



## **Environments Triple Dimensions in Fairytales: A Dialectical Ecolinguistics Perspective**



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### **Abstract**

Quite a lot of approaches have been utilized to study fairytales; yet, none has been from an ecolinguistics' perspective. This writing specifically intends to scrutinize fairytales on the ground of dialectical ecolinguistics as developed by Bang, Door, et al. The main purpose of this writing is to describe the triple dimensions of environment found in fairytales, *i.e.* bio-logics dimension, socio-logics dimension, and ideo-logics dimension. The result of the analysis shows that: (1) bio-logics dimension in fairytales refers to the environments of humans, animals, plants, other beings, nature, as well as 'other' environment; (2) socio-logics dimension refers to relations either among best friends or between rivals embedded with social roles as either conflict-trigger or peace makers individuals, as advisor, as producer, and as consumer; (3) ideo-logics dimension refers to six types of relations, *i.e.* relations among best friends, relation of hunter-huntee, relation of shop owner-consumer, relation of advisor-client, relation of superiors-inferiors, and relation of master-pets.

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### **1. Introduction**

Fairytales have been parts of our daily lives and often utilized to teach moral principles to children. [Young \(1997\)](#) stated that:

*It is, at once, a commentary on social values, a vivid example of family tragedy, and a bit of personal psychology. There is much we can learn by reflecting on the stories heard in childhood. Magical characters such as the Pied Piper, the talking frog, and the fairy godmother are likely to remain in the imagination for a lifetime. The adventures these stories describe often reflect challenges we face in our journeys. The tales hide a wealth of insights just below the surface. They are clearly more than mere entertainment for children.*

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According to Young, fairytale may have different functions varying from presenting social views, personal psychology, as well as serving entertainment purpose. In other words, fairytale can be defined as: "a simple fictional story served as an instrument to teach moral values as well as to entertain its readers" (Young 1997; Hynes-Berry 2000; Atkins 2004; Chandler 2004; Macfadyen 2004; Zipes 2006).

Fairytales have long been objects of research studies. Macfadyen (2004) mentioned that modern fairytale interpreters have adopted various approaches to analyzing fairytale in terms of its content, structure, and symbols. Those studies basically aimed at finding "hidden" meanings or messages conveyed in fairytales as well as to find the answer of fairytales' capability of "survival" for ages. There are two common approaches employed in analyzing fairytales, namely psychoanalysis and sociologic analysis. Using psychoanalysis approach means the focus of discussion is on the aspect of either practical roles or benefits of fairytales; whereby fairytales are considered as human's personal conflict representation, as individuals or as groups. In general, within a psychoanalysis model, fairytales are studied based on its function in "mastering the psychological problems of growing up" and "fostering...personality development". Meanwhile, sociologic interpretation states that fairytales are best viewed as texts – that the function of fairytales is basically to communicate communal values held and believed by particular groups. From this point of view, fairytales are considered as an instrument contributing to social stability and take a role to maintain social status quo.

This writing aims at scrutinizing fairytales from a different perspective, that is, from a dialectical ecolinguistics' perspective. It specifically aims at describing the triple dimensions of the environment in fairytales (bio-logics dimension, socio-logics dimension, and ideo-logics dimension).

## 2. Research Methods

The research is qualitative in nature. The data were taken from the book entitled "80 Kumpulan Dongeng Menakjubkan Dunia" (80 *Worldly Amazing Tales*) retold by Agung Bawantara and published by Anakkita in 2013. There were a total of six tales used for the article, namely: 1) "Empat Sahabat Karib" (*Four Best Friends*); 2) "Burung Gagak Berganti Warna" (*Vultures Changing Colors*); 3) "Pertapa dan Janggut Harimau" (); 4) "Mimpi Raksasa dan Mimpi Burung Hantu" (*The Giant's and The Owl's Dream*); 5) "Ayam bertelur Perak" (); 6) "Keledai dan Kulit Singa" (*A Donkey and A Lion's Skin*). Those six tales can be categorized as fables, meaning they are tales about the lives of the animals. In other words, all the main characters in the data were animals. The analyzed data were the lexicons of concrete nouns found in the texts. Three aspects were analyzed: the bio-logics dimension, social-logics dimension, and ideo-logics dimension.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Environment from a Dialectical Ecolinguistics' Perspective

According to Derni (2008:29), language is basically the part of an environment where we live, so that it needs to be speculated in accordance with the environment. Ecolinguistics is a study focusing on the relationship between ecology and linguistics, meaning that it studies the relation between language and the environment where the language is practiced. If located according to its history, ecolinguistics can be said to be having a few different approaches. It was firstly introduced by Haugen in 1970, using the paradigm of language ecology. Haugen's idea was mostly related to the issues of both language maintenance and language planning. Meanwhile, the term "ecolinguistics" itself was coined by Halliday in 1990 at the AILA Conference when he was presenting his ideas on ecological and non-ecological elements in language systems. In his point of view, an ecological language system is one that applies a "holistic system"; while the non-ecological one applies a "fragmented' system". Another approach in ecolinguistics study is that of Odense-based known as Dialectical Ecolinguistics. This was pioneered by Jorgen Chr Bang and Jorgen Door through the Ecology, Language, and Ideology Research Group at The University of Odense, Denmark. The term ecolinguistics in this article refers to Dialectical Ecolinguistics as developed by Bang and Door.

According to Bang and Door (1993), environment consists of three main elements, which they called "triple dimensions". These triple dimensions of environment include (1) ideological environment (mental order, also known as an ideo-logics dimension); (2) biological environment (physical order, also known as a bio-logics dimension); and (3) sociological environment (social order, also known as a social-logics dimension). Ideo-logics dimension relates to mental, cognition, and psychological aspects of individuals within a particular collective society or environment.

Bio-logic dimension refers to the interrelation of human-beings in existence with other species. Socio-logic dimension relates to collective individuals, from family as a basis of social organization to community members to speech community to a society. The environmental aspect within fairytales to be discussed here refers to triple dimensions of the environment on the basis of Dialectical Ecolinguistics' perspective namely bio-logic dimension, social-logic dimension, and ideo-logic dimension.

### 3.2 Triple Dimensions in Fairytales

The following discussions cover the three aspects of triple dimensions found in the data.

#### a) Bio-logic Dimension

Bio-logic dimension of the environment in fairytales refers to physical environment found in the six tales used as data sources. This particular dimension can be seen at the following table:

Table 1  
Biological environment in fairytales

No	Environment	Data
1	Humans	
	a) Job/Profession	”Pemburu” (hunter), ”penjual roti” (bread seller), ”pertapa” (hermit)
	b) Status in the family	”Suami” (husband)
	c) Sex	”Perempuan” (female)
	d) Proper name	”Umi”
2	Animals	
	a) Animals living in the forest	”Tikus” (mouse), ”gagak” (vulture), ”kura-kura” (tortoise), ”rusa” (deer), ”burung hantu” (owl), ”harimau” (tiger), ”gajah” (elephant), ”keledai” (donkey), ”singa” (lion), ”rubah” (fox), ”burung” (bird)
	b) Domesticated animals	”Ayam” (chicken)
3	Plants	”Pohon” (tree), ”semak” (bushes)
4	Other Beings	”Raksasa” (giant)
5	Nature	”Hutan” (forest), ”gunung” (mountain), ”sungai” (river), ”sarang” (nest)
6	Others	a) Food: ”gandum” (wheat), ”jagung” (corn), ”dedak” (bran), ”telur” (egg), kue (cakes), roti (bread). b) Building: ”toko” (shop), ”ruang pewarnaan” (coloring room), ”rumah” (house) c) Equipment: ”Jaring” (net), ”tungku” (fireplace) d) Material: ”Perak” (silver) e) Time of the day: ”Malam” (evening)

Based on the data analysis, six types of physical environment were found in the fairytales, namely: (1) the environment of humans; (2) the environment of animals; (3) the environment of plants; (4) the environment of other beings; (5) the environment of nature; and (6) other types of environment, which in itself includes five different types of environment. The environment of humans can be differentiated based on four factors, which are, jobs/profession, status in the family, sex, and proper name. The environment of animals consists of two groups, those living in the forest (such as mouse, vulture, tortoise, deer, owl, tiger, elephant, donkey, lion, fox, bird) and domesticated ones (chicken). The environment of plants consists of trees and bushes. The

environment of other beings consists of a giant. The environment of nature consists of forest, mountain, river, and nest. Besides those five types of physical environment, other types were also found, including: (1) food (such as wheat, corn, bran, egg, cakes, bread); (2) building (such as shop, coloring room, house; (3) equipment (such as net and fireplace); (4) material, such as silver; and (5) time of the day, such as evening.

*b) Socio-logics Dimension*

Socio-logics dimension refers to the social environment and relates to collective individuals, from family as a basis of social organization to community members to speech community to a society. Based on the result of the analysis, social environment in fairytales focuses mainly on two things. The first concern is on the interrelation among individuals as a part of the particular community. The second one is on each individual's social roles as the citizen of earth. The kind of interrelation among individuals depicted in the data generally is either that of among best friends or that between rivals. Meanwhile, as the citizen of earth, each individual has their own social roles. Those roles vary from either as conflict-trigger or as peacemakers individuals to as advisor, producer, and consumer.

*c) Ideo-logics Dimension*

Thompson (2003:17) and Fairclough (1992:86) state that the term ideology may refer to the thinking or belief systems or "symbolic practices" through the continuous meaning-making process towards social relations, most importantly those related to power relation, domination, hegemony, and exploitation. Power relation itself mostly deals with authority, in which one party is much more dominant than the other. There are six types of relations found in the analyzed data: one type of equal relation and five types of unequal relations because one party is more dominant. Those types of relations can be found in the following table:

Table 2  
Power relations in fairytales

No	Types of relation	Level of relation
1	Among best friends	Equal
2	Hunter – Hunttee	Authority, one party is more dominant
3	Owner – Consumer	Authority, one party is more dominant
4	Advisor – Client	Authority, one party is more dominant
5	Superiors – Inferiors	Authority, one party is more dominant
6	Master – Pets	Authority, one party is more dominant

Based on the table, it can be explained that the relations found in fairy tales are: (1) relations among best friends; (2) relation of hunter-hunttee; (3) relation of shop owner-consumer; (4) relation of advisor-client; (5) relation of superiors-inferiors; and (6) relation of master-pets. Of the six relations, the more equal level of relations is shown in the relations among best friends.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion on triple dimensions of the environment in fairytales, the following are concluded:

- Bio-logics dimension in fairytales deals with six types of environment, which are: (1) the environment of humans; (2) the environment of animals; (3) the environment of plants; (4) the environment of other beings; (5) the environment of nature; and (6) other types of environment, which includes (a) food; (b) building; (c) equipment; (d) material; and (e) time of the day.
- Socio-logics dimension in fairytales refers to the interrelations among individuals (either as best friends or as rivals) and to each individual's social roles (as conflict-trigger, peacemakers, advisor, producer, and consumer).
- Ideo-logics dimension in fairytales refers to six types of relations, which are: (1) relations among best friends; (2) relation of hunter-hunttee; (3) relation of shop owner-consumer; (4) relation of advisor-client; (5) relation

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of superiors-inferiors; and (6) relation of master-pets. Of the six relations, only one equal level of relations is found, that is, in the relations among best friends.

*Suggestion*

This particular article only covers the aspects of triple dimensions of the environment from a dialectical ecolinguistics' perspective. It has not yet covered the ideological aspects beyond those three dimensions. It might be more interesting if the environmental aspect is also studied using the ecocritical discourse's perspective to uncover "the hidden meaning" behind the choices of specific physical, social, and ideological environment in fairytales.

*Conflict of interest*

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*Statement of authorship*

The author has a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author has approved the final article.

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