

Systemic Strategies to Improve the Readability of the English Version of Indonesian Children Stories

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses language exploitation for the children story books and offers several systemic strategies to improve the quality of language exploitation so that the books have a better quality for their readability. Thirty children story books which are classified as narratives according to the publishers were randomly selected for the analysis. The books are targeted for children from five to twelve years old. The analysis on the text structure shows that all the stories have the three obligatory discourse units, namely orientation, complication, and resolution. Meanwhile, seen from the lexicogrammatical exploitation, most of the books have various grammatical mistakes and difficult words.

Key words: Lexicogrammar, lexicon, grammar, genre, narrative, children books.

INTRODUCTION

Many Indonesian children stories are written bilingually in Indonesian and in English for Indonesian children from five to twelve years old. In addition to this, many Indonesian children stories are also translated into English. The translation version coming along with the original text in one edition of a book is designed to help the children improve their English as a foreign language. The problem appearing with this kind of writing is that the English version or the English translation version is often composed with little consideration on the language exploitation. This phenomenon then leads to the low readability of such books.

A study was conducted by Djarmika (2009) to see how English is exploited for Islamic books for Indonesian children. The result showed that both lexically and grammatically the English of the books is not really appropriate for the children as the target readers of such books. Too many nominalizations and abstractions are selected for the books. Moreover, the clauses are constructed in complex forms. These characteristics make such books have low readability for the children readers. This means that the exploitation of grammatical constructions as well as the words selection for the book gives problems for the children to decode the message.

As the study conducted by Djarmika in 2009 was only focused on the lexical selection and exploitation as

well as the grammatical constructions for the clauses, the analysis in this research is expanded to see how English is exploited to accommodate Indonesian children stories by seeing the structure as well as the texture of the stories. As suggested by several linguists (Martin, 1992; Halliday, 1994; Gerrot & Wignell; 1995, Martin & Rose, 2004), the structure of a text is seen from the format and the style of the texts, while the texture of the texts is revealed by analysing the lexical choices as well as the grammatical construction for the clauses in the stories.

The analysis is expected to demonstrate the problems behind the potentially low readability of the children books. The level of readability of a text can be measured in several ways. It can be tested by enlisting the selected words, by analyzing subjectively the factors that influence the readability of a text, or by applying a cloze procedure to test the readers' comprehension on a certain text being measured for its readability. Some experts (such as Puurtinen, 1989; Baker, 1993) suggest several formulas for the readability measurement—most of them are designed based on two things—the words selection and the length of the sentences being used to compose a text. The popularity of the words is used for the base of the measurement because it is assumed that the more unpopular words potentially will make a text difficult to understand, whereas the long sentences are assumed to have a tendency to accommodate complicated matters. Actually, these formulas only provide a syntactic complicatedness indication of a

text; they do not demonstrate the complicated language exploitation. On that account, to see the readability of a text can be conducted by seeing the text structure and the text texture. The former shows the arrangement of discourse units composing the text, while the latter discusses the exploitation of lexicogrammar for such a text.

Meanwhile, to accommodate the social and functional goal of a narrative, several linguistic features are required. The characteristics are focused to the types of participants which are specific, individual and personal, to the various types of process, to the types of conjunction which are dominated by the temporal ones, and the choice of past tense.

Most of participants in a narrative refer to specific animate beings or inanimate treated as animate beings through personification. Put in other words, a participant in a story refers to an individual animate being. Although, some texts may have specific as well as generic participants, the former types will dominate the texts.

One linguistic feature which differentiates a narrative from other texts is the complete types of verbs in such a text. If a description or a report is dominated by *being* and *having* verbs and an exposition or a discussion has more complete verbs such as material, mental, behavioral, and existential verbs, a narrative may have all these verbs including the verbal one.

To relate one part to the other, a narrative text needs conjunctions. For this type of text, many temporal conjunctions are exploited and they dominate the text than the other types of conjunction. The selection of temporal conjunctions is related to the fact that this text tells events happening in the past which are arranged chronologically. Meanwhile, to tell the occurrences experienced by the participants in the text, temporal circumstances are much used. There are two types of the temporal circumstance—location and time. The former gives information about the place where an event happens and the latter tells about the time for the event.

In a narrative, the selection of tense may vary—especially when there are dialogs inserted in the text—even though simple past tense shows its domination in such a text. If the narration is always represented in past tense, the utterances in the dialogs may need different tense for different purposes—it can be *simple present*, *simple past*, or other *tenses*. The following part of a story is an example.

Example 1:

Hmm,” he thought. “Maybe I can use that peach in a plan.” “So he walked off to

Panther’s house because he knew Panther had blackberries.

“Oh, Panther,” he said, “I am so hot. Would you like to take a mountain walk with me?”

“Why, yes, Lion,” said Panther, for she was very hot. “That would be nice”

The conversation above happens between two participants—Lion and Panther. They are involved in a negotiation by encoding and decoding utterances. These utterances are constructed in present tense because this type is needed to tell about action or event which happens at the same time with the time of speaking. However, the narrating parts are in simple past tense because in these parts the speaker/the writer tells the readers about the actions which happened in the past. In a narrative written in English, it is very common (it can be always to happen) that the narrating part is constructed in simple past tense, while the utterances ~~can~~ need more various types of tense according to the context which controls the tense selection. It may happen that utterances are represented in present or in future, or even in one part of a dialog the utterance and the narrating parts are wrapped in simple past tense such as in the following example:

Example 2:

When he woke up, his head was spinning. “Oh!” he said, “What happened? Let’s see. The last thing I did was I said, “Hmm. What a peculiar purple peach” PLOP! Down he went again.

The narrating part (bold) and the utterance (underlined) are both written in simple past tense. This happens so as these two parts accommodate events happening in the past. The tense selection above proves that English has very detail rules on grammar for showing times for every event and experience—grammatical rules that do not exist in Indonesian language. Based on this phenomena, for the sake of English teaching for Indonesian children, narrative texts will be more effective and more recommended to be given whenever the learners are considered to have mastered such a grammar rule concerning with tense selection in addition to the other grammatical texture such as *passive voice*, *direct speech*, and so on.

Each book in this research was chosen based on the following features:

- It tells about Indonesian children stories.
- It is written in English by Indonesian writer or translated into English by Indonesian translator.
- It has Indonesian elementary school children as its target readers.
- It is published by an Indonesian publisher.

METHOD

Thirty Indonesian children story books written in English were purposively selected for the following criterias. Each book should tell about an Indonesian children story written in English or translated into English from Indonesian by an Indonesian writer/ translator. It is published by an Indonesian publisher and has elementary school children as its target readers.

The analysis on their text structure excluded eleven books as five of the books are written as a description, while six others are as a recount. Therefore, there are nineteen books to go to the lexicogrammatical analysis to see their quality of language exploitation as texts in narrative genre. The analysis demonstrates linguistic features supporting the genre type as well as supporting the readability of the texts; this also shows the features which do not support the genre type so that they influence the level of readability of such

texts. An interview with children readers was conducted to see their judgment on the books' readability. This was done to cross-check the informants judgment and the quality of language exploitation towards the readability of the books. The children informants were selected for the following characteristics. S/he is a student of an Indonesian elementary school; s/he is in year 4 or 5; s/he has got English since year one; s/he agrees to be an informant.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Text Structure

The text structures of the story books show that nineteen books are written in a narrative genre, while six are in recount and five others are in description genre, even though all are titled as children story books by the publishers. The following are the story books which were selected for the analysis in the study.

No	Title	Author	Publisher
1	The Secret of Zizi's Stripe/Rahasia Belang Zizi	Tedi Siswoko	ANDI
2	Angel's Turtle	Ratna Yoes	LIFEMEDIA
3	When Ellice's Upset/ Ketika Ellice Kesal	Ratna Yoes	LIFEMEDIA
4	Unforgettable Day/ Hari Tak Terlupakan	Ratna Yoes	LIFEMEDIA
5	Eri Learns to Read/ Eri Belajar Membaca	Ratna Yoes	LIFEMEDIA
6	Mike's Red Bike/Sepeda Merah si Mike	Arleen Widjaja	PT. Bumi Aksara Group
7	Edgard Loves to Stay Clean/Edgard Suka Menjaga Kebersihan	Dian Kristianti	Buana Ilmu Populer
8	New Pants for Glen/ Celana Baru untuk Glen	Miden Lee	Buana Ilmu Populer
9	School's Coloring Competition/Lomba Mewarnai di Sekolah	Lilis Hu	Buana Ilmu Populer
10	Keta the Cheetah	Fitri Indah Harjanti	Andi Publishing
11	Saving Gina the Guinea Pig/Menyelematkan Gina Marmot	Arleen Amidjaja	Dar Mizan Publishing, Bandung
12	Looking for a Pot of Gold/Mencari Segentong Emas	Arleen Amidjaja	Dar Mizan Publishing, Bandung
13	The Secret of Alan's Quill/Rahasia Duri Alan	Teddy Siswoko	Andi Publishing
14	Burung Hantu	Jumi Haryani	Gema Insani
15	Edgard Loves Sport	Dian Kristiani	PT. Bhuana Ilmu Komputer
16	Gabi Sees the Dentist/Gabi Pergi ke Dokter Gigi	Lilis Hu	PT. Bhuana Ilmu Komputer
17	Edgard Loves Fruits	Dian Kristiani	PT. Bhuana Ilmu Komputer
18	Denny's Toy-car/Mainan Denny	Ratna Yoes	LIFEMEDIA
19	Pesta Buah	Anita Hairunnisa	Littlel Serambi
20	Allah Maha Kuasa	Ninik Handrini	Gema Insani
21	Watch Out, Durian is Falling/Awas Ketiban Durian!	Bambang Joko Susilo	PT. Cita Putra Bangsa, Jakarta
22	Cooking with Mom/Memasak bersama Ibu	Lilis Hu	PT. Bhuana Ilmu Komputer
23	The Penguins that Wants to Fly/Penguin yang Ingin Terbang	Tevi Hanavi	Life Media
24	Tito Tikus Terbang/Tito the Flying Mouse	Fitri Indra Hardjanti & Indra Bayu	ANDI
25	The Secret of Onci's Humpback/Rahasia Punuk Onci	Tedi Siswoko	Andi Jogjakarta

No	Title	Author	Publisher
26	What is the Sweetest Fruit?/Buah Apa yang Paling Manis?	Bambang Joko Susilo	Cita Putra Bangsa
27	Cerita si Kura-kura	Jumi Haryani	Gema Insani
28	The Humiliated One Who Helps/Yang Dihina Ternyata Menolong	Tevy Hanafi	Effhar Offset Semarang
29	First Day at School	Lilis Hu	PT. Bhuana Ilmu Populer
30	First Days in Nias/Tiba di Nias	Ratna Yoes	Life Media

All the story books which are written as a narrative demonstrate that they are composed of three obligatory discourse units, namely orientation, complication and resolution. Furthermore, twelve of them are completed with an evaluation such as *Eri Learns to Read*; one is completed with a moral such as *Angel's Turtle*; and two of them are completed with an evaluation and a moral such as *The Secret of Onci's Humpback* and *Looking for a Pot of Gold*.

Text Texture

As texts written in a narrative genre, the story books show linguistic features supporting the genre. All the texts are dominated by specific participants. They are specific because they have clear referents. This is due to the fact that the books are created to give fun to the readers by telling something happening to a particular participant(s) in the past. They can also tell about what a particular participant(s) did in the past. The participants are animate being—can be human, animals, or tree; or they can be inanimate beings which are treated as animate beings by using language.

However, the stories also display several generic participants—those which do not have clear referents. In these texts such kind of participants are supportive but they are not the focus of the stories. Similar to the specific ones, these generic participants are represented by animate as well as inanimate beings. As stated above, the specific participants dominate the texts compared to the generic ones. This feature is one of the linguistic characteristics required by a narrative. In detail, the specific participants are generally represented by nominal group in the form of person's names such as *Angel*, *Meggie*, *Yunus*, *Andre*, *Yuli*, *Kiki*, and so on. In several story books familial addresses are selected such as *mom*, *dad*, and *father*. Two other expressions which are used as specific participants are a person's name combined with profession such as for a nun named *Sister Junita* and a profession such as *bus driver* referring to a particular driver in one story.

Meanwhile, the language units that represent the generic participants in the stories can be exemplified by such nominal groups as *other friends*, *friends*, *first*

graders, *students*, *new kids*, and so on. Moreover, if the nominal group representing the generic participant is singular, an indefinite article will come up such as *a lion* or can be represented by an expression which has a singular treatment such as *everybody*.

The next linguistic feature that is displayed by the story books is the verb selection. In general, verbal groups representing material process—or verbs showing physical action dominate the texts than other types of processes. The type of verbal group in the second rank is the relational one. The verbs in this classification are selected to describe the participants as well as the location of the events in the stories. Meanwhile, the other types of verb are selected in an average number. This pattern of verb selection happens for almost story books in this research. However, there are some books which show different verbal group exploitation such as a book entitled *Eri Learns to Read*. The verbal groups used in this story are mostly behavioural. This might be due to the fact that this book tells about someone who is in the process of learning how to read, so the story is much related to action which is a combination between mental and material process.

The other characteristic which is demonstrated by the story books is the domination of temporal conjunctions, although other types of conjunction are also selected for the texts. The domination shows that in a narrative text these conjunctions are used to arrange events due to the time of happening. Meanwhile, the other conjunctions are selected according to the contextual needs; for example, to relate an event resulting from another event, a causal conjunction such as *because* or *so* will be used.

Grammatically, the exploitation of such conjunctions to relate one part of a text to the other will help the readers follow the story easily as conjunctions have a capability to arrange and to control the flow of the message which is being encoded by the speaker or the writer. On that account, the domination of temporal conjunctions in the story books is a supportive linguistic feature for a narrative as the events in a narrative text are delivered due to the time of happening.

The story books in this research also have many temporal circumstances for the clauses building up the texts. This becomes the next supportive feature for the narrative texts. For a text which tells about events happening to or done by certain participants, the clauses need grammatical elements which give more information about the time and location for the events. Furthermore, the exploitation of many temporal circumstances for the stories makes the readers get clear description for what are being encoded by the clauses.

A narrative written in English needs simple past tense to accommodate the need to tell something happening in the past. Most of the story books in this research show this supportive feature. Such a kind of tense is much selected for the narrating parts of the stories, although in several dialogs, this tense is also chosen for the utterances which contextually need such a kind of tense. As the utterances are in the form of direct speech, they will be dependent on the context for their tense selection. Therefore, the tense for this part varies due to the context. The following dialog shows how various forms of tense are exploited.

Dialog 1

"Wow! Such a story!" said Robby. "I wonder there really is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow?" said Gina. "There's only one way to find out. Look!" said Harry, pointing at emerging rainbow.

(Looking for a Pot of Gold)

There are two types of tense in the above dialog. The narrating parts are represented in past tense, while the utterances are delivered in present. The former tells something happening in the past, while the latter represents something happening in the time of speaking. These features are positive for a narrative text written in English. As the utterance represents a direct speech, its tense will adjust to the context of time.

Meanwhile, there are several stories which are told in present tense such as shown by the book entitled *When Ellice's Upset*. This tense selection, in fact, is not supportive to the linguistic features needed by a narrative. On the other hand, this 'unsupportive' feature helps the young readers in getting through the book. Although the narrating parts of the book are told in present tense, the uttering parts are still context dependent. These parts change the tense due to the context of the happening. For example, the narrating parts of the following dialog are expressed in present tense, but the tense for the utterances varies according to the contextual needs—it can be in past tense such as in *I did it, mom!*, or in present such as in *You're*

wonderful, Ellice!, or in past as well as present such as in *I bet Fillia was happy to accept it!*.

Dialog 2

"I did it, Mom!" Ellice shouts cheerfully as she opens the door. "I gave Fillia the eraser!" Mom hugs Ellice, feeling just as happy as she is. "You're wonderful, Ellice! I bet Fillia was happy to accept it!"

(When Ellice's Upset)

In the case of narrative texts for Indonesian children, it can be suggested that the correct selection of tenses (past tense for the narrating parts and others for the utterances depending on the context of happening) supports the linguistic characteristics needed by a narrative text. However, as the books are about Indonesian stories written in English for Indonesian children, the various tenses in the texts give a little bit challenge for them to comprehend.

The other fact is that clauses which are represented in present tense for narrating the story are easier for the young readers to understand than when they are expressed in past tense—the correct tense selection. For the Indonesian young readers, the rules how to select tense for actions or events do not exist in their languages—either their mother tongue or Indonesian language. The different times for different events or actions are represented in the same form of verbs in their languages. Therefore, an action or an event represented in past tense in English is more difficult for them to understand rather than in present. Put it other words, clauses in past tense will influence the level of readability of the texts which have them.

The other unsupportive linguistic feature for a narrative text is the selection of difficult words and expressions. The more words and expressions a text has, the more difficult the text to be. Unfortunately, many story books in the research show their huge possession for these language units. The words and expressions are too 'adult' and too 'difficult' for the young readers. However, few books are composed with easy and consumable words and expressions for the children such as *School's Coloring Competition*.

This negative condition is further destroyed by the grammatical mistakes taking place in the texts. Because the books are written in English, in addition that their text structure should be arranged in a narrative genre; the constructions for their clauses should also be grammatically correct. However, many story books in the study demonstrate the writers' careless in exploiting good and correct English grammatical constructions for a narrative text. Many

constructions are grammatically incorrect and these in fact influence the readability of the texts; and if this happens so, the books will not be effective for English supplement material.

Children Judgment

The interview with the children informants shows their various judgments toward the story books related to their readability. In the interview an informant was asked to read a book and then gave a judgment whether such a book was easy or not to understand. The children informants' academic background was designed to be similar or almost similar as described in the research methods. Their various judgments are as follow.

Seven of the total number of the story books (19) written in a narrative genre are judged to be easy to comprehend; 5 books are rather easy and 7 others are difficult to understand. The children judgment is based on their understanding on the participants of the stories who are differentiated into the main characters and the supporting ones; their understanding on the flow of the stories; their understanding on the setting of the stories; and their understanding on the endings of the stories. Moreover, their judgment is also related to their consideration on the length of the sentences; the grammatical constructions for such sentences as well as the selection for the words and expressions used in the books. For the children, the design and also the pictures going along with the stories are also considered as inputs in giving the judgment.

According to the informants, the obstacles for getting through the stories are related to two linguistic aspects—the story structure and the story texture. For the former, the children are divided into three groups—those who did not understand the sequence of the events in the story, so they could not retell the whole text; those who understood the sequence of the events in the story, but they could not retell the whole text; and those who understood the sequence of the events in the story and could retell the whole story.

As the informants were designed to have similar (or almost similar) academic background, their different judgments on the books' readability will be explained further by focusing on the language exploitation for the story texts. The books which are judged to be hard display several linguistic characteristics as follow. The discourse units are arranged a little bit circular and not straight; the sentences are complex; and many difficult words and expressions are selected for such books. In contrast, those which have simple arrangement for the discourse units, simple sentences,

and easy and friendly words and expressions have easy judgment from the young readers. Meanwhile, books which are judged to be rather difficult are those which show positive characteristics in some parts, but have negative ones in others. A book entitled *When Ellice's Upset* can be picked up as an example for the circular arrangement for the discourse units. This book is believed to be potentially difficult to understand by the young readers. In a different case, *Watch Out Durian is Falling* is a book which is also judged to be difficult because of the serious grammatical mistakes. Such a book has long sentences and almost all the sentences are very badly constructed.

The process to understand the stories, actually, is much supported non-verbally by the pictures going along the books. As described in the beginning, the books are targeted for Indonesian children. Therefore, to be attractive for the young readers the books are designed to have the verbal aspect telling the story and the non-verbal aspect representing the story in pictures. This design, fortunately, is very beneficial for the children in understanding the texts, especially those who cannot get through the texts easily due to the quality of the language exploitation for the books. Put in other words, whenever a reader gets obstacles in understanding the story because the text has low readability, the pictures will help her/him.

On the other hand, when a book is well-designed linguistically, the young reader did not get any problem in understanding the story. For example, the informant who got a book entitled *The Humiliated One who Helps* told that he could understand the story easily without just by reading the narrating part and without 'reading' the pictures. However, in general, the combination of the text and the pictures is very helpful for the children to get the point of the story.

Systemic Strategies to Apply

The analysis and the discussion above show that the books in the research have good quality in some parts, but they also have weaknesses in others. All the books are well-designed as story books for children consisting of story texts accompanied by pictures representing the stories non-verbally. Such a design is very beneficial for the young readers not only because of their attraction but also because of the pictures' contribution to their process of understanding whenever the children get blocked in comprehending the texts. Moreover, few books are very good in their structure as well as their texture such as *The Humiliated One who Helps*, *School's Coloring Competition*, and so on. These books are very ideal

for the young readers as the discourse units are arranged in a simple way, and the language is proper for their English proficiency level.

However, most of the story books in this study show weaknesses in language exploitation, either in their text structure or in their text texture. The selected story books (30) show varieties in genre. The types of discourse units in the texts, then, exclude eleven books for the further analysis because they are not written in a narrative genre—six of the books, such as *Mike's Red Bike* and *Pesta Buah* are composed in a recount genre, while give others such *Burung Hantu* and *Edgard Loves Sport* are a description.

A book which is written as a recount can actually be classified as a story. However, as the story book is designed to give fun to the readers, such a text does not maximally fulfil the function or the objective of the book. On that account, inserting a conflict in a recount might improve or 'shift' the text into a narrative. The conflict will fall into a complication, and this should be followed by a resolution. A sequence of events will be more attractive to the young readers if a conflict happens in it. For the books which are designed as a description, the strategy to improve them is much different. A 'total' improvement should be performed to the texts as a description is totally different from a narrative. Therefore, there are two alternatives for such kind of books. First, the texts are left like what they are, but the titles of the books are changed. For example, the book entitled *Cerita si Kura-Kura (The Story of Turtle)* is a description. To improve this book for the readers, the title can be changed into *A Book on Turtle* or any other title but not stating it as a story as the text just describes what a turtle is. The second improvement is a total rewriting for the text. The title can be kept as it is, but the text should be a narrative with the turtle as the participant.

The other matter related to the text structure is the arrangement of the discourse units. All the story books in the research contain complete obligatory discourse units, namely orientation, complication and resolution. Several of the books, even, complete their texts with one or two optional discourse units, either evaluation or moral or both evaluation and moral in their texts. The problem comes up when a particular discourse unit happens more twice or more in a similar text. If this happens the text will potentially have long discourse unit arrangement, and usually the arrangement will be circular. For the children events which are sequenced in a simple and straight way are more easily to understand that those which are arranged in a circular way such as orientation-

complication-resolution-complication-resolution. A story book entitled *When Ellice's Upset* shows this kind of circular arrangement for the discourse units building up the story. Based on this phenomenon, a suggested strategy to modify the text is to simplify the flow of the events, meaning that the discourse units in the book need to be rearranged into a simpler sequence.

Meanwhile, there more various problems related to the lexicogrammar exploitation for the story books. One of the problems is that most of the sentences used to compose the stories are in long and complex constructions. If a sentence contains two or more clauses, it means that it accommodates two or more events in it. For the young readers this kind of construction is not beneficial. They get obstacles in understanding what happen in the sentence; they need longer time to understand the sentence; therefore for them the sentence with such a construction has a low readability. A story text which has many sentences like this will in fact have a low readability too. A recommended improvement for this problem is to cut the long sentences into shorter and simpler ones. One sentence consisting of one clause is an ideal form for the young readers as one clause will normally consist of one event in it.

The other matter with grammar is the tense selection for the story. Normally, a story written in English will show simple past tense selection for its narrating part and various tense selections for the utterances in the dialogs. Several books in the research, however, are written in present tense in their narrating parts such as *When Ellice's Upset*, *Unforgettable day*, *Eri Learns to Read*, and so on. This kind of selection, in fact, gives benefits to the young readers as they can understand the sentences more easily if the verbs for the sentences are in present tense. This case might be related to the fact that the system of tense does not exist in the children languages—both Indonesian language and their local mother tongue. For them the different time of speaking does not change the verbs, therefore when they learn English, the changing tense does not influence their understanding for the meaning of the verbs. Moreover, the verbs in past tense are more challenging because for them these verbs are different words from their present forms.

The selection of tense for the utterances in the dialogs, on the other hand, should be considered carefully. The dialogs in the stories reflect the real spoken interactions using English language, so the tense should be chosen in accordance to the context need. This is related to the fact that the story books are designed as supplement materials to help the children

learn English. The correct tense selection not only improves the readability of the texts but also gives good model of tense selection to be applied in daily spoken interaction. Therefore, story books with wrong tense selection for the utterances such as *Watch Out, Durian is Falling*, the suggested systemic strategy is to revise the selection.

The other grammatical mistakes such as wrong application for articles, wrong plural forms, wrong parallel construction, wrong verb form for certain modal operator, and so on also contribute to the quality of readability. These minor grammatical problems play a part in making the young readers get difficult to comprehend the texts. One systemic modifying strategy is to revise the mistakes and change them with the correct ones.

The last texture weakness happening in most of the story books is the difficult words and expressions. Many words selected in the books are too 'adult' and difficult for the readers to understand. Words like *scowls, stationery, a frowning face, bad temper, defends, cute-looking eraser* are considered to have roles in making the texts hard for the children. Moreover, some archaic words such as *obnoxious, vanish, dwarves, superb* position the readers in a distant to the texts. They have never seen these words so that they do not know their meaning. All these words make the texts unfamiliar to the children; and this unfamiliarity influences the readability of the books.

In addition to the words, there are many difficult expressions used in the stories. They can be in the form of a sentence, a phrase, or an idiom such as *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; out of mood; or falls into silence* for each category. All of these expressions are too high for the young readers to understand, so that using them will reduce the texts' readability. The result of the text analysis is in line in many parts with the result of the interview with the children informants. They told that the difficult words and expressions exploited in the texts influenced the process of understanding the stories.

The only suggested strategy for this problem is to replace all the difficult words and expressions with the easier and more friendly ones. On that account, the understanding on meaning relationship can be applied here. For example, if an expression of *bad temper* is considered to be hard for the children to understand such as in a sentence: *She is in a bad temper*, such an expression can be changed into the more daily one *angry*.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and discussion above lead to several real actions that are suggested to take. The writers or translators of Indonesian children stories in English version should consider the young readers' age and level of English proficiency. The more difficult a story text to understand, the harder the text achieves its social goal as a narrative—as something giving fun to the young readers. Furthermore, as the books are expected to be supplement material to the English course books used in formal classes, the lexicogrammar exploitation should be selected correctly. The well-constructed sentences in the books can be good models for the readers in using English for their daily interaction. In line with this case, the writers should also carefully select the words and expressions for the stories. They should consider the selection with the age and the English proficiency level of the young readers. Friendly words and expressions make the books friendly to the children. It means that such words and expressions make them understand the stories easily. On all above matters, the publishers of the story books should have a careful process in preparing the books to be published. They should appoint someone as a 'draft polisher' to scrutinize the texts to see everything related to the language exploitation in making the books consumable for the young readers.

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