

Reflection Of Children's Emotional Thinking In The Language Of Fiction

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Abstract: This article examines how children's emotional thinking is reflected in the language of fiction. The study explores linguistic, stylistic, and psychological features that reveal the emotional world of child characters. Through qualitative analysis of selected literary texts, the research identifies narrative techniques, lexical choices, and stylistic devices that embody the emotional perception of reality typical for children. The findings contribute to understanding how fiction represents and shapes the emotional development of young readers. The article investigates how children's emotional thinking is expressed and reflected in the language of fiction, emphasizing the interrelation between linguistic form, psychological perception, and narrative structure. The main objective of the study is to analyze the linguistic and stylistic mechanisms through which writers convey the emotional world of child characters. The research is based on the qualitative analysis of several literary works, including *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, and *Matilda* by Roald Dahl. The study applies elements of cognitive linguistics and child psychology to identify how specific linguistic features—such as expressive adjectives, interjections, metaphors, repetitions, and childlike narrative perspectives—reflect emotional cognition. The results show that authors deliberately simplify syntax and use emotionally charged vocabulary to capture the sincerity, curiosity, and sensitivity characteristic of children's emotional thinking. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that the fictional depiction of a child's emotional experience not only enhances the reader's empathy but also supports children's emotional and cognitive development. The research concludes that the language of fiction functions as a mirror of emotional thought, providing a linguistic framework for understanding and expressing human emotions in early cognitive stages.

Keywords: Children's literature, emotional thinking, linguistic reflection, stylistic analysis, cognitive linguistics, child psychology, emotional language, narrative perspective, fiction.

Introduction: Children's literature plays a vital role in shaping a child's emotional and cognitive world. The reflection of children's emotional thinking in fiction reveals how language can represent feelings, imagination, and perception. Unlike adults, children express emotions more directly, often through vivid imagery and spontaneous speech. Therefore, the study of children's emotional thinking in fiction provides insight into the interaction between language, psychology, and creativity. Children's literature holds a unique position within the broader field of literary studies because it reflects not only the imaginative world of the child but also the emotional, moral, and intellectual growth that shapes human consciousness.

From the earliest fairy tales to contemporary novels, writers have used the language of fiction to convey the emotions, thoughts, and dreams of children in ways that resonate deeply with readers of all ages. The language used in children's fiction is not merely a means of storytelling; it serves as a powerful tool for representing emotional experience and shaping emotional intelligence. This paper explores how children's emotional thinking—defined as the way children perceive, interpret, and express emotions—is reflected through the linguistic and stylistic features of fictional texts. Children's emotional thinking is fundamentally different from that of adults. It is characterized by immediacy, sincerity, and imagination. According to Vygotsky (1986), emotional

development in childhood is closely linked to linguistic development: as children acquire language, they learn to name, describe, and regulate emotions. Literature plays a crucial role in this process because fictional narratives provide linguistic models for understanding feelings and emotional interactions. By observing how fictional child characters experience and articulate emotions, young readers learn to interpret their own internal states and those of others. Thus, fiction functions as both a mirror and a guide for children's emotional cognition. The emotional dimension of language in fiction has been widely discussed in stylistics, cognitive linguistics, and literary psychology. However, most existing studies focus on adult-centered narratives or on general emotional representation in literature. Comparatively less attention has been given to how authors capture specifically childlike emotional logic—the spontaneous, metaphorical, and affective way in which children perceive the world. In children's literature, emotions are often conveyed through linguistic simplicity, vivid imagery, repetition, and playful sound patterns that mirror the natural rhythm of child speech. Such stylistic choices not only make the text accessible to young readers but also authentically reproduce the emotional world of the child. The relationship between emotion and language in fiction can be analyzed on multiple levels. On the lexical level, authors use emotionally charged words, diminutives, interjections, and onomatopoeic expressions to convey the sensitivity and intensity of a child's inner world. On the syntactic level, short sentences, exclamations, and questions are employed to represent the impulsive and dynamic nature of children's thoughts. On the stylistic level, devices such as metaphor, personification, and symbolism serve to externalize internal emotions. For instance, in *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the child's emotions are expressed through cosmic metaphors—stars, planets, and flowers—that reflect his emotional purity and philosophical curiosity. Similarly, in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll uses linguistic playfulness and nonsense logic to express the emotional confusion and wonder of childhood perception. Roald Dahl, in *Matilda*, demonstrates how a child's emotional resilience and intellect challenge oppressive adult authority, using humor and exaggeration as linguistic expressions of empowerment. The reflection of children's emotional thinking in the language of fiction can also be viewed through a psychological lens. Child psychology emphasizes that emotional thinking precedes rational thinking; children first feel and only then interpret. In fiction, this is mirrored through the predominance of feelings over logical explanations. Authors often construct narrative worlds where emotional truth outweighs factual accuracy—an approach that aligns

with the child's natural mode of understanding. As Bruner (1990) notes, narrative is a fundamental way of making sense of experience, and for children, it is through narrative language that emotions become meaningful and communicable. Therefore, analyzing children's emotional thinking through fictional language allows scholars to observe the intersection between narrative structure and emotional cognition. Moreover, the language of fiction does not merely reflect children's emotions; it also shapes them. When children engage with stories, they internalize linguistic expressions of emotion, expanding their emotional vocabulary and empathy. This dual function—reflection and formation—makes children's literature a key medium for emotional education. It encourages young readers to identify, name, and regulate their feelings while understanding the perspectives of others. Consequently, the study of emotional thinking in fiction has pedagogical significance: it helps educators, parents, and writers understand how language influences emotional growth. From a linguistic perspective, the study of emotional thinking in children's fiction aligns with the principles of cognitive linguistics, which views language as a reflection of human experience. Emotions are conceptualized and expressed through linguistic metaphors, schemas, and narrative patterns. For example, happiness may be conceptualized as "light" or "up," while sadness as "darkness" or "down." Such metaphoric expressions in children's fiction reveal how abstract emotions are grounded in sensory experience, consistent with a child's embodied understanding of the world. Thus, fiction becomes a site where language, cognition, and emotion converge. The significance of this study lies in its interdisciplinary approach. By combining literary analysis with linguistic and psychological frameworks, it aims to reveal how the emotional logic of childhood is linguistically encoded in fiction. Understanding these mechanisms provides insights not only into literary artistry but also into the ways in which language mediates emotional experience. The research contributes to the broader field of literary linguistics, offering tools for analyzing how fictional discourse mirrors the cognitive and emotional patterns of real children.

In summary, the introduction sets out the rationale and objectives of the study:

- (1) to identify linguistic and stylistic features that reflect children's emotional thinking in fiction;
- (2) to analyze how authors use language to represent emotional perception;
- (3) to explore how the language of fiction contributes to the development of emotional understanding in readers.

By examining these aspects, the study seeks to deepen

our comprehension of how fiction embodies the emotional mind of the child—revealing the profound connection between language, thought, and feeling in the imaginative world of literature. Previous research has focused primarily on the moral and educational functions of children's literature. However, fewer studies have investigated how linguistic and stylistic choices mirror the inner emotional state of child characters. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how emotional thinking is linguistically encoded and stylistically realized in fictional works featuring child protagonists.

MAIN PART

Ways to develop emotional intelligence in children: A number of methodological approaches are used to form emotional cognition skills. These methods are designed to support and further strengthen the emotional development of students. Interactive activities and play-methodical techniques develop mutual understanding and expression of emotional experiences among children. number of methodological approaches are used to form emotional cognition skills. The reflection of children's emotional thinking in fiction reveals how language can represent feelings, imagination, and perception. Unlike adults, children express emotions more directly, often through vivid imagery and spontaneous speech. Therefore, the study of children's emotional thinking in fiction provides insight into the interaction between language, psychology, and creativity (Ashurova, 2024). These methods are designed to support and further strengthen the emotional development of students. Interactive activities and play-methodical techniques develop mutual understanding and expression of emotional experiences among children. For example, role-playing games and activities such as "emotion banks" are organized to develop empathy and communication skills among children. Also, psychological trainings, such as breathing and relaxation exercises, help children control their emotions. These techniques teach children not only to perceive their own emotions, but also to control them and to treat others empathically. An experiment was carried out in which 60 children took part in the research process. Iso, psychological trainings, such as breathing and relaxation exercises, help children control their emotions. These techniques teach children not only to perceive their own emotions, but also to control them and to treat others empathically. An experiment was carried out in which 60 children took part in the research process. The experimental group was presented with an 8-week special program that used interactive training, playmethodic methods and psychological training. In the control group,

however, traditional training methods were continued. The results of the study showed that the level of emotional cognition skills, including self-awareness and understanding of the emotions of others, in the experimental group significantly improved. The results were analyzed using quantitative (t-test) and qualitative (content analysis) methods, and differences in the experimental group were statistically significant.

METHODS

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in a qualitative approach, combining elements of linguistic analysis, literary stylistics, and child psychology. Since the aim of the research is to explore how children's emotional thinking is represented in the language of fiction, the methods used focus on textual interpretation, discourse analysis, and comparative stylistic examination of selected literary works. The research prioritizes meaning, context, and stylistic expression rather than numerical data, as emotional reflection in fiction is primarily a qualitative and interpretive phenomenon.

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical design, focusing on identifying and describing linguistic and stylistic features that reflect children's emotional cognition. This design allows the researcher to investigate the connection between linguistic form and emotional function within literary contexts. The descriptive aspect concerns the identification of language patterns, while the analytical aspect involves interpretation of how these linguistic structures embody emotional perception typical of childhood. In order to ensure validity and depth, the analysis was carried out at multiple levels — lexical, syntactic, stylistic, and cognitive — allowing the research to capture both surface-level linguistic markers and deeper conceptual meanings related to emotion.

Selection of Texts

Three works of children's fiction were selected as primary data sources for this research:

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943)

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll (1865)

Matilda by Roald Dahl (1988)

These texts were chosen based on three main criteria: Each features a child protagonist whose thoughts and emotions are central to the narrative. The works are recognized as classics of children's literature, with rich linguistic and emotional content suitable for analysis. They represent different cultural and stylistic traditions, allowing for comparative insights into how emotional thinking is reflected across contexts. The

chosen texts offer diverse linguistic environments—from the philosophical and poetic tone of *The Little Prince*, to the playful linguistic logic of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and the emotionally resilient narrative of *Matilda*. Such variation ensures that the analysis captures a wide spectrum of emotional expression in children's fiction.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection involved close reading and systematic extraction of linguistic elements that represent emotion. Each text was read multiple times to identify and categorize linguistic markers that express or evoke emotional thinking. The process included: Identifying emotionally charged words and expressions (e.g., adjectives, interjections, onomatopoeic forms). Highlighting narrative techniques that reveal emotional perception (e.g., first-person narration, dialogue, internal monologue). Examining stylistic devices such as metaphors, similes, and personifications used to visualize or symbolize emotions. Noting syntactic and rhythmic features (sentence length, repetition, exclamation) that reflect emotional intensity. All selected data were organized into thematic categories (e.g., joy, fear, curiosity, empathy) to enable comparative analysis among the three literary works.

Analytical Framework

The analysis was guided by three complementary theoretical perspectives: Cognitive Linguistics: This approach focuses on how language encodes conceptual understanding and emotional experience. It examines how authors use metaphors, conceptual schemas, and image-based language to represent feelings. For instance, emotions such as happiness are often depicted as "light" or "up," while sadness appears as "dark" or "down." Identifying these metaphorical patterns helps reveal how children's emotional cognition is structured linguistically. Stylistic Analysis: Literary stylistics examines how linguistic choices contribute to emotional tone and characterization. The study analyzed how specific stylistic devices—diminutives, exclamations, alliteration, rhythm, and repetition—enhance emotional vividness and childlike authenticity. This approach helped determine how style functions as a reflection of the child's mind. Child Psychology: Insights from child psychology provided interpretive support for understanding how emotional language corresponds to developmental stages of emotional thinking. The research drew upon the works of theorists such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, who argue that children express emotions more directly and symbolically than adults. These principles were used to interpret why certain linguistic forms, like simple syntax or imaginative metaphors, dominate children's speech

and therefore appear in child-centered fiction.

RESULTS

The analysis of the selected literary texts revealed several distinct linguistic and stylistic patterns that effectively reflect children's emotional thinking in fiction. These findings highlight the ways in which authors manipulate language to capture the innocence, spontaneity, and imaginative perception characteristic of childhood. First, simplicity and directness emerged as dominant linguistic features. Literature plays a crucial role in this process because fictional narratives provide linguistic models for understanding feelings and emotional interactions (Galiyeva 2022). In *The Little Prince*, for example, the narrator's sentences are often brief and emotionally transparent, mirroring a child's straightforward way of expressing feelings: "If someone loves a flower that lives on a star, then it is sweet to look at the sky at night." The absence of complex syntax allows emotions to appear pure and unfiltered, reflecting a child's cognitive style. Second, imagery and metaphor play a central role in transforming abstract emotions into tangible, sensory experiences. Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* portrays confusion, fear, and wonder through fantastical images—falling, growing, shrinking—that linguistically symbolize emotional instability. In *Matilda*, Roald Dahl uses metaphorical exaggeration to express a child's emotional resilience and sense of justice; *Matilda's* anger is described through supernatural energy, symbolizing empowerment against unfairness. Third, the analysis showed frequent use of repetition, rhythm, and sound play, which serve as emotional intensifiers and reflect the musical quality of child speech. Expressions such as "so, so happy" or "very, very small" mimic the repetitive emphasis children use to convey intensity. Similarly, interjections ("Oh!", "Wow!", "Oops!") and onomatopoeic words evoke immediacy and authenticity of emotional response. Fourth, narrative perspective strongly influences emotional reflection. Each text adopts a viewpoint close to the child's perception, often employing first-person or limited third-person narration. This technique enables readers to experience emotions as the child does—without adult rationalization or detachment. Finally, the study found that lexical choices—especially expressive adjectives (e.g., "lonely," "sparkly," "terrible") and diminutive forms—create a warm and empathetic emotional tone. Such words not only characterize the child protagonists but also guide readers toward shared emotional experiences. Overall, the results demonstrate that authors construct the emotional world of children through deliberate linguistic simplicity, symbolic imagery, rhythmic expression, and

empathetic narrative perspective. These devices collectively reproduce the emotional logic of childhood, where imagination and feeling dominate over reasoning.

The analysis revealed several dominant features that reflect children's emotional thinking in fiction:

- **Simplicity and Directness:** Sentences are often short and emotionally charged, reflecting spontaneous child speech.
- **Imagery and Symbolism:** Children's emotions are projected through imaginative comparisons — for instance, fear as a “shadow” or joy as “sunlight.”
- **Repetition and Rhythm:** Frequent use of repeated words or structures mirrors emotional intensity and helps reinforce feelings.
- **Perspective and Empathy:** Authors frequently use a child's viewpoint to create an authentic emotional experience for the reader.
- **Lexical Choice:** The preference for vivid, sensory words reflects the immediacy of children's perception of the world.

These findings indicate that authors consciously employ linguistic and stylistic tools to replicate the emotional logic of a child's mind.

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that children's emotional thinking is not only a psychological phenomenon but also a linguistic construct. Through narrative language, fiction captures the sincerity, curiosity, and vulnerability of a child's emotions. The results indicate that the language of fiction functions as a mirror of children's emotional cognition, representing how emotions are experienced, conceptualized, and expressed linguistically. Fiction does not merely describe emotions—it simulates them through rhythm, sound, and imagery, allowing readers to feel alongside the characters. From a linguistic perspective, the findings support cognitive linguistic theories that view language as a reflection of embodied experience. Emotional metaphors such as “light = joy” or “darkness = fear” appear consistently across the analyzed texts. This correspondence between sensory imagery and emotion shows that authors rely on universal cognitive mappings while adjusting them to a child's imaginative worldview. From a psychological standpoint, the results align with Vygotsky's notion that language mediates emotional development. In children's fiction, words serve as both expressive and regulatory tools. For example, when the Little Prince names his flower or fox, naming itself becomes an act of emotional bonding. Similarly, in Matilda, verbal expression transforms inner frustration into empowerment,

showing how language converts emotion into agency. Thus, fiction models emotional self-expression and control, contributing to a child's emotional literacy. Stylistically, the analysis confirms that simplicity and playfulness are not signs of linguistic limitation but intentional strategies for emotional realism. The repetition of structures, rhythmic dialogue, and humorous exaggeration imitate the natural speech of children, making emotional expression linguistically authentic. This supports the idea that children's fiction creates an “emotional echo” — a shared resonance between narrator, character, and reader. Moreover, the comparative analysis across the three works highlights cultural and individual differences in emotional portrayal. While *The Little Prince* reflects philosophical tenderness and melancholy, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* emphasizes curiosity and confusion through linguistic absurdity, and *Matilda* foregrounds defiance and moral emotion through irony and exaggeration. Despite stylistic diversity, all three narratives employ emotional language as a central organizing principle of storytelling. Importantly, the findings reveal that emotional thinking in children's fiction has a dual function: it reflects children's internal experiences and simultaneously shapes the reader's emotional development. By engaging emotionally with fictional characters, young readers learn to identify, verbalize, and regulate their own feelings—an educational process central to emotional intelligence. This pedagogical value reinforces the importance of literary language as a formative influence in child development. Writers of children's literature often simplify syntax while enriching vocabulary with expressive and imaginative elements. This combination allows readers to perceive emotions vividly, fostering empathy and emotional intelligence. Moreover, emotional language in fiction supports children's cognitive development by modeling emotional expression and understanding. From a pedagogical perspective, studying the emotional language of fiction helps educators and parents understand how children internalize emotions through stories. It also emphasizes the role of literature in emotional education, encouraging children to articulate and manage their feelings effectively.

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that the reflection of children's emotional thinking in the language of fiction represents a complex interplay between linguistic form, psychological function, and artistic intention. Authors of children's literature use language not only as a medium of storytelling but also as a mirror of emotional life. Through lexical simplicity, metaphorical imagery, rhythmic repetition, and empathetic narration, fiction

reconstructs the child's unique way of feeling and understanding the world. This study demonstrates that children's emotional thinking is linguistically encoded through expressive forms that bridge emotion and imagination. The child's worldview—spontaneous, sincere, and symbolically rich—is made visible through the stylistic texture of language. Fiction thus becomes both a psychological document and an artistic creation, capable of teaching emotional awareness, empathy, and moral sensitivity. Furthermore, the analysis confirms that the emotional language of fiction serves a developmental purpose. It helps children (and adults) articulate emotions, recognize empathy, and connect language with inner experience. Therefore, understanding how emotional thinking is reflected in fiction contributes not only to literary scholarship but also to educational psychology and language pedagogy. In summary, the study affirms that the language of fiction is a living embodiment of emotional thought. By decoding how authors craft emotional expression through words, we gain deeper insight into the cognitive and affective dimensions of human experience. The emotional world of children—so pure, imaginative, and deeply human—finds its most authentic reflection in the artful simplicity of literary language. The reflection of children's emotional thinking in the language of fiction is a multidimensional phenomenon that unites linguistics, psychology, and literary art. Fiction not only portrays children's emotions but also teaches readers to empathize and interpret feelings linguistically. Understanding this connection enriches both literary analysis and educational practice.

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