study's focus on just two novels and specific themes, and the lack of a detailed exploration of certain visual elements like colour symbolism. Further research could address these gaps, including reader-based analysis and deeper visual exploration.

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