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Changing Horizon Expectations of Students for the Adaptation of Hänsel und Gretel in the Film Secret Magic Control Agency

Manuscript Information

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Abstrak
Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang perbedaan horizon harapan mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Jerman Universitas Negeri Malang angkatan 2022 hingga 2024 terhadap perubahan media yang terjadi pada dongeng klasik *Hänsel und Gretel* ke dalam adaptasi filmnya yang berjudul *Secret Magic Control Agency*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bayangan mahasiswa dan perubahannya sebelum dan setelah menonton film adaptasi tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan resepsi. Estetika resepsi milik Hans Robert Jauss inilah yang digunakan sebagai dasar pembuatan pedoman wawancara dan dilanjutkan dengan mengelompokkan kategori yang paling sering muncul dengan bantuan teknik analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa berada dalam kondisi menolak realitas karena bayangan mereka terkait dengan adaptasi film *Secret Magic Control Agency* tidak sama dengan bayangan awal mereka ketika memikirkan bayyangan dongeng itu menjadi sebuah film. Maka dari itu, penenilitian menemukan makna baru bahwa perbedaan horzon harapan dan kehadiran jarak estetik yang teadi pada mahasiswa aktif Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Jerman Fakultas Sastra Universitas Negeri Malang ini sangat beragam dan dapat hadir sebagai pemberi makna baru yang masih relevan dengan kehidupan masa kini.

Kata Kunci:
Hänsel und Gretel, Secret Magic Conttrol Agency, Estetika Resepsi, Adaptasi.

Abstract
This study examines the difference in the horizon of expectations of students of the German Language Education Study Program, State University of Malang class of 2022 to 2024 towards the media changes that occurred in the classic fairy tale Hänsel und Gretel into its film adaptation entitled Secret Magic Control Agency. This study aims to find out the students' reflections and their changes before and after watching the film adaptation. This study uses a qualitative method with a reception approach. Hans Robert Jauss's reception aesthetic is used as the basis for creating interview guidelines and continues by grouping the categories that appear most often with the help of thematic analysis techniques. The results of the study show that students are in a state of rejection of reality because their shadows related to the Secret Magic Control Agency film adaptation are not the same as their initial shadows when they think of the fairy tale becoming a movie. Therefore, the research found a new meaning that the difference in expectations and the presence of aesthetic distance in active students of the German Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang is very diverse and can be present as a provider of new meanings that are still relevant to today's life.

Keyword:
Hänsel und Gretel, Secret Magic Conttrol Agency, Reception Aesthetics, Adaptation.

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INTRODUCTION

The change of literary works is a process of switching from old literary works to new literary works while maintaining the core story of the literary work. The transformation of literary works does not only occur in novel manuscripts into series, but also in the transformation of poems, poems, and even fairy tales into E-Books, short videos to feature film formats. This change is usually known as a "vehicle transfer", which in one of its developments has the term *ekranization*. This is in line with the opinion Damono (2018) which states that *ekranization* or *l'écran (screen)* refers to the process of changing the form of a literary work into a film.

Nowadays, film is growing as one of the most in-demand media by the public. This can be seen in the presence of film in fulfilling its function as a media representation of the social environment and people's lives (Ramadhani et al., 2023), or as an adaptation medium, which is widely favored by today's audience (Alayya et al., 2023). The high interest of the public in films, especially adaptation films, is increasing and sometimes makes literary writers think about making their work a film rather than a written work.

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This enthusiasm, is in accordance with the habits of Generation Z as one of the social order, which generally spends nine hours a day just staring at the screen (Marriott, 2025), and their tendency to choose literary works that are displayed in a color visual format (Firdausi & Syafruddin, 2025). This form is easy to find in various digital platforms that are widely used by Generation Z today, such as Tiktok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Netflix, and movie trailers in them that emphasize the duration of the content is short, fast, and can help them in deciding the next step to watch the content or not.

The decision of Generation Z in choosing the genre of spectacle is influenced by the different ways in which they enjoy literary works, especially in their tendency to consume concise and fast stories. This pattern indirectly impacts the form of literary works, such as the adaptation of the work into film form as an effort by literary writers to collaborate with technological advances. This form of adaptation is present as a story medium with new components including images, plots, characters, and the development of conflicts in the story. This condition is usually easier to see in one of the literary works that has undergone various adaptation processes, such as fairy tales (Pratiwi & Saksono, 2019).

Aesthetics of reception *(Rezeptionsästhetik)* is a response or reception to a literary work in order to give meaning or just appreciate the work which is adjusted to the understanding of each connoisseur of literary works. This is in accordance with the opinion by Pradopo (2020) which explains that reception aesthetics are aesthetic science that comes from various readers' answers to the existence of literary works, especially because readers have an important role in determining the value and meaning of a literary work (Rokhmansyah, 2014). This condition indirectly requires the presence of interaction between the reader and the literary work itself. The interaction between the reader and the literary work is generally present to form a new meaning that is diverse and in accordance with the period of the work being read.

The formation of new literary works cannot be separated from the reader's imagination related to the literary work he is reading. It is this initial reflection or "expectation" of the reader that Jauss more often calls a concept called the Horizon of Expectations *(Erwartungshorizont).* It is this horizon of hope that allows readers to interpret literary works, even though the meaning is still limited by the elements in the literary work (Jauss in Jabrohim, 2014), such as the reader's expectation that the literary works he reads will always be in line with his understanding (Pradopo, 2020). This image is always carried by readers of literary works and makes every reader have a difference in interpreting the work.

The acceptance of literary works, which generally occurs in the change of the form of literary works, such as from the form of fairy tales or short stories to films, often causes various rejections and criticisms from readers. This is in accordance with the opinion Jauss (1982) who argue that the recognition of new literary works often triggers the rejection of readers, especially because of the difference between the work and their pre-existing aesthetic experiences. This rejection that needs to be resolved must go through the process of understanding the new work, such as by giving the reader proof contained in the literary work (Holub, 1984), and explain the difference or source of the work from the work that existed before.

The process of accepting the two literary works is carried out by filling the gap between the reader's initial image and their reality when viewing or reading a new literary work. This gap is usually called aesthetic distance *(Horizontwandel).* Aesthetic distance is generally influenced by the "forced acceptance of reality" to previous aesthetic experiences, such as their reflection when reading their old literary works. This is in accordance with the opinion Jauss (1982) which states that the presence of new literary works can cause a strong rejection of the initial expectations for the connoisseurs of literary works, so that they need time to accept new elements that they did not find in the previous literary works.

One of the fairy tales that has been widely adapted and changed in its medium is the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* as one example of the Grimm Brothers' collection of fairy tales. This fairy tale tells the story of two brothers who live in a time of food crisis. The fairy tale is set in the wilderness coupled with the presence of an evil old witch as a symbol of evil. *Hänsel und Gretel*, who was "abandoned" by his two men in the forest, met a witch who liked to eat children, but with their ingenuity, they were able to return home with pearls and gemstones as a reward to help the father. This valuable item will later succeed in making their small family happy and feeling enough to find food. This famous fairy tale belonging to the Grimm Brothers causes the existence of the making of film adaptations in today's times, especially the role of old literary works as a source of inspiration that can form various new literary works (Damono, 2018). This is the reason for the adaptation of the fairy tale film *Hänsel und Gretel*, as the film Secret Magic Control Agency is present and also colors the screens of today's audiences.

The film Secret Magic Control Agency or a film with another name *Hänsel und Gretel* can be watched on the Netflix platform since March 25, 2021. This film is included in the animated film genre with the theme of the adventure of siblings named *Hänsel und Gretel*. In the story, these two main characters get a mission to

e-ISSN: 2963 – 198X
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save the King. The search for the King is colored by many magical things that happen to them, such as the shrinkage of the body due to baba Yaga's shrinking potion, as well as the emergence of ingenious ideas to bring the King back before the day of his birthday celebration. This mission is present as a representation of Gretel's work as a great intelligence agent who is always successful in her missions. Meanwhile, the character Hänsel, the elder brother is described as a trickster character who introduces himself as a great magician. This film features new characters, such as Agents Stepdaughters, Baba Yaga, the Queen of the Magic Lake, and Ilvira as the main villain in the development of the story's conflict. The emergence of this new character has the potential to cause an aesthetic distance, namely a change in the horizon of readers' expectations demanded by appreciation of new literary works (Jauss, 1982).

The presence of variation in understanding literary works has been the focus of attention in several previous studies, such as the research of Rahmadinia & Adiputra (2025) entitled Expectations and Extensions behind the Audience Reception of the 1990 and 1991 Dilan Adaptation films. This research focuses on the audience's reception of the film adaptation of the novel Dilan 1990 and Dilan 1991. The results of the study showed that the audience was invited to share their experiences and hopes in understanding Dilan's story which was previously in the form of a novel. In addition, different patterns were also found that not all readers of Dilan's novel wanted to continue the "shadow of the story" in their thinking into a new medium such as feature films. This shows that film adaptations sometimes have different appeals to each person, although it is generally understood that film adaptations and novels will have some changes in their presentation as well as the storyline.

The research that has been carried out next is The Study of Fairy Tales and the Film *Hänsel und Gretel* the Grimm Brothers' work on research Pratiwi & Saksono (2019). The study examined the differences and similarities between the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* by Grimm Brothers' and the film adaptation of *Hänsel und Gretel* by Uwe Janson. This study uses an esynchronization approach with a focus on elements such as the addition of character characters, as well as the difference in storyline between the original fairy tale and the film. The results of the study show that there is a change in the depiction of conflict, as well as an addition to characterization in the film version. This research also shows that film adaptations will adjust the narrative according to the needs of the audiovisual media.

The third previous research is a research of Prameswari et al. (2025) titled Representation of Gretel's Crisis of Trust in the Secret Magic Control Agency's Fairy Tale Adaptation. This study examines the visual elements of the film Secret Magic Control Agency with an English dubbing version adapted to Roland Barthes' semiotic theory regarding the crisis of trust of Gretel's character and the role of the film Secret Magic Control Agency as a learning medium. The representation of Gretel's character crisis is expressed in the form of a screnshoot of several scenes that show the expression and atmosphere of Gretel's character in the film Secret Magic Control Agency and is complemented by a scene analysis table that examines the meaning of denotations, connotations, and myths of the existence of the scene.

Based on the description of the explanation, it can be seen that previous research has paid attention to the aesthetics of the reception of literary works from the form of novels to film adaptations of Dilan 1990 and Dilan 1991. then a comparison of the structure of the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* with the film by Uwe Janson using an ecranization approach, a discussion of visual elements in the Secret Magic Control Agency movie poster, and a study of the character of Gretel The Secret Magic Control Agency is based on Roland Barthes' theory of representation. The three studies have limitations in the study of students' reactions to the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* into its latest film adaptation, the animated film entitled Secret Magic Control Agency. Therefore, to fill this gap, this study is here to examine the changes in the reception of students of the German Language Education, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang in interpreting the film Secret Magic Control Agency as an adaptation of the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel*, as well as what things affect the change in students' horizon of expectations before and after watching the film.

In addition, this study aims to determine the change in the reception of German Language Education students, class of 2022 to 2024 at the State University of Malang to the story of *Hänsel und Gretel* before and after watching the German dubbed version of the film Secret Magic Control Agency based on the aesthetic theory of Hans Robert Jauss's reception with the help of the concept of horizon of expectations as well as the presence of new meanings that are relevant to the present.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a reception approach. This approach was chosen because the focus of this research is the responses of students of the German Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, class of 2022 to 2024 to the change of literary works from the fairy tale

e-ISSN: 2963 – 198X
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Hänsel und Gretel to a film adaptation entitled Secret Magic Control Agency who openly and voluntarily argue that it is related to literary works (Rejeki & Sayuti, 2019), and easier to understand through descriptive presentation of data in qualitative methods (Moleong, 2013). The presentation of interview data was then analyzed thematically, to see the relationship between data and themes in the events being researched (Heriyanto, 2018).

The subjects in this research are active students of the German Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang in the class of 2022 to 2024. The three batches are in accordance with the requirements for this research to be carried out, namely active students who have graduated or are taking the *Literature und Gesellschaft* course or at least took the fourth semester at the time this research was conducted. In addition, the students of the German Language Education, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang class of 2022, 2023, and 2024 are a picture of generation Z who live in post-literacy conditions, who are used to accessing literary works through digital media so as to create a closer relationship between literature and its readers (Mardi et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the instrument used in this study is interview guidelines. Data was collected through interviews with ten students of the German Language Education, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, class of 2022 to 2024. The selection of ten students as interview resource persons was carried out based on their understanding related to research needs.

The analysis technique used in this study is a thematic analysis technique. This technique is used to examine the entire interview data as a basis for determining the categories in the data that has been taken, especially on the data obtained through interview transcripts (Damayanti, 2021). The data were further analyzed by identifying the patterns of answers that emerged from students' experiences and responses to the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* and its adaptation in the form of the film Secret Magic Control Agency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Presence of Aesthetic Distance and Difference in Horizon of Expectations

This section describes the students' initial horizon of the film adaptation of the Secret Magic Control Agency, and the presence of the students' aesthetic distance after watching and delivering their reception related to the film adaptation. Finally, the formation of new meanings after watching the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency will be discussed and adjusted to the context of the current reality.

Early Horizon Formation

The first category is the students' reception related to their reflections on the story of the film adaptation. The results of the study show that this category is divided into two. Most students imagined the important characters in the fairy tale, namely the characters of Hänsel, Gretel, and the character of the Evil Old Witch. Meanwhile, only a few students have expressed their imagination about the form of stories in fantasy and adventure genre films, such as Disney films. The first category of student shadows related to characters in fairy tales, such as Handel, Gretel and the Wicked Old Witch, can be found in the following excerpts:

"If the fairy tale Hänsel und Gretel were adapted into a film, I imagine the character of Hänsel would be portrayed as an ingenious, resourceful, calm and initiative child. While Gretel is described as a gentle girl but also has a brave nature. The old witch will be described as a creepy and cunning figure. This film adaptation of the fairy tale Hänsel und Gretel will feature a dark, quiet forest and will later become the basis of an atmosphere of tension and fear. On the other hand, the witch's house will be depicted as colorful and full of sweets that will make the house look attractive to children. ... " (DF)

DF's quote shows that students have an initial horizon regarding the important characters in the story. On the other hand, ZD students described Hänsel as imagined by students as a brave, cheerful, brave and intelligent older brother. Then YE and DF students described Hänsel's character as a calm, strategic figure who always tried to protect his sister, Gretel. Meanwhile, RNA, SAA portrays the character of Gretel as a child full of affection, whiny, timid, but also tough in the face of problems. On the other hand, AJK, RM, MDF and NCS envision the character of the Evil Old Witch as a creepy character with an old, mysterious and scary appearance. The depiction of the forest in the film is imagined by ZD, AJK, NLA, NCS, DAS, JA and FPT as a dark, quiet, full of tall trees and thin fog.

The second category of answers refers to the expectations of students who imagine the form of a fantasy film with an adventure theme. The film is imagined like a Disney movie that was produced before. This is reflected in the following quote:

e-ISSN: 2963 – 198X
p-ISSN: 2963 – 2498

"It's unimaginable, but even if it is made into a movie, it will be very fun. Maybe the atmosphere can only be expressed in my mind, because indirectly when reading the fairy tale, in my brain I immediately imagine a setting like in the movie Snow White with the dwarves." (TJN)

The TJN quote shows that students envisioned a similar adaptation film to a princess themed film with an era that corresponds to the medieval era. The film is depicted with beautiful visuals and has a lot of colors. Even though it is a fantasy film, students expect this film to have scenes that can be added or updated, such as by adding humor. This is in line with the opinions of AA, NAF, HPF, ZD, YEH, and KA.

Difference in Horizon of Expectations

In this section, it is explained the difference in student expectations after watching the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency. The most categories in this section include changing students' views on various elements of the film, including the appearance of Baba Yaga's character; changes in storyline, character development; and adaptations of the names of some of the characters in the film.

The first category is related to the appearance of the character of Baba Yaga, as found in the following excerpt :

"... Then, in the fairy tale, they are quite the witches, the grandmother, yes, but it turns out that the one in the movie is Baba Yaga, not a witch who plays villains. ... The witch's grandmother's house is made of cake, but in the movie Baba Yaga she is made of wood, ... So what is in the movie is like being packaged to be more modern and more complex... (MAA)

"... Then for the character of Baba Yaga, it ruined my imagination. Because I mean, yes, I think he's an old witch who is like the images in ancient folklore that his impression with his big hat is really old. And while in the film, I mean that there is a bit of a positive. There are positives to the portrayal of the character. It was a bit of a shock to me that I thought it was a bad idea. ..." (SQH)

The MAA answer quote is an example of the understanding of students who think that the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency has a significant difference. The character of Baba Yaga, which SQH students imagined as a witch with a big hat, does not match the portrayal of Baba Yaga in the film. On the other hand, the presence of Ilvira's character as the main villain with a palace and cookie-shaped warriors is something that according to students has the most different impression from their initial horizon expectations. This is in accordance with the opinion of MAA, AJK, RAP, and NCS.

In the second answer category, students showed differences of opinion regarding changes in storyline, character traits, and a few adaptations taken to the names of the characters in the film. This is reflected in the quote below:

"In my opinion, if it's from a fairy tale and a movie, it's really much different. Well from the storyline... Then the characteristics of the characters are also all different. The characters are also different. So if it's in fairy tales, it's even more in movies. That's it, so I think it's different, maybe the adaptation is just a little bit like the names of the characters taken from the fairy tale." (WA)

WA's statement is a representation of students' understanding of the differences present in the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency. The change in the mindset of Hänsel and Gretel in this film shows that they have their own way of life. The presence of the character of Gretel, which is more prominent than Hänsel's, also indicates the development of a character that is different from the original fairy tale. This is evident in the depiction of Gretel's more daring and more structured nature than Hänsel's. Story modifications, such as the addition of humor to the film, further enrich students' understanding of the differences between fairy tales and film adaptations, This is in accordance with the opinions of TJN, MDF, DF, and NWK.

The Presence of Aesthetic Distance

This section contains a mismatch between the students' initial expectations and their expectations after they watch the Secret Magic Control Agency movie. The categories in this section are divided into two, namely, the portrayal and addition of characters in the film Secret Magic Control Agency; and the thematic differences between the fairy tale Hänsel und Gretel and its film adaptation Secret Magic Control Agency.

The first category in this section is related to the portrayal and addition of characters in the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency. This can be found in the following quote:

".... Gretel in her short story I think she is a bit shy, a bit annoyed too, but in the film it turns out that she is the bravest, braver than Hänsel. If this is a bit of a cowardly thing, then what's the point? If the Javanese language is nyelenthem? Yes, that's right, so I think the most different character is the Gretel in the same fairy tale in the movie. Then if the character of Brüder Grimm, actually if the shadow changes, it doesn't change, it's just confusing. "Why, you know? This isn't the narrator, why does it suddenly appear in the movie?" It's like that, right, but what about the portrayal of the character? Because at first it was still loading like, "Why

e-ISSN: 2963 – 198X
p-ISSN: 2963 – 2498

is this in the movie? Isn't this supposed to be the third person who knows everything, right? But it turns out that he is in that movie, right?" It's confusing in my opinion. ..." (DF)

DF's response is one example of most of the students' answers who argue that the Secret Magic Control Agency movie has all the differences from the original fairy tale. This is reflected in the presence of new characters, such as the King, Ilvira, the queen of the lake, Agents Stepmothers, Agent Stepsisters, Baba Yaga, and the office where Gretel works as a secret agent. This answer is also seen in the opinions of NWK, MDF, AJK, and MAA.

The second category can be seen from the students' responses regarding the thematic differences between the fairy tale Hänsel und Gretel and the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency, which can be seen in the following excerpt:

"... The whole movie is very, very different from the original story I had read at the time. ... In the fairy tale, it tells a story that is more about family, which is told as children who were abandoned by their parents. But when I saw the movie... There are younger brothers and sisters who work together inside a secret royal institution to try to save the king who is kidnapped by witches. Like that." (RAP)

RAP's answer shows that the fairy tale Hänsel und Gretel and the film adaptation of the Secret Magic Control Agency have differences in themes and conflicts presented. This shows that students view film adaptations not only as a repetition of fairy tales, but as new literary works that have undergone changes in content and purpose according to their new rides. In addition, the presence of magical themes, adventures, and royal visualization images are new things that also attract students' attention in interpreting this film adaptation. This is in line with the opinions of SQH, TJN, and WA.

Based on the differences in students' initial expectations and changes after the film Secret Magic Control Agency, students again relate the film adaptation to the reality of today's life, as described in the following quote:

"... So the conflict in the movie... That is to say, conflicts such as conflicts between his family, or conflicts with his social and economic conditions are also shown in Hänsel. Yes, he is willing to deceive people like this, so he is a magician fraud, yes, the important thing is money. Yes, it is actually in harmony with today's times, there are many such scams. All for the sake of money, because again the socio-economic conditions are like that, right? That's a lot in today's world. Social and economic conditions. Families are also very similar..." (SQH)

The description of SQH's answer is one of the signs of a response that film adaptations play a role in conveying current realities, such as conflicts in the family, as well as awkwardness in conveying affection. The need for courage in facing problems, prioritizing the interests of the group, and the sacrifice of the eldest son to his younger brother was interpreted by students as something moving. This SQH opinion has similarities with the opinions of NCS, MAA, TJN, and RAP.

Discussion

The Presense of Aesthetic Distance and Difference in Horizon of Exectations Discussion

The students' reception of their initial expectations of a film adaptation of the fairy tale Hänsel und Gretel showed the students' various points of view regarding the film adaptation of the Secret Magic Control Agency. The students' responses also illustrate that film adaptations are seen as a new form that is better adapted to the original literary work. On the other hand, students relay their fantasies about movies with young child actors aged 6 to 10 to movies with similar themes of princesses, such as Disney movies in the 90s. This view suggests that students' experience in watching previous films can influence the formation of their horizons of expectation.

The diversity of students' initial reflections on the presence of this film adaptation illustrates the expectations of students for a new form of literary work. This is in line with the Jauss (1982) opinion, that the horizon of hope acts as a bridge between literary aesthetic elements, such as perspective and characterization with social elements that include norms, values, and societal expectations and supported by opinion of Iswahyudi & Anwar (2025) which explains that the reader's reaction reflects their views related to the expectations and values used in interpreting a literary text.

In other hands, The students' reception of the difference in horizon after watching the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency shows a modification of the fairy tale and the film adaptation. The change in the portrayal of the two main characters in the film Secret Magic Control Agency indicates that students find a difference in adapting the fairy tale to the film form. This opinion is supported by Damono (2018) which states that some parts of the film must be modified to meet the demands of filmmaking, which in turn provides a new understanding of various aspects of the narrative, such as settings, plot, and characters in the film. This is

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supported by opinion Jauss (in Holub, 1984) which explains that the horizon of hope can be rearranged due to the incompatibility between literature and the reality of the times.

On the other hand, students' new interpretations remain related to the way students view fairy tales as their original work. The students' new opinions about the film adaptation are often in the form of disappointment, as reflected in the students' activities when comparing the image of the witch's house in the fairy tale and the house of Baba Yaga in the film. In addition, students' understanding of the roles and characters of parents in the story of Hänsel und Gretel differs from their portrayal in the film adaptation version. This is in line with the opinion Hutcheon (2006) that a negative view of the adaptation work can arise from unfulfilled expectations, such as those felt by a society that desires loyalty to the original source.

The students' understanding of relating moral messages in film to current conditions shows that students do not only view adaptations as new versions of classic fairy tales. This can be seen in their view of the character of Gretel, who is considered more courageous and has a more structured life than Hänsel. This view is in line with the opinion of Jauss (1982) that interacting with literary works allows readers to gain a new perspective on the reality of everyday life.

The Presence of New Meaning

Students as Generation Z received the film Secret Magic Control Agency as a new work, so that a reception of the new work emerged. This is further explained in the following paragraph:

Relevance to the Present

One of the respondents (SQH) argued that the form of the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency is one of the films that depicts the current situation. This is found in the part of small conflicts between fellow family members, social conflicts, and economic unrest. A bad economy makes people look for shortcuts to continue their lives, such as cheating, showing their ability to exaggerate, and others to deal with the economic turmoil. This is supported by opinions Rahmad (2019) which states that changes in people's economic and social needs cause unpleasant situations, such as the rampant cases of online and conventional fraud. The film's economic problems are shown through the moment when Hänsel performs a magic show and sells his fake healing crystals. This 'cheating' situation is very closely related to today's rampant fraud both online and offline. Lack of social supervision, narrow job opportunities, increasing economic pressures, and an environment that is easy to tolerate deviant behavior contribute to an increase in fraudulent activity (Hisyam et al., 2025).

In addition, family conflicts are also a widespread problem today. Conflicts that occur in the family generally occur because there is no time to communicate between one family member and another family member (Rohman, 2024), conflicts between descendants, as well as economic difficulties that can result in mood disorders in the family (Silawati et al., 2025). This is evident in the opinion of SQH, AZS, HPF, and SAA regarding the presence of family conflicts experienced by Hänsel und Gretel due to lack of communication and confusion in showing affection for each other.

The diversity of respondents' responses regarding the character of Gretel, who is portrayed as a firm, responsive, and brave female character in the film, is also one of the reasons that is relevant today. This is in line with the opinion Prastiwi & Pebryawan (2026) which states that courage is one of the essential elements in portraying the character of a tough woman. This can be seen in the character of Gretel in the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency which depicts a brave and independent woman. Although, the film also features the bond of brotherhood between Hänsel und Gretel which shows that under some circumstances, Gretel needs the support of her brother, Hänsel.

The depiction of Gretel's character in need of Hänsel's help is one of the actions that reflects the first child's position as an important person in the family. The first child is a child with an obligation, hope, role model, and substitute for parents in caring for and caring for his other siblings (Rahman et al., 2025). The character of Hänsel is described as an ingenious, calm, helpful figure, and a place of calm for Gretel. This is very relevant to today's conditions, especially in the many news that the first child is a surrogate parent, full of plans and must take good care of his sister, as Hänsel's character did to Gretel in the film adaptation.

The Formation of New Meanings

From the entire formation of new meanings carried out by the respondents, a new meaning was obtained that is in accordance with the present. German Language Education students, class of the 2022, 2023 and 2024 batches have succeeded in forming a new meaning to bring literary texts to life in their new vehicles. This is in line with the opinion Damono (2018) which states that the change of the fairy tale into a new vehicle such as a movie can lead to changes in the elements of the story and the meaning of the story. This phenomenon is

e-ISSN: 2963 – 198X
p-ISSN: 2963 – 2498

again supported by Jauss (1982) which states that differences in interpretation enrich the meaning of literary works through various interpretations that appear over time.

One of the new meanings formed by the respondents refers to the urgency to increase vigilance of others, especially with the rampant fraud or criminality that often occurs today. The problem of fraud arises due to inadequate law enforcement and limited public understanding (Mulyadi et al., 2024). The students' view of scenes that depict fraud as a current issue shows that their understanding of the film is influenced by personal experiences and social environments. This is in line with the opinion Jauss (1982) which states that the historical horizon can only be understood through the present horizon of the work that is interacting with the audience.

The presence of the character of Gretel in the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency shows the development of today's female characters that reflect gender equality. This is reflected in the character Gretel in the film having a higher rank than the male agent in her office. It is the portrayal of the character of Gretel in this film that offers a new perspective on the female character, which is different from the original fairy tale version. Gultom (2021) explained that gender equality refers to equal rights, opportunities and roles between men and women in society. This is supported by opinion Jauss (1982) which states that today's works of art not only continue the traditions that existed before, but also create new ways of understanding reality through the experiences presented in the new form.

On the other hand, the moral message obtained from the film refers to the importance of maintaining communication, openness to fellow family members and maintaining a great harmony between siblings. This is reflected in the film's final scene, when Hänsel und Gretel remembers and resolves a misunderstanding between them. This is in line with the opinion Yulianti et al. (2023) resolves a misunderstanding between them. This is in line with the opinion Yulianti et al., (2023) which states that interaction between family members can increase togetherness, create effective communication, and support harmony in the family. The understanding of students as spectators is what helps films have a novelty of meaning, as expressed by the opinions expressed by Jauss (1982) that in the aesthetics of reception, connoisseurs of literary works play an active role in interpreting and developing the meaning in the literary works that they are interpreting.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that students of the German Language Education, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, had various receptions of German Language Education students of the Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, to the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* and the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency. This diversity can be seen in students' interpretation of their favorite scenes, storylines, and moral messages of the two literary works. This difference in student responses indicates that the process of interpreting the original literary work and its adaptation is influenced by the reader's reading experience and knowledge of the literary work. In addition, this study shows a change in the initial horizon of students' expectations after watching the film adaptation of Secret Magic Control Agency. The change in the horizon of students' expectations can be seen in the way they interpret the interaction between characters, character development and conflicts in the film. Film as a visual medium also helps students in imagining fairy tales more clearly. Thus, film adaptations allow classic fairy tales to be reinterpreted according to the conditions and views of today's society, such as the importance of communication in the family, cooperation and mutual trust.

Further research is expected to develop a study of the reception of the film Secret Magic Control Agency with Wolfgang Iser's reception theory in order to expand the understanding of the process of audience interpretation of the film's work. In addition, new research can be carried out in other student reception areas that have not had time to be analyzed in this study. Finally, the research on the film Secret Magic Control Agency can be continued by examining the grammatical aspects, as well as the study of the ekranization of the form of the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* into the film Secret Magic Control Agency.

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