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LINGUISTIC AND VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF WAR IN PICTURE BOOKS

ABSTRACT

The goal of the study is to analyse linguistic and visual representations of war in picture books. The paper shows the interplay between words and pictures employing Nikolajeva and Scott's (2006) taxonomy, demonstrating that it is the use of gaps in the visual or verbal code that lies behind most narrative devices analysed. Gaps also fulfill a protective function, helping to balance the need to tell young readers about traumatic events and to account for social and pedagogical norms in operation.

KEYWORDS: picture books, war, text-image relationship

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest analiza językowych i wizualnych przedstawień wojny w książkach obrazkowych. Omówiono w nim współzależność słów i obrazów z wykorzystaniem taksonomii opracowanej przez Nikolajevą i Scott (2006), wykazując, że stosowanie zamierzonych luk w tekście i obrazie stanowi podstawę większości przeanalizowanych środków narracyjnych. Luki pełnią także funkcję ochronną, umożliwiając opis wydarzeń traumatycznych z uwzględnieniem obowiązujących norm społecznych i pedagogicznych.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: książki obrazkowe, wojna, relacja tekst-obraz

INTRODUCTION

PICTURE BOOKS AND TEXT-IMAGE RELATIONSHIP

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the linguistic and visual representations of war in picture books for young readers. Unlike illustrated books, in which occasional illustrations merely decorate the text and are not essential to understanding the story, words and images in picture books interact with each other to form an integral whole. This close relationship between both media – text and image – is often referred to as 'iconotext' (a notion coined by Hallberg in 1982, cf. Nikolajeva 2006: 6). In other words,

> [p]icture books are books in which both words and illustrations are *essential* to the story's meaning. In a true picture book, the illustrations are integral to the reader's experience of the book and the story would be diminished or confusing without the illustrations. Picture books are written in all genres and typically have illustrations on every page or every other page. (Short et al. 50)

The above definition implies an equal status of words and illustrations. However, an analysis of previous research on text-image relationship shows that pictures are frequently approached as subordinate to the verbal content of a story. Among others, Pereira (104–119) suggests that pictures are intersemiotic translations of the text and as such can be analysed with the help of tools used in verbal interlingual translation. She distinguishes three ways through which illustrations can translate the text: reproducing the textual elements literally in the picture, emphasizing a specific narrative element, and being adapted to a certain ideology or artistic fashion. Such an approach, although appropriate for illustrated stories, seems to be ill-suited for picture books, especially when we consider the fact that in many of them images are created before the text is written, or both the verbal and the visual narrative emerge simultaneously.

In their extensive taxonomy of relationships between images and texts, developed to include all subject areas and document types, Marsh and Domas White (2003) distinguish 49 types of relationships, dividing them into three broad categories dependent on the function of illustrations, which may express little relation to the text, close relation to the text, or go beyond the text. The taxonomy is extremely detailed and seems to be most relevant for extensive analyses of single illustrations. Also, it seems to follow the implication that – again – illustrations are subordinate to the text.

Nikolajeva and Scott's (11–26) terminology, elaborated specifically for non-textbook material for children, is much more general than the previous one. The scholars distinguish five main types of text-image relationships: symmetry, complementarity, enhancement, counterpoint and contradiction, which will be shortly characterised below. In a symmetrical relationship, similar information is provided by words and images. If there are gaps in one of the media, they are multiplied by the other. Complementarity implies that words and images are used as building blocks jointly conveying a cohesive message – they fill each other's gaps. Employing either symmetry or complementarity leaves no room for the readers' imagination, letting them remain passive in the reading process. Enhancement is somewhat more demanding, as the visual narrative supports the verbal narrative, and the other way round. By adding new information, one medium is an extension of the other. Counterpoint requires close cooperation between the author and the illustrator, in which the author consciously leaves gaps in the text to be completed with visual images or the illustrator leaves gaps to be filled with textual information. Thus two mutually dependent narratives are created, which show different interpretations of the same story. Counterpoint may refer to address (when one of the narratives is directed

more at the adult, the other at the child), style (using the potential of, for example, ironic pictures and serious text), convention, perspective or characterization. Finally, the fifth category, contradiction, implies that pictures and words do not match each other, each telling a different story. Nikolajeva and Scott's division seems to be well-rooted in the traditional semiotic division of text-image relationships[1]. At the same time, it emphasises the dynamics of the interplay between the verbal and the visual narrative, proving that both, on equal terms, are able to convey the message of the story.

WRITING ABOUT WAR FOR CHILDREN

There are certain universal editorial requirements at play as regards picture books. Galbraith points out that they must be:

> optimistic, light-hearted, and just. These mandates, derived from social norms as well as protective concern for what a child can bear, dictate that childhood trauma be presented in picture books only in such a way that upbeat and culturally sanctioned messages are promoted, while raw and threatening content remains latent or suppressed. Serious writers and artists working in this genre and expressing truths about their own childhood experience thus face the seemingly impossible task of revealing their own pain without dismaying children or their parents. (Galbraith 338)

The concern articulated above stems from the fact that children's literature belongs simultaneously to the literary and the social-educational system and as such is subject to some ideological influences reflecting the society's ideas about what is educationally, morally, emotionally and cognitively 'suitable' for children. For example, a recurring theme in scholarly analyses is the warning dimension of children's books about war, and the necessity to distinguish between the fictional and the factual elements of the story. It is particularly conspicuous, though by no way limited, to Holocaust literature. For example, Baer (384–85) argues that such texts: "must 'grapple directly with the evil'", "should not provide simplistic explanations", should convey "a warning about the dangers of racism and anti-Semitism, and of complacency" and, finally, should give the reader "a framework of response". The renowned researcher Kokkola (10–11) discusses in detail an "(unspoken) etiquette for Holocaust writing", stressing the strong ethical responsibility which puts pressure on the author to represent the events accurately. This prescriptive approach seems to be intuitively followed by many (if not most) authors of books for young audiences: when depicting war, they carefully emphasise what is fictional and what is factual in their work, often using paratexts. Even in fictional stories it is often

[1] See Barthes 1977; Nichols 1976, 1981; Van Leeuwen 2005 and the categories of elaboration and extension, the former including specification and explanation, the latter – similarity, contrast, and complement.

stressed that similar events did actually occur at a specific time and in a specifc place. Obvious exceptions are allegorical stories of war, usually for the youngest readers, where the focus is on general mechanisms provoking conflicts and the destruction they eventually cause.

It seems that apart from their warning dimension, war stories are intended to teach children how to live in peace and how to resolve conflicts without retreating to violence. Agnew and Fox, the authors of *Children at War: From the First World War to the Gulf* conclude their study pointing out that:

> [Authors] share a passionate belief that children must be made aware of the evils of the past and the courage with which that evil has often been met; and also that young readers need narratives which explore the nature and experience of war if they are to make sense of the world they have inherited and the future they confront. (Agnew, Fox 186)

While it is generally accepted that children must be told about war, authors and illustrators devoting their work to this topic must carefully choose the linguistic and visual means of expression so as not to violate the already mentioned social and pedagogical norms in operation, which dictate what is 'suitable' and 'unsuitable' for children. The goal of the present study is to show in detail how the linguistic and the visual narratives in picture books about war are constructed and how they interact with each other to accomplish what was earlier called a "seemingly impossible task": telling young readers about traumatic events without dismaying them.

THE STUDY

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The body of picture books with war as their main subject is quite extensive. I was interested in how contemporary wars are presented and related to the experience of the young reader of today. Therefore, the study focuses on autobiographical and narrative picture books for children depicting military conflicts of the 20th and 21st century. Preliminary library queries, conducted at the University of Arizona Libraries and the Worlds of Words International Collection of Children's and Adolescent Literature, returned fifty-five items that fulfilled this criterion. Of them, thirty were based on authentic stories, as was explicitly mentioned on the cover or in the end-papers. Eleven referred to wars in general and were often allegorical or told as parables, twenty-seven to WW II (among which two to Japanese-American internment camps, three to the atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima, and fifteen to the Jewish experience of war, including the Holocaust), the war in Vietnam (three), Iraq (three), September 11 and war on terrorism (two), World War I (two), and wars in Korea, Sudan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Laos, Afghanistan, Chechnya and

Lebanon (one example each). As can be seen, WW II generated the most extensive body of literature in question. Thematically, children (only rarely animal or toy) protagonists of the book experience the atrocities of war first-hand, are refugees, suffer from hunger, landmine injuries, atom bomb disease, are separated from their family, incarcerated in concentration or death camps, stay in hiding or witness the war from a relatively safe place.

This paper focuses in more detail on eleven of the picture books mentioned above. They were selected as the most representative sources in the corpus to exemplify a range of visual and verbal techniques used to show the child the atrocities of war in a manner judged as 'suitable' by picture book creators.

The study encompasses a detailed analysis of narrative devices used in linguistic and the visual representations of war in picture books. Also, it shows how words and pictures interact with each other to achieve the desired effect in terms of Nikolajeva and Scott's taxonomy (2006).

LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATIONS OF WAR IN PICTURE BOOKS

TOY PROTAGONISTS AND EUPHEMISMS – *OTTO. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TEDDY BEAR* (UNGERER 2010)

The first narrative device in the corpus is the use of toy protagonists. Ungerer's *Otto. The Autobiography of a Teddy Bear* describes the peaceful life of a German-born teddy bear. When one day his owner, David, comes home wearing a yellow star, and soon he and his family are carted away by men in military uniforms, he stays with David's friend Oskar. After war separates Otto from Oskar, the bear travels to the US with an American soldier whose life he saved and, many years later, is found by Oskar in an antique store. The teddy-bear's fate epitomises that of his owner, and, on a larger scale, of all those who were displaced in consequence of war, losing their family and home. In fact, nonhuman characters featuring as protagonists are quite common in children's literature and have their own narrative capabilities. On the one hand, they undoubtedly increase readers' empathy and engagement, as they represent human experience, are "disguises for a child" (Nikolajeva 125), or, as Kümmerling-Meibauer and Meibauer argue, "cute characters that share traits of cuteness with young children" (Kümmerling-Meibauer and Meibauer 11). On the other hand, nonhuman, anthropomorphised protagonists presuppose the existence of a fictional space where the events are taking place – although the world depicted resembles the real one, it is nevertheless different, helping readers distance themselves from what is happening in the story and thus fulfilling a protective function.

The choice of a toy protagonist affects the visual and the verbal layer of the picture book to a similar degree. A narrative device that is particularly conspicuous

on the level of words is the use of euphemisms, or laconic, evasive statements, as in this account of David's and Oskar's war experience:

> David and his parents had been sent to a terrible prison. Both his parents died there. David had been very sick, but he managed to survive. Oskar's father had died at war, and Oskar and his mother were trapped in the ruins during the bombing. They were both wounded. His mother didn't manage to escape, but Oskar did. (Ungerer[2], emphasis mine)

In the above report, euphemisms clearly play a protective role, sparing children detailed descriptions of the atrocities of war and concentration camps. "Being sent to (…) prison" stands for the horror of roundups or arrests from home, which usually preceded transportation to concentrations camps. "Terrible prison" seems to be an understatement, as using the negatively loaded adjective spares the author the necessity to explain in more detail the cruel reality of life in those places. The meaning of this expression cannot be fully grasped without background knowledge based on historical sources describing concentration camps. Similarly, "died", "had been very sick" and "trapped in the ruins", when used in literary communication with young readers, leave them unaware of the context of the events in question. Although they do describe *what* occurred, they may be classified as eupehmisms on the basis that they do not connote all the circumstances essential to understand *how* things happened (e.g., "died" in the context of concentration camps could mean 'starved', 'was beaten or tortured to death', etc.). "His mother didn't manage to escape" in turn is used to avoid revealing what happened to her as a consequence – during war time, she must have suffocated or starved in the ruins.

The relationship between words and pictures in *Otto* may be classified as symmetry, as both words and pictures share the same gaps. The use of toy protagonist and euphemisms is present on the linguistic and on the visual level, with images faithfully illustrating the verbal content, without revealing any further details.

RETROSPECTION AND METAPHORS – *THE ANGEL WITH THE MOUTH-ORGAN* (MATTINGLEY, LACIS 1986)

The Angel with the Mouth-Organ is a retrospective story. Before putting a glass angel on the Christmas tree, mother tells her children "the angel story", describing her own experiences as a little girl during the war. Displaced and separated from her father, she struggles to survive with the rest of the family. Finally, they are reunited – father finds them through the songs they had sung and the tunes he played on his mouth organ. The little glass angel with a broken wing that father had found in the ruins of a church, and which kept him company in his search for his loved ones, became a family treasure – it is always put last of all on the

[2] Picture books, including ones described in this paper, are usually not paginated.

Christmas tree as a symbol of hope, reunion and survival: "And the little angel with the mouth organ proclaimed its message from on high once more" (Mattingley). A terrifying war story is thus framed by scenes portraying peaceful domestic life at Christmas time, which is reassuring and makes the reader expect a happy ending.

Retrospection is particularly frequent in stories about the Holocaust, which narrate the evil of the past through the perspective of the happy present, when survivors recall the war, surrounded by their children and grandchildren, usually during a religious holiday. Examples include Oberman and Waldman's *By the Hanukkah Light* (1997), Stillerman and Gerber's *Nine Spoons* (1998), and Bunting and Popp's *One Candle* (2002). Thanks to this story frame, young readers are reassured that the protagonist managed to find a safe space, that the suffering is a matter of the past, and life continues.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the descriptions of military actions and consequent destruction in *The Angel with the Mouth-Organ* abound with metaphors and elaborate comparisons, for example:

> [O]ut of the clouds the planes came, with noise like thunder and flashes like lightning. They flew across our village. It became a garden of flame. The houses and the haystacks were like poppies, bursting out of their buds into glowing gold and orange. The church spire and the chimneys were like spikes of scarlet salvia. When all the petals of flame had fallen at last, the village was like a skeleton. Buildings were black, animals were dead, people had disappeared. The earth was bare and burnt. But in the hearts of the people who were left the fire flowers had dropped their seeds – of fear and of hate, of courage and of love. (Mattingley, emphasis mine)

In this excerpt, Mattingley finds parallels between war and common everyday phenomena, such as thunderstorm, seeds planting, flowers blooming and losing blossom, to create her dynamic metaphors and comparisons, capable of arousing vivid images in the readers' minds. Comparing bombers to a thunderstorm seems to be a deliberate explanatory device, as it describes realities potentially foreign to the child reader (the dropping of bombs) with the help of the common, natural, but nevertheless frightening phenomenon of storm ("noise like thunder", "flashes like lightning"). In "the garden of flame" metaphor, where burning houses and haystacks are likened to poppies, and church spire and chimneys to salvia, the readers' attention is turned towards something familiar and beautiful at the same time – flowers blooming and losing blossom. Perhaps surprisingly, the horrifying target domain, war, is conceptualised with the help of a very positively associated source domain, garden. Only when "all the petals of flame had fallen at last", the so-far dynamic, picturesque narration seems to slow down (parallelisms: "Buildings were black, animals were dead, people had disappeared"), describing the gloomy, desolated world after the bombing. Interestingly, the "garden of flame" metaphor expands on the human soul: the fire flowers (that is, the fires that the bombs ignited) leave seeds of hate and of love, of fear and of courage in the villagers' hearts. The language is further enhanced by alliteration (e.g. "bare and burnt"; "fire

flowers"). Metaphors and comparisons in Mattingley's work are clearly meant to 'beautify' war, and perhaps make it less frightening, and more poetic in this way.

As was the case with Ungerer's *Otto*, the word-image relationship in Mattingley's work is symmetrical. Again, both words and pictures share the same gaps, with pictures reflecting the metaphorical, poetic descriptions and the retrospective character of the verbal layer.

EMBODIED EMOTIONS – *GLEAM AND GLOW* (BUNTING, SYLVADA 2001)

In contrast to explaining what war means in terms of everyday experience and impressing the reader with the beauty of highly aesthetic descriptions, in *Gleam and Glow* Bunting chooses to recount the atmosphere of all-pervading, overwhelming fear aroused by the approaching front line by mentioning the protagonists' physiological reactions:

> Every day we heard distant gunshots and saw smoke rise into the faraway skies. Every day strangers stopped on their way out of the country to put down their bundles, to share our food, to take shelter under our roof. They told terrible stories of how it had been when for them and their neighbours when the soldiers came. They cried as they talked. Their eyes went this way and that, as if they thought the soldiers were just outside on our doorstep. (…) Marina started to suck her thumb again, and I wet the bed three nights in a row. (Bunting, emphasis mine)

The "terrible stories" which made their tellers cry and the child listeners suck their thumbs and wet their beds are never mentioned, and the pictures remain equally silent about this issue. Describing embodied experiences rather than referring to emotions in a direct way seems to be a conscious narrative device aimed at creating distance to the events taking place – difficult emotions are disguised under bodily reactions and not straightforwardly named.

Gleam and Glow is yet another instance of a symmetrical word-image relationship, where identical gaps appear on the visual and on the verbal level. Similarly to *Otto* and *The Angel with the Mouth-Organ*, it exemplifies those picture books in which the verbal dominates over the visual, and where images faithfully reflect the verbal content. The next section of the paper draws more attention to the role of images, which in several cases will turn out to carry more significance than words.

VERBAL SILENCE – *THE YEAR OF THE JUNGLE* (COLLINS, PROIMOS 2013)

In *The Year of the Jungle*, a complementary text-image relationship may be distinguished, with pictures filling gaps left by the verbal narrative. In this picture book, the words depict both external events and the mental picture of war the protagonist constructs on the basis of cartoons, the news, her father's letters from

the jungle and interaction with other adults. The change in the girl's way of thinking and feeling is shown on the level of the visual narrative only. This is a gradual process, leading from her initial naïve ideas about war to to confusion and finally – horror, when she discovers what war really means. What is happening in the internal world of her feelings is mirrored by the changing situation on the imaginary island in the jungle, where she meets her favourite cartoon characters, whose attitudes progress from peaceful to blood-thirsty and who are active protagonists of the parallel war story taking place in her head. These illustrations describe the protagonist's internal transformation about which the text is silent. As in this case the interpretation of pictures is probably more demanding in comparison with the process of assimilating words, using verbal silence encourages readers' engagement with the story, making its message more powerful.

VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF WAR IN PICTURE BOOKS

THE USE OF COLOUR – *A CHILD'S GARDEN* (FOREMAN 2009), *SEPTEMBER ROSES* (WINTER 2004), *ROSE BLANCHE* (GALLAZ, INNOCENTI 1985)

One of the most important aspects of the visual language is colour, which illustrators frequently use to emphasise the distinctness of the world of war and the world of peace. An example is *A Child's Garden* by Foreman, where war landscape and sad, war-afflicted people are presented in brownish colours, while vivid pastels are reserved for picturing symbols of hope, such as the peace-bringing dove on the cover, the plant which eventually grows into a garden, the family hearth, or the girl caring for seeds on the other side of the fence. Colours thus acquire an axiological dimension, exposing what is good and what is evil, what represents war and conflict, and what stands for peace and harmony. An analogous example as regards the use of colour is Winter's picture book *September Roses*, which shows the events of September 11 through the eyes of two women who bring thousands of roses from Africa to a flower show in New York. After the twin towers collapse, the scenery immediately turns black-and-white. On seeing candles lit to honour the victims, the two women decide to use their flowers to commemorate all those who died. Candles and roses, as symbols of hope and remembrance, are the only elements of the visual narrative painted in colour.

In Innocenti's *Rose Blanche*, colours seem to play a double role. First, they fulfill an axiological function, distinguishing the main protagonist, Rose Blanche, who is the only character to reflect critically on the situation and act against the apathy of her immediate environment. She is portrayed as the single bright-coloured individual in the pages. Secondly, colours dynamically mark the development of the plot, changing from spread to spread – as the story progresses to its tragic ending, they become more and more gloomy, with a noticeable expansion of browns and grays. Even the

bright colours initially distinguishing Rose fade: after she meets children from the camp and shares her food with them, her skirt gradually turns white, and she loses her red hair ribbon. Through her emaciation and death, the girl shares the fate of those she helps, which is symbolically anticipated and revealed by the use of colours.

In all of the books mentioned in this subsection, language is quite economical and pared-down, limited to reporting the events, rather than commenting on them, while pictures play the dominant role in creating the feelings, moods, and atmosphere. Here, the text-image relationship is enhancement, with the visual narrative supporting the verbal narrative and enriching it with new interpretations, as in *Rose Blanche*, and the text enhancing the interpretation of images in *September Roses* and *A child's Garden*.

VISUAL ALLUSION AND COUNTERPOINT – *THE LILY CUPBOARD* (OPPENHEIM, HIMLER 1995)

The Lily Cupboard represents both visual allusion and counterpoint. This picture book tells the story of a young Jewish girl, who has to leave her parents and finds shelter with a farmer's family during the German occupation of Holland. The dramatic events featured by the plot and the atmosphere of imminent danger of soldiers coming to inspect the farm in search for Jews contrast sharply with peaceful illustrations of the cozy farmhouse and flourishing countryside, creating an example of counterpoint in style between the verbal and the visual narrative. Also, the images are clearly reminiscent of the works of old Dutch masters of painting, and may be interepreted as an instance of visual allusion. On the one hand, the pictures may provide comfort and reassure the reader that the story will have a happy ending, on the other – they act as a warning that evil may invade even paradise-like settings.

VISUAL SILENCE – *THE NUMBER ON MY GRANDFATHER'S ARM* (ADLER, EICHENBAUM 1987)

The Number on my Grandfather's Arm is an interesting instance of communication through visual silence. A grandfather explains to his granddaughter the origins of the number on his arm, telling her the story of Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland. His report is accompanied by black-and-white, pertinent photos, which are toned-down and have a documentary character. They show Jews wearing yellow stars and incarcerated in ghettos, without portraying any violent or potentially terrifying scenes. However, the climax of the story, where the text mentions the torturing and killing of Jews, is not accompanied by any photographs. The reader is left without any visual cues – the absence of visual material opens space for thought and reflection, and encourages dialouge with silence, possibly in the presence of

an adult intermediary. The picture book is an example of a complementary text-image relationship with gaps in illustrated material.

SUBSTITUTING TOYS FOR PEOPLE IN INDIVIDUAL PICTURES – *THE LITTLE YELLOW BOTTLE* (DELAUNOIS, DELEZENNE 2011)

Another interesting instance of using the visual code effectively is a picture in *The Little Yellow Bottle*. The scene in question is one of bomb explosion: when one of the village boys finds in the forest what he thinks is a shiny yellow bottle, it explodes in his hand. The burst of explosion is shown, and next to it – a rag doll being torn into pieces, although in fact the ones who are mutilated are two boys: "Pain shot through my body (…) I heard Ahmad fall to the ground, screaming" (Delaunois, Delezenne). Showing the event on a substitute – a toy – is like hiding the difficult message behind a mask, an equivalent to euphemism in verbal language. Through the use of toy, violence is at the same time expressed and kept at a distance (cf. Higonnet 2007: 120). Although in general the text-image relationship in the book is based on complementarity, in this case it could be labelled as counterpoint.

VISUAL METAPHORS AND TECHNICAL DETAILS – *FLOWER GRANNY* (KWON 2010)

An exquisite example of how the meaning of words is enhanced by pictures is *Flower Granny*, a testimony of an elderly Korean, grandmother Sim Dal-yeon, kidnapped as a teenager by Japanese soldiers in 1940 to work as a military sex slave. She joined hundreds of the so called 'comfort women' satisfying the sexual desire of the Japanese army in the Pacific war zone. Although more than 70 years passed, there has been no apology (not to mention compensation) from the Japanese government.

Because an English translation of the book has not been published yet, I based my analysis on a Korean version translated by a colleague. The author of *Flower Granny* uses language economically, reporting facts, changing the narrative perspective, and posing questions to stand for answers she chooses not to give, as in this excerpt describing what happened when the transport with kidnapped girls reached the camp and each was assigned a small cubical room:

> … there was a long human line formed right outside of the room. One man came in and left and next man came in and left… Too many men came in and out. Too many to count. What happened in that small room? The 13-year-old Flower Granny's pants ran red with blood. How did she endure such a thing? (Kwon translation by Mi-Kyoung Chang)

Pertinent descriptions of daily life in the camp correspond with technical illustrations. There are several figures that explain basic facts about comfort women's

life rule at the comfort stations: a price list detailing the hours of "service" and the rank of the soldier or officer who comes to be "served" (regular soldier, sergeant, officer; respective hours: 9–16, 16–19, 19–24 and prices: 30 mins for 1, for 1.5, for 3 units/tickets); a schedule of health checks; proud inscriptions informing newcomers that the ladies are serving with their bodies and mind for the victory in the holy war. Technical details presented by means of illustrations, as well as neutral, to-the-point descriptions of routines and bureaucratic procedures, which reflect the narrator's apparent disengagement from harsh realities described, seem to make the girls' life at comfort station even more harrowing and distressing.

This picture book has a pictorial leitmotif, which frequently recurs as a visual theme. It is a blue flower, which alludes to the protagonist's name and symbolises her inner self. It interweaves with the story from the outset: it is shown in scenes from Sim Dal-yeon's childhood and adolescence at her parents' home, is downtrodden by soldiers in the kidnapping episode, is present in the pool of blood, and in rape scenes. Violent events tend to be depicted metaphorically in illustrations: the oppressors – soldiers – are shown as empty uniforms, the victims are represented by flowers, their blood is blue; in rape scenes, the reader sees soldiers entangled in small blue flowers. Visual metaphor is a fascinating device, as it speaks indirectly, on a subconscious level, allowing the illustrator to avoid portraying cruelty directly, but nevertheless communicating the intended message. Another flower (purple) appears when the girl dreams of reuniting with her family, and when her happy memories come back. It can be argued that the blue flower metaphor in the pictures has the same function as rhetorical questions on the verbal level, as both hint at certain realities (in this case, sex slavery) without revealing details.

In contrast with some of the picture books mentioned earlier, in which murky colours reflect gloomy reality, the illustrations in *Flower Granny* are always vivid, colouful, elaborate, even when depicting atrocious scenes. On aesthetic level, one can find parallels with Mattingley and Lacis' work described above, as the beauty of colours in the Korean book seems to match the poetic, metaphorical language used to describe war bombings in *The Angel with the Mouth Organ*. As can be seen, some picture book creators do not shy away from juxtaposing negatively valued events with positive aesthetic representations, whether visual or verbal.

CONCLUSIONS

In the material analysed, four types of text-image relationships were distinguished according to Nikojaleva and Scott's (2006) taxonomy: symmetry, complementarity, enhancement, and counterpoint. It was shown that illustrations in picture books are an intrinsic part of the story, often used to express the intangible in words. The text-image relationship itself proved to be an important tension-building element

in the potential reception of a given picture book, depending on how much was revealed in the verbal and in the visual narrative.

Creators of the picture books in question employed a number of linguistic and visual narrative devices to present the subject of war to young readers. These included: the use of toy protagonists, euphemistic descriptions, references to embodied emotions, metaphors, retrospection, verbal silence, rhetorical questions on the verbal level; the use of colour, allusion, counterpoint, visual metaphor, visual silence, substituting animals or toys for child protagonists, saturating the story with technical details on the visual level. In addition, in many books, autobiographical narrative perspective was used, often accompanied by paratexts explaining that the plot was inspired by facts, to emphasise authenticity and strengthen the warning dimension of a given story.

Most of these narrative devices are based on the authors' or illustrators' conscious use of gaps. Such apparent 'omissions' do not necessarily distort the presented subject. On the contrary, making choices of emphasis is an intrinsic part of the creative process. Also, in children's and young adult literature, gaps fulfil an additional function – by leaving space for questions, they make readers search for answers and encourage them to interpret the story for themselves. In the case of particularly demanding subjects (e.g. sex slavery in war) leaving gaps to be completed by teachers and parents, who are best acquainted with the perceptive abilities and emotional sensitivity of a given child, might be the most appropriate solution.

In the books, one could see a constant tension between bringing war closer (emphasising the factual character of events to make children more aware of conflicts or specific problems) and distancing it, seen e.g. in the use of gaps. None of the books in the corpus presented war in a positive or even neutral light: it was always shown as a formidable time endangering the lives of protagonists or their nearest ones. Clearly, authors and illustrators focused on the warning dimension of war stories.

It might be concluded, then, that picture books may potentially play an important role in shaping children's attitudes towards military conflicts, communicating their message about the human experience of war and supporting an unceasing search for peace thanks to a wide spectrum of visual and linguistic narrative techniques, the most frequent of which were analysed in this paper.

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