

DIDACTIC DIMENSIONS OF THE RECEPTION OF CHILDREN'S LITERARY WORKS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract. The reception of children's literary works represents a fundamental component of literary education in primary education, contributing to the development of reading competence, critical thinking, creativity, and pupils' aesthetic sensitivity. In the context of competency-based education, the use of active-participatory strategies facilitates pupils' active involvement in the process of interpreting and understanding literary texts. This article highlights the role of active-participatory strategies in the reception of children's literary works, analyzing the ways in which these approaches stimulate reflection, dialogue, the expression of personal opinions, and the construction of literary meaning. Furthermore, the paper presents practical examples of implementing these strategies in primary education and argues for their contribution to the development of literary reception competencies and the formation of active, reflective readers.

Keywords: literary reception, children's literary works, active-participatory strategies, primary education, literary reception competencies, literary education.

DIMENSIUNI DIDACTICE ALE RECEPTĂRII CREAȚIILOR LITERARE PENTRU COPII ÎN ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL PRIMAR

Rezumat. Receptarea creațiilor literare pentru copii reprezintă o componentă esențială a educației literare în învățământul primar, contribuind la dezvoltarea competențelor de lectură, a gândirii critice, a creativității și a sensibilității estetice a elevilor. În contextul actual al educației centrate pe formarea competențelor, utilizarea strategiilor activ-participative facilitează implicarea activă a elevilor în procesul de interpretare și valorificare a textului literar. Articolul evidențiază rolul principalelor strategii activ-participative în receptarea creațiilor literare pentru copii, analizând modalitățile prin care acestea stimulează reflecția, dialogul, exprimarea opiniilor și construirea semnificațiilor textului literar. Totodată, sunt prezentate exemple de aplicare a acestor strategii în învățământul primar și este argumentată contribuția lor la dezvoltarea competențelor de receptare literară și la formarea cititorului activ și reflexiv.

Cuvinte-cheie: receptare literară, creații literare pentru copii, strategii activ-participative, învățământ primar, competențe de receptare, educație literară.

Introduction

In the contemporary context of competency-based education, the reception of children's literary works represents a complex process that goes beyond the mere understanding of a text's content and involves pupils' active engagement in constructing meaning, interpreting the artistic message, and expressing their own aesthetic responses. In primary education, children's literature serves as an essential means of developing reading competence, critical thinking, imagination, creativity, and aesthetic sensitivity, while also contributing to the overall development of pupils' personalities.

The process of literary reception is directly influenced by the teaching strategies employed by the teacher. In this regard, active-participatory strategies enable pupils to become active participants in the learning process by encouraging dialogue, reflection, collaboration, and personal interpretation of literary texts. These strategies transform reading into an interactive process in which pupils not only receive information but also analyse, interpret, and relate it to their own experiences and values.

From the perspective of reader-response theory, literary meaning is not treated as a fixed element transmitted unchanged from text to pupil. Iser emphasises the active role of the reader in the process through which a literary text produces an aesthetic response [4], while Rosenblatt conceptualises reading as a transaction between reader and text [5]. Jauss places reception within the reader's horizon of expectations and shows that literary understanding develops in relation to prior experience and changing interpretive contexts [6]. In educational practice, this orientation is complemented by Chambers's emphasis on children's talk about books and on discussion as a means of articulating and developing responses to reading [7]. These perspectives support an approach to literary education in which pupils are encouraged to formulate interpretations, compare viewpoints, and justify their responses to the text.

Based on these considerations, the present paper aims to highlight the role of active-participatory strategies in the reception of children's literary works in primary education by examining the main ways in which these strategies can be implemented in teaching practice and their contribution to the development of literary reception competencies.

Methodological Foundations of Active-Participatory Strategies in the Reception of Children's Literary Works

A teaching method may be understood as a structured way of organising the activity of the teacher and the learner in order to achieve instructional and educational objectives [1]. From a methodological perspective, teaching methods provide pathways through which learning activities are organised and educational aims are pursued [2].

Teaching methodology encompasses the methods used in teaching and learning, while a teaching strategy involves their purposeful combination with appropriate instructional resources in relation to the objectives of the educational process [1].

Teaching methods fulfil several interrelated functions that concern both the content of instruction and the organisation of the educational process. Gheorghe Dumitriu and Constanța Dumitriu distinguish a cognitive function, through which learning is organised and guided, and an instrumental or operational function, through which the method mediates the relationship between the learner and the subject matter, as well as between intended objectives and expected outcomes. They also identify a normative function, concerned with selecting effective ways of achieving educational results, and a

motivational function, which stimulates pupils' curiosity and activates their intellectual potential.

The formative-educational function completes this perspective by linking the acquisition of knowledge and skills with the development of cognitive and psychomotor processes and with the shaping of attitudes, opinions, beliefs, emotions, and moral values [1]. These functions should not be understood as rigid or isolated categories. Ion Cerghit considers such classifications relative and argues that they remain open to further exploration within modern pedagogy [2], an observation that is particularly relevant when methods are adapted to the concrete needs of pupils and to the objectives of literary education.

A broader perspective on active teaching methods is offered by Maria E. Dulamă, who systematises active methods according to the type of intellectual and collaborative activity they encourage [3]. Some techniques are intended to activate pupils' prior knowledge and experience, as in brainstorming, Think–Pair–Share, simultaneous round table, circle discussion, free writing, the chain of ideas, prediction using given terms, and categorisation. Others support meaning-making through individual study and writing, including author questioning, reciprocal questioning, study guides, INSERT (Interactive Noting System for Effective Reading and Thinking), R.A.F.T., study worksheets, outline planning, and theses.

Work with the textbook also belongs to this methodological area because it can combine and adapt several methods according to the topic and to instructional, educational, and formative objectives [3]. Its effective use presupposes that pupils gradually acquire reading techniques and learn to prepare and use reading records, such as summary sheets, reading logs, excerpts, and notes. These resources can subsequently support summaries, outlines, reports, and essays, while supplementary materials such as text collections, exercise books, dictionaries, and specialised journals broaden the reading experience. From this perspective, the modern textbook can function as a guide that supports understanding, interpretation, and the expression of personal opinions through varied learning tools [3].

Meaning-making can also be developed through discussion and cooperation. Read–Summarise in Pairs, Summarise–Work in Pairs–Share, the double-entry journal, reciprocal teaching, the three-step interview, group interview, Jigsaw techniques, rotational review, the Cube method, image analysis, guided discussion, and multiprocess questioning create contexts in which pupils compare interpretations and negotiate meaning [3]. Argumentation and debate extend this process through argument cards, T-charts, arguments and counterarguments, constructive or academic controversy, the values line, discussion webs, and debate formats such as the Karl Popper model [3].

Inquiry and problem solving add another dimension to active learning through mini-cases, case studies, group investigation, experiments, reports, interviews, projects, and surveys [3]. At the same time, graphic organisers—comparative tables, Venn diagrams, double bubbles, the sunburst diagram, quadrants, clustering or mind mapping, pictorial maps, posters, and other visual structures—help pupils organise information and make relationships between ideas visible [3]. In literary education, the value of these categories lies not in using as many techniques as possible, but in selecting those that genuinely help pupils move from initial comprehension towards interpretation and personal response.

The expository method involves the oral presentation of new knowledge by the teacher. However, this method can also be transformed into an active teaching approach. In such cases, pupils' activity can be guided progressively through the teacher's discourse and organised around a sequence of short learning tasks. The process may follow an inductive progression in which pupils gradually formulate partial or final conclusions. Pupils gradually reach partial or final conclusions under the continuous guidance of the teacher. Whenever they are unable to formulate these conclusions independently, the teacher provides the general ideas or principles.

To transform exposition into an active teaching method, several conditions must be met:

For exposition to acquire an active character, it should not remain a one-way transmission of information. The teacher can introduce contradictions inherent in the topic, structure the presentation as a dialogue rather than a monologue, and use rhetorical questions or appeals that invite pupils to anticipate, compare, and formulate conclusions. Stylistic features associated with journalistic discourse may also increase the dynamism of the presentation and sustain pupils' attention.

Storytelling involves the oral narrative or descriptive presentation of facts and events and can be used to introduce pupils to contexts that are distant in time or space [1]. This method can be applied during the introductory lesson devoted to the study of the works of the Romanian writer Ion Creangă. The teacher may spend approximately three minutes presenting aspects of the author's life using information from a biographical profile. The purpose of storytelling is to capture pupils' attention and arouse their interest before initiating a discussion on the relationship between the author's life and the destiny of the literary character.

The school lecture is recommended primarily for upper secondary education and only in particular situations. It may be useful when the teacher offers an overview of a literary period, explains the characteristics of a literary movement, introduces the biography of a representative author, or presents an extensive literary work with carefully selected quotations. Even in these contexts, the lecture becomes more productive when pupils are

invited to formulate questions, identify connections, and relate the information received to the literary text.

A lecture-debate represents another variation of the lecture method, combining the presentation of instructional content with a subsequent structured discussion or debate [1]. From a contemporary pedagogical perspective, the school lecture should adopt a problem-based approach that encourages critical thinking and active learner participation.

Reflection techniques include the cinquain, reflective writing exercises, the five-minute essay, the ten-minute essay, argumentative essays (pro and con), foresight techniques, coloured cards, summarising activities, classified advertisements, the photolanguage technique, riddles, and gallery walks [1].

Game-based strategies include role-playing, puzzles, divided squares, team games and tournaments, statement tournaments, mystery journeys, famous places, and comic strips [1].

Another classification of teaching methods, based on their role and function within a lesson, identifies the following categories:

Ice-breaking and group familiarisation methods

The Coat of Arms Technique

Each pupil receives a blank sheet of paper, coloured pencils, and pens. The teacher draws the outline of a coat of arms on the sheet, and pupils illustrate symbols representing their temperament, literary preferences, and personal aspirations, signing their work in one corner. Each pupil then presents the coat of arms, which is displayed on a classroom board to facilitate group familiarisation. In well-established groups, pupils may create a coat of arms for one another before forming random pairs. This activity allows comparison between self-perception and the perceptions of peers.

The Petals Technique

The teacher prepares a flower made of coloured paper, writing the group's name in its centre. Each pupil receives a paper petal on which they write their name, favourite author, and a word or drawing that best represents them.



Figure 1. The Petals Technique

The teacher assembles the petals to create the class flower, which remains displayed throughout the teaching activity. When coloured paper is unavailable, the flower may simply be drawn on the board or on a large sheet of paper, with pupils writing their responses directly on the petals.

The Fishbowl Technique

Pupils arrange themselves in the shape of a rectangle, symbolically representing a fishbowl. Each pupil takes turns becoming the "fish" by moving to the centre of the fishbowl and responding quickly to a limited number of questions. This technique may also be used during assessment activities, where the teacher acts primarily as an observer who records the pupils' responses.

Bingo

Pupils receive a bingo grid and are asked to identify classmates who meet specific criteria, such as having recently read or purchased a book, attended a theatre performance, or responded to a statement related to the literary text under study. The six squares on the bingo card must each be signed by a different classmate who can confirm the corresponding statement. The first pupil to complete the card and call out "Bingo!" is declared the winner.

Live Interview

The Live Interview is generally used at the beginning of a lesson and places one pupil in the position of responding to questions formulated by classmates working in pairs. Together with the Coat of Arms, Petals, Fishbowl, and Bingo techniques, it can support group familiarisation and create a more relaxed climate for communication. Their pedagogical value is not limited to ice-breaking: when the prompts are connected to reading preferences, characters, or reactions to a text, these activities can also prepare pupils for subsequent literary discussion.

Simulation Methods

Learning through Dramatization

Learning through dramatization uses dramatic techniques and theatrical procedures as instructional tools. By reconstructing a scene, a conflict, or a character's behaviour, pupils are encouraged to interpret the literary situation rather than merely reproduce information about it. This makes dramatization especially useful when the aim is to explore motivation, relationships between characters, or alternative ways of understanding an episode.

Educational Games

Educational games may include sensory, orientation, creative, and skill-development activities, such as the Syllable Game, the Orthographic Maze, Form Diminutives, and Answer the Question. Their use can introduce an element of exploration and cooperation while keeping the learning task connected to linguistic and literary objectives. The game

therefore becomes meaningful when its rules lead pupils towards observation, comparison, explanation, or interpretation.

Role-Playing

Role-playing involves the simulation of roles, situations, or practical exercises and gives pupils an opportunity to examine a literary situation from the perspective of a character. Dramatization, educational games, and role-playing can all be integrated into lessons devoted to the analysis and characterisation of literary characters, particularly when the teacher follows the activity with questions that encourage pupils to justify the choices they made during the simulation.

Methods for Preparing Pupils to Read Literary Texts

Introductory ("Warm-up") Methods

These methods are used exclusively at the beginning of a teaching sequence in order to introduce pupils to the atmosphere of the literary text and motivate them to read. Such activities may include imaginative exercises designed to recreate a historical period, a literary character, or a particular situation; predictions based on the book cover of the selected text; recalling personal experiences, reactions, or attitudes; and presenting the author in an engaging manner through activities such as completing biographical information or identifying inaccuracies in a deliberately modified biography.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming, often referred to as the "idea storm" method, consists of asking a sequence of questions designed to stimulate pupils' thinking and encourage the spontaneous generation of ideas [3]. To trigger this "storm of ideas," pupils should be presented with a thought-provoking problem or question capable of encouraging spontaneous aesthetic responses. Consequently, some researchers regard brainstorming as a form of problem-based learning.

A fundamental principle of brainstorming is postponing evaluation in order to avoid inhibiting creative thinking. All ideas are considered valuable, and no response is regarded as incorrect.

The questions used in brainstorming should remain open enough to generate several possible responses. For example, pupils may be asked what comes to mind when they hear the word "narrator", how they interpret the expression "educated only up to the frog's knee", why they think Nică agrees to return to school, or how Nică might avoid being sent to Socola. Such prompts invite pupils to activate prior knowledge, make predictions, and express tentative interpretations before these ideas are examined more closely through discussion.

Brainstorming is often combined with the conversation method, which may be defined as "a dialogue between teachers and pupils through which learning activities are

stimulated and guided." Genuine dialogue, grounded in literary texts, fosters pupils' creativity and their ability to apply acquired knowledge independently [3].

Educational conversation may take a catechetical or a heuristic form. Catechetical conversation primarily verifies previously acquired knowledge and therefore addresses pupils' memory; it can be useful at the beginning of a lesson to reactivate relevant knowledge or at the end to obtain feedback. Heuristic, Socratic, or maieutic conversation has a different purpose: through a carefully structured sequence of questions, the teacher guides pupils in using what they already know, establishing new connections, and discovering additional meanings through their own intellectual effort [1].

From a contemporary educational perspective, authentic dialogue requires genuine two-way communication. The classroom becomes a space in which teacher and pupils contribute to the construction of meaning, while questions stimulate and direct thinking rather than simply test recall. Such dialogue depends on the direct involvement of participants, the sincere expression of emotions, ideas, and personal experiences, willingness to collaborate in order to reach mutual understanding, and encouragement of pupils' personal initiative [1]. These conditions are particularly important in literary reception because interpretation develops through the encounter between the text, the reader's experience, and the perspectives expressed by others.

Vote for a Quotation

Pupils are presented with a list of quotations by well-known authors or a selection of proverbs related to the lesson topic. Each pupil selects one quotation that reflects a belief they agree with or one they would adopt as a personal motto. Afterwards, pupils discuss and justify their choices in small groups through reasoned argumentation.

Pyramid Discussion

In this activity, pupils receive a list of six quotations related to the lesson theme. Individually, each pupil selects the three quotations they agree with most strongly. They then work in pairs to negotiate and choose two quotations, after which groups of four or five pupils select a single quotation. Finally, following class-wide discussion and argumentation, all pupils vote to determine the quotation that best represents the group's collective opinion.

Conclusion

The reception of children's literary works is a complex educational process that requires pupils' active involvement in discovering, understanding, and interpreting the artistic message. In primary education, the development of literary reception competencies cannot rely solely on traditional knowledge-transmission approaches but requires the implementation of teaching strategies that promote active participation, reflection, dialogue, and creative expression.

The analysis of active-participatory strategies demonstrates that they transform pupils from passive recipients of information into active participants in constructing the meaning of literary texts. Through methods such as brainstorming, heuristic dialogue, double-entry journals, role-playing, dramatization, and graphic organisers, pupils are encouraged to formulate hypotheses, justify their opinions, establish connections between literary texts and their own experiences, and develop personal interpretations grounded in dialogue and critical reflection.

The effective integration of these strategies into teaching practice supports the development of literary reception competencies, critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, and aesthetic awareness, while simultaneously fostering the formation of active, autonomous, and reflective readers. Within this framework, the teacher's role extends beyond the transmission of knowledge, evolving into that of a facilitator and mediator of the reading experience who creates authentic opportunities for learning and meaningful interaction with literary texts.

In conclusion, active-participatory strategies constitute a fundamental component of the methodology for teaching the reception of children's literature in primary education. They facilitate pupils' engagement with the world of literature, encourage conscious and purposeful participation in the reading process, and contribute to the development of the competencies required of thoughtful, competent, and aesthetically sensitive readers. The systematic integration of these strategies into educational practice has the potential to enhance the quality of literary education and to strengthen pupils' interest in reading, which remains one of the fundamental objectives of contemporary education.

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