Considerations on the use of Authentic Children's and Youth Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom

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CONSIDERATIONS ON THE USE OF AUTHENTIC CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH LITERATURE IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

by

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B.A., University of Northern Colorado, 2009

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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This thesis entitled:
Considerations on the use of Authentic Children's and Youth Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom
written by Erin Ashley Burr-Adair

has been approved for the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.
When teaching language courses, there are many considerations to keep in mind when deciding if non-textbook literature should to be included in the curriculum. Factors influencing this decision include authenticity, text difficulty, the target audience’s age and language level, and implementation in a world where technology is changing how we read. The purpose of this research is to examine the validity of using authentic children’s and youth literature in a college level foreign language classroom in order to increase students' understanding of the target language. The importance of authenticity will be discussed, followed by the reasoning behind using children’s literature, including picture books, to teach older students linguistic and cultural content. Because it is changing how we read, the use of technology to enhance literature's implementation will also be presented. To provide a practical basis for this topic, sample classroom activities for two different German children’s books will be included.
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INTRODUCTION

When teaching college level foreign language courses, there are many considerations to keep in mind during the process of deciding if non-textbook literature should to be implemented into the curriculum. Factors that influence this decision include authenticity, text difficulty, the target audience’s age, language level, and proper implementation in a world where technology affects how students read. The topic of authenticity has been debated by language teachers and scholars for years and there are several studies on the various arguments behind authenticity, including student perspectives and whether or not authentic texts are truly superior to non-authentic ones (Bacon & Finнемann; Chavez; Crossley & Louwerse; Gilmore, Guariento & Morely; Peacock; Swaffar). The combination of older students and lower level language skills is also typically a challenge when introducing non-standard materials into the classroom. Many upper level courses integrate literature, but there is a clear deficiency in the lower levels, creating a rift between what students can do and what they are expected to do when working with literature. To close this gap, it is recommended that children’s and youth literature be implemented into beginner language courses, as it provides similar benefits to classic literature while still being comprehensible to students with less advanced language skills (Beckett; Benedict & Carlisle; Bloem & Padak; Brumfit & Carter; Henry & Simpson; O’Sullivan & Rösler; Schulz). Modern technological advances have started changing the way people approach reading. This has many implications for using literature in the classroom, but when handled in such a way that technology is meaningfully integrated into the curriculum, it can have a number of benefits for how students interact with and learn from target language literature (Hussein; Lloyd; Rüschoff & Ritter; Stepp-Greany; Thomas).
The above mentioned factors are often looked at individually in discussions on teaching, but they have rarely been looked at together in terms of foreign language education. In the following chapters, I will look at each one individually with the ultimate goal of showing how they can be combined to provide a learning atmosphere that not only introduces students to target language literature, but also engages them in such a way that they obtain a deeper appreciation for the literature and the culture it represents. To accomplish this, a brief theoretical background behind authenticity and children's and youth literature in the foreign language classroom will be given, followed by a sampling of methods for integrating technology into a curriculum that uses foreign language literature. This work will conclude with a selection of exemplary texts and sample lesson activities to provide a practical basis on how to integrate authentic children's and youth literature into a college level German course. It is my hope that other educators can use this research to successfully implement literature into their own beginning and intermediate level language courses.
CHAPTER I
THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTICITY

It is often claimed that authentic materials are superior to non-authentic materials when teaching a foreign language. There are many issues that arise with this argument, including that there are many different definitions of authentic (Gilmore; Swaffar; Maxim; Rogers & Medley) and the claim of authenticity's superiority has rarely been tested or proven (Peacock). In this section, these and other aspects of using authentic texts to teach a language will be examined. It will be shown that while authentic and non-authentic texts alike have benefits for the classroom, those relating to authentic texts outweigh the others.

Before embarking on a discussion about the benefits of authentic texts, it must be pointed out that there are several variations and meanings in the term "authentic". Many of these are listed by Alex Gilmore and he points out that it is "impossible to engage in a meaningful debate over the pros and cons of authenticity until we agree on what we are talking about" (98). One current definition of authenticity can be found in Janet Swaffar's article on reading authentic texts in a foreign language. She claims that an authentic text is one that communicates meaning, whether that be for native or non-native audiences. For her, the target audience and author have little importance, but "an authentic communicative objective" (17) is key. She qualifies this by mentioning that textbooks are not authentic due to their purpose of educating rather than communicating. A second definition, found in Hiram Maxim's study, focuses more on the target audience. For him, although the novel they use in his article was not originally written in German, the translation of an English text into German still makes it authentic because "its intended audience was native speakers" (22). The most commonly used and accepted definition
of authenticity is that of materials which are created by native speakers for a native speaking audience with the intent to communicate. Chavez has concerns that even this definition is problematic because it disregards context and prevents learners from participating in authentic discourse, essentially making the material irrelevant to students. Although this may be true for certain materials, the focus of this paper is literature, which creates its own context and is therefore able “to transcend the artificial classroom situation” (Brumfit & Carter 179).

Understanding the various definitions and acknowledging Gilmore's statement on meaningfulness is important when considering authenticity as a whole. It is not my intent to discredit other definitions, but for the purposes of this paper, a focus on materials created by natives for natives, or those who have chosen to integrate into the target culture, will help when examining the linguistic and cultural benefits of authentic texts.

Mathew Peacock's article on the effects of authentic materials and motivation provides a good starting point for the argument that authentic materials surpass non-authentic or artificial ones, which are created specifically for learners. He points out that there are two opposite views on authentic texts: some authors claim that authentic texts "are intrinsically more interesting or stimulating than artificial or non-authentic materials" and they "bring learners closer to the target language culture, making learning more enjoyable and therefore more motivating" (144). On the other hand, it can be argued that authentic materials are too difficult for language learners, thus lowering motivation. Peacock claims that there is a lack of research for all of these statements and provides us with an overview of his own study on the topic.

The study was conducted with beginner-level students in an unnamed South Korean university EFL institute. To provide basis comparisons for the study, authentic and non-authentic materials were used alternately during the semester and questionnaires were provided
to all students at the end of each lesson, along with individual interviews throughout the semester. The goal was to examine on-task behavior, observed class motivation (motivation being defined as interest and enthusiasm), and self-reported motivation.

Students were observed to be on-task an average of 86% of the time with authentic materials, while the use of non-authentic texts during the semester resulted in a decrease of on-task behavior (78% average). In the first eight days of the study, self-reported motivation was higher for artificial materials, and then switched to a considerable increase in motivation with authentic texts, a factor that Peacock attributes to students becoming more comfortable with using unfamiliar authentic materials. Feedback ratings from students in regards to non-authentic and authentic materials alike ranged from low to high, and although authentic materials tended to be less interesting for students, Peacock found that "overall class motivation significantly increased" (148) when using them. This led him to conclude that interest and motivation are separate factors, but that authentic materials should be used because they increase on-task behavior, concentration, and involvement with activities more than artificial texts do.

In her study on learners' perspectives on authenticity, Monica Chavez says that the interest level for authentic materials is largely based on individual student factors such as previous experience with the target language, culture, age, gender, and classroom success. She found that students who don’t enjoy authentic materials have usually had insufficient linguistic and cultural preparation before being fully exposed to them. Those who do enjoy working with authentic materials, however, are of typical college age (18-23), have little exposure to the target culture, are males, and are usually academically successful. While weaker students may also prefer authentic materials for their communicative value, strong students enjoy being able to handle authentic materials with high levels of accuracy.
This leads into one of the opposing arguments for authentic materials in beginning and intermediate level courses, namely that they are too difficult. Chavez tells us that learners do not automatically assume that authentic materials are more difficult, and they do not like them because of how difficult or easy they are, but rather because students "like what they think helps them succeed" (20). Authentic materials often have a perceived superior value over non-authentic materials because they "give the learner the feeling that he or she is learning the 'real' language; that they are in touch with a living entity, the target language as it is used by the community which speaks it" (Guarente & Morley 347).

When arguing which type of material should be used to teach languages, both authentic and non-authentic proponents will use varying features of grammar, vocabulary and discourse to defend why their choice is superior. The benefits for simplified texts include that they can be written to demonstrate specific language features, modify the amount of new information, and easily control vocabulary. On the other hand, authentic texts are said to be more comprehensible, provide functional language, and are more cohesive.

Crossley, Louwerse, McCarthy, and McNamara recognize that the claims made on linguistic aspects of both text types are insufficiently supported and so they conducted their own study to find out which assertions are true. Their findings showed that simplified texts were more likely to use stiff and unnatural language. This is largely attributed to their attempts at avoiding complex sentence structures. A lack of complex structure and the desire to create a more accessible language leads to non-authentic texts relying heavily on certain constructions and phrases, making them "unnaturally plain" (27). The study showed that reliance on set phrasing and attempting to create simple syntax may in fact lead to sentences that have more constituents, are atypical, and more syntactically complex. Efforts to simplify tend "to produce a
homogenized product in which the information becomes diluted” (Brumfit & Carter 193), causing texts to be less comprehensible and more difficult for students to understand because they miss out on the elaboration, extensions, and idea enhancements that authentic texts contain (Crossley et al.).

Another common argument is based on vocabulary. Literacy advocates will say that less frequent words are generally not important to the text and vice versa, which leads Goodman to say that authentic texts have predictable vocabulary whereas non-authentic texts don't. If students cannot easily anticipate what is coming next, they usually have more difficulties understanding the text. Others claim that simplified texts can't effectively use high-frequency words (Braunger & Lewis) and that authentic texts contain more redundancy, which is helpful for information retention. Crossley et al. refute this idea, showing that simplified texts had higher numbers of word frequency and contained more words that were familiar to the reader than authentic texts. The frequency of words allows a text to be more quickly read, which could make them more advantageous for beginning and intermediate learners, but it must also be pointed out that there are other factors that go into a student’s ability to understand low frequency words. Gilmore’s list includes “how common the lexis is in the target community (…), the context in which the word occurs, the learners’ knowledge of the topic and whether there are any cognates in the L2 [2nd language]” (108). It must also be acknowledged that students don't necessarily have to recognize every word in a text to understand the content. As a matter of fact, when adults read in their native language, they do not always comprehend everything (Beckett) or know the definition of every word, and although our comprehension is not complete, we are satisfied as long as we obtain the information that we are looking for (Gilmore). Even if unusual words are present and can’t be defined using context, O'Sullivan &
Rösler claim they don’t necessarily have to be obstacles, but rather challenges, and the excitement of learning something exotic may actually help students remember unique words better than everyday words.

While repetition is not necessarily more present in authentic texts, they do contain a higher diversity of less frequent word types, especially when considering more complex parts of speech (Crossley et al.). Research has shown that children acquire language structures in a certain order, and this applies to older learners, as well (Braunger & Lewis). Native language is acquired because we are immersed in it on a daily basis and we receive direct input, which is perceived to be at our level of understanding. However, we also have contact with higher language forms, which can assist language acquisition based on Krashen's theory of comprehensible input (i+1) (Crossley et al). Although simplified texts are designed to be easily understood by the learner, authentic texts can do the same thing, and even allow for students who are more advanced in the language to improve their skills by accepting the linguistic challenge of authentic texts. The presence of variety in grammar and vocabulary gives students an introduction into elements that will be formally introduced later and allows them to see the range of language in action (Braunger & Lewis).

Gilmore draws further attention to the variety in authentic texts by looking into what some second language acquisition studies call “noticing”, or the process of being aware of other forms in a text. The textual input can be stored in a learner’s short-term memory, interact with the information they have in long-term memory, and change it in a process called “‘assimilation’” and “‘accommodation’” (111). The various influences that go into a student noticing include how often the forms appear, how much they stand out, explicit instruction, and student variables which include processing abilities and how ready the student is to notice a
form. “Authentic materials are often superior because they provide rich input that is more likely to cater to the different stages of development and individual differences that exist within any classroom population” (112) and while not all students will be ready to notice any particular form at the same time, they can use the information they have and what the text is showing them “to suit their own particular developing interlanguage systems” (111). Students who are ready for new information will use it to close the gap between what they do and don’t know, while others may simply set it aside until explicit teaching takes place. Although noticing can take place in non-authentic texts, Crossley et al.’s study proved that unusual forms are not frequent in simplified materials or textbooks, meaning noticing is more likely to happen in authentic materials. Gilmore tells of authors who claim that this is a reason to use authentic texts and addresses the idea in his own forthcoming publication on the topic. His findings showed that students receiving authentic input performed considerably better on tests designed to measure different types of competence than those who used textbooks alone, attributing this to the wider range of features found in authentic texts.

Authentic materials are seen as "often random in respect to vocabulary, structure, functions, content, situation and length", making them difficult to effectively integrate into classroom learning (Rogers & Medley 470-471). The fact that simplified texts' content can be more easily controlled makes them attractive for teachers of beginning and intermediate students, especially if they believe authentic texts are too difficult for new learners. Some scholars, however, would say that authentic materials are appropriate for all levels of learners, as long as they are chosen carefully and the tasks associated with them are appropriate (Guariento & Morley; Rogers & Medley). These scholars acknowledge that "simplification of text, (…), is justified, [but] it appears to be difficult to execute seamlessly" (Guariento & Morley 348), thus
concluding that it is not necessarily the texts that should be simplified, but rather the tasks required of the students should be altered. Authentic texts which combine accessible language and student interests are readily available if one is willing to search for them. Some materials are even suitable for multiple levels, regardless of difficulty level, given that the assigned tasks are appropriate for the different stages of learning.

The authenticity of texts, according to Guariento & Morley, lies not only in the definition of authentic, but also in the purpose of the accompanying task, which they term “task authenticity”. The assignments given to students must be designed not only to give learners the opportunity to produce and learn the language, but they must also allow for “real communication” that is used for a “genuine purpose” (349). Other types of tasks include authenticity through real world objectives, classroom interaction, and student engagement. For example, pedagogic tasks should be related to those that happen in the real world, such as organizing a party or making travel plans. Classroom interaction should involve the students themselves discussing the best way to present information, and they should also be consistently engaged in what they are doing. Given that it is impossible to expect complete participation from all students based on topic, purpose, and perceived authenticity, allowing students to design tasks that they find relevant could help keep them engaged in the materials (Guariento & Morley). Just as authentic texts don’t have to be difficult to understand, it should not be assumed that simple tasks are inauthentic. If tasks are selected based on student ability and reflect real world occurrences, they are no less authentic than more difficult tasks. The most important outcome of task authenticity is to show students that they can handle authentic materials, they simply need to “make the most of their partial comprehension” (Guariento & Morley 348).
Up to this point in this paper, the argument for authentic materials has focused largely on the linguistic factors, but there is more to add when the cultural element of language is considered. When teaching a foreign language, grammar and vocabulary are important, but culture is of equal value, and authentic materials are the ideal vehicle to foster contact with and interest in the target culture (Little, Devitt & Singleton). Identifying for whom and why a text was written can help students "learn from awareness of their foreign audience status" (Swaffar 22) and better understand the target culture mentality. Additionally, just as ESL students will see a variation in language from American to British materials, there is a large variation in materials from other languages. Even within Germany there are a number of different dialects based on region, and German is spoken in Austria and Switzerland, as well. Each different region, whether inside Germany or in a different country, has their own variation of language and culture. "Precisely because they are not informationally [sic] normed, authentic texts mirror the aspirations and value systems of their respective society" (Swaffar 31), providing learners with access to linguistic variations such as dialects and idioms, as well as cultural behaviors that are usually not present in non-authentic sources (Brumfit & Carter).

The environment introduced by authentic materials may create comprehension difficulties, which is common when what students expect to read is different than what the author of the material wishes to communicate (Swaffar; Goodman). This happens especially if the target culture is dramatically different from the native one. To combat this problem, Swaffar recommends selecting a wide variety of materials that cover a specific topic, saying that even if students are unfamiliar with certain aspects thereof, they may have other information "anchored within the range of their existing schema" (23) and can use that to create meaning and understanding for the other materials. Activating existing knowledge on specific topics and
providing students with the additional information necessary to understand the material is essential to the learning process. To reduce the challenges of conflicting ideas, teachers should select materials that have minimal or clearly stated cultural contrasts to the native culture, such as those dealing with immigration. Many American students are familiar with US immigration debates, so activating that knowledge can help them connect with the concept of immigrants in Germany. Furthermore, encouraging students to critically think about differences and similarities in both countries is a good way to have them interact with and learn about the target culture (O'Sullivan & Rösler).

The benefits and downfalls of authentic and non-authentic materials alike will likely continue well into the future. While there are many studies which show that authentic materials have positive effects on how well students interact with and learn from authentic materials, no conclusive results have been reached and so there are many proponents that passionately defend their stance, often at the expense of the opposing type. Those who prefer non-authentic materials usually do so based on ease of content control and the fact that they are specifically designed for learners, making them easy to use. Scholars who prefer authentic materials point out that "exposure to authentic input has a positive perceived effect on comprehension and satisfaction" (Bacon & Finnemann 469), meaning students respond favorably to its inclusion. Authentic texts often revolve around content rather than form, and are therefore more likely to have an acquisition promoting effect (Little, Devitt & Singleton) because they also allow for a wider and more natural range of linguistic features to be represented. The argument of difficulty is refuted when task authenticity is included so as to show that students only need to make the most of the text using their current abilities. The advantages extend into cultural benefits, as well, because authentic materials can be drawn from multiple cultural sources and assist in the "developing [of]
learners’ intercultural communicative competence" (Gilmore 106). Some may claim that authentic materials should be the sole source of information in the foreign language classroom (Little, Devitt & Singleton), but the benefits of non-authentic sources cannot be easily discounted. I would argue that while both have a place, authentic materials should be included on a regular basis, and whenever possible, in place of non-authentic materials, in order to "bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and 'a student's capacity to participate in real world events'" (Guarento & Morley 347).
CHAPTER II
WHY CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH LITERATURE?

Children’s and youth literature (CYL) is characterized by its content, which is designed to entertain and educate children and young adults on social and cultural behaviors using simplified language in a context that is easy for them to comprehend. It is usually divided into genres and age categories, where the different ranges, usually spanning 0-14 years, typically replicate children's natural language progression. As a category of its own, it is often overlooked in discussions about literature in the classroom. Many scholars and educators don't even consider CYL to be literature, and especially when dealing with college level courses, it can be thought to be below the students' abilities and interests. The following section will examine CYL's place in the foreign language (FL) classroom, and its relevance to older learners with the goal of showing that this particular category of literature is indeed suited for college level language courses.

Goodman tells us that the development of more complex language in texts for young readers is helpful because just as listening affects our ability to speak, reading affects our writing, and it is not uncommon for people to learn how to read more quickly than to write, making children's literature vital to their linguistic development. If children’s literature helps develop a sense of culture, moral values, and native language skills, one could conclude that same concept can be applied to learning a second language. Even if the texts are designed for a younger audience, the linguistic level of FL learners can be approximated to that of a native speaking child, although second language learners have the advantage of using their first language skills to assist in creating meaning in the FL (O'Sullivan & Rösler; Braunger & Lewis;
Maxim). Goodman further explains that those who are learning a second language may develop the ability to read before they obtain proper listening skills because they tend to use tactics developed in their native language to work through a foreign text. They do so until the content becomes clear, thus comprehending the text's meaning, picking up on grammatical features and vocabulary, and learning cultural information that is presented in the text.

Oral skills should then progress based on reading ability, as Patsy Lightbown points out with an experiment in several small schools in New Brunswick, Canada. In the experimental curriculum, French-speaking students spent thirty minutes per day interacting strictly with books and the accompanying audio recordings in English. Upon completion of the three year program, it was discovered that the students who spent their time exclusively with reading and listening were able to understand written and spoken English as well as the comparison group, which worked with an interactive audio-lingual program, and even surpassed them in vocabulary size and English fluency (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet). While this experiment and its researchers do not advocate using only textual and auditory input for language learning, it is a strong case for implementing texts into a language classroom.

Some educators believe that many students don't like to read, so implementing texts that learners see as too challenging and lacking practical application for the real world will simply create boredom (O'Sullivan & Rösler). While this assumption may be true for some students, given the proper texts, "students find extensive reading informative and enjoyable" (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet 248). Even if the text is complex and linguistically challenging, CYL is often more exciting and imaginative, giving students the opportunity to identify with the protagonist of the story, creating a level of engagement that is rarely found in textbook pieces (O'Sullivan &
Rösler). For those who don't enjoy it, there are still opportunities to be involved in discussions about the literature and topics because they must explain why they disliked them.

Given the requirements and standards that need to be met in the FL classroom, one may ask oneself how it could be possible to effectively introduce literature and still address the specific learning needs of the students. Although almost all levels of language instruction use text of some sort, it is often thought that if readings are to be covered in a lower-level course and are lengthier than a few pages, they will take away from the time needed to explicitly teach necessary grammar and language skills. To examine the possibilities and reality of a textually-oriented approach in a collegiate FL classroom, Hiram Maxim details a German program at the University of Texas in Austin that implemented a curriculum in two of its seven first-semester courses where class time was divided between communicative grammar exercises and work with *Mit dem Sturm kam die Liebe*, a romance novel that was originally written in English and then translated into German. The other five classes followed the standard curriculum of Presentation-Practice-Production. The altered class's text-time was used to introduce the literature, read, discuss topics, plots, characters, and even grammar points within the 142-page novel. Language functions that had been or were being covered in class provided students with active examples of how language is used and any nuances that students were unfamiliar with were handled as they came up. After a routine had been established, the teachers started to notice that students were not only engaged in the various reading tasks, but that they were also conversing in the target language on a regular basis during class discussions.

At the end of the semester, it was reported that the students had not only successfully completed reading the novel, but that they performed at least as well on departmental exams as the classes that followed the standard syllabus. This leads Maxim to conclude that the textually
based curriculum was "not only a feasible option for beginning instruction, but also a
manageable one" in which "a degree of implicit learning was taking place" (30). Both students
and teachers experienced initial apprehension about reading such a novel in a beginner's
language class, but the end result was a feeling of accomplishment. The students themselves
noted that they enjoyed the reading, "The novel’s subject matter was appropriate for first-
semester students", and that they "benefited from the in-class reading of the novel" (30).

While the literature used in Maxim's study was not classified as CYL, nor authentic by
this paper's definition, as it was not originally created for the target culture, one can assume that
the same results could be achieved using texts that are specifically designed for younger, or less
linguistically advanced, readers. "Beginning courses for adults provide students with virtually
no exposure to longer texts" (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet 247) and O'Sullivan & Rösler point
out that if there is space for longer readings, it is usually only with more advanced learners.
Additionally, many educators believe that if literature is used, the texts should be "proper" works
from a classic canon so that students can experience the literature that shaped many world views
and values. Bloom and Padak disagree with this viewpoint, stating that:

First-rate children's literature offers the same benefits that any high quality
literature and art offer, including the pleasure of a good story, the experience of
knowing other people and places, and the opportunity to reflect or examine ideas
and values. In short, like all good literature, children's literature provides a forum
that allows us to see or think in a new way (49).

Unfortunately, the divide persists and many upper level courses are dedicated to the
classics whereas beginning and intermediate courses continue to have a noticeable lack of
literature. The problem with this is that after a few years of beginning and intermediate
instruction, it is assumed that students have mastered the FL and are ready for what classical texts have to teach them. Maxim refutes this by saying that two years of instruction is not enough for students to master communicative skills, much less academic literacy. Expecting them to attain literacy in an additional two years of upper-division courses is unfair and unrealistic. His solution is to implement literature into lower-level courses so that students can start attaining literacy skills in the FL at an earlier stage. Literature that is created for younger readers can have a bridging function to more advanced texts, as O’Sullivan and Rösler tell us:

Für manche Lernende ist ein kinderliterarischer Text auch die Brücke zum ersten Lesen eines Ganztextes in einer fremden Sprache... und damit der große Schritt über die angstbesetzte Schwelle, sich in der Fremdsprache tatsächlich auf einen Text selbständig einzulassen und nicht mehr darauf zu warten, dass man im Unterricht mit Häppchen aus dem Lehrwerk gefüttert wird (45).

It is not uncommon for the textbook readings in language classrooms to be geared toward a specific theme, short in length and to have simplified wording. By giving the students access to additional literature that is longer, but still accessible at their level, the teacher is providing them with a stepping stone to works that are of a similar length, but more complex in form. Introducing students to literature that is appropriate for their skill level and working them up to more advanced texts with constant exposure from the beginning may reduce anxiety and help prevent the students from being overwhelmed when they do come into extensive contact with literature that is more linguistically and cognitively challenging (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet).

There is one problem, however, with the fact that CYL is designed for younger readers. Many language learners in the United States start formal language training at a later age and may see reading literature designed for children as degrading or irrelevant to learning a FL. This can
be a problem for adult learners because they have already experienced the educational upbringing that CYL tries to impart on its readers. However, while there may be some resistance to using texts designed for children in a classroom of older students, if handled properly it can be overcome. Teachers must take special care to select texts that will be relevant to older learners by choosing themes that keep them interested, can be seen on a level deeper than simply the language itself (i.e. social satire or parody), and will challenge them mentally. There is even the possibility that the introduction of CYL can lead to adults choosing to read other complete texts in the FL outside of the classroom setting (O’Sullivan and Rösler). A crossover into reading literature that is designed for multiple age groups (i.e. *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*) is a possibility for all ages of learners, especially if they are familiar with the texts in their native language and are comfortable reading in a FL.

A further advantage that CYL offers not just to adults but students in general is variation in cultural viewpoints (Garcia). Literature for young readers often focuses on every-day topics such as relationships, social status and eating habits, providing students with concrete examples of basic life as seen in the target culture. It can provide students with easy access to the foreign culture, and the variety of texts within the CYL genre may help the reader think outside of their normal comfort zone (Brumfit & Carter). This is especially important because "L2 readers tend to cling to their initial misapprehensions" (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet 239) and it is possible that with enough exposure or a strong cultural shock, students, especially older ones who have their native culture engrained in them, will start to question what they think they know about the target culture and become more curious about it. Furthermore, with the growing multicultural diversity in many classrooms today, CYL offers students of diverse backgrounds the opportunity
to share their own cultural differences in a way that celebrates them and provides an additional perspective for the class (O’Sullivan and Rösler).

CYL also mirrors some of the factors that make authentic literature so vital, such as contextualized grammar and vocabulary. Brumfit & Carter tell us that CYL can "increase all language skills because [it] will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax" (191). Because CYL is designed for younger readers, it tends to focus on important word features and vocabulary, using them with high frequency. This allows the students to crosscheck the meanings of words without having to look up a translation in the dictionary every time (Braunger & Lewis). The frequency of grammar functions is also important for the students. As they read more extensively, they are subconsciously, sometimes even consciously, seeing grammar and vocabulary that has been taught or will be taught in the future. If not used on a regular basis, people tend to forget what they have learned and by continuously being exposed to language in a written form, old topics are kept fresh and new topics have at least some form of introduction (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet). This continuous exposure aids language fluency, but it can also increase the students' stamina when dealing with the FL (Braunger & Lewis).

While the text in CYL is undoubtedly important, there is a genre within this literary category that contains another helpful aspect for language learning, namely the images in picture books. One may question how pictures can help teach a language, but it must be kept in mind that even ancient societies with no written language used pictures to communicate, and we use those pictures to interpret meaning and understand what life may have been like for them. Quality picture books take the best from both written and visual communication and combine
them, a feature that P. Martens, R. Martens, Doyle, Loomis & Aghalarov claim is the “very essence and integrity of picturebooks [sic]” (285).

On the concern that picture books are too simplistic for an audience of older learners, it should be noted that picture books have "intrinsic appeal for a wide range of readers" (Bloem & Padak 48). Benedict & Carlisle uphold this idea and say that the only difference between picture books and other forms of literature is the perceived audience. If special care is taken to select texts that are thematically, linguistically, and visually appropriate for older readers, the literature can support continuing literacy and language awareness, provide a cultural viewpoint different from that found in textbooks, help form social interactions, and encourage the development of sophisticated language structures (Braunger & Lewis). In addition to providing cultural and linguistic knowledge, picture books are a:

combination of visually appealing illustrations, brevity, sophisticated ideas and great writing [which] makes them attractive to young and old alike. Because the subject matter in many of them is sophisticated, students need not be embarrassed about reading them (Henry & Simpson 24).

The combination of text and image can be incredibly helpful for students who are reading a picture book for the first time because the illustrations are just as important to the story as the written text. In fact, the combination of images and words allows students to learn “more than the sum of the parts” (Kiefer 6) especially since the “innovative graphics and creative, often complex dialogue between text and image provide multiple levels of meaning and invite readings on different levels by all ages” (Becket 2). While images in a picture book are designed to "provide information that may or may not be represented in the [text]" (Martens et al. 287), they can also communicate their own meaning through artistic expression. A student reading about
foreign clothing styles can read the words used to describe an outfit, but without a visual representation, they may not fully understand or comprehend the true nature of the clothing. This idea is also extended to introducing students to a concept for the first time. If students are not familiar with the terminology used to describe certain ideas, they may not be able to properly understand until given a visual example. In the event that they are able to visualize it for themselves, it is possible that a picture can increase the shock value and convey a message that is not fully represented in written text (Kiefer).

Picture books are especially helpful when dealing with students who struggle with reading. Martens et al. tells us that even if students have difficulty reading, they are often able to "understand different viewpoints, analyze moods, messages and emotions, and articulate personal responses to picture books" (287). In addition to this, the shortened nature of the books and the presence of pictures may help reduce any fear or anxiety attached to not knowing what is being said in longer texts. Shorter texts are good opportunities for students who do not have the reading stamina required for longer texts and students can use the combination of words and images to hypothesize about what a term or phrase means by drawing meaning from the pictures. The ability to create a visual-verbal connection with shorter, high quality texts may make reading less daunting, thus increasing motivation, skill level and confidence (Henry & Simpson).

Proponents of picture books claim that due to their intended audience, these books are often snubbed in conversations about literature. To defend the picture book’s place in the literary world, it is often pointed out that the text found in them is frequently of higher quality than that found in edited and simplified adult books, and they provide excellent models of good writing, a skill all students need when learning a FL (Benedict & Carlisle; Henry & Simpson). To bring back the discussion from earlier about students not having the necessary exposure to
lengthy literature before getting into higher level courses, Benedict & Carlisle tell us that picture books "may help readers see story patterns that are useful in interpreting longer texts" (7) because they embody essential literary elements such as plot, characterization, theme, style, setting, and point of view. Unlike "proper literature" however, picture books can convey complex topics in easy to handle segments, which provides equal access to information for all readers, strong and weak. Pictures are generally universal and each person will interpret them in their own way (Beckett), making picture books a good source of communication. Using them in the FL classroom can create an environment where ample opportunities to speak, write, listen and think are provided, no matter what language level the learner is. Using as many skills as possible in combination with each other is the "most appropriate learning environment for adult … students" (Bloem & Padak 52). The aesthetic aspect in picture books is vital to helping students understand and interpret texts, but it also supports visual literacy, an aspect that is becoming more and more important in modern society (Martens & Loomis).

Many scholars consider picture books to be works of art that can be appreciated by young and old alike (Henry & Simpson; Benedict & Carlisle). Bloem & Padak equate modern picture books to old-fashioned coffee table books, which were designed especially for adults. Kiefer even points out that before the 16th and 17th centuries, picture books were designed for adults, as it was assumed that children did not have the capacity to appreciate the visual form. O’Sullivan and Rösler tell us that like the interpretations of written texts, "die Bilder in dem Bilderbuch sind nicht eindeutig" (110), meaning that multiple levels of aesthetic satisfaction are possible. While younger readers find the images visually stimulating, exciting, and amusing, adult readers have more experience and may be more receptive to visual stimuli (Kiefer), enabling them to still find amusement in the pictures. Older readers can understand the images
on a deeper level, recognizing aspects of symbolism, irony, visual puns, and social commentary, all of which often elude young readers (Henry & Simpson).

Although the target audience is wide, and many topics and issues that are dealt with in pictures books are universally understood, one could say that many picture books still target an older audience. They often "raise issues that demand maturity and life experience" (Bloem & Padak 49), especially when the topics include war, drugs, and abuse. Henry and Simpson point out that although illustrations and rhyme in Dr. Seuss's The Butter Battle Book may keep children interested, "the true meaning of the book, the futility of the arms race, is only fully understood by older students" (23).

The advocacy of CYL that has been presented in this section is not intended to imply that it is superior to textbooks or other forms of literature. On their own, CYL and picture books are insufficient to properly teach a foreign language and culture, but they make excellent supplementary materials. The availability of both in a variety of topics, styles, and grades of difficulty make them the ideal materials to introduce concepts or provide additional points of view. Furthermore, when looking for decent authentic input, the written word is usually available in multiple forms and more easily accessible for students than auditory input (Braunger & Lewis). The heavy emphasis placed on "proper" literature in upper-level language courses is often too big of a jump for students who have had little to no access to comprehensible materials in the lower levels. By providing students with sufficient access to picture books and other forms of CYL, teachers can prepare them for the linguistic and cognitive load that awaits in advanced language courses.
CHAPTER III
ENHANCING LITERATURE WITH TECHNOLOGY

Even before technology was as advanced and accessible as it is today, educators and scholars alike were able to recognize the benefits that came with using non-traditional materials in teaching. When technology was first introduced into FL classrooms and the options for using it to teach languages were being explored, it was a novelty that people either embraced or remained staunchly skeptical of (Smith). The benefits of using computers and audio devices were eventually almost completely accepted and became so popular that most schools and universities had at least some kind of access to them, usually in the form of language laboratories (Lloyd). Although Smith claims that the advances in technology have become common place and are no longer a curiosity or motivator for students, he also points out that technology and media are constantly evolving, which has led us to the technology soaked world that we live in today. Even with the ten years required for new developments in technology to be widely accepted (Lloyd), innovations such as Skype, the Internet, and portable media devices like the iPad and smartphones have become so much a part of everyday routines that it is hard to imagine life without them. These devices have made contact with native speakers and authentic materials much easier than teachers could have ever dreamed of when the computer was first invented (Smith). According to Lloyd, technology redefines itself every three to five years so it is reasonable for us to assume that the technology of today will eventually join the likes of floppy disks in the realm of the obsolete and that Smith’s assumption on technology no longer being interesting or motivating is incorrect. Expressly because technology is an ever-changing and
integral part of most students' lives, it can be a great resource for interacting with and learning about literature.

Although Smith's work on technology in the FL classroom is now outdated, it does demonstrate the extent to which modern technological advances have put the world at our fingertips. When the language lab was invented, it was a very popular form of FL technology and many teachers considered it to be the "magic wand" (Smith 13) that would revolutionize how students learned and interacted with languages. They were not mistaken, as the language lab allowed students access to a variety of native speaker samples and authentic materials that were previously unavailable. Tele-communication was also available and the opportunity to interact personally with native speakers was hard to resist. Despite the cost and limited access to these learning resources, many schools found them to be not only highly motivating for students, but also beneficial to the learning process, and so they continued to have a presence in FL classrooms. Since then, there has been a boom in technological advances and now much of what used to be stationary is available in a portable form. We now have access to learning materials when and where it suits us, an aspect that is very important for many learners who may not have the time required to sit in a lab. Those who only have a few minutes while walking between destinations can listen to audio samples of texts as many times as desired or necessary, without the worry of losing valuable time that could be used for other important tasks.

Due to the diversity of technological devices, the opportunities to engage students in learning have greatly increased. It is well known that there are a variety of learning styles and that not every student will be reached with traditional classroom methods. This is especially relevant when discussing literature in the classroom because as Thomas tells us, print materials alone are no longer sufficient. A focus on other forms of literacy is necessary to "challenge the
focus on 'formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed' forms of language" (22). In this day and age, most students are at a minimum "computerate" (Atkinson 1), if not more literate in other forms of technology, and are often well versed on how to obtain information in a digital world. Advances in technology have started to change how we read and an increasing amount of information is becoming available to us in a strictly digital format (Lloyd, Atkinson). Kartal & Arikan tell us that it is important for educators to keep this in mind and to start teaching literature in a virtual environment, or at least make connections to it. Lloyd supports this by explaining that incorporating technology into the classroom is becoming more and more vital because as students gain literacy in technology, they may start to reject traditional teaching styles. While some scholars refute this by saying that many students still prefer and need the explicit and linear instruction that comes with traditional language instruction, especially in the lower level courses (Stepp-Greany; Hussein), it is a fact that technology is affecting our daily lives and by giving students the chance to use it in the learning process, teachers not only encourage language acquisition, but also the development of skills that will become indispensable in the future.

One of the most notable examples of how technology is changing the way we read is the e-reader. Wines & Bianchi did a study on the benefits of these small portable devices and found that students often ignore unfamiliar words in traditional texts but tend to look them up if using a device with a built in dictionary. Students in the study also reported deeper engagement with the readings because they could focus on individual pages and use highlighting and annotating features to make notes in the text. Having access to downloadable texts could mean that students seek out target language materials and use them as an extension to their classroom learning.

All of the skills that are essential to FL acquisition, including listening comprehension,
reading, writing, and speaking can be addressed with the use of media and technology (O'Sullivan & Rösler). The variety produced by media can recreate the complex nature of language, including visual, auditory, and social factors (Smith). Examples include TV programs, movies, online videos, and audio recordings which offer students a wide range of target language audio samples accompanied by visual aids. It has often been thought that when a student engages multiple senses, they will better understand the material, and so combining the auditory and visual factor of following along in a text with an audio book should help students retain the information more easily than reading alone (Hussein).

For those teachers who are afraid that using technology will take up too much precious class time, video clips on reading topics already being used in class can easily be substituted for shorter texts and handled just like any other learning source. Finding a movie based on a book being read in class is a good way to activate students' analytical skills as they compare the text to the film (Smith). Although it may not be possible to obtain visual representations for each text used in the classroom, the opportunities they provide for students to hear different dialects, colloquialisms, slang, and idioms can improve their pronunciation and increase their ability to understand the spoken word, especially if captioning is present (Stepp-Greany). When using print materials, target language television broadcasts can be especially useful as supporting resources. Unlike texts, which are slower to update (Smith), TV programs have the ability to quickly adapt to current language usage and can keep up to date on present day language practices. Additionally, because the programs are produced by native speakers, just as literary materials are, they reflect the culture in which they were created and can provide a rich source of visual cultural information. "Nothing makes a situation as real as seeing it" (Smith 27), so just as picture books combine text and image to increase understanding, the visual aspect of programs
related to the literature can assist in students' comprehension of the target culture by providing a sort of animated picture book.

It is estimated that over 75% of youth ages 12-19 use the internet on a daily basis, especially for leisure and social networking purposes (O'Sullivan & Rösler; Yunus & Suliman). Knowing this, teachers can easily integrate technological assignments into the learning process and relate them to students' current skills and interests. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs are just a few of the more common ways that students spend their time online, and blogs can be especially useful in helping students work more intensively with literature (Thomas). Because blogs are available on almost every subject, teachers or students can choose specific content from within the literature and easily find multiple sources that will provide additional information. Although most blogs are used as personal journals (Thomas) and therefore not reliable academic sources, if the goal is to have students interact with native speakers and find out about their experiences with certain topics, then they are an excellent source of information. This approach to learning allows students to choose with whom they communicate and gives them the opportunity to practice target language reading and writing skills in a real-world context where the setting focuses more on content rather than form (Stepp-Greany). If students are allowed to choose the topic, many will remain within areas that are of particular interest to them and by doing so are more likely use certain phrases with higher frequency, thus committing them to memory and allowing for recall in other communicative activities (Stepp-Greany).

Blogs and other online forums can also act as an equalizer for different skill levels and participation. When choosing online supporting materials, students who have a good grasp on the information can move on or be encouraged to read more advanced materials while weaker
students can work on improving their skills and still receive comprehensible input relevant to the topic at hand (Smith). Technology can also provide a patient and un-judgmental setting in which students who are shy or hesitant to speak up in class have the opportunity to participate in discussions without the anxiety that comes with feeling rushed by their peers (Smith; Chavez). On the other hand, students who are outspoken and quick to speak in class can be encouraged to take more time to think about what they want to say when composing a written response, instead of just blurting out whatever comes to mind (Lloyd).

When all students have the chance to be heard, technology can also increase the rates of student-teacher interaction (Stepp-Greany) and allow teachers to personalize feedback for each student. Along these same lines, technology can provide near instantaneous feedback, a feature many students find helpful for the learning process (Atkinson; Smith). It is not unusual for students to have to wait a few days to receive feedback on traditional written assignments and at that point, it is generally not beneficial for them. Online workbook activities and certain language learning programs can bypass this inconvenience and provide immediate feedback so that students can fix their mistakes with fewer delays. Online glossing can provide this same benefit for literature. When reading a challenging text on foreign policy, students can easily look up words and stop spending so much time on meaning alone and concentrate more on comprehending the text as a whole (Thomas).

Software such as Skype, which allows people to communicate in real-time, can have a similar communicative function to blogs, but they have the added factor of requiring students to actually speak the target language and reply without the delay that written responses require. Interacting with native speakers in this way will let many students feel like they are receiving real exposure to authentic language for the first time because they know that the person with
whom they are speaking is from the target culture (Smith). Programs like Skype allow access to native speakers from different regions, which can expose students to a diversity of linguistic and cultural nuances that are not necessarily present in the classroom. If a text about a certain region in Germany is being discussed in class, connecting with a partner school in that region may help students better identify with the text, understand the context, and provide a differing perspective on the topic. By practicing their language skills in real-time in an authentic conversational setting, students are "fac(ing) the reality of a true [target language] setting" (Smith 212) and can become more aware of their own personal language abilities and gain confidence in handling situations where the next step is not necessarily dictated by a learning outcome.

Another important reason for integrating technology comes when one considers the constructivist approach to learning. "Construction of knowledge and information processing are regarded as key activities in language learning" and can be supported by "project-based and process-oriented learning" (Rüschoff & Ritter 219, 221). Technology is the perfect medium to create such a learning environment and can encourage students to create their own understanding of content. Studies have shown that students who are taught with an interactive approach to language learning outperform students in less interactive courses (Smith, Lloyd, Thomas). This has led to a shift in which students are now expected to take a more active approach and actually participate in the learning process by constructing their own knowledge.

Advocates of the constructivist approach argue that language acquisition does not happen by simply practicing grammatical and vocabulary skills. "Language is seen as a negotiable system of meaning, expressed and interpreted via the social interaction of a reader and text, or between speakers in a culturally coded situation rather than as a closed system of formal lexical and grammatical rules" (Smith 98). Using this information, students can create their own real-
world social interactions and bring them into the classroom by using technology such as wikis, YouTube, and VoiceThread. Wikis are a good example of having students interact with texts on a deeper level. By creating a class wiki for a particular text, in which individuals or groups of students are responsible for certain aspects such as character profiles or vocabulary lists, students are encouraged not only to create and share their own work, but also to edit and comment on work by their peers, something many students are more comfortable doing online (Atkinson). Creating such a process-oriented approach to learning, where students have the opportunity to explore other resources and construct their own products of language, teachers support an environment where students experience increased learning competence and awareness of their own language abilities (Rüschoff & Ritter).

When students are personally invested in a project and know that their performance is directly related to how successful they are, they tend to take more pride in their work, perform at a higher level, and have a feeling of satisfaction once the product is complete (Stepp-Greany; Rüschoff & Ritter; Lloyd). Additionally, Thomas says that if the product of students' efforts is visible for fellow students, friends, family, and native target language speakers, they may be more motivated to produce a quality product. Especially in the case of blogs, if students have developed an audience outside of the classroom, there is the possibility that they will continue to edit their work and create new posts in the target language, even after the course is over (Lloyd).

Technology projects that allow students to choose their topic and medium are not only good for working with the literature, but it can also have applications for cross-curricular education and future career choices (Atkinson). Take for example a journalism student in a German course. As part of a technology project after reading a text on the social climate in multicultural Berlin, the student could design an electronic interview on the topic of living in a
place where so many cultures come together and ask native target language speakers to participate. Students who are taking general geography classes can do an interactive mapping project on countries that speak German or destinations within those countries that might be attractive for people looking to move there. "In modern languages, where so much is new and alien to the learner, a continuity of experience is all the more important" (Atkinson 8). By combining other courses of study with language learning, technology, and literature, teachers are making use of the vast resources and knowledge that students already have, creating an environment in which students are able to use their language skills in a meaningful way.

Through this discussion we have seen that technology is a wonderful resource for teaching a FL and can be used to improve the implementation of literature in a multitude of ways. It brings the real-world into the classroom and encourages students to make learning a personal goal rather than an abstract one set by the course, therefore increasing the likelihood that they will enjoy learning and retain information long after the course has ended. While the advances technology has made in recent years are exciting and boast many opportunities for learning, it is still merely one of many delivery methods that is designed to assist students in the learning process. "The success or failure of any technological aid will have less to do with what it can do than what we are actually doing with it" (Smith 82) and the teacher's presence and ability to properly implement it will remain a crucial aspect of language learning. Technology can expand our human capacity to reason and process information, help us develop new insights (Lloyd), and provide a greater diversification of learning activities in order to motivate students who live in a technologically developed society (Smith), but it should be properly balanced with traditional methods so that we achieve the ultimate goal of technology-enhanced foreign language literature.
CHAPTER IV
PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

In the following section, I will provide examples of how to integrate authentic children's and youth literature into the German foreign language classroom with sample lesson activities based on a selection of literature that is representative of the theoretical discussions presented in previous sections. However, it must be mentioned that these samples are by no means exhaustive. It is my hope that other educators will use these examples to create their own lessons in which CYL is purposefully integrated in order to teach culture, vocabulary and grammar in such a way that students are engaged in the reading and obtain a more in-depth comprehension of the material.

Both texts to be discussed were written by German authors, published in Germany no more than 8 years ago, and intended for young readers. *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* is a 32 page picture book intended for children 4-5 years old and, as is typical for picture books, the art is the most prominent feature, but there are text boxes on each spread of pages. *Adile: Ein Mädchen aus Istanbul* is recommended for youth ages 9-11 and is 96 pages long. The pages contain mostly text, but there are pictures that take up either partial or whole pages throughout the book.

Smith points out that print materials are harder and more expensive to update than other sources, which is why the recent publication dates played a key role in text selection. The language reflected in these texts is current and up to date with modern language usage and spelling reforms, which is important when learning a foreign language. Older books may have the same cultural and grammatical impact, and should by no means be discredited in language
learning, but languages are constantly changing and it is important that students have exposure to current linguistic practices and nuances.

The content of these stories deals largely with being an outsider and having difficulties fitting in and is presented in such a manner that both children and adults can relate to them. *Die Furchtlichen Fünf* does so in a generic setting that can be related to on multiple levels, while *Adile* contextualizes the topic in terms of immigration. The images in *Die Furchtlichen Fünf* contain a great deal of humor and irony that help keep even an adult reader interested. The text is more advanced than many students might expect for a picture book, meaning that even if older students are not entertained by the topic, they still experience a challenge in understanding the content. *Adile* is good for older readers because it has the perceived challenge of being a longer text, but it also covers a topic that most adults can relate to. Additionally, the author invested time and effort into making sure that the content was based on facts and historical accuracy. The combination of a story that students might read for pleasure and historical accuracy make this text engaging enough that many students may find themselves not only reading to complete the assignment, but also because they enjoy it.

Like most stories, both books are narrated in the simple past with present-tense dialogue between the characters, so they can easily be integrated into the curriculum when students are learning about the various verb forms. They are both are also acceptable as exemplary texts for other grammatical structures such as word order and subordinate clauses and cultural themes.

Although the texts can be used individually and consecutively, because they are easily relatable to each other, a few considerations should be kept in mind for either method. If used in together, it is recommended that the picture book be the leading text. One of the goals for using these particular books in a German classroom is to introduce students to complex topics and as
Benedict & Carlisle tell us, picture books break down complicated messages into easy to handle segments. *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* therefore not only allows students to read a full text in the target language for the first time, but can also provide connections to various aspects in *Adile* such as her friendship with a young German girl.

It is possible that using two texts for a single topic might be excessive or impossible based on time restrictions in the course. If this is the case, *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* is more flexible, so it can be used in discussions on just about everything from being an outsider to friendship, while *Adile*’s context is almost strictly limited to the topic of immigration. Although *Adile* is longer and possibly therefore more daunting for students than the picture book, its structure and in-class assistance from the teacher should allow students to navigate the text with little difficulty.

The topics in these books can be left open to interpretation, but for this paper it is assumed that *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* is used to discuss being an outsider while *Adile* is used to introduce the theme of migrant workers and foreigners in Germany. The following lessons will assume that the books are being implemented in a third semester college German course, although they would also be acceptable in other levels based on class dynamics. It is presumed that third semester students have a vocabulary large enough to understand the basic premise of the books, but especially in the case of *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf*, the language is a bit trickier and more dense than one might expect from a picture book. This combination makes the text good for older learners who are used to understanding more than just words whilst still presenting a reasonable challenge for intermediate language learners. It is intended that the materials will be presented in German, using only as much English as necessary to aid understanding.
The Books and Authors

The first example, the picture book *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* by Wolf Erlbruch, is a story about a toad, rat, bat, spider and hyena who are unhappy because they feel ugly and unwanted. They soon find out, however, that they each have a special talent and join together to create a pancake restaurant with live music. After getting the restaurant set up, they wait a while for guests to arrive and start to blame themselves when nobody shows as expected. Realizing that they don’t need anybody but themselves to have a good time, the friends strike up the music and serve up pancakes. Hearing the lively music, other animals start joining them and it turns into a big party. Everybody is enjoying themselves and when asked if they plan on doing the restaurant and music more often, the *fürchterlichen* five promise to do it every night.

Wolf Erlbruch is a postmodern illustrator and children’s book author. He started publishing his work in 1985 and continues to do so today. He was a professor of illustration at two different German institutions and has received several awards and recognitions for his writing and artwork, including the 1993 Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis for picture books and the 2003 Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis Sonderpreis. Although *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* itself has not received any awards, “Die wunderbaren Bilder von Wolf Erlbruch haben dieses Buch bereits zu einem Bilderbuch-Klassiker werden lassen” (Pisakids.de) and online reviews of the book mirror the praise for the illustrations, quality of text, and applicability to older readers (Amazon.de). It has also enjoyed a great deal of success in theatrical adaptations on the stage.

The second sample, *Adile: Ein Mädchen aus Istanbul* by Anja Tuckermann, is based on the true story of a young Turkish girl named Adile. At the beginning of the story, Adile must face the traditionalist views of her family and instead of just playing outside with other children, she is often required to learn the ways of a house wife. As the chance to increase their meager
income presents itself, Adile's father moves to Germany as a guest worker, and the mother follows a few months later, taking her youngest son with her. Eventually, Adile and her older brother join their family members in Germany. The apartment in Berlin is cramped and Adile's school experiences are less than positive. She and her siblings are among the first Turkish students in the school and Adile's father forbids them from having any additional contact to the German students. Things worsen as the father starts beating his children and wife, but Adile finds hope as she begins to excel in her schoolwork and starts to fit in at school. Soon thereafter, however, Adile's grandpa in Turkey dies and her family decides to send her back to be with her grandma. Once again in Turkey, Adile must repeat the 5th grade but does not understand the foreign school system, rekindling feelings of being stupid. After two years of being in Turkey, Adile is allowed to return to Germany, where she resumes her education and friendship with a younger German girl. As the father's beatings become unbearable, Adile confides in one of her teachers and the family eventually separates from him. The story concludes with what the real Adile is doing today.

Anja Tuckermann is a journalist who also writes books, including novels and plays for old and young alike. Many of her books deal with girls, foreigners, children of foreigners who live in Germany, and "eben alle, die als Minderheit so leicht an den Rand gestellt werden" (Pisakids.de). Her work has received many nominations, recognitions, and awards, to include the 2006 Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis for non-fiction.

Die Fürchterlichen Fünf

Pre-Reading: In this phase, the teacher introduces the concept of outcasts by asking students what makes somebody an outsider. Collectively, students come up with types of people who
don't fit into the social norms of society. Afterward, the students are put into pairs or small
groups and come up with reasons why these people are outcasts, how they deal with it, and if
there is anything that can be done to change it. They should also consider the validity, or
invalidity, of the stereotypes attached to outsiders. After collecting several ideas, students are
asked if they have any personal experience with outcasts, what problems being an outsider can
present, and share their ideas on validity and overcoming the issues. The teacher can then lead
into the picture book by asking which animals are considered outsiders or undesirable and why.

**Reading:** To begin, the teacher passes out a vocabulary list that contains important terms from
the text. As a class, students should write out the various tenses of the verbs and the plural forms
of the nouns. After going over the list, the teacher introduces the title, author and five main
characters and then shows the first two pages of the book. As a class, students read through the
text and the teacher assists comprehension by stopping after every sentence to address
vocabulary words or syntactical issues. The teacher should also take some time to introduce
various reading strategies. One way of doing so is to put the first text box of the book online and
use Scrible, a tool that allows you to annotate and save websites, to highlight the specific
strategies. Many of the strategies for reading a FL are similar to the ones used in our native
language (O'Sullivan & Rösler; Braunger & Lewis) and include 1) scanning the text to look for
vocabulary words or words that show up on a frequent basis, 2) understanding that not every
word in the text is vital to understanding the overall meaning, 3) re-reading passages, and 4)
seeing if you can summarize what you have read. The additional step of identifying verbs,
nouns, adjectives, etc. can be added if desired, and it is a good idea to have students use
synonyms instead of looking up the English translations for unfamiliar words.
After assigning students groups of 3-4, the teacher passes out photocopies of *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf*, from which the original text has been removed. Not all pages from the book need to be passed out, just enough so that the main idea is represented. Using the information from the first page of text, the vocabulary list, and keeping the theme of outcasts in mind, students are to hypothesize about how the story continues. They do so by organizing the images and completing the story using the simple past for everything except dialogue, which is present tense. The text can be written in a text box, spread out on the pages, or done with speech bubbles. Once they have finished, the teacher selects a few groups to share their stories and the rest of the class compares them to what they did.

Finally, the original text can be presented. It is read aloud by the teacher in a story-time fashion, or scans of the book are shown on a projector while an audio recording of the text is played¹. Intermittent pauses can be made to allow students to hypothesize about what will happen next (i.e.: What talent might each animal have? How many guests will show up? Will their restaurant be successful in the future?) and to inquire about vocabulary words. Upon completion of the reading, basic comprehension questions should be asked so ensure that students understood the main ideas.

**Post-Reading:** As a follow-up activity, students are given a worksheet that asks higher-end questions related to the text. This is a good spot to lighten the mood a bit and talk about the friendship aspect of the story. Examples include:

“What meanings/connotations does the word *fürchterlich* have in the text?”

"What else could *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* do to not be so *fürchterlich*?"

¹ *Die Fürchterlichen Fünf* can be ordered with an audio CD
"Would you go to the pancake restaurant? Why/Why not?"

"Do you have a special talent? How might you use it to help bring people together?"

**Technology:** As a final project, students are assigned groups of 4-5 and given the task of digitally recreating the story. They may choose one of the following activities:

1) **Theater** - each student assumes the role of one of the main characters and, using the dialogue in the book, they record their own theatrical rendition of the story to post on YouTube. The students should either provide an alternate ending or create a scene about how the five friends and their restaurant are doing a year later.

2) **Digital Storytelling** - students can use images from other sources to create a video for which they provide the audio in order to expand on an aspect of the story, such as how Hyena learned to play saxophone.

3) **Audio book** - using only dialogue and sounds, such as chairs being pushed around, students record an auditory reenactment of the story.

Because the digital storytelling and audio book choices don't necessarily have the same involvement for all group members as the theatrical option does, each student should be assigned a specific job or task that is required to complete the project. For example, they work collaboratively to create a script, but one student acts as the scribe, another finds the images and music, the third does the speaking, and the fourth is responsible for compiling the elements into the final product.
Variations:

1) For an easier alternative to having students organize the images and create their own texts, the teacher can do a two-step matching activity. In the first phase, students match the images with corresponding simplified texts. The second step consists of students then putting the story in order. The student-arranged stories can then be compared to the original and any sequencing differences can be discussed. This activity can also be done after reading the text as a warm-up for the next day.

2) While listening to the teacher read, or an audio track of the story, students have a cloze-text in which they are required to fill in missing words. The missing words can be anything relevant to current class topics including vocabulary, simple past forms, items related to case, or other parts of speech.

3) Using software such as Microsoft Word or Publisher, students create their own picture book on a topic relating to Die Fürchterlichen Fünf. This can be a background story for one of the characters, the student's own experience with being an outsider\(^2\), or they can create their own using a similar storyline and different characters, such as outcast plants.

Adile: Ein Mädchen aus Istanbul

Pre-Reading: This pre-text phase assumes that Adile will be used to present the subject of foreigners and migrant workers in Germany. To begin, the teacher introduces the topic by showing pictures and talking about famous German immigrants or people with non-German heritage such as the boxer Firat Arslan and singer Xavier Naidoo.

\(^2\) Because this is a difficult and emotional topic, exercise caution if allowing this as an option.
After hearing about several individuals, students are placed in pairs to discuss which
problems people might experience when living in a new country. They should consider the
differences between adults and children, and then come up with a few ways that these problems
could be solved. Special attention should be paid to people who choose to stay in the country
and what might assist in making their integration easier. Before starting or assigning the reading,
a vocabulary list of key terms should be provided. This can be done once for the whole book or
chapter by chapter. As students come upon the words in the text, they should record where they
were found and in what context. For example, if a vocabulary word is die Palme, students
should write down that it appears in the first chapter when Adile is lying under the tree looking at
the sky. These words can then be discussed along with the other tasks for each chapter.

**Reading:** Work with this text can be done in 20 minute in-class sessions as was presented in
Maxim's article, or the students can read a selection of chapters as homework and then have
assignments and quizzes based on the readings. For this example, it will be assumed that
students complete the reading as homework and have designated time in class for quizzes and in
depth work with the text. Quizzes consisting of vocabulary and grammar work should be given
after each section of reading. A few examples of activities include matching English and
German translations, having students provide the definitions themselves, filling in the blank with
the proper word (verbs or nouns), vocabulary clusters (i.e. group all feminine nouns together, or
all strong verbs), word associations, relating words (i.e. die Sehnsucht and sehnsüchtig or essen
and Essen), and providing the various conjugations of verbs. Combining vocabulary work and
summaries of the readings is a good activity, as well. For example, given a list of words,
students should explain how they relate to the story. This not only helps students work meaningfully with the vocabulary but also prepares them up for the upcoming discussion.

Students should initially read up through chapter 2, when Adile's father applies for a job in Berlin. Adile’s grandmother wants the father to go to Germany because it would get him away from the woman he is having an affair with and the father would like to go for the money. Using these reasons as prompts, students should come up with other reasons why people would leave their home country.

After reading through the fourth chapter, in which Adile and her younger brother arrive in Berlin, students complete a chart comparing Adile’s life in Turkey to her life in Berlin and then with their own lives. Students who have children may wish to use them as an example instead of their own childhoods. Topics of comparison can be childhood games, family size/relationships, the environment, and living situations. Once the charts are completed, the students get into small groups and compare them. Following this, there should be a whole-class discussion on how childhood affects what we do later in life. Students can also try to make predictions about how the story will continue.

Chapters 5-9 deal with Adile getting used to a new school system, the separation of Turks and Germans at school, fears about doing everyday things in the foreign land, being beaten by her father and finding coping mechanisms. Students can discuss the causes of these situations and talk about what they personally do to get through difficult times. Special care should be taken when dealing with these sensitive topics, especially the beatings, because one never knows how students might react if they have experienced a form of abuse themselves.

In the following three chapters, Adile is sent back to Turkey and then returns to Germany a few years later. This is a good opportunity for students to discuss the problems with Turkish
people not being considered German, even though they may have been born and raised in Germany. The problems with Turkish culture being foreign to these students and the issues that arise from cultural assumptions can be discussed. This may also be the time to talk about the German and US educational systems. Students should discuss the pros and cons of each system, bearing in mind that neither is wrong; one is just different than what they are used to.

In the final chapter, students find out how the real Adile is doing today, and it is a good lead into the current Turkish-German situation. Teachers may use this opportunity to connect with a partner school in Germany and have students speak with students in German schools about the current immigrant situation. Students should prepare a list of questions to ask beforehand and predict what kind of answers they may get based on Adile's story. If it is possible, a college level Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF) course would be the ideal contact group for this content, as it combines the cultural information of foreigners with the possibility of selecting a course that is closer to the students' target language abilities.

**Post-Reading:** Due to the fact that *Adile* is based on the *Gastarbeiter* program, which ended in 1973, it is a good idea to conclude the reading by updating students on the current immigration situation in Germany. Topics should include the impact of the *Gastarbeiter* program on Germany after the *Anwerbestopp*, the headscarf debates, discussions revolving around allowing Turkey into the EU, and citizenship laws.

**Technology:** This book presents many opportunities for students to enhance their reading experience using technology. These projects may be done between chapters or as final projects, as is fitting for the pace and depth of classroom interaction with the text.
1) Brochures - students can research various cities in Germany and create brochures that are designed to attract foreigners, either for work or pleasure. Brochures should include information on the city's location, economy, population, environment, attractions, and any other information that students find relevant.

2) Interviews - Students conduct interviews with people in their community or on campus that are from different countries to find out what experiences they have living in the US. If the class has access to a German partner school, they can complete this activity with German-Turks or other non-native Germans. The interview can be done in pairs and the information should be presented to the whole class using either video or other visual representation of the interview, such as a digital poster with an image of the interviewee and important quotes.

3) Choose your own adventure – using PowerPoint or similar presentation software, students can create their own version of the story in which they provide various outcomes for different decisions in the storyline based on Adile or her brothers (i.e. when Adile’s father forbids them to have contact with Germans, what happens if the children obey? What happens if they don’t?). The whole class can participate in reading the final project. If feasible, the teacher can even have the final product formatted as a book and then printed off and kept in the classroom for future reference.

Variations:

1) If the topic of foreigners in Germany, especially Turkish migrants, has already been introduced, this text can be used as an additional reading to reinforce what the students
have learned with a real-life context. As they learn about different aspects, the teacher can assign the reading of relevant chapters as homework and have students compare what they learned in class to Adile's experiences.

2) For each chapter, a picture can be used as a writing prompt. Students should write about events leading up to the picture, the picture itself, or events that happen directly after.

3) Adile loved reading, so as a final project, students can choose a favorite book from their childhood and, working in small groups (2-3), prepare a talk-show style review of their choices in the target language. The review should contain information about the author, plot, main characters, and why the student enjoyed the book. This can be recorded as a radio show or as a TV show and then presented to the whole class.

4) Anja Tuckermann has written several books that have to do with children in situations similar to Adile's. After gathering information on these books and the author herself, students can organize a mock interview with Tuckermann and discuss why she thinks these issues are so important and what they mean to her.

As can be seen by the above examples, there are many ways in which an educator can use CYL in conjunction with technology to teach grammar and culture. The activities listed in this section are a mere sampling of the numerous options that exist, but once students are used to using CYL, it will become an integral part of the learning process that many students will look forward to. The ultimate goal of the lessons should be to have students come away with an appreciation of target language CYL and a deeper understanding of the topics the literature was used to support.
Despite the fact that research on the superiority of authentic or non-authentic materials has yet to reach any conclusive results, it is undeniable that authentic texts should have at least some role in the FL classroom. Along with the various linguistic benefits discussed in the first chapter, authentic texts reflect the values and viewpoints of the culture in which they are produced, providing students with a tangible source of cultural information. It is important when exposing learners to materials that were not created specifically with them in mind that the content be appropriate and comprehensible for their level of knowledge. For this reason children’s and youth literature is the ideal mode of presentation. CYL is written with younger, less advanced readers in mind, but is often done so in such a manner that it can easily be appreciated by older readers, as well. The combination of reading level and age appropriateness make these texts an excellent resource for students who wish to gain exposure and in-depth understanding of target language literature and culture. Using technology to enrich the students’ experience with the literature will help them develop a better understanding and continuing appreciation for the materials, above and beyond what can be achieved in a traditional classroom.

Due to the fact that authenticity, children’s and youth literature, and foreign language technology are often researched individually but rarely in conjunction with one another, more research is needed to fully understand the implications and results that come from using all three together to supplement language learning in a traditional classroom. It is my hope that the information presented in this work will inspire other educators to consider including technology-enhanced authentic children’s and youth literature into their curriculum and that future research
will help definitively prove that this type of instruction is undoubtedly beneficial to the foreign language learning process.


Schulz, Renate A. "Using Young Adult Literature in Content-Based German Instruction: Teaching the Holocaust." *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* 31.2 (1998): 138-47. Print.


APPENDIX

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Teacher Resources

1) German lesson materials
   a) http://www.schulportal.de/

2) International Association for Language Learning Technology
   a) http://www.iallt.org/

3) Merlot II
   a) http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm

4) German partner schools
   a) http://www.goethe.de/ins/us/lp/prj/gapp/enindex.htm
   b) http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm
   c) http://www.goethe.de/ins/pl/lp/prj/bld/mit/deindex.htm

5) Open Education Resources
   a) http://www.oercommons.org/

Technology

1) Skype
   a) http://www.skype.com/en/

2) YouTube
   a) http://www.youtube.com/

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3 This list is by no means comprehensive, as there are many more resources available that relate to teaching and working with languages that are not included. It is simply intended to provide a starting point for those who wish to start incorporating more resources into their lessons.
3) WebQuests
   a) http://webquest.org/search/index.php
   b) http://www.thinglink.com/

4) Digital Storytelling
   a) http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/
   b) https://voicethread.com/

5) Social Drawing
   a) http://doodle.ly/

6) Text Proofing
   a) German: http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibpruefung-online
   b) French: http://bonpatron.com/
   c) Spanish: http://spanishchecker.com/

7) Create music
   a) http://incredibox.com/

8) Record and download audio
   a) http://vocaroo.com/

9) Interactive timelines
   a) http://timerime.com/en/

10) Annotate, save, and share websites
    a) http://www.scrible.com/

11) Isolate online texts for easier reading
    a) http://evernote.com/clearly/