Biology concepts and Pictorial Fiction Books. Do early years children comprehend?

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Theoretical background
✓ Realistic fictional storybooks offer epistemic and epistemological potentialities with young children (Bruguière et al. 2007)
✓ Children can transfer fantastical characteristic to real animals (Ganea et al. 2004)
✓ Picture books can develop some of understanding of conceptual categories (Gelman and Waxman, 2009).
✓ Learning through reading pictorial fictional books is influenced by the type of interaction with the adults during the picture reading (Mol and Bus, 2011)

Corpus
- children’s drawings (N = 14, 2 classes)
- Transcription of teacher-class dialogue as the story was read out loud

“Cows,” said the frog. “Cows! They have four legs, horns, eat grass, and carry pink bags of milk.”

Research question
Do children comprehend the possibilities of the situations depicted in reality and concise the actuality situations presented by realistic fictional storybook?

Results
Children in both countries responded similarly and drew, using their existing mental model, their own interpretation of the text of observable features of the animal whose description they had heard.

References
Mol and Bus (2011) To read or not to read” : A metanalysis of print exposure from infancy to adulthood. Psychological Bulletin 137: 267 -296

Conclusion
Reading ‘realistic fiction’- generates ‘explanation-seeking curiosity’ but does not
- provide directly scientific explanations- needs adult intervention for the science
- allow the pupils to spot the issue of the problem but not to resolve it,
- not means to stand by its own, but intended to be integrated with other scientific learning