

measurement, the magic lantern, plants and plant names, animal species, Gaganendranath Tagore's painting styles, variations between versions of the two stories, orthographical conventions, as well as other issues relevant to the task of translation. However, it is regrettable that *Fantasy Fictions* does not come with an index, which would be especially helpful in a book of this size and great level of detail.

Nevertheless, this critical edition of two fables by Abanindranath Tagore and Gaganendranath Tagore offers something far beyond a skilful and pleasing translation of two landmark texts of Bengali children's literature: it is a rich repository of insights into numerous facets of Indian literature, history, culture, politics, folklore, mythology, and much else besides, and therefore represents a valuable addition to the field of annotated works of children's literature that will be helpful to anyone interested in these two fascinating stories and their broader context.

Storytelling with Young Foreign Language Learners of English

Licia Masoni. 2019. *Tale, Performance, and Culture in EFL Storytelling with Young Learners*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 184 pp. ISBN: 978-1-5275-3840-5.

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Teaching English as a foreign language is in many ways different from what it was before the current time of accelerated globalisation. The most prominent difference can be found in the minds of young learners. The amount of input they receive today through online content, video games, or television shows increases as technological accessibility continues to grow. New content is created every day, by either native or non-native speakers of English, and a great portion of it is targeted at young children. This increase in exposure of young learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) to the target language can help build and improve their language skills at a very early age. However, there is no reason for educators to rely only on such sources in their efforts to provide authentic input. Storytelling can be a powerful source of not only linguistic but also cultural concepts and ideas learners can identify with, which is evident from the fact that it is so often used to both teach the native language (L1) and socialise children.

The key questions addressed in Licia Masoni's *Tale, Performance, and Culture in EFL Storytelling with Young Learners* are raised in the "Introduction". The book is specifically targeted at educators working with EFL learners, as such learners do not necessarily receive great amounts of exposure to English outside school, and their teachers are often non-native speakers. Storytelling is often overlooked in the EFL classroom, whether because of the teachers' perceived lack of time, fear of low efficiency, or children's alleged incapability to process stories in a foreign language at early stages of learning. The author also suggests that storytelling can, in fact, lose its power if it is used as a 'tool' to merely tick boxes and achieve prescribed learning outcomes. She aims to point out similarities between the "ideal EFL picturebook and traditional narrative texts" (5), as well as to investigate the role of

performance in the context of storytelling. The “Introduction” closes with the question of stories as facilitators of intercultural competence and their potential to foster intercultural understanding.

The book contains eight chapters, followed by the author’s conclusion. Each chapter tackles a specific element important for understanding how storytelling developed in its origins and how it can help EFL learners acquire linguistic, social, intercultural, and other competences. At the end of the book, readers can find a bibliographical list with all the referenced picturebooks appropriate for use in the EFL classroom, along with an index of particular terms important for this context.

In chapter 1 (“Storytelling and Traditional Narrative”), the essential purpose of traditional narratives is explained in terms of not only their didactic features, but also their power to entertain and heal – the author states that storytelling was one of the first forms of group therapy. Stories were not told randomly; it was a matter of knowing the listener and adapting content and performance to their individual needs at that particular point in their development. The capacity for strong identification with the story’s characters opens new doors for meaning construction, language acquisition, and emotional growth. Masoni provides a list of oral narrative genres (for some of which she offers definitions), along with a categorisation of tale types and motifs in folktales. She describes themes and structures used to convey meaning in traditional oral narratives, with a focus on repetition, rhythm, intonation, and the tellers’ astonishing ability to evoke strong visualisations that long remained in their listeners’ minds.

The content of chapter 2 (“Traditional Oral Narrative for Children”) narrows down the topic of traditional oral narratives to those which were generally told to young children. In Western culture these were, most commonly, animal tales and tales of fortune and cleverness, chosen for their suitability to the needs of children. The author provides examples of formula tales, animal tales, tales of magic, and tales of the stupid ogre (both English and non-English variants), stressing their therapeutic effect on the emotional processes a child goes through, as well as the long-term (sometimes lifelong) relationship between children and stories. She also suggests that language acquisition was not a by-product of storytelling, but rather one of its goals – tellers often showed remarkable awareness of the richness of language used to tell these stories. They consciously used repetition, tongue twisters, or alliterate sounds to encourage language acquisition.

Chapter 3 (“The Text: Picturebooks for EFL Learning”) is especially valuable for language teachers, as the author suggests a number of picturebooks for EFL classroom use. She emphasises the qualities of picturebooks that are similar to traditional oral narratives, and which can be told (performed) in a similar way. The stories in these picturebooks are often rhythmic, rich in vocabulary, playful with words, and predictable in structure. Nevertheless, selecting the right picturebook is only one half of successful storytelling in the classroom – the other half is the teacher’s performance. The significance of nonverbal cues is stressed multiple times, especially in terms of gestures and pictures as visual support for the story. In trying to answer the question of what makes an ideal text for storytelling in an EFL class, the author mentions the length of the verbal text, the quality of the illustrations, linear plots, and the familiarity of the story.

The focus shifts to performance in chapter 4 (“The Context: Performance”), where an explanation is provided as to why simply reading a story is not enough for language acquisition in early EFL learning. The author suggests that the best way to understand this is to imagine oneself in a situation of listening to a story in an unfamiliar language, and to think about the support one would wish to have in order to make the input comprehensible. Gestures, facial expressions, and vocal (tonal) changes naturally emerge as possible solutions. Not only that – young learners tend to mirror their teachers when they perform in an engaging, sometimes exaggerated way, so it is important for the gestures to be unambiguous. Because of this, it is crucial that the teacher appreciate the story and find it interesting. In this way, they can not only teach but inspire.

One of the most important aspects of storytelling is the affective one, presented in chapter 5 (“Emotions and EFL Storytelling”). It highlights the role of facilitating positive emotions and creating an anxiety-free environment for EFL learning. The author suggests that stories can trigger various emotions in listeners, often because of their identification with the characters, so it is important to achieve a sense of community and safety in the classroom. Storytelling can help teachers set an atmosphere of acceptance where individuality is respected, as it is an activity that does not require the evaluation of learners, nor does it force them to disregard their own learning pace or preferred learning style.

As suggested by the title, “EFL Storytelling and Language Acquisition”, chapter 6 offers an insight into various ways storytelling can enhance language acquisition in young EFL learners. Vocabulary learning naturally emerges as one of the most prominent aspects of language acquisition enhanced with the help of storytelling. Stories often contain a significant number of concrete words, which can be materialised in memorable gestures or pictures. These new words are almost always contextualised and authentic, which additionally enhances the listener’s memory. Young EFL learners can also practise their pronunciation, intonation, and sentence stress by simply mirroring the teacher’s performance.

Chapter 7 (“Stories and Culture”) addresses the topic of developing cultural competences in the EFL classroom. Masoni emphasises the cultural aspect of picturebooks in their authenticity, suggesting that they are, in fact, cultural representations. Stories in picturebooks grant young learners access to real cultures of different communities, allowing them an opportunity to be immersed into the worlds of their peers across the globe. It is also important to mention that tales sometimes merge with legends, bringing children culturally rich content in many different genres.

In the final chapter, “Stories and Intercultural Knowledge”, Masoni continues to highlight the endless possibilities of storytelling in terms of developing intercultural competences. Picturebooks written in English are far from representing only the culture of the English-speaking world. Many authors from all over the world have told their stories in English in an attempt to share their native culture in a language that readers from other parts of the world will understand. Cultural heritage from a great number of non-English cultures can be discovered in terms of folktales and legends, as well as everyday life events, conveyed through picturebooks.

Masoni concludes the book with the inspiring thought that “children’s ability to imagine and construct meaning in a foreign language will never cease to amaze us” (165). The authenticity of language used in picturebooks can serve as a rich source of contextualised

concepts, words, and phrases that EFL learners will one day be able to draw on in their real-life interaction with other speakers of English. What *Tale, Performance, and Culture in EFL Storytelling with Young Learners* shows is that powerful, engaging storytelling performances of teachers can deeply influence young EFL learners, and these opportunities should not be ignored. It is a rich source of practical suggestions for educators, often based on concrete stories or picturebooks. Its distinctive value lies in the fact that, even though the author focuses on EFL teaching and learning, her advice is as valuable to teachers of English as a second or even first language. Scholars might find a number of relevant insights as well, especially regarding traditional oral narratives and various types of children's tales. Licia Masoni's book achieves a balanced combination of theoretical concepts and practical advice and can thus be equally interesting to both teachers and researchers.

Duhovito i znalacki o humoru

Lovorka Zergollern-Miletić. 2021. *Humor, smijeh, misao, jezik*. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada. 169 str. ISBN 978-953-169-479-7.

Diana Zalar

U izdanju Hrvatske sveučilišne naklade izišla je 2021. godine vrlo osebujna knjiga Lovorke Zergollern-Miletić naslova *Humor, smijeh, misao, jezik*. Autorica se humorom kao temom znanstvenoga izučavanja ozbiljnije počela baviti još od pisanja magistarskoga rada *Crni humor u romanima Kurta Vonneguta i Josepha Hellera* (1990.), koji je dijelom i objavila u *Književnoj smotri*. Na poslijediplomskom studiju iz književnosti posebno ju je zaintrigirala činjenica koliko jezik i književnost mogu biti predmet zajedničkoga proučavanja. O nastanku ove knjige može se pročitati u predgovoru autorice, gdje posebno apostrofirala promjene u kontekstu u kojem se humor ostvarivao nekada i u kojem se ostvaruje danas, kao i promjene u samom izučavanju humora jer se danas njime bave znanstvenici različitih struka (psiholozi, antropolozi, lingvisti, teoretičari književnosti, filozofi). Ova knjiga, između ostaloga, argumentira kako je danas vrlo bogata znanstvena literatura o toj temi. Njome se opet intenzivnije počela baviti potaknuta temama dviju sekcija konferencije Međunarodnoga pragmalingvističkoga udruženja (IPRA) u Belfastu 2017. koje su bile posvećene humoru, a na kojoj je konferenciji i autorica održala izlaganje.

U prvom poglavlju naslovljenom „Uvod u proučavanje humora“ započinje analiza teorija i pristupa, najznačajnijih autora studija o problemu humora (Norman N. Holland, Sigmund Freud, Vladimir Propp, Stephen Leacock, Robert Escarpit, a od hrvatskih Ivan Marković, Dunja Fališevac, Milivoj Solar, Boris Senker i dr.), kao i problema temeljne terminologije – u međunarodnim okvirima. Drugo poglavlje naslovljeno je „Povijest proučavanja smijeha, smiješnog i humora“ gdje autorica pojašnjava u kojim su smjerovima tekle teorije o smiješnom i humoru, pa govori o teoriji superiornosti, agresivnosti ili neprijateljstva, teoriji opuštanja i teoriji inkongruencije/nesklada i njihovim predstavnicima. Ovomu pridružuje i teoriju igre, prisutnu u brojnim stručnim djelima, još od djela Tome Akvinskoga do današnjih dana. Nalazimo ovdje još važnih izučavatelja spomenute teme (Johna Morrealla, Henrika Bergsona, Katrin Froese, Simona Critchleya, Salvatorea Attarda