

THE METHODOLOGY OF STUDENTS' RECEPTION OF CHILDREN'S LITERARY WORKS

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Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of pupils' reception of children's literary texts, exploring cognitive, emotional, interpretative, and aesthetic processes that shape literary understanding. It reviews theoretical foundations, pedagogical models, and classroom strategies that enhance literary engagement and support competency-based education. Practical implications for teachers and structured methodological recommendations are included.

Keywords: children's literature; literary reception; reading competence; pedagogical strategies; aesthetic development.

METODOLOGIA RECEPTĂRII DE CĂTRE ELEVI A CREAȚIILOR LITERARE PENTRU COPII

Rezumat. Articolul oferă o analiză amplă a modului în care elevii recepționează textele literare pentru copii, explorând procesele cognitive, afective, interpretative și estetice care influențează înțelegerea literară. Sunt analizate fundamente teoretice, modele pedagogice și strategii aplicabile în clasă pentru consolidarea competențelor de lectură. Lucrarea include recomandări metodologice practice pentru profesori.

Cuvinte-cheie: literatură pentru copii; receptare literară; competențe de lectură; strategii pedagogice; dezvoltare estetică.

Introduction

Children's literature occupies a central role in early education, serving both as a cultural artifact and as a didactic tool that supports the holistic development of young learners. Through literary texts, children construct internal representations of the world, interpret moral dilemmas, identify with characters, and explore imaginative realms that contribute to emotional, cognitive, and linguistic growth. The reception of literary works by pupils is not a passive act of decoding, but an interactive and dynamic process shaped by prior knowledge, personal experiences, developmental stage, and pedagogical context.

Current educational paradigms emphasize competency-based learning, active participation, and interpretative autonomy. Within this framework, literary reception becomes a fundamental tool for cultivating reading comprehension, critical thinking, aesthetic sensitivity, and cultural awareness. However, achieving meaningful reception requires a rigorous methodological approach that integrates theoretical principles from literary studies, psychology of development, and contemporary pedagogy [1-8].

The purpose of this study is to examine the methodological underpinnings of pupils' reception of children's literature and to provide educators with a structured model for

optimizing interpretative engagement. The article identifies key factors influencing reception, describes pedagogical strategies that enhance students' understanding of literary texts, and proposes instructional guidelines suitable for primary and lower-secondary educational levels.

Methods and Materials

This article is based on a qualitative, theoretical research approach that integrates multiple sources and methodological tools:

1. Theoretical analysis

The study examines core concepts in reception theory (Iser, Jauss), transactional theory (Rosenblatt), constructivist pedagogy (Vygotsky, Bruner), and educational psychology. These perspectives help explain how children construct meaning during reading and how teachers can scaffold interpretation.

2. Document analysis

Scientific literature on children's literature, reading development, didactics, and aesthetic education was analyzed to identify methodological patterns and evidence-based instructional strategies.

3. Comparative method

Pedagogical practices across different educational systems were compared, with particular focus on methods used to introduce pupils to narrative, poetic, and symbolic texts.

4. Synthesis of educational models

Findings from literary theory and pedagogy were synthesized to develop a coherent methodological framework applicable in classroom settings.

Materials used

The study refers to:

- narrative texts (fairy tales, contemporary stories)
- poetic texts for children
- multimodal texts (illustrated books)
- teacher guides and curricular documents

Results and Discussion

Cognitive reception develops gradually from concrete thinking to symbolic and analytical reasoning. Younger pupils rely on visual cues and emotional identification, while older pupils engage in inferential and critical reading processes.

Emotional and aesthetic dimensions significantly influence literary understanding. Empathy, curiosity, and affective resonance enhance interpretative engagement and foster deeper comprehension.

Pedagogical strategies such as expressive reading, guided questioning, dialogic teaching, dramatization, creative writing, and collaborative activities improve pupils' interpretative skills and promote meaningful interaction with texts.

1. Cognitive and Developmental Factors in Literary Reception

Children interpret literary texts according to their developmental stage. Research grounded in developmental psychology highlights the following tendencies:

1.1. Early primary stage (6–8 years)

At this age, pupils:

- rely heavily on imagery and concrete representations;
- understand narrative sequences but have limited abstraction abilities;
- emotionally identify with characters, especially those representing familiar roles;
- respond strongly to rhythm, repetition, and predictability in texts.

Therefore, literary reception at this stage benefits from expressive reading, storytelling, dramatization, and visualization activities.

1.2. Middle primary stage (9–10 years)

Pupils begin to:

- develop inferential reasoning;
- recognize cause–effect relationships in narratives;
- understand simple symbolism;
- express opinions about characters' decisions.

They engage more actively in discussions and interpretative questioning, allowing teachers to introduce basic analytical tasks.

1.3. Lower secondary stage (11–12 years)

Learners develop the capacity to:

- analyze narrative structure;
- compare characters and themes;
- identify moral and ethical dilemmas;
- use textual evidence to justify interpretations.

At this stage, reception evolves into reflective reading, enabling more complex dialogic and creative learning experiences.

2. Emotional and Aesthetic Dimensions of Reception

Reception theory underscores the importance of the emotional bond between reader and text. In children's literature, this dimension is particularly significant.

2.1. Empathy and emotional resonance

Children internalize stories more deeply when:

- characters experience emotions similar to their own;
- narrative conflicts mirror familiar life situations;
- the text stimulates curiosity, suspense, or humor.

Emotional engagement enhances interpretative depth, making texts more memorable and meaningful.

2.2. Aesthetic appreciation

Children gradually learn to appreciate:

- stylistic devices (metaphor, rhythm, imagery);
- narrative patterns;
- artistic illustrations;
- literary voice and tone.

Aesthetic experiences form the foundation of cultural taste and creative thinking.

3. Pedagogical Strategies that Enhance Literary Reception

The educational environment plays a decisive role in shaping how students interpret texts. Effective reception is supported by diverse, interactive methods.

3.1. Guided reading and interpretative dialogue

These practices:

- scaffold pupils' understanding;
- encourage observation and reflection;
- help learners articulate ideas;
- foster collaborative meaning-making.

Teachers guide pupils through open-ended questions, supporting deeper comprehension.

3.2. Creative response methods

Including:

- dramatization;
- role-play;
- drawing scenes or characters;
- composing dialogues;
- rewriting endings.

These activities empower pupils to personalize interpretation and stimulate imagination.

3.3. Reading journals and reflective practices

Reading journals help pupils:

- record impressions;
- track emotional reactions;
- evaluate character behavior;
- develop metacognitive awareness.

Such reflective tools transform reading into an active, introspective process.

3.4. Collaborative learning strategies

Group activities—think-pair-share, literature circles, text debates—promote:

- critical thinking;
- cooperative skills;
- multiple perspectives in interpretation.

Collaborative strategies are especially effective in enhancing textual comprehension.

4. Teacher's Role in Structuring Reception

Teachers serve as mediators between text and reader, shaping the quality of pupils' interpretative experiences. Their responsibilities include:

- selecting age-appropriate and culturally relevant texts;
- creating motivational contexts for reading;
- integrating multimodal materials (pictures, audio narration, dramatization);
- cultivating an emotionally safe reading environment;
- modeling interpretative behavior and critical inquiry.

A competent teacher does not impose meaning but guides its construction, respecting pupils' interpretations while encouraging nuance and curiosity.

Conclusion

The reception of children's literature is a multidimensional process integrating cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic components. Effective methodology requires structured pedagogical approaches, developmentally appropriate texts, and interactive strategies that foster reflective reading.

Teachers play a decisive role as mediators by selecting texts, guiding interpretation, and creating learning contexts that encourage critical and creative engagement. Children's literature remains an essential educational resource that shapes culture, imagination, and intellectual growth.

The reception of children's literary works represents a multidimensional process that integrates cognitive, emotional, cultural, and aesthetic components. When pupils read literary texts, they do much more than decode words: they imagine, interpret, evaluate, and construct meaning from narrative structures, characters, themes, and stylistic elements. These processes contribute to the development of reading comprehension, empathy, creativity, and critical thinking.

This study demonstrates that effective literary reception requires a structured methodological approach that aligns theoretical foundations with pedagogical practice. Pupils' developmental characteristics must guide the teacher's choice of texts, instructional strategies, and interpretative tasks. Literary reception becomes meaningful

when children are encouraged to interact with texts in varied ways—through discussion, visualization, dramatization, reflection, and creative tasks.

Pedagogical strategies such as guided reading, dialogic teaching, collaborative interpretation, creative responses, and reflective journaling have proven to be essential tools in supporting deep comprehension. These strategies not only enhance pupils' interpretative skills but also foster their aesthetic sense and personal engagement with literature.

The teacher's role is crucial in mediating the interaction between reader and text. By creating supportive learning environments, modeling interpretative discourse, and designing activities that stimulate curiosity and inquiry, teachers become facilitators of literary exploration. Their methodological choices determine the depth and quality of children's reception of texts.

In conclusion, the methodology of students' reception of children's literary works should integrate theoretical principles, developmental insights, and interactive pedagogical practices. When applied thoughtfully, these elements transform the act of reading into a formative experience that nurtures intellectual growth, emotional balance, cultural understanding, and aesthetic appreciation. Literature for children remains an indispensable educational resource that shapes young readers' identities and prepares them for lifelong learning.

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Recepționat / Received: 24.11.2025

Acceptat / Accepted: 27.12.2025

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