

Abstract Keynote Hildesheim

Approaching Literary and Language Competence: Picturebooks and Graphic Novels

Picturebooks and graphic novels consist of a graphic and a visual text which blend into stories. Children, teenagers and young adults are often highly motivated to share these authentic texts with native speakers of English, leaving behind coursebooks and their rather pragmatic language lessons. Yet the two semiotic codes have to be read diligently to be fully understood, and, therefore learners have to be trained to gain a literary competence that encompasses the visual and the graphic mode of representation. As competent readers, learners will experience that picturebooks and graphic novels render invaluable insights into foreign cultures with fictional adventures, different narrative voices, aesthetic experiences and cultural information. The keynote will examine the multifaceted objectives which are achieved by training pupils to become “sophisticated readers” (Nikolajeva 2005) including conversational skills and creative faculties. Based on several examples by authors like Anthony Browne, Will Eisner, Neil Gaiman, Shaun Tan and David Wiesner, picturebooks and graphic novels will be shown to be extremely valuable teaching material and cultural artefacts for learners of all age groups in the EFL-classroom.