

27th IRSL Congress

June 2025, Salamanca (Spain)

Borders, Migration and Liminality in Children's Literature

The 27th Biennial International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSL) Congress will take place in the third week of June 2025 (exact dates TBA) at the University of Salamanca (Spain), co-located by Isakun Dorra (UBER) Research Group, University of Salamanca) and Carmen Santamaría-García (University of Madrid).

The theme for the 27th Biennial IRSL Congress addresses borderlands, migration, and liminality in children's literature. Borders may serve as geographical boundaries, imposing limitations on interaction with the environment or as political barriers that limit free movement and can result in harsh or traumatic experiences. Yet, borderlands can become wonderlands, as rich spaces of liminality where limits are negotiable and identities become blurred, transient, and complex.

Borderlands and liminality appear in children's literature in a variety of ways, such as thresholds between different languages, genres, crossover narratives, transitional periods from childhood to adulthood, or the blurring frontiers between the human and the more-than-human.

Borders can set limits to freedom of movement for territorial and political reasons. We must acknowledge a wide multiplicity of borders, such as geographical, legal, linguistic, economic, or cultural, with new types of emerging borders arising with life changes and challenges. The triggers for human migration can be multifaceted, ranging from escaping conflict to searching for new opportunities. In the Anthropocene, economic growth forces human displacement and challenges ecosystems, leading to the need for continuous adaptation by both human beings and other species.

The congress theme aims to stimulate discussion about these topics. We invite papers that engage in discussion on the representation, production and/or reception of migration, borders, and liminality in different genres (fairy tales, fantasy, novels, poetry, biographies, fiction) and formats (picturebooks, graphic novels, digital narratives, films, books) found in children's literature. We encourage approaches including, but not limited to, ecocriticism, posthumanism, materiality, aesthetics, multimodality, discourse analysis, critical content analysis, equity, diversity, and social justice. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, those listed below:

- Decolonial, Postcolonial and Anti-Colonial approaches
- Borders of childhood and coming-of-age narratives
- Human and more-than-human migratory journeys
- Omnis, ephemeral, and transient spaces