



Introduction

Children's literature has attracted increased academic attention in recent years and rightly so, because many avid readers acquired the habit of reading in childhood. It is therefore worthwhile examining the literature which makes so many of us fall in love with books, teaches us about the world and our interactions with it and gives us stories which continue to charm us even into adulthood. Stories are the most important aspect regarding literature, obviously, but today we live in a golden age of publishing, where beautifully illustrated books are available to every child and it is worth examining how these visuals may interact with texts to engage their readers. Of course, ideas of what children's literature is have changed over time. One constant has been the purpose of teaching life lessons inherent in most books written for children and it is natural that teachers of foreign languages should wish to make use of them in a pedagogical context.

This paper has three key intentions: to align to the worldwide, general interest in the children's literature; secondly, to show the beauty and usefulness of its visual representation; thirdly, to discuss the use of children's texts in teaching English as a foreign

language, its practicalities and impact on young students in the context of Romanian schools, private or public.

In analyzing and discussing the literature for children, some major critics in the field have been consulted. I am deeply indebted to the seminal works of Jack Zipes, Peter Hunt, Perry Nodleman, Karin Lesnik Oberstein, Peter Hollindale, Maria Nikolaeva, Zohar Shavit, Margaret Meek, Arthur N. Applebee among others who have been researched for the purpose of this paper which heavily relies on their illuminating influence.

The first important step in the approach of this paper's topic was to research the history of children's literature, its landmarks and after that, its genres. This is covered in chapters one and three from the second part of the paper. From this I attempted to cover the academic perspective on children's literature, its timid beginnings as it struggled to become a serious academic discipline in its own right and subsequent slow development up to the plethora of remarkable texts, anthologies and companions of today. This is to be found in chapter two of the second part, where I also examine in passing the world of fairy-tales, children's verses and last but not least, some important children's authors.

Since one topic of this paper is the visual imagery of children's books, a special chapter (chapter one of the third part) is dedicated to illustrations and picture books, comprising an extensive discussion on selecting such books for teaching English to young learners and some observations on their practical use

in the classroom. Children love visuals and so these can be a valuable tool to develop a love of learning for our young learners, as shown in part one.

With these in mind, the connection between children's literature with its illustrations and the vast domain of teaching foreign languages had to be made. This has been managed in chapter one, third part, by discussing the theories of second language acquisition and their applicability in teaching English to young learners. This is particularly relevant for this paper as more and more educators become convinced of the value of sending their children to learn English and wish to know that the resources and methods used are effective.

This paper has in view three important American authors for children: Frank Baum, E.B. White and Dr. Seuss. Their contribution to the field of children's literature, their most representative works and literary value are discussed extensively, particularly in chapters eight, nine and ten of the second part. They are also part of the backbone of discussions in the practical part of this work. Certain books of these authors or excerpts from their writing were selected and used to teach English to young learners and the next part (more precisely, the appendix) makes the connection between the two. Here, I go into detail the practical teaching ideas used in real situations, along with minutes of several lessons. I also use the work of young learners so that some of the possible outcomes of these lessons may be illustrated. Last, but not least, the research methods used and the way they were put into practice are presented, along