

Picturebooks, Plot Twists and Multimodal Reading Interpretation

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Picturebooks engage and entertain audiences through compelling storylines. Authors can use plot twists to increase readers' engagement and entertainment in picturebooks. Plot twists often invoked a cognitive and emotional response from audiences as the reader encounters a shift in the world of the text. A picturebook's plot twist is crafted by authors through intricate plot events in which audiences develop close empathy with protagonist characters and are distanced from antagonist characters. The close empathy or distance to characters is crafted through many plot, language and visual choices made by authors. This paper investigates the plot twist in the picturebook *Cicada* written by Shaun Tan (2018). An innovative approach that draws on complementary Systemic Functional Semiotic and Text World Theory is used to analyse the picturebook for its plot twist. The language and visual grammar choices made by the author are examined to reveal how the picturebook's plot twist is crafted through interpersonal language and visual grammar resources that realise different power positions and evaluative attitudes concerning feelings, judgments, and assessments of objects or events. Text World Theory reveals how the audience is gradually scaffolded through different plot events to co-create a new textual world through the plot twist. The paper discusses the implications of the innovative approach for planning shared reading learning experiences in classroom settings. Moreover, the research contributes to innovative research on multimodal reading interpretation for the teaching of inferential and interpretive meaning-making.