

The Use of Diction and Tone in Children’s Stories Book Entitled “Great Stories for Children” By Ruskin Bond

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to analyze about the use of diction and tone in children’s stories book entitled “great stories for children” by Ruskin Bond. The writer uses a qualitative approach as the method of research in analyzing the use of diction and tone in children’s stories book. This kind of research method is chosen because the writer will analyze the use of dictions and tones used in children’s short story. After analyzing the book, there are 196 data found as the result of this research. 82 data for the dictions and 114 data for the tones. From those data, the tendency of the the use of dictions and tones are using concrete and informal diction, while for the tones are mostly using curious tones along with the informal tones.

Key Words: Diction and Tone; Short Story; Great Stories for Children’s Book

Introduction

Learning English in today’s era is getting more challenging. People are being competitive in mastering the language. Sneddon (2003) states “As a global language, it is obvious that English plays an important role in the international interaction.” That is why it can be said that English holds the critical part as deliverer state language in any kind of fields such as in business, commerce, education, and entertainment. It is also already known that English is used as spoken language globally to communicate with other people around the world. Since living in a digital era makes people use technology, learning English can be done more easily. All the information can be accessed through the internet. Therefore, many people now are having gadgets to support doing their daily activities. Not only adults, but also children are equipped with at least one gadget – smartphone to help them studying. Furthermore, because nowadays English is important to be used as spoken language, it is better to make children learn English at the very young age. This will help them develop their skills in language gradually, especially to prepare themselves as well in facing the learning in 21st century.

The 21st century skills require students to be able to adept four basic skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills are expected to be mastered by students who learn the language. According to Ledward & Hirata (2011), “21st century skills are a blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies necessary to succeed in work and life.” They imply that 21st century skills are not about mastering certain skills but it promotes other aspects of the skills in term of communication, collaboration, social, critical thinking, creativity, and information literacy. By applying these skills, people are aimed to deal with the competition and global challenges that require more skills in communicating, particularly in the areas of work that will be wrestled with later. To be able to communicate with other people around the world, we are not only learning English language, but also learning English culture too. Learning literature is one of many ways to enrich our knowledge to study English itself. It is not surprising that nowadays, literature becomes a subject in field of study. For that reason, it is also important to learn literature for children so that they can develop their intellectual, affective, and social skill. By studying children’s literature, students, or the children themselves will be able to improve their critical thinking and learn about lessons in our life as well through a story.



Studying literature is similar to the learning of life. According to Budianta in Anoegrajekti (2008, p.84), “Disini karya sastra dapat diibaratkan sebagai potret kehidupan masyarakat” (Here, literature can be illustrated as a portrait of society life). In literature, there are components of life’s reality from human expression such as life experience, idea, enthusiasm, and belief that is presented in the shape of art. The study of literature gives the ability to present the human expressions through writing. In other words, it can be said that literature is kind of language activity or writing that the result is presented in the form of work literature such as poetry, prose, short story, drama, and other work literatures. Short story becomes one of the work literatures that can be enjoyed by many people, especially children or students who are learning language. Setyani (2019) defines that the short story is interesting can also help to stimulate the students’ curiosity toward the target language and culture. As it is stated earlier, to learn language, it is also important to learn the culture as well. One of the ways to get to know the culture is by reading many literatures like short story. If children want to learn English faster, reading English short story can be a good way for them to improve their reading comprehension.

Besides improving the comprehensive skill, reading short story will increase vocabulary too. Because to understand the story, the readers should know the meaning of each word in that story. Recognizing the words is one of the steps to learn the language better. While reading the text on the story, the readers can also ready along the story with their spoken language. It also helps them improve their speaking skill as well. Starting by saying each word on each sentence, it makes them imagine the situation happens in the story. However, even if the children do so, there might be still a problem too for understanding the story. It could be the readability of the story is too high for children or the chosen words are quite difficult to be understood by the children. The choice of words should be thought carefully when the author of the short story wrote it.

To make children understand about the story, the word of choice should be suitable and appropriate for their age. The word choice or diction itself in term of literature means words that are chosen selectively for writing any kind of written forms. Diction is having a crucial part in a form of written text, especially in a short story because it can convey the message of the story to the readers appropriately, give the emotion feeling of story truthfully, and make the readers comprehend the whole content of the story. By having a proper diction, a story can be understood clearly and easily. Not only is having a proper diction, but also using a tone in a story can help the readers, especially children to know how the feeling of the writer toward the story can be delivered. According to Your Dictionary, “Tone in writing is not really any different than the tone of your voice”. To know this definition, it means that the use of tone in literature helps the imagery situation described comprehensively. The tone using in a short story can be functioned to stimulate the readers’ emotion while reading the story. By understanding the tone used in the story, children are expected to recognize feelings that are expressed by the write in the story so that they can comprehend the story well. Thus, both diction and tone in a short story can be considered as important elements in writing that can affect the story thoroughly.

Considering that short story book can be a media to help children recognize the words, understand the story thoroughly and enrich their vocabulary, hence the writer is interested in analyzing the use of diction and tone in children’s stories book entitled “Great Stories for Children” by Ruskin Bond.

Method

Method used in this research is qualitative descriptive method. Punch (2006, p.3) stated “Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers.” It means that qualitative approach is more like the way of thinking approach. So, Punch (2006, pp.3-4) adds: “Qualitative research is the way of thinking about social reality being studied, the way of approaching it and conceptualizing it. The design and methods used to represent that way of thinking and to collect data.” The qualitative approach inquirer deals with data that are in the form of words, rather than numbers and statistic.

In conducting qualitative research, the writer use procedures that include some perspectives that exist within the scope of qualitative research. By using descriptive qualitative research, the writer attempted to identify and describe the use of diction and tone in Great Stories for Children book by Ruskin Bond.



Results and Discussion

Results

1. Dictions in Great Stories for Children Book

Based on the research conducted, the tendency of using the dictions in Short Stories Book “Great Stories for Children” is having concrete diction for about 37,8%. As it is explained on the theory earlier, concrete dictions show how the language is used based on the senses, like sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing. A story that has concrete dictions is appropriate for children because the words used and showed in each story can be imagined. Considering that most children like to imagine and explore their minds Besides having more dominant dictions in concrete diction, the research shows that instead of formal dictions, informal dictions are chosen to put in this story about 22%. There is no result of having formal dictions for this story. In informal dictions, there are rarely sentences use complete and full grammar rules. Some of the sentences sometimes do not have a ‘subject’ to begin with like the use of imperatives and colloquial (shorten words). The use of informal dictions also allows the children to understand words easier because they are more familiar and mostly heard commonly by them. Slang words are used for about 14,6% in this story book. The 12 phrases and sentences are showing synonym of other words. Even though there are not so many of them, the use of slang gives readers especially the children more exposure to know more vocabularies to learn. Colloquial, abstract, and poetic diction are not really appeared in this short story book. They have only about less than 15% each.

2. Tones in Great Stories for Children Book

Second, the last data about the use of tones that are showed in the story of “Great Stories for Children” book is having a tendency mostly in five tones with similar percent. The first dominant is in curious tones for about 17,5 %. In curious tones, the quotes said by the characters in the story deliver a curiosity from each character. Curious tones make the readers feel curious too when they read the story. The illustrations showed use some words that indicate there are some of them such as wonder, curious, and all wh-questions used in the quotes. Next, informal tones show 16,7% lower than the curious tones. Informal tones are using more friendly and conversational vibes when the quotes are said. The structure and grammar of the sentence mostly are incomplete, like using colloquial and imperatives sentences. Worried tones also have one lower percent than the previous tone mentioned for 15,8%. They deliver the feeling of scared of facing the situation. Besides worried tones, the fourth dominant tone found in this story book is encouraging tone. It has 14,1% of other tones. This tone is heard when the characters are showing support for other characters by saying some words such as “c’mon; don’t worry; and let’s”. Besides that, the use of imperatives and modals are used to show the encouraging tones too like should, must, and have to. The last is optimistic tone is considered having a tendency too for 13,2%. The tone is found when the character says some words positively in showing a confidence.

Discussion

The data findings showed in the interpretation data says that concrete diction is mostly used in short stories book named “Great Stories for Children” written by Ruskin Bond. The theory used in this analysis is based on Davenport (2021). This theory purposed that the dictions can be classified into eight types, namely abstract diction, concrete diction, formal diction, informal diction, colloquial diction, poetic diction, jargon and slang words. As for the tones, according to Calonia there are ten categories such as formal, informal, optimistic, worried, friendly, curious, assertive, encouraging, surprised, and cooperative.

The use of dictions and tones in children’s story book helps the readers especially children to recognize the story based on the suitable and appropriate words put in the story. The most dominant use of dictions in Short Stories Book “Great Stories for Children” is having concrete diction. Concrete diction in a story is a good way to make children explore their minds and imagine the things described concretely in the story. The sample of words are words that can be described in five senses like something that we can see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Besides concrete diction, most common dictions used in the story are more into the informal

rather than the formal dictions. Informal dictions used into sentences are simpler and easier to understand. Most informal diction found in this book are using shorten words or phrases, imperative words, slang words included. Since the dictions are used already mostly in informal, the dialog lines are heard in the same way as it is heard. Furthermore, this is the sample data found about the diction used in the stories book.

Tabel 1

Dictions	Sample sentence(s)
Abstract	The air was hot on his face. (<i>Romi and The Wind</i> ; page 32)
Concrete	...a little sweet, sour, small, bright, cherries.. (<i>A Special Tree</i> ; page 8)
Formal	-no data found-
Informal	He could no longer see me. (<i>Those Three Bears</i> ; page 61)
Colloquial	He'd teach me to cook. (<i>The Thief's Story</i> ; page 66)
Poetic	Woodman, spare the tree! Touch not a single bough! In youth it sheltered me, And I'll protect it now. (<i>When the Tress Walked</i> ; page 70)
Jargon	-no data found-
Slang	Off with you! (<i>The School Among the Pines</i> ; page 32)

The use of tones in the story are mostly in curious, informal, encouraging, worried, and optimistic tones. Like diction, the tone used in the “Great Storied for Children” also more into informal ones. In curious tones, the quotes said by the characters in the story deliver a curiosity from each character. Next, informal tones are using more friendly and conversational vibes when the quotes are said. Worried tones also have one lower percent than the previous tone mentioned. They deliver the feeling of scared of facing the situation. Besides worried tones, the fourth dominant tone found in this story book is encouraging tone. This tone is heard when the characters are showing support for other characters. Besides that, the use of imperatives and *modals* are used to show the encouraging tones too like should, must, and have to. The last is optimistic tone is found when the character says some words positively in showing a confidence.

Tabel 2

Tones	Sample Dialogue(s)
Formal	-no data found-
Informal	“Never mind”, said grandfather. (<i>A Special Tree</i> ; page 9)
Optimistic	“We won’t stop again! We’re nearly there!” (<i>Romi and the Wildfire</i> ; page 34)
Worried	“Still, I’m frightened. There may be more Leopard!” (<i>The School Among Pines</i> ; page 14)
Friendly	“Ah, here we are!” (<i>Goodbye, Miss Mackenzie</i> ; page 73)
Curious	“I wonder”, he whispered. (<i>A Special Tree</i> ; page 11)
Assertive	“We’ll get rid of it”, I said confidently. (<i>Snake Trouble</i> ; page 54)
Encouraging	“Just kept running and jumped right over it!” (<i>Romi and the Wildfire</i> ; page 34)
Surprised	“It’s Mr. Mani!”, he gasped. “He’s disappeared!” (<i>The School Among Pines</i> ; page 14)
Cooperative	“We’ll lock her up in the outhouse.” (<i>Monkey Trouble</i> ; page 50)

Conclusions

After conducting the analysis of The Use of Diction and Tone in Children’s Stories Book Entitled “Great Stories for Children” by Ruskin Bond, it can be concluded that:

1. The use of diction and tone in “Great Stories for Children” book written by Ruskin Bond uses a linguistics approach in content analysis. The theory used in this analysis is based on Davenport. This theory purposed that the dictions can be classified into eight types, namely abstract diction, concrete diction, formal diction, informal diction, colloquial diction, poetic diction, jargon and also slang words. As for the tones, according to Calonia there are ten categories such as formal, informal, optimistic, worried, friendly, curious, assertive, encouraging, surprised, and cooperative.
2. The most dominant use of dictions in Short Stories Book “Great Stories for Children” is having concrete diction. Besides concrete diction, most common dictions used in the story are more into the informal rather than the formal dictions.
3. The use of tones in the story are mostly in curious, informal, encouraging, worried, and optimistic tones. Informal tones are using more friendly and conversational vibes when the quotes are said. Worried tones also have one lower percent than the previous tone mentioned. They deliver the feeling of scared of facing the situation. Besides that, the use of imperatives and *modals* are used to show the encouraging tones too like should, must, and have to. The last is optimistic tone is found when the character says some words positively in showing a confidence.

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