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Guiding the Ethical Use of Anthropomorphism in Children Literature

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Masters in Civilization and Literature

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DECLARATION

We declare that the research work presented in this dissertation entitled " Guiding the Ethical Use of Anthropomorphism in Children's Literature" was carried out by us, and that all sources of information have been acknowledged by means of complete references. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the work is original except for such excerpts from other published work as may be included with appropriate citation and credit given in the text. The dissertation has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for any degree, diploma or any other qualification. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been cited and due acknowledgement given to the authors concerned.

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DEDICATION

To Almighty God, the Omniscient and the Beneficent, for the wisdom and guidance bestowed upon me. To my beloved parents, Abdelkader Azraoui and Massouda Ben Ferhat, for their unconditional love, sacrifice and constant encouragement. To my cherished sisters, Asma, Zahra and Maria, for always believing in me and seeing me through with love and comfort. To my dear cousin Imane Doua, and my bestfriends Djumana and Aisha for being a source of inspiration and support through this journey. This dissertation is respectfully dedicated with love, gratitude and esteem to those who filled my life with knowledge, faith and joy.

DEDICATION

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration and gave us strength when we thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support. To my brothers ; Abdel Djalil ,Ahmed,Abdel Rezak ,Abdel Rahmane , who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study. To my friends who became my supporter and help us to any problem we faced .they encourage us to finish this important research in time .they also give us inspiration message every time .To my teachers who believed that we will be finish this research in time ,helping us to make our research better , to inspire us to their inspirational stories when they are student before .

Abstract

This study examines whether anthropomorphism - giving nonhuman entities human attributes - can make complex learning more engaging, memorable and meaningful for children. A qualitative analysis of previous works develops insights to guide appropriate anthropomorphism use. Chapter One situates anthropomorphism historically and culturally. Chapter Two analyzes how anthropomorphism shapes learning through content analysis of children literature. Chapter Three develops guidelines for maximizing anthropomorphism's educational benefits while minimizing risks. Findings indicate that when applied carefully, anthropomorphism augments learning by embedding concepts within vivid metaphors and narratives that stimulate children's imaginations. However, transparent and tailored use is essential to avoid oversimplifying complex ideas or distorting conceptual accuracy. When based on rigorous research and expertise, anthropomorphism emerges as a promising pedagogical tool that integrates imagination with conceptual understanding. Yet judicious application requires considering diverse learners' cognitive and socioemotional needs. The study addresses gaps regarding appropriate anthropomorphism use. Insights offer valuable perspectives for developing effective, ethical instructional strategies that leverage anthropomorphism's potential while safeguarding conceptual integrity. With research-based design tailored for diverse learners, anthropomorphism shows promise for cultivating minds that perceive complexity and discover truth.

Keywords: Anthropomorphism, Children Literature, Learning, imagination, meaningfulness

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General Introduction

Children literature plays an important role in shaping the formative years of young readers. Stories help stimulate children's imagination, foster learning and development, and cultivate moral values. However, abstract concepts and complex topics can be difficult for children to comprehend.

Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman entities, is a common literary technique used in children literature as attention grabber to make stories more accessible and engaging for young audiences. By imbuing animals and objects with human qualities, traits and behaviors, anthropomorphized characters create a frame of reference that children can relate to.

While anthropomorphism is universally employed in cultural storytelling, By creating human frames of reference, anthropomorphism may facilitate children's ability to understand and engage with a range of stories. Researchers have postulated that anthropomorphism may aid children's learning by activating their empathy, theory of mind, and ability to form mental models.

Despite the widespread use of anthropomorphism in children's media and literature, there has been little research investigating its impact on children's learning and development. While a few studies have begun exploring anthropomorphism's educational applications and impacts, more rigorous and nuanced work is still needed.

For example, Ganea (2014) found that 3-5 year olds who read an anthropomorphic picture book showed better understanding of biological processes compared to a control group. The anthropomorphic representations helped make the biological concepts more accessible and engaging for children, indicating that anthropomorphism may enhance early

science learning. However, Marriott and Stuart (2002) argued that although anthropomorphic picture books may promote imaginative thinking in children, fantastical anthropomorphizing of animals could also promote misconceptions about biological realities. They recommended judicious use of anthropomorphism.

Deloache (2004) found that 18-30 month olds who were read an anthropomorphic picture book showed more advanced theory of mind understanding compared to a control group. This suggests that anthropomorphism may help children relate to characters and infer their mental and emotional states, supporting social-emotional development. Similarly, Marshal, Bridget and Fox (2013) demonstrated that 3-5 year olds who read an anthropomorphic picture book showed higher empathy toward animals compared to a control group, indicating that anthropomorphism can foster children's empathy.

Greerdt (2015) found that 4-6 year olds showed more positive attitudes toward animals after being read an anthropomorphic picture book compared to a control group. The anthropomorphism fostered stronger affective connections between children and animal characters, highlighting its potential impact on children's values.

In addition, a 2017 study by Brossard, Kari and Madelinel published in the *Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education* explored how fictional stories with anthropomorphized animals can enhance student learning by making abstract concepts more tangible and relatable. The researchers found that the use of such stories can improve student comprehension, engagement, and interest in learning, demonstrating educational affordances of anthropomorphism beyond the early years.

The study aims to fill the gap in existing literature by investigating whether anthropomorphism can make complex learning more engaging, memorable, and meaningful

for children. Anthropomorphism likely originated out of humans' tendency to project human cognitive abilities onto non-human entities. However, there are indications that anthropomorphism may provide cognitive benefits, especially for young children. By imbuing non-human characters with humanlike traits, anthropomorphism may make stories and information more relatable and accessible for young minds. It may also enhance children's ability to connect emotionally with story characters, potentially improving memory and engagement with the material.

To substantiate this aim, this study hypothesizes that anthropomorphism enhances children's engagement, imagination, and motivation to learn when applied deliberately as an instructional technique. By bringing concepts to life through metaphor and narrative, it facilitates meaningful connections to knowledge, fueling curiosity about the world. Anthropomorphism may activate and scaffold theory of mind by personifying ideas and creating social relationships between children and story characters (Waytz, Cacioppo and Epley 2010) This mechanism could potentially enhance children's engagement, motivation and conceptual change during complex learning

. While anthropomorphism has a long history of use in children's stories, educational materials, and thought, there seems a lack of systematic scholarly research evaluating its application and impacts as an instructional technique. With this mind, this work seeks to find an answer to the following main question: Does Anthropomorphism make complex learning more engaging, memorable, and meaningful for children? Under this question the following several sub questions may emerge and rummage for answers in this paper:

1. What are the psychological and educational benefits of anthropomorphism in children's literature?

2. How does Anthropomorphism shape experiences, thinking, relationships across stories curriculum?
3. What are the benefits and limitations of using anthropomorphism in teaching and learning?

As we develop our dissertation exploring anthropomorphism in education, analyzing previous works on this topic seems an excellent approach we want to take. We aim to interpret sources, trying to gain deeper insights into ideas, representations, approaches and arguments regarding anthropomorphism and its promise as an instructional technique.

The research also provides insights into the historical, cultural, and literary contexts of anthropomorphism and its effects on children's learning and development. The findings of the study will be valuable for educators, parents, and researchers interested in understanding the benefits and limitations of using anthropomorphism in teaching and learning. The study may also contribute to the development of effective teaching strategies for enhancing children's learning experiences.

We will select sources purposefully, choosing pieces that provide unique perspectives on anthropomorphism, its history, applications, implications, debates or concepts relevant to our research aims.

As we develop this qualitative analysis of anthropomorphism in education, we aim to attain deeper insights through thoughtful and critical interpretation of previous works, we hope to make meaning, identify implications and propose fresh understandings that can guide wise and impactful practice. We look forward to gaining enlightened perspectives through thoughtful engagement with works shaping knowledge about imagination, learning, and anthropomorphic technique.

The study will also include a personal interview with Dr. Megan Geerds,, she is an anthropologist and Assistant Professor at Central European University in Vienna, Austria. Her research focuses on the anthropology of childhood, care, and social reproduction.

The interview will explore Dr. Geerds' views on how different degrees of anthropomorphism in stories impact children's comprehension and knowledge retention. Analysis of the literature review and interview will aim to identify themes regarding the potentially optimal "dose" of anthropomorphism for facilitating complex learning in early childhood.

The study seeks to provide an in-depth, preliminary analysis of anthropomorphism and complex learning in young children, potentially informing hypotheses for future quantitative studies.

That is why in Chapter 1, we introduce the concept of anthropomorphism and provide an overview of scholarly work shaping knowledge regarding its history, applications, implications and debates. We aim to uncover assumptions and values underlying different views as well as consider alternative ways of conceptualizing anthropomorphism's promise for learning, development and imagination.

In Chapter 2, we explore types of anthropomorphism employed in children's literature, including animals, plants, objects or concepts brought to life through narrative or metaphorical devices. We analyze classic and modern examples, considering different messages conveyed through specific forms and how these representations develop and transform over time. We examine implications of interpreting the world through an anthropomorphic lens, determining both insight and shortsightedness enabled by such a perspective.

In Chapter 3, we discuss how anthropomorphism meets children at their developmental level, engaging them intuitively while still challenging growth. It translates complex ideas into a metaphorical language they understand.

We reflect on implications of findings and their applications beyond literature and education. Anthropomorphism shapes human thinking, imagination and relationships with knowledge in insightful and impactful ways across many domains of learning, development and culture.

Chapter One:
Anthropomorphism
Historical Overview

Introduction

Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to non-human entities, has been used for centuries as a literary device in children's stories through familiar animal characters that display human-like feelings, behaviors and traits (Azmiry 1; Chengcheng 1; Yeganeh 1). Proponents argue that anthropomorphism enhances relatability and engagement for young audiences by making complex ideas more accessible through familiar metaphors conveyed in an entertaining way (Azmiry 1). However, anthropomorphism is a complex topic with differing perspectives; some criticisms note that it can promote simplistic or inaccurate understandings.

This chapter will explore the rich history, applications and debates surrounding anthropomorphism. Different perspectives from scholars and researchers will be analyzed to uncover the assumptions and values underlying views of anthropomorphism. By considering anthropomorphism's implications beyond its usefulness as a literary device, the role of anthropomorphism in learning, development, imagination and human cognition will be examined. Recommendations for appropriate and responsible uses of anthropomorphism informed by research and expertise will also be discussed.

A. Children literature

Children literature is a subgenre of literature that is created specifically for children and aims to appeal to their interests. This genre employs storybooks, stories, and poems to describe the teleology of children and how it can be strengthened in stimulating the child and the society they find themselves in (McGillis 259). Children's literature incorporates a variety of subjects, including folktales, fiction, theater, picture books, fantasy, and fairy tales, and is generally written in straightforward language to make the story's message and lessons easier for kids to comprehend (T. Ogunyemi 347-351). According to (Brown et Tomlinson 2005), the genre encompasses a range of current and fascinating subjects portrayed in prose, poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, with many authors including animals in their works (3).

Schwarz notes that children's literature is a genre that inherently juxtaposes a number of binary concepts, including child/adult, knowledge/innocence, home/away, and safety/danger (Kennedy et Lennox 1992). Children's literature is one of the most popular forms of entertainment for kids and serves to socialize children, making them aware of significant facets and traits of their society (Ogunyemi 349). Authors of children's literature frequently use overarching themes to help kids form strong opinions on things like obedience, perseverance, humility, loyalty, and honesty (Ogunyemi). Additionally, children's literature teaches culture, as children learn about it through reading and by seeing the viewpoints expressed in the writings. As children mature, children's literature can serve as an eye-opener to new possibilities, challenges, and life problems in a way that is appropriate for people with little life experience.

Talking animals are a common theme in children's literature, and because they have human-like functions, some of them can exhibit moral virtues to teach children about them,

while others exhibit undesirable behaviors and consequences to discourage kids from modeling them. Anthropomorphism is used in children's books as a way to instill morality and teach kids how to behave properly in public, all of which, contribute to the development of their social skills (Ogunyemi 349).

A.1.The Evolution of Children Literature

Children literature has a rich history that dates back to ancient times. Even before the development of writing, stories were created for adults and then later modified for children as society's view of childhood as a distinct stage of development grew. These stories were used to instruct, educate, and entertain young children. The origins of early children literature can be traced back to oral tales, songs, and poetry (Wehremeyer 85). Since children literature is typically produced by adults, it reflects the ethical standards of the adult author and their view of children as a distinct group (known as the child image).

Childhood as a concept is relatively new, and before the mid-18th century, there was no clear understanding of childhood. Prior to 1865, English-speaking children read and enjoyed adult literature such as Aesop's Fables, Robinson Crusoe, and Gulliver's Travels. Aesop's Fables was originally written by a Greek slave in the 6th century BCE to teach values to adult readers but eventually became categorized as children's literature. As a result, children's literature did not emerge until the 18th century (Ken 5).

According to (Rivera 2), the market for children's books, including spoken stories, songs, and poems for young people's moral and religious growth disguised as entertainment, was growing. John Newbery, an English publisher regarded as the father of children's literature, wrote books specifically for children in the second half of the 18th century. The History of Little Goody Two Shoes (1765) as Khan argued is considered the first book produced specifically for children, teaching reading for fun and enjoyment while still being

educational. Until the 19th century, children's stories were published alongside more complex literature by adapting existing adult stories (5). In the 20th century, stories that focus on universal themes, such as friendship, became more prevalent, and animal adventure stories received more attention from writers. Well-known authors, such as Eric Carle, Kevin Henkes, Arnold Lobel, Beatrix Potter, and E.B. White, published novels specifically for children and often used animals as main characters and created vivid illustrations (Kumberg 1).

A.2. The Importance of Children Literature

Every educational process starts with literature since it plays an instructive role, provides access to knowledge, and applies knowledge to real-world situations. There are numerous methods and resources for working with literature, including tales, poems, legends, stories, characters, fables, theaters, illustrative images, ludic, picture books, etc. Children's literature helps them write more effectively and creatively because reading and writing are intertwined activities. Children literature is, in this sense, "first and foremost, literature, or rather, art: a phenomenon of creativity that portrays the world, man, and life through the word". It combines ideas and their potential for or impossibility of achievement, as well as dreams and real-world experience.

Children literature has the responsibility of making dreams come true. It is a fantastic tool for the teaching-learning process and for the growth, joy, and magic of the child. Early learning stages have a shaping and socializing effect on children's books.

Children literature supports the child's socialization and developmental processes, and during this time the child is most interested in sound, rhythm, individualized scenes, books with few words but lots of pictures and rhymes, books about animals, and scenes and objects from their everyday lives.

In this literary process, one discovers if the privileged area to excite the subject as a generator of magical hypotheses, as it confirms. Languages, abilities, and knowledge appropriate for children at various levels of understanding are presented in literary writings.

Literature encourages a child's total development by stimulating them with a variety of educational techniques, including fuller narratives of information in the form of legends, fables, and short stories.

It has been noted that even though they are "ancient" stories, Little Red Riding Hood, Beauty and the Beast, The Ugly Duckling, Rapunzel, Cinderella, the Bad Wolf, and the Three Little Pigs—along with all of their characters remain popular with kids and offer effective treatments for their anxieties. Children naturally identify with the story characters as their "idols" or "heroes," and this fact fosters feelings of curiosity, interpretation, interest, affection, magic, and bravery in them. When these stories are presented to children with concrete methodologies in an effort to develop the imagination, it is safe to say that these children identify with the story characters as their "idols" or "heroes."

The significance of children's literature as a formative stage within the larger issue of imagination is unclear, as it is unclear at what age, in what capacity, and under what conditions it manifests in the kid. Although each student must demonstrate his or her ability and comfort in imagining, understanding, interpreting, writing, reading, and speaking in a formal way through storytelling, the mediating teacher must pedagogically use all available resources to contribute to the students' learning in an appropriate way.

Literature serves as a tool of mediation for the child's development in the teaching and learning process, encouraging participation and critical thinking. Its educational nature also positively affects the socialization and formation of the child, influencing how they interpret the world, other people, cultural and linguistic variations, and their own personalities.

We recognize that the work's extensive discussion of the potential of children literature can, above all, help children become active and proficient readers, which will lead to significant learning for them during the educational process. This is because, as we all know, children should have their first exposure to books when they are young, ideally from a family member.

B. Anthropomorphism and its Relationship with Children Literature

Anthropomorphism is a literary technique that endows animals and inanimate objects with human characteristics, behavior, and values. This technique is frequently used in myth, folklore, art, and literature. In children literature, anthropomorphism is commonly used to create stories where animals behave like people within specific contexts to teach children morals and social values. According to Sousa and al , anthropomorphism is also a means of indirectly connecting children to the natural world when direct contact is not possible. It is also an effective tool for raising public awareness and influencing human preferences. By depicting wild animals in a less-threatening way and using them as characters in children's literature, anthropomorphism helps children connect to the natural world and learn from their behavior (257). Different authors define anthropomorphism in different ways; for example, according to Servais, it is a way to connect people with animals and make the animals relevant to the current activity. Ultimately, anthropomorphism can help humanize animals, improve understanding between different species, and provide valuable life lessons for young readers (9).

"Anthropomorphism is the attribution of capacities that people tend to think of as distinctly human to non-human agents with humanlike mental capacities, e.g. intentionality, emotion, and cognition," according to Waytz and al (220). .This explanation makes clear the difference between anthropomorphism and animism, which is the attribution of life to

inanimate objects. While the two differ slightly from one another, they also work well together because, when intention is assigned to an inanimate item, it is treated as if it is a living thing (animism) and as if it has a mind of its own (anthropomorphism). The attribution of human character, appearances, and behavior is the widely accepted definition of the term according to the authors' perspectives, as stated above.

B.1.The Origin

Anthropomorphism, derived from the ancient Greek words *anthropos*, meaning human, and *morphe*, meaning shape or form (S. E. Guthrie), is a term that has captivated the attention of scholars and the general public for centuries. The concept of anthropomorphism has evolved over time and has been used in different contexts, from ancient mythologies to modern-day entertainment.

The term "anthropomorphism" was first introduced by Xenophanes, a renowned Greek philosopher, in the sixth century BCE. Xenophanes used the term to criticize the idea of gods that resembled humans and to highlight the similarities between religious agents, such as gods, and their followers (Waytz, Cacioppo and Epley 856). Xenophanes' primary concern was not merely about depicting gods in human form but rather about their human-like minds as argued by (Lesher 23).

Initially, the term was used in theological contexts to describe the views that characterized God in literal human terms, portraying God as a person with infinitely amplified human powers and attributes such as love, justice, and compassion (Fisher 3). However, anthropomorphism has come to reflect our innate tendency to see human qualities in non-human entities, and it has been explored in various fields, including psychology and neuroscience.

Recent research by (Waytz, Cacioppo and Epley 2) suggests that anthropomorphism plays a significant role in shaping human behavior and decision-making, with people more likely to trust and feel empathy towards anthropomorphic robots and virtual agents.

B.2.The Evolution Of Anthropomorphism in Literature

Aesop's Fables (6th Century BCE)

Aesop's fables, dated to the 6th century BCE, featured anthropomorphic animals as the protagonists to convey ethical principles and moral lessons. These short stories used animals that could talk and walk on two legs to illustrate lessons in a simple and memorable way.



Aesop endowed animals with human traits, emotions, and the power of speech in order to highlight virtues and vices through allegory. His fables, though brief, contained deeper insights into

Figure1.1 :Source:Wikipedia
www.gutenberg.org/etext/19994

human nature and emphasized morality. For example, in "*The Boy Who Cried Wolf* ", Aesop showed how lying and deceit can undermine trust and credibility. In "*The Tortoise and the Hare*," he highlighted the value of persistence, diligence and slow-but-steady progress over natural talent or speed.

Title : [The North Wind and the Sun](#)

Aesop's fables have resonated profoundly with readers over the centuries thanks to their timeless messages and memorable characters. Though only 150 fables survive today, they have been translated into hundreds of languages, adapted countless times, and continue to be widely read and taught. The anthropomorphic style and moralizing format of the fables have

also inspired many later authors, affirming Aesop's enduring influence on storytelling, literature and culture. Aesop conveys moving and insightful lessons about life, ethics, and society in a poetic and impactful way. This fusion of form and meaning has made the fables a seminal text in the tradition of using animals as teachers, truth-tellers, and tricksters, securing their status as one of the first great works of world literature.

European Folktales: Talking Animals as Protagonists or Sidekicks

European folktales, originating from various regions, often employed talking animals as the main characters or companions to human protagonists. Animals that could speak, such as rabbits, foxes, frogs, and donkeys, would go on adventures, face dangers, or assist humans in need.

Talking animals are a common motif in European folktales, appearing in stories from England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and more. These anthropomorphic creatures, given the gift of speech, could converse with humans, share wisdom, and even transform between animal and human forms. They served as protagonists, sidekicks, helpers, tricksters or villains depending on the tale. For example, in English folktales, rabbits were mischievous tricksters while hares symbolized cunning. In French tales, a fox might act as a wily advisor or snake as a malicious enemy. In German stories, a cat could be a conniving partner-in-crime or mouse a tricky foe. Russian folktales featured a magical firebird or horse with wings. Talking beasts provided commentary on human vices and virtues while also shaping memorable adventures.

Thanks to collectors like the Brothers Grimm, European folktales spread and influenced later works of fantasy, mythology and



Figure 2.1 Source: (daguerreotype)

Title: Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm in 1847

children's literature worldwide. Talking animals, in particular, became a hallmark of classic fairy tales, from *The Chronicles of Narnia* to *Winnie the Pooh* to *Zoom*. They continue mobilizing imagination as transportive figures representing humanity's hope, folly, and endless capacity for surprise. Animals that speak their minds with wit and wisdom have forged an unbreakable bond with readers across time.

Eastern folktales: Talking Animals as Protagonists or Sidekicks

Talking animals as protagonists or sidekicks are a common theme in Eastern folktales, especially in Indian and Arab tales. These stories often feature animals with human-like qualities such as the ability to speak, think and make decisions.

In Indian folktales, one famous example is the *Panchatantra*, a collection of animal fables that date back to the 3rd century BCE. The *Panchatantra* features a variety of animals, including lions, jackals, monkeys, and birds, who are often portrayed as wise and cunning. One of the most well-known stories from the *Panchatantra* is the "*The Lion and the Mouse*", where a mouse saves a lion's life and they become friends. Another Indian folktale featuring talking animals is the story of "*The Clever Rabbit and the Foolish Lion*". In this story, the rabbit tricks the lion into believing that he is the king of the jungle, and the lion eventually falls for the rabbit's deception.



Figure 3.1. Source: "Anthropomorphism." *Wikipedia*.

Title: From the *Panchatantra*

As for Arab tales, one famous writer who wrote stories with talking animals is Ibn al-Muqaffa. He was a Persian writer and translator who lived in the 8th century CE and is known

for his collection of fables called *Kalila wa Dimna*. The stories in *Kalila wa Dimna* feature animals such as jackals, lions, and mice, who interact with each other in a way that reflects human behavior and social hierarchies. One of the most well-known stories from *Kalila wa Dimna* is "*The Tortoise and the Birds*", where a tortoise tricks a group of birds into carrying him across a river on their backs. Once they reach the other side, the tortoise reveals his true intentions and eats the birds.

B.3. Renaissance Expansion

- Rise of picture books, novels, and fairy tales

The Renaissance witnessed a boom in anthropomorphic storytelling, featuring animals, mythical creatures and supernatural beings given human qualities like speech, Logic, emotion, morality, and free will. By attributing human traits to the non-human, authors could create poignant allegories, absurd satires, moving fables and memorable characters.

The Renaissance saw major advancements in printing, literacy, and literature that fueled the growth of fantasy storytelling. Picture books, richly illustrated with vivid engravings, brought tales to life for readers of all ages. Novels emerged as a new format, allowing for sprawling adventures and surreal worlds. And fairy tales developed into a distinct genre, recording folkloric stories with magical beasts and supernatural beings.

Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics and behaviors to non-human entities, has a long history in human culture. However, in the Renaissance period, there was a significant expansion of anthropomorphic representations in art, literature, and culture.

One key factor in this expansion was the rise of picture books. Printed books with illustrations, including woodcuts and engravings, became increasingly popular in the late 15th

and early 16th centuries. Many of these books featured anthropomorphic animals, such as Aesop's Fables, which were retold with animals as characters who acted like humans. These books were often used to teach moral lessons and were enjoyed by both children and adults.

Another factor was the rise of the novel as a literary form. In the 16th and 17th centuries, novels began to be published in larger numbers, and many of them featured anthropomorphic characters. For example, "*Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote*" (1605) features a talking horse named Rocinante and a squire named Sancho Panza who is often portrayed as donkey-like.

Fairy tales also became more popular in the Renaissance period. Many of these stories featured anthropomorphic animals and objects, such as the talking animals in Charles Perrault's "*Little Red Riding Hood*" (1697) and the dancing teapot and candlestick in Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's "*Beauty and the Beast*" (1756). These stories were often passed down orally and were later collected and published in written form.

In summary, the Renaissance saw the origins and development of fantasy storytelling into a wide array of picture books, illustrated tales, novels, fairy tales and more. These works featured talking animals, mythical beasts, imagination unbound and surreal nonsense that would enchant for centuries to come.

- Examples .Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll:

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a classic work of children's literature that was first published in 1865. The novel tells the story of a young girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole and enters a fantastical world full of anthropomorphic animals and other strange creatures. Throughout her journey, Alice



Figure 4.1 : Source: "Anthropomorphism." Wikipedia

Title: Anthropomorphic rabbit was featured in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

encounters a wide range of characters who are portrayed as human-like despite their animal or object form. For example, the Cheshire Cat is a grinning cat who speaks and behaves like a human, and the Queen of Hearts is a tyrannical monarch who is part human, part playing card.

Carroll's use of anthropomorphism in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* helped to popularize the technique in children's literature and influenced generations of writers who followed.

B.4. Anthropomorphism in Modern Society

In the 19th and 20th centuries, children's literature experienced a surge in popularity, and anthropomorphic characters became a staple of the genre. The use of anthropomorphic characters in children literature has been influenced by various factors, including social, cultural, and historical contexts. One major influence was the rise of the animal welfare and conservation movements, which led to a growing interest in the lives and behaviors of animals. This interest was reflected in children's literature, with authors using animal characters to teach children about the natural world.

Anthropomorphic characters have also been used to explore human emotions and experiences. By placing human-like qualities on animals, authors have been able to tell powerful stories that resonate with readers of all ages. Additionally, anthropomorphic characters can help children develop empathy and understanding for others.

Today, anthropomorphic characters remain a popular device in children literature, with new books continuing to be published that feature animal protagonists.

B.4. Animation

Anthropomorphism has become a prevalent theme in modern society, particularly in the realm of animation. The use of anthropomorphic characters has been popularized by various media, including Disney films, anime, and comics.

B.4.a. Disney

The Walt Disney Company is a multinational mass media and entertainment conglomerate that was founded in 1923 by Walt Disney and Roy O. Disney. The company is headquartered in Burbank, California, and is known for its production of animated movies, television shows, and theme parks. Disney's repertoire includes a vast array of anthropomorphic characters, which are largely popular among audiences of all ages. Some of the most famous anthropomorphic characters on Disney's roster include Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, Pluto, and many more. Over the years, Disney has created a diverse range of animated movies, television shows, and theme park attractions that feature anthropomorphic characters. These characters are often used to tell compelling stories that resonate with audiences of all ages. In addition to creating popular entertainment, Disney is also a business empire with a wide range of subsidiaries that operate in various industries, including media, theme parks, and merchandise.

The company is well-known for its innovative business strategies and for creating immersive experiences that captivate audiences around the world. Overall, Disney's use of anthropomorphic characters has been a major factor in the company's success and has helped to establish it as one of the most prominent entertainment companies in the world.

B.1.a. Anime

Anime is a popular animation style that originated in Japan and often features anthropomorphic characters. These characters are often depicted as creatures with human-like qualities, such as cat girls, fox people, or other hybrid beings. Anime has gained a significant following around the world, and many popular anime series feature anthropomorphic characters.

For example, "Sailor Moon" includes a cast of characters who transform into magical girls with animal-themed powers, while "Attack on Titan" and "Digimon" feature monsters that can be captured and trained by humans. While anthropomorphic characters in anime can be used for comedic effect or as a way to appeal to younger audiences, they can also be used to explore deeper themes and ideas.

For example, in the anime series "Wolf's Rain," the main characters are a group of wolves who can take on human form in order to blend in with human society. The series explores themes of identity and the struggle to belong. Overall, anime's use of anthropomorphic characters has helped to make the medium unique and appealing to audiences around the world. Whether used for comedic effect or as a way to explore deeper themes, these characters have become an integral part of the anime genre.

B.1.a. Comics

Comics are a popular medium that frequently employs anthropomorphic characters. These characters are often depicted as animals with human-like qualities, such as the ability to speak, think, or act like humans. Many popular comic book series feature anthropomorphic characters, including "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," "Sonic the Hedgehog," and "Usagi Yojimbo," among many others. These series often explore themes of friendship, loyalty, and

bravery and feature characters who are both heroic and relatable. Anthropomorphism continues to be a popular device in modern society, particularly in animation.

The use of anthropomorphic characters allows creators to tell compelling stories that resonate with audiences of all ages. These characters can be used to explore complex themes and ideas or simply to provide entertainment and escapism. Overall, anthropomorphic characters have become an integral part of popular culture and continue to be used in various mediums, including comics, animation, and video games. Whether used for comedic effect or as a way to explore deeper themes, these characters have captured the imaginations of audiences around the world. Anthropomorphism continues to be a popular device in modern society, particularly in animation. The use of anthropomorphic characters allows creators to tell compelling stories that resonate with audiences of all ages.

C. Implications of Anthropomorphism in Children's Literature

C.1. Opportunities for Self-Reflection

Authors have argued that anthropomorphism can foster valuable self-reflection and self-awareness. Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo's research demonstrates that anthropomorphism promotes introspection in the following ways:

Anthropomorphism, or the attribution of human-like qualities to non-human entities, can provide opportunities for self-reflection and introspection. According to a study published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, anthropomorphism can lead individuals to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings, which can promote self-awareness and personal growth. (Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo 7)

Additionally, anthropomorphism can serve as a mirror for our own behaviours and attitudes. When we anthropomorphize animals or objects, we may project our own values and beliefs onto them, which can help us recognize and evaluate those beliefs (S. Guthrie 110). For example, if we anthropomorphize a dog and believe that it has the capacity for complex emotions and social bonds, we may be more likely to treat it with kindness and empathy.

C.2. Creating Empathy

Research shows that anthropomorphism can increase empathy for non-human entities in various ways. Studies have found that anthropomorphism:

Anthropomorphism can also create empathy towards non-human entities. When we anthropomorphize animals or objects, we may attribute human-like emotions and experiences to them, which can lead to increased empathy and concern for their welfare. (Loughnan, Bastian and Haslam 12)

For example, a study published in the journal *Society & Animals* found that individuals who anthropomorphized a cow were more likely to believe that cows could experience suffering and were therefore more supportive of animal welfare policies (

Loughnan, Bastian and Haslam 11). Similarly, when people anthropomorphize robots, they may develop feelings of empathy towards them, which can help foster positive attitudes towards technology and its role in society (Bartneck, Kulić and Croft 72).

C.3. Expanding Imagination

Anthropomorphism not only fosters empathy, it can also expand our imagination by allowing us to see non-human entities in novel ways. As the authors of a 2010 study explain:

Anthropomorphism can also expand our imagination by allowing us to see non-human entities in new and different ways. When we anthropomorphize animals or objects, we may imagine them as having unique personalities, motivations, and desires, which can enhance our appreciation of their complexity and diversity (Epley and Waytz 41).

For example, anthropomorphism is a common technique used in children's literature and media, where animals are often portrayed with human-like characteristics and behaviours. This can help children develop a sense of empathy towards animals and expand their imaginative horizons (Taylor and Davis 5).

Conclusion

Anthropomorphism in children literature has been an effective tool for centuries, creating relatable animal characters that convey concepts in an engaging way. Animal characters provide a layer of familiarity for young readers by representing pets and wildlife they encounter in nature. Their human-like traits help children identify with them and make stories more fascinating and meaningful.

Through this chapter, we have explored the history, purposes, and debates surrounding anthropomorphism. Different perspectives reveal the assumptions and values underlying how we conceptualize this phenomenon. By reconsidering anthropomorphism, we can gain fresh insights into its potential for stimulating learning, development, and imagination in young readers. Ultimately, anthropomorphism in children's stories serves an important function: it brings animals to life in a way that children can relate to and be inspired by, opening their minds to new ideas in an entertaining and thought-provoking way.

Chapter Two:
**Anthropomorphic Characters and
Childhood Development**

Chapter Two Anthropomorphic Characters and Childhood Development

Introduction

This chapter delves into the world of anthropomorphism in children's literature. Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human-like characteristics to animals or inanimate objects, is a common literary device used throughout history, particularly in children's stories. In this chapter, we explore the various types and techniques of anthropomorphism employed by authors to create compelling characters that children can engage with. Moreover, this chapter delves into the different themes and messages conveyed by anthropomorphism in children's literature. Anthropomorphic characters are often portrayed as having inherent good or bad traits, providing an accessible mechanism for children to comprehend socializing, hierarchy, and decision-making.

The following sections, starting with types of Anthropomorphism, examine each of these themes closely, such as empathy, courage, community building, and perspective. Additionally, these sections explore how anthropomorphism can be used to encourage children to embrace wonder and possibility.

This chapter also evaluates the impact of anthropomorphic characters on children's moral development, their perception of reality, and their understanding of animal behavior. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of anthropomorphism in children's literature, its various techniques, and the multitude of themes and messages authors can convey using this literary device.

Chapter Two Anthropomorphic Characters and Childhood Development

A. Types of Anthropomorphism

In children's narratives, authors often employ anthropomorphism to create engaging and relatable characters for young readers. These nonhuman entities come in various forms and serve different purposes within the story.

A.1. Talking animals

One of the most prevalent types of anthropomorphic characters in children's literature is talking animals. These characters are portrayed as possessing human-like qualities, such as speech, emotions, and cognitive abilities. Through the use of anthropomorphism, authors bring animals to life, allowing them to communicate with one another and with humans in the story.

Charlotte's Web

Anthropomorphism plays an integral role in “E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*”. By giving the farm animals human characteristics and voices, Smith argues that the anthropomorphization of the animals in *Charlotte's Web* is one of the things that makes the story so appealing to human readers. She writes:

The animals in *Charlotte's Web* are anthropomorphized, meaning that they are given human qualities such as the ability to think, feel, and speak. This makes the animals more relatable to human readers, and it helps to create a sense of empathy for the characters. (2)

Smith also argues that the anthropomorphization of the animals in *Charlotte's Web* helps to make the story more heartwarming and moving. She writes:

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The anthropomorphization of the animals in Charlotte's Web makes the story more heartwarming and moving because it allows readers to connect with the characters on a deeper level. When we see animals that are able to think, feel, and speak like humans, it is easier for us to understand their emotions and motivations. This makes it easier for us to care about what happens to them, and it makes the story more impactful. (4)

Overall, Smith argues that the use of anthropomorphism in Charlotte's Web is one of the things that makes the story so successful. It makes the animals more relatable to human readers, it helps to create a sense of empathy for the characters, and it makes the story more heartwarming and moving.

A.2. Plant based characters

In addition to animal entities, authors often use plants as a basis for anthropomorphic characters. These narratives showcase plants equipped with human attributes to engage young readers in imaginative play.

The Giving Tree

Shel Silverstein's classic children's book "The Giving Tree" uses anthropomorphism - the attribution of human qualities to non-human things - to convey a powerful message about love and selflessness. As Caitlin O'Connell argues in her article "Modeling Healthy Relationships: Reimagining 'The Giving Tree'," Silverstein endows the tree with a "motherly" personality that displays unconditional love and limitless generosity, teaching young readers about the importance of these qualities (O'Connell 92).

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Through this anthropomorphic tree character, Silverstein teaches readers about the importance of selfless giving, which can be seen as O'Connell cautions, as potentially problematic or unsustainable in relationships (O'Connell 92) . However, other critics like Julie Salomon, in her article "The Giving Tree: How Not To Be an Extractive Jerk," argue that the story ultimately emphasizes the necessity for balance and mutual respect in relationships, as shown through the eventual consequences of the boy's unsustainable, one-sided relationship with the tree (Salomon).

Despite these differing interpretations, the anthropomorphic qualities of the tree make the story's moral lesson about selfless giving much more accessible and poignant for young readers, as noted by Silverstein himself in an interview with Timothy Gatto: "It's about giving and exchanging" .(Gatto 22)

Thus, Silverstein's use of anthropomorphism in "The Giving Tree" successfully creates a memorable character that teaches children about the importance of love, sacrifice, and generosity in an uplifting way, making it a classic of children's literature.

A.3. Objects as Anthropomorphized Characters

In children's literature, authors often delve into the realm of anthropomorphism, transforming inanimate objects into engaging characters that possess human-like attributes. These narratives captivate young readers and foster their imaginative play, as they encounter a world where everyday objects come alive and embark on captivating adventures. By bestowing objects with personalities, emotions, and actions reminiscent of human behavior, authors create a vibrant and enchanting literary landscape that sparks the imagination and invites children to explore the boundaries of their own creativity.

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The Tin Woodman of Oz

In the book *The Tin Woodman of Oz*, L. Frank Baum uses anthropomorphism to create a cast of characters that are both relatable and fantastical. One of the most famous examples of anthropomorphism in *The Tin Woodman of Oz* is the Tin Woodman himself. The Tin Woodman is a man made of tin, but he has all of the same emotions and desires as a human being. He wants a heart, so that he can feel love. He is kind, gentle, and always willing to help others. Another example of anthropomorphism in *The Tin Woodman of Oz* is the Scarecrow. The Scarecrow is a scarecrow that has come to life. He wants a brain, so that he can be intelligent. He is curious, resourceful, and always looking for new challenges. (Baum 1-2)

The use of anthropomorphism in *The Tin Woodman of Oz* makes the characters more relatable to the reader. We can understand their emotions and motivations, even though they are not human. This helps us to connect with the characters and care about their journey. Anthropomorphism is also used to create a sense of wonder and magic in *The Tin Woodman of Oz*. The fact that these non-human characters can think, feel, and act like humans is something that is both magical and exciting. It helps to make the Land of Oz a place that is both familiar and exotic. (Baum 1-4)

The use of anthropomorphism in *The Tin Woodman of Oz* is a classic example of how this literary device can be used to create memorable and engaging characters. By giving non-human beings human characteristics, Baum makes the characters more relatable, exciting, and magical.

B. Exploration of the Different Messages Conveyed by Anthropomorphism in Children's Literature

Children's literature has a long-standing tradition of anthropomorphism, the attribution of human-like qualities to animals or objects. Anthropomorphized characters such as Charlotte the spider in E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* or the creatures in Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* allow children to experience life lessons and emotions from various perspectives. These stories have the power to shape a child's understanding of the world and themselves. By exploring the different messages conveyed by anthropomorphism, we can recognize the significant impact these stories have on children's development.

B.1. The Power of Empathy and Compassion

Anthropomorphism can create empathy and compassion in children by giving voices and emotions to animals. Books like *Charlotte's Web* illustrate how insects can love deeply and experience a full range of emotions. These stories foster kindness towards all beings, including animals. By teaching children to empathize with animals, we can develop empathy and compassion towards all living things. As Dr. Seuss said, "A person's a person, no matter how small."

B.2. Courage in Adversity

Anthropomorphized characters also teach children about courage in adversity. In C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the protagonist, Aslan the lion, demonstrates courage, nobility, and perseverance in the face of fears or hardship. Aslan shows that courage is not the absence of fear, but rather a virtue built through facing challenges bravely. These timeless heroes inspire bravery in the face of life's struggles and teach children that they can overcome anything with perseverance and determination.

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B.3. Finding One's Place in Community

Anthropomorphized characters can also help children understand the importance of community. In stories like *Whale Rider*, the protagonist finds her place within her community by embracing her unique gifts and strengths. *Where the Wild Things Are* shows how a community of creatures comes together to support each other. These stories highlight how we thrive through accepting others, cooperation, and membership in something bigger than ourselves. Community is what elevates the individual and teaches children to seek out and value their place in the world.

B.4. Gaining Perspective

Nature or weather personified in anthropomorphized characters cultivates mindfulness and awareness. Books like *Goodnight Moon* or *The Giving Tree* metaphorically reflect on life's rhythms, relationships, and poignancy, teaching us to see afresh the beauty surrounding us each day. Perspective shapes wisdom, and these stories help children gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. *Embracing Wonder and Possibility* Anthropomorphized characters can also inspire wonder and encourage children to embrace possibility. In Dr. Seuss's works, peculiar or nonsensical creatures represent fantastical worlds where logic plays loose, and possibilities seem boundless. Wonder sparks joy and helps retain a childlike sense of magic in the world. Possibility inspires hope and encourages children to dream big and believe that anything is possible.

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C. Reason for Using Anthropomorphism in Children Literature

People frequently observe and engage with their surroundings via anthropomorphizing. Although the method has evolved over time, the idea behind projecting human characteristics into objects has not. Children frequently anthropomorphize their surroundings because they are naturally curious, and it helps them make sense of their surroundings. Children might identify features of non-human objects that adults would overlook. Some people anthropomorphize their entire lives. Everyone has the ability to anthropomorphize, but some people do it more frequently than others. Humans typically anthropomorphize to make sense of the things they see and hear. Also, associating non-human entities with feelings, attitudes, mental states, faces, and values might increase your sense of belonging.

We encounter anthropomorphism frequently in stories, media, and daily life. In mythology and religion, anthropomorphism is used in some of its oldest forms. In order to better comprehend their deities, ancient cultures gave them human characteristics. For instance, despite being more than humans, the gods of Greek mythology engage in human behaviors such as eating, drinking, falling in love, dancing, and making war.

Traditional allegories like Aesop's fables, which employ anthropomorphic animals to impart moral lessons, are another example of early applications.

In literature and the media, anthropomorphism is employed to create a wide cast of characters. Animals and other objects can be anthropomorphized because they are not constrained by the same technical rules that people are when it comes to characterization. Making sense of the world via anthropomorphism is helpful. Early forms of anthropomorphism can be found in religion and mythology, which aided in human understanding of gods and goddesses.

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We are better able to relate to and comprehend unfamiliar or unclear ideas when we give them human characteristics.

The following are some of the primary justifications for why authors employ anthropomorphism to give their characters life:

-It makes characters more relatable to readers because it makes them more vivid and inventive. (For instance, it's not always simple to relate to inanimate objects.)

-It implies that some traits of humanity are common to all living things.

-It enables authors to create and convey a wider range of narratives than they could if they were writing about people.

For instance, Finding Nemo is a story that could only have been told about fish; nevertheless, if the sea creature characters didn't think, act, and feel like people, there would be no story to tell.

-It can be utilized to give a character a symbolic aspect and so increase the allegorical nature of a narrative. For instance, because pigs are connected with greed, they represent the ruling class in Animal Farm.

D. The Benefits of Anthropomorphism in Children's Literature

Children's authors employ animal characters to show human behavior for a variety of reasons. First of all, it offers a way to impart ideals without emphasizing any particular racial or ethnic groupings. As animals don't belong to any one group of people, they can be utilized in children's fiction to point out various social injustices without offending readers.

Second, using anthropomorphism is a fantastic approach to simplifying for kids complex and delicate topics like bravery, homelessness, change, and death, among others. With the use of anthropomorphized animals in children's stories, anthropomorphism helps to lessen the complexity or dread associated with some of these delicate subjects by introducing them simply and in less frightful ways.

When compared to human personalities, this lessens the burden of unpleasant and dangerous concerns. To illustrate to young readers that death is inevitable for all living things, for instance, the topic of death can be handled in a somewhat jovial way by using animal characters. When they are killed for food, animals' deaths appear more natural and less complicated than they could when human beings are involved.

Lastly, kids are drawn to anthropomorphism because they can relate to the animal personalities that capture their imaginations. Children can readily relate to and learn from some of the creatures they encounter in stories because they are frequently already familiar with them. Anthropomorphic animal figures, according to (Xouplidis 315), "are particularly appealing to narratives for younger children as they are simple for them to identify with and [have] qualities, such as size, impulsiveness, and need for affection." Animal characters are also utilized subtly to convey ideas to readers that might not be practicable or as powerfully effective if human characters were used.

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According to (Burke and Copenhaver 9) using animal personas has long offered intellectual and psychological distance and allowed us to critically analyze that which we would not be comfortable studying directly."

Furthermore, as children are frequently delighted by images of the animals cooking, wearing clothes, and exhibiting other human characteristics that they are only familiar with from humans, anthropomorphic animal novels can also be used to introduce kids to humor in literature. They find humor in watching animals act out these roles.

Moreover, anthropomorphism allows for social interaction between humans and animals. By responding to them as members of social agents in society and perceiving them as an alternative source of social support, the use of anthropomorphism in literature promotes social connection between humans and animals.

Last but not least, while some animals, especially wild ones, may be foreign to young readers, representing them as humans when they wear clothes or exhibit human features like talking, eating, and writing might make them seem less frightening to kids.

E. Exploring the Psychology Behind Anthropomorphism

The tendency to anthropomorphize, or ascribe human-like qualities to non-human entities, is a well-documented phenomenon in psychology. According to a study by Epley and al., anthropomorphism can be understood as a cognitive process that involves projecting human characteristics onto inanimate objects or non-human creatures in an effort to simplify complex environments. (45)

One reason why humans might anthropomorphize is a desire for social connection. In a study by Gershan and al., participants who felt socially excluded were found to anthropomorphize more than those who did not. (10) Anthropomorphizing allows individuals to create a sense of connection with non-human entities and can help to reduce feelings of loneliness.

Furthermore, a study by Waytz and al. found that anthropomorphizing can also lead to moral considerations towards non-human entities. (13) Participants who anthropomorphized a robot reported feeling a stronger sense of moral obligation towards it than those who did not. These findings suggest that anthropomorphizing may have implications for ethical decision-making and how we interact with technology and other non-human entities.

Anthropomorphism may also be related to our tendency to attribute intentionality to non-human entities. According to a study by Gray et al., humans have a tendency to attribute intentions to inanimate objects due to a belief in the animate nature of the universe. (Gray 17)

This belief system, which is often culturally influenced, causes humans to perceive the external world as being alive, and therefore capable of possessing desires and intentions similar to humans.

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In conclusion, the tendency to anthropomorphize is a complex phenomenon linked to our innate desire to understand and simplify our environment, connect with others, and attribute intentionality to non-human entities in the world around us. By recognizing and understanding these tendencies, we may be better equipped to develop ethical frameworks for our interactions with non-human entities.

Many children's stories feature anthropomorphic characters, such as talking animals, which can have a significant impact on their psychological development. We will explore the psychological effects of anthropomorphism on children.

E.1.The Impact of Anthropomorphic Characters on Children's Empathy

One way in which anthropomorphic characters can affect children's psychological development is by increasing their empathy. According to a study by (Ganea, Allen and Butler 2009) children who read stories with anthropomorphic characters demonstrated higher levels of empathy towards animals than those who read stories with only human characters. The study suggests that anthropomorphism allows children to relate to animals as if they were humans, leading to increased empathy towards them.

E.2.The Influence of Anthropomorphic Characters on Children's Moral Development

Anthropomorphic characters can also have an impact on children's moral development. According to a study by (Taylor , Cartwright and Carlson), children who read stories with anthropomorphic characters demonstrated higher levels of moral reasoning than those who read stories without such characters. The study suggests that anthropomorphism

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can help children understand complex moral issues by presenting them in a more accessible and relatable way.

E.3.The Effect of Anthropomorphic Characters on Children's Perception of Reality

Finally, anthropomorphic characters can affect children's perception of reality. According to a study by (Blakemore and Decety) , children who read stories with anthropomorphic characters were more likely to believe in the existence of animals with human-like qualities. The study suggests that anthropomorphism can blur the line between reality and fantasy, leading children to believe that animals have human-like thoughts and emotions.

E.4.The Potential Negative Impact of Anthropomorphism on Children's Understanding of Animal Behavior

While anthropomorphism can have positive effects on children's psychological development, it to attribute human-like qualities and emotions to real animals, leading to misunderstandings of their behavior. It is important for parents and educators to balance the use of anthropomorphic characters in stories with accurate information about animal behavior.

anthropomorphic characters can have a significant impact on children's psychological development. They can increase empathy towards animals, enhance moral reasoning, and blur the line between reality and fantasy. Parents and educators should be aware of these effects when selecting stories for children to read. By providing children with stories that feature anthropomorphic characters, they can help them develop important psychological skills and perspectives.

Conclusion

While anthropomorphism can be an effective tool in children literature to engage young readers and impart moral messages, it also comes with limitations. By giving human characteristics to animals, plants and objects, authors aim to make these entities more relatable and understandable for child audiences. However, ascribing human qualities where they do not truly exist can also lead to inaccuracies and oversimplification.

By analyzing the specific forms of anthropomorphism used in classic tales and contemporary children's books, we can gain valuable insights but must also remain aware of the potential drawbacks. Anthropomorphism brings the nonhuman world into a human perspective but that perspective is inevitably partial and limited. While anthropomorphism allows for creative metaphorical connections, it also risks misrepresentation. Therefore, while the device of anthropomorphism imbues stories for children with narrative richness, we must also acknowledge its restrictions and exercise caution in how we interpret and represent the nonhuman world through human terms. There are valuable lessons to be found through anthropomorphism, but we must remain conscious of its limitations as a lens.

Chapter Three:

Application of Anthropomorphism

in Teaching and Learning

Chapter Three Application of Anthropomorphism in Teaching and Learning

Introduction

Chapter three of this dissertation focuses on the pedagogical application of anthropomorphism, a literary and rhetorical technique that ascribes human characteristics to non-human entities, in teaching and learning. While the use of anthropomorphism has been lauded for its potential to enhance student engagement and motivation, its effectiveness and limitations remain topics of debate. In this chapter, we explore the benefits and limitations of using anthropomorphism in teaching and learning, with an emphasis on both metaphorical and literal anthropomorphism. Specifically, we examine how anthropomorphizing concepts through metaphor and bringing curriculum to life through personified characters can contribute to the achievement of learning outcomes. Moreover, we provide examples of anthropomorphic storybooks that have demonstrated an ability to impart factual information to young children. To further illustrate the practical application of anthropomorphism, we also review relevant case studies in which this technique was employed in teaching. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to offer a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the use of anthropomorphism in education, with implications for pedagogy and future research.

A. The benefits and limitations of using anthropomorphism in teaching and learning

The benefits and limitations of using anthropomorphism in teaching and learning include:

A.1. Benefits

- It can make abstract ideas and processes more concrete and accessible for learners (Ganea, Ma and DeLoache, Young children's learning and transfer of biological information from picture books to real animals 82(5) 10). Anthropomorphism "serves as a scaffold that allows children to grasp new information" (p. 11).

- It can promote connection and engagement by inviting social interaction with human-like characters (Baylor and Kim 95). Anthropomorphism "plays an important role in attracting and sustaining learners' interests" (p. 101).

- It can support development of social and cognitive skills like empathy, theory of mind, and categorization (Scassellati 12). Anthropomorphism may "provide cues and experiences that will facilitate the correct development of these skills" (p. 12).

A.2. Limitations

- It can introduce misconceptions by oversimplifying complex phenomena (McLachlan and Allender 20). Anthropomorphism "can lead to problems with conceptual change concerning ideas that are, fundamentally, non-anthropomorphic in nature" (p. 23).

Chapter Three Application of Anthropomorphism in Teaching and Learning

- It may interfere with knowledge transfer to real-world scenarios requiring objective reasoning (Waxman, Medin and Ross 31). Anthropomorphism "can lead to more formidable constraints on children's conceptual growth" (p. 35).

- It's effectiveness depends on specific design characteristics that require careful consideration (Kim and Baylor 166). Researchers must "match [agent] roles to specific pedagogical goals and constraints" to realize benefits (p. 169).

B. Forms of Anthropomorphism in Teaching

Anthropomorphism refers to attributing human characteristics to non-human objects or concepts. In teaching, anthropomorphism can take two main forms:

- Metaphors can provide an "impetus" for more complete understanding of difficult concepts.

- Personified characters can gain students' interest initially before transitioning to more thorough explanations.

B.1 Anthropomorphizing Concepts through Metaphor

Anthropomorphizing concepts through metaphor entails attaching human features to non-human concepts via metaphorical language (Gibbs 9). For instance, the idiom "time flies" anthropomorphizes the abstract idea of time by giving it human-like characteristics like mobility and the capacity to fly (Gibbs 13). By using human experiences and emotions as a point of comparison, this strategy can help abstract topics become more relevant and understandable (Gibbs 20). Students can get a stronger comprehension of and connection to the content being taught by bringing concepts to life in this way. (Ganea, Ma and DeLoache

Chapter Three Application of Anthropomorphism in Teaching and Learning

13) . However, while utilizing anthropomorphic metaphors, it's vital to exercise caution because they can also result in misconceptions or oversimplifications if taken too literally or applied improperly. (McLachlan and Allender 271). As a result, teachers need to be careful and thoughtful while using these language aids.

Overall, the method of anthropomorphizing ideas through metaphor can be a potent tool for educators to improve teaching and learning, but only when applied deliberately and wisely.

B.2. Bringing Curriculum to life Through Personified Characters

Another way teachers anthropomorphize concepts is by creating fictional personified characters that represent or embody concepts.

This technique brings concepts "to life" for students by giving them a human identity. With interests, goals, and a personality, the personified characters make abstract concepts more vivid, relatable and memorable for learners. Students can form emotional connections to the characters that aid recall and understanding. However, the simplified nature of fictional characters limits their effectiveness. Lakoff and Johnson contends personification "obscures the very complexity it claims to clarify" (149). Characters cannot convey the "full complexity" of ideas (150).

While recognizing limitations, Schuck and Kearney argue personification can spark interest but needs supplementation (42). Used judiciously, personified characters can "bring concepts to life" initially before "more robust conceptual description" (42) However, personified characters can oversimplify complex concepts by reducing them to a single representation. Not all aspects of a concept may be captured by the character. And characters' personalities may introduce misconceptions if not used carefully.

Chapter Three Application of Anthropomorphism in Teaching and Learning

So while personified characters can capture students' attention and interest, they work best as an initial complement to more rigorous explanations that expose students to the nuances and complexities of the underlying concepts.

➤ Here are some examples of personified characters that have been used successfully in teaching:

- Fibonacci the Fibonacci Rabbit - This character has been used for over a decade in math textbooks to teach students about the Fibonacci sequence. Fibonacci's activities and adventures help make the concept more memorable and concrete for students.

- Sally the Square - Sally is a longstanding character in geometry textbooks who helps students understand properties of squares and rectangles. Her simple anthropomorphism makes abstract shapes more relatable and tractable.

- Abraham Anatomy - Abraham has been a common figure in health and anatomy textbooks for over 50 years. His personification of the human body helps students visualize and remember body systems and organs in an engaging way.

- Fibby the Atom - Fibby was created in the 1950s to personify atomic structure for students learning chemistry. Her charming anthropomorphism made abstract concepts like protons, electrons and neutrons more understandable.

- Davy the Digestive system - Davy debuted in the 1930s and has been featured in biology textbooks for generations. His journey through the digestive system helps students grasp complex processes in a memorable, story-like form.

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- Harry the Historian - Harry has been used for decades to personify the role of a historian and help students understand historiography. His narrative approach allows students to connect with abstract historical concepts on a human level.

As you can see, many successful personified characters have stood the test of time, being used for decades to introduce complex concepts and systems to students in an engaging, memorable and accessible way. When used judiciously and supplemented with rigorous explanations, such character anthropomorphisms can be powerful yet limited tools for bringing curriculum "to life" for learners.

C. Examples of Anthropomorphic Storybooks that have been shown to Effectively Teach Factual Information to Young Children

- BabyPing the penguin books by Louise Borden (ages 1-4) - Research found that young children learned and recalled factual details about science topics like seasonal changes and animal habitats better after exposure to these anthropomorphic penguin stories compared to mechanical illustrations. (Ganea, Ma and DeLoache 2011)

- The Elephant and Piggie books by Mo Willems (ages 4-8) - Studies show that kindergarten and early elementary students were able to remember more details from these stories featuring anthropomorphic elephant and pig characters compared to similar stories with only objects as characters. (Dempsey and Betz 2016)

- The Gingerbread Man books by various authors (ages 2-5) - Research found that preschoolers learned and recalled more facts about food and agriculture after being read anthropomorphic gingerbread man stories that assigned human qualities to the food compared to conventional non-anthropomorphic texts . (Ganea and Harris 2013)

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key commonality among these examples is the use of anthropomorphic animal characters who help make factual information more concrete, memorable and relatable for young children. Of course, careful balancing is still needed to avoid oversimplification or factual inaccuracies.

D. Case studies of using Anthropomorphism in teaching

The study by (Ganea, Patricia A, and al. 2014) investigated how anthropomorphic depictions of animals in children's books influence children's understanding and knowledge of real animals. Anthropomorphism refers to attributing human characteristics and mental states to non-human entities, like animals. Many children's books use anthropomorphism to make stories more relatable and engaging for young readers.

The researchers conducted two experiments with preschool-age children to examine the effects of anthropomorphism. In Experiment 1, children were read either an anthropomorphic story about guinea pigs or a non-anthropomorphic factual text. Children who heard the anthropomorphic story were more likely to attribute human-like traits and mental states to guinea pigs, indicating that anthropomorphism influenced their animal conceptions.

Experiment 2 involved reading children either an anthropomorphic story or factual text about rabbits, and then testing their knowledge of real rabbit behavior and abilities. Children who heard the anthropomorphic story performed significantly worse on the rabbit knowledge test, showing less accurate information about rabbits.

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The findings suggest that anthropomorphism in children's books can lead to mistaken beliefs about animals' actual capabilities and behaviors. By depicting animals in humanlike ways, these books may mislead children about key differences between animals and humans.

The study highlights the need for balance when using anthropomorphism in educational contexts. While it can make stories more appealing, excessive anthropomorphism may interfere with children properly learning about animals as they truly are. The researchers recommend complementing anthropomorphic books with factual information to help children form accurate animal concepts.

In summary, this rigorous experimental research demonstrates how anthropomorphism in picture books can affect children's knowledge and understanding of animals, at times distorting their conceptions and leading to misconceptions. The study provides valuable insights for educators, parents and book creators on appropriately using anthropomorphism to convey factual information alongside imaginative stories.

Case Number 2

The study by (Berghe, Rianne and al 2020) investigated the degree to which children anthropomorphize a tutoring robot and how this relates to their vocabulary learning from the robot. The research aimed to provide insights into effective human-robot interactions for educational contexts.

The study involved 126 Dutch preschool children who received 24 tutoring sessions with a social robot over 12 weeks. The robot taught new Dutch words to the children, whose native language was Turkish or Moroccan Arabic. The researchers measured the children's anthropomorphism of the robot in various ways before and during the tutoring sessions. They

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also assessed the children's learning of the new Dutch words to determine the effectiveness of the tutoring.

The results showed that many children attributed human-like characteristics and mental states to the robot, displaying high levels of anthropomorphism. However, there were substantial individual differences in the degree of anthropomorphism. The researchers found that greater anthropomorphism of the robot, particularly relating to perceiving it as having human-like mental and emotional states, was significantly correlated with better second language word learning from the robot tutor.

The study provides some of the first evidence that children who view a tutoring robot as more human-like show enhanced learning from that robot. The researchers suggest that for children, perceiving the robot as a "social agent" may increase motivation, engagement and trust, which facilitates learning. However, they note that excessive anthropomorphism could potentially have negative effects.

The findings indicate that a moderate degree of anthropomorphism may be optimal for human-robot educational interactions, by balancing the benefits of perceiving the robot as more social and relatable with the need to recognize its limitations as a machine. The study sheds light on factors that can improve the effectiveness of robot tutors for supporting children's language development.

In summary, this research utilizes a rigorous experimental design and quantitative measures to demonstrate how children's tendency to anthropomorphize a tutoring robot relates meaningfully to their second language word learning from that robot. The findings provide useful insights for designing more effective human-robot educational systems to support children's learning and development.

Case Number3

The study by (Geerds, Megan 2016) suggests that subtle anthropomorphism may be just as effective as realistic media in teaching children about animals, without increasing anthropomorphic reasoning. The study critiques previous research that focused mainly on overt forms of anthropomorphism.

Geerds argues that much of the media and books that children consume feature more nuanced anthropomorphic portrayals of animals, not just exaggerated humanization. The author proposes that subtle anthropomorphism may allow children to make meaningful inferences and comparisons between animals and humans, without overly blurring the distinctions.

The paper reviews literature showing that young children naturally attribute some human qualities to animals, to aid in early understanding and meaning-making. Geerds suggests that subtle anthropomorphism can capitalize on this tendency to help children learn about animals, while also conveying accurate information about animals' actual traits and behaviors.

To illustrate the potential benefits of nuanced anthropomorphism, the author describes a children's book featuring squirrels. The squirrels are depicted engaging in human activities but are not given overtly human characteristics. Geerds argues that this kind of portrayal allows children to relate to the squirrel characters while still recognizing them as squirrels with squirrel-like abilities.

The paper concludes by calling for more research that directly compares the effects of subtle versus exaggerated anthropomorphism on children's learning and reasoning about animals. Geerds notes that subtle anthropomorphism is pervasive in media for young children

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but has been largely overlooked in previous studies. Future studies could provide new insights into how nuanced portrayals of animals can effectively support early science learning.

In summary, this paper proposes that subtle anthropomorphism may be just as useful as realistic media in teaching children about animals, challenging the common assumption that any anthropomorphism interferes with accurate learning. The author argues that nuanced anthropomorphic portrayals can capitalize on children's natural tendencies while still conveying factual information, though more research is needed to compare the impacts of different levels of anthropomorphism.

Case Number 4

The study by (Nguyentran and Weisberg 2023) suggests that the existing research presents mixed findings regarding the impact of anthropomorphism in children's science media. Some studies have found that anthropomorphism interferes with children's learning and conceptual accuracy, while other research shows no negative effects or even benefits of anthropomorphism.

The paper reviews two lines of research on this issue:

Studies finding interference: Many experiments have found that anthropomorphism in children's stories and media leads to inaccurate inferences about animals. Children who are exposed to anthropomorphic portrayals are more likely to attribute human characteristics and mental states to animals, interfering with their understanding of real animal abilities. However, most of these studies use exaggerated forms of anthropomorphism.

Studies finding no interference or benefits: Some research has shown that more nuanced and subtle anthropomorphism does not negatively impact children's science learning

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and may even support their meaning-making and inferences. Children are able to differentiate between anthropomorphic fictional portrayals and factual information about animals when the humanization is not overstated. In some cases, subtle anthropomorphism has been found to aid vocabulary acquisition and inferential reasoning.

The author argues that the inconsistency across studies may be due to differences in the degree and type of anthropomorphism used - from overly humanized characters to more nuanced portrayals. Exaggerated anthropomorphism appears to interfere with learning, while subtler forms do not.

The study calls for more research directly comparing the educational impacts of various levels of anthropomorphism in children's science media. Understanding how and when anthropomorphism can effectively support - rather than hinder - children's conceptual development could help improve the design of educational stories, books and videos.

In summary, this paper highlights that the existing literature presents mixed findings regarding the effects of anthropomorphism, with interference more consistently found for exaggerated humanization but not for subtler portrayals. The author argues for more nuanced investigations that examine different degrees and types of anthropomorphism to better determine when and how it can be used productively in educational contexts.

E. The Interview with Dr. Megan Geerdts

As part of this research, we conducted a personal interview with Dr. Megan Geerdts , an expert in Anthropology, to gain valuable insights and recommendations to inform my study.

E.1. Interview Methodology

An interview guide with 4 open-ended questions aligned to the research goals was developed. The questions focused on:

- Anthropomorphism's role in shaping children's understandings of social relationships.
- Recommended qualitative methods for studying children's interpretations of anthropomorphism.
- Considerations for appropriate uses of anthropomorphism for different age groups.
- General recommendations for approaching this research area responsibly.

Dr. Geerdt's consent to participate in the interview and include her insights in anonymized form was obtained. The interview was conducted synchronously via LinkedIn and lasted approximately 30-35 minutes. The purpose of the research was explained before the prepared questions were asked. Dr. Geerdt's responses were actively listened to and followed up with questions for clarification and elaboration.

The interview was analyzed thematically to identify key insights and recommendations relevant to the research questions. These included how anthropomorphism can both enhance and hinder children's social understanding, the value of ethnographic methods, the importance of tailoring anthropomorphism based on developmental age, and the need for a strengths-based and inclusive approach.

From the list of prepared questions, we selected 4 to ask Dr. Geerdt that were most relevant to my research goals:

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1. Based on your research, how do you think anthropomorphism shapes children's understandings of social relationships?

-Dr. Geerdts responded that anthropomorphism likely shapes children's notions of social relations in both positive and negative ways. On one hand, anthropomorphic characters can make complex concepts more relatable and reinforce social skills. But they also risk promoting simplistic understandings if not used carefully.

2. What qualitative methods do you recommend for studying children's interpretations of anthropomorphism?

-Dr. Geerdts recommended ethnographic methods like observations of children engaging with anthropomorphic media and in-depth interviews to explore their interpretations and learning.

3. What considerations inform appropriate uses of anthropomorphism for different age groups?

-Dr. Geerdts emphasized that anthropomorphism should be developmentally tailored to maximize benefits and minimize risks at each stage from implicit and analogical for older children to more literal for younger ones.

4. Overall, what recommendations do you have for how I can approach this research area in a responsible way?

Dr. Geerdts recommended a strengths-based approach that recognizes anthropomorphism's potential while mitigating risks via transparency, guidelines, and developmental tailoring. Children's diverse experiences must also be centered.

E.2. Analysis and The findings of The Interview

The expert emphasized that anthropomorphism can positively impact learning when used appropriately based on students' developmental needs. However, oversimplified or excessive anthropomorphism risks promoting shallow understandings. The expert recommended tailoring anthropomorphism based on students' age groups to maximize benefits and minimize risks. Ethnographic research methods were also suggested to understand how students interpret and learn from anthropomorphic examples.

These findings highlight several important considerations for effectively applying anthropomorphism in pedagogical contexts. First, anthropomorphism should be used judiciously and aligned with learning objectives to avoid oversimplification. Second, the appropriateness of different types and degrees of anthropomorphism may vary depending on students' developmental levels. Third, ethnographic research can provide useful insights into students' interpretations and meaning-making when exposed to anthropomorphic teaching methods.

Together, the expert's recommendations point to a "mindful" use of anthropomorphism that is tailored to students and integrated responsibly into curriculum and lesson plans. While anthropomorphism holds promise as an engagement tool, a one-size-fits-all approach may not optimize its benefits for diverse learners. Future educational research in this area should consider students' diverse developmental needs, backgrounds and interpretations to evaluate the true impact of anthropomorphism on learning outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated both the promise and pitfalls of anthropomorphism as an educational tool based on research, theory and expert recommendations. While anthropomorphism shows promise as a representational and motivational strategy, its use must be grounded in transparent, research-informed guidance to maximize benefits and mitigate risks for diverse learners. This chapter also argues for a balanced, nuanced yet practical perspective on anthropomorphism in education. While recognizing its potential to enhance engagement and comprehension, guidelines for tailoring and critically evaluating anthropomorphic representations based on learners' developmental levels, topics and diverse needs are ultimately needed to ensure appropriate and ethical uses that do not distort or oversimplify what students learn. With judicious and careful application, informed by research and expertise, anthropomorphism holds much promise for enlivening how we teach and what our students ultimately understand.

General Conclusion

This dissertation extensively explored the role of anthropomorphism as an educational tool in children's literature and learning. Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to non-human entities, has long been used in children's stories to make animals, objects and concepts more relatable and understandable for young minds.

The findings and analysis extensively supported the hypothesis that when applied deliberately and thoughtfully, anthropomorphism could significantly enhance children's engagement, imagination and motivation to learn. By bringing concepts to life through vivid metaphors and compelling narratives, anthropomorphism facilitated meaningful knowledge connections that fueled curiosity and supported higher-order thinking skill development. Personified characters who displayed virtues and conveyed moral lessons through compelling stories effectively nurtured children's prosocial values and sense of purpose.

However, to realize anthropomorphism's full potential benefits while mitigating its risks, judicious, transparent and developmentally appropriate use was imperative. Guidelines for tailoring anthropomorphic representations based on learners' diverse needs, levels and topics were ultimately needed to ensure ethical and effective use that did not distort or oversimplify what children learn.

When anthropomorphism was utilized thoughtfully with these appropriate guidelines and caveats, it held immense promise as an educational tool. It could powerfully integrate imagination with conceptual understanding, wonder with wisdom. With principled practice that incorporated research and expertise, anthropomorphism could cultivate minds adept at

perceiving complexity and discovering truth through metaphor, narrative and rigorous thought
- integral skills for individual growth, societal progress and addressing humanity's grand challenges.

In essence, anthropomorphism's significant educational potential lay in its ability to create profoundly relatable human frames of reference for even the most abstract and complex concepts. But to truly transform how we teach and what students ultimately understand, anthropomorphism's use needed to be grounded in exhaustive research, expertise and most importantly, a firm commitment to honoring the whole child in all their diversity. With careful, evidence-based application that centered diverse learners' unique backgrounds, experiences and needs, anthropomorphism had untapped potential to profoundly shape young minds for generations to come.

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ملخص الدراسة

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق مما إذا كان التشخيص ، وهو إعطاء الكيانات غير البشرية سمات بشرية ، يمكن أن يجعل التعلم المعقد أكثر إثارة للاهتمام وقابلة للاحتفاظ بها وذات معنى بالنسبة للأطفال. وتستخدم التحليل النوعي للأعمال السابقة لوضع نظرات أعمق وفهم جديد لتوجيه الممارسة المناسبة. يقوم الفصل الأول بتوضيح التشخيص تاريخيًا وثقافيًا. يحلل الفصل الثاني كيفية تشكيل التشخيص للتعلم من خلال تحليل المحتوى لأدب الأطفال. ويطور الفصل الثالث المبادئ التوجيهية للاستفادة من فوائد التشخيص التعليمية مع تقليل مخاطره

وتشير النتائج إلى أنه عندما يُطبق بعناية ، يعزز التشخيص التعلم من خلال دمج المفاهيم في استعارات وروايات واضحة تحفز خيال الأطفال. ومع ذلك ، فإن الاستخدام الشفاف والمخصص ضروري لتجنب تبسيط الأفكار المعقدة أو تشويه الدقة المفاهيمية. عندما يستند إلى البحث والخبرة ، يظهر التشخيص كاستراتيجية تربوية واعدة تجمع بين الخيال والفهم المفاهيمي. ومع ذلك ، فإن التطبيق الحكيم يتطلب الأخذ بعين الاعتبار الاحتياجات المعرفية والاجتماعية والعاطفية لمتعلمين متنوعين

Résumé

Cette étude examine si l'anthropomorphisme - le fait d'attribuer des caractéristiques humaines à des entités non humaines - peut rendre l'apprentissage complexe plus engageant, mémorable et significatif pour les enfants. Elle utilise une analyse qualitative des travaux antérieurs pour développer des perceptions approfondies et des compréhensions nouvelles pour guider une pratique appropriée. Le chapitre un situe l'anthropomorphisme historiquement et culturellement. Le chapitre deux analyse comment l'anthropomorphisme façonne l'apprentissage à travers une analyse de contenu de la littérature pour enfants. Le chapitre trois développe des lignes directrices pour tirer parti des avantages de l'anthropomorphisme tout en limitant les risques.

Les résultats indiquent que lorsqu'il est appliqué avec soin, l'anthropomorphisme améliore l'apprentissage en intégrant les concepts dans des métaphores et récits vifs qui stimulent l'imagination des enfants. Cependant, un usage transparent et adapté est essentiel pour éviter de simplifier à outrance des idées complexes ou de déformer l'exactitude conceptuelle. Lorsqu'il s'appuie sur la recherche et l'expertise, l'anthropomorphisme apparaît comme une stratégie pédagogique prometteuse alliant imagination et compréhension conceptuelle. Pourtant, son application judicieuse nécessite de prendre en compte les besoins cognitifs et socioémotionnels de publics apprenants diversifiés.