Destructive Environmental Discourse: An Author's Writing Strategy in Children's Stories

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe the discourse of the destructive environment found in the book Indonesian Children's Stories of Choice and explain the presence of destructive environmental discourses as an author's writing strategy. Environmental discourse is a subject of special attention in studying language related to the environment. This study uses the Ecolinguistic theory of the story we lived by Arran Stibbe. Environment discourse is stories that live in a community environment that influences and even determines one's mind. The environment consists of constructive and descriptive discourse. This study focuses on destructive environmental discourse, i.e., disasters containing information that violates or opposes environmental conservation values. The results of this study indicate that destructive environments are one of the authors' writing strategies for punishing characters in stories that contradict the environmental values of intelligence. In addition, the discourse of environmental destruction is created to be the reason for the presence of the discourses of resistance that are constructive and on the side of the wisdom of the environment. This study concludes that the authors use the environmental disasters as part of the message of the story to be known so as not to be done or followed by readers, especially readers from among children.

1. Introduction

Early age is the most crucial period in human development and growth. In addition to physical and mental development and knowledge, a person at this age determines their success in living a more complex life when they reach adulthood. Children's expertise and mental readiness can be stimulated through reading materials that they have learned from an early age. One of the lectures recommended by several experts is literary reading.

Reading materials for ordinary children are also called children's literature. One of the children's literature that offers emotional release, mental education, and character is fiction story (Junaid et al., 2023). Fiction stories offer a picture of the real world through a fantasy dimension. The fantasy world is quite interesting for children's readers because it can facilitate children's curiosity about new and unique things. The development of children's imagination allows them to reach absurd stories (Lanta et al., 2022). Like a broom that can fly or a person who can turn into a monster. Imaginative facts in fiction stories build a new world in the eyes of child readers.

Children's stories offer a variety of stories wrapped in various themes. One of the most frequently raised themes by the author is the environmental theme. The presence of environmental elements in children's stories can have a positive effect on the development of ecological wisdom in children (Jumiati et al., 2022; Andini, 2017). The description of the environment that is articulated in children's stories can also get children used to hearing, reading, getting to know, and understanding so that in the end it can form an attitude of caring for the environment (Rahman & Weda, 2018).

The environmental discourse that children get from stories can also construct knowledge and experience and color children's views about the environment, culture, and the character of a society. Reading children's stories will affect children's understanding and logic about their environment. Thus, children's stories can be a medium for instilling the character of caring and loving the environment in children from an early age.

The process of creating children's stories cannot be separated from the physical, social and cultural environment that surrounds an area where the author lives. Environmental elements are always present, giving color and even helping to shape the conceptual system of a community group about the world. This is justified by Rahman who argues that literary works as a cultural product, can be reviewed or seen from various dimensions, such as form, ideology, language, style, presentation technique, structure, author, creative process, linguistic aspects and a number of other dimensions (2014, p. 1).

Environmental ideology can represent a society's cognitive construction regarding the environment and can be a tool that instills environmental ethics in children. Ideology cannot be separated from a literary work, including children's stories. Hunt supports this opinion by stating "Ideology is not a separate concept "varied by" texts, but that all texts are evitably infused by ideologies" (1999, p. 31). Ideology is inherent in literature as a result of human cognition. Futhermore, expressing ideology in literary texts, including children's stories, is important. Even, ideology in children's stories has the potential to determine the ideology and cognition of child readers in the future (Hunt, 2003).

A number of studies with the topic of ideology in children's stories have been carried out by previous researchers both in Indonesia and outside Indonesia, including research conducted by Burnes (2016) with the title The Gothic in Children's Literature: The Creation of the Adolescent in Crossover Fiction, Children's Literature as an Exercise in Ecological (2018) studied by Goga, The Development of the Child's Superego Didik Through Reading Activities in Child Literature (2017) by Kadir and Gender Construction in Child Novel-Novel by Child Author (2015) written by Liliani. Research Zakaria and Harun (2019) with the title Analysis of the Element Story of Princess Kaul Child Story by Herman RN and Princess Betung & Elephant White Work of Rismawati.Research Wulanesti D.J., year (2021) titled Ideological Attitude in the Four Novels of the Child Work of Roald Dahl. Last, conducted the research titled Seeing Children's Literature of the World as an Ideological Struggle Tool done by Santoso (2022).

Previous studies are different from this research. Previous research each discussed the topics of children's literature, virtual children's literature, children's stories and so on. Meanwhile, the focus of the study in this research has quite clear differences, namely studying destructive environmental discourse in fiction genre children's stories. None of the previous studies focused on revealing the destructive environmental discourse found in children's stories.In addition, this study uses the ecolinguistic framework story we lived by by Arran Stibbe as grand theory. This framework was not found in previous studies.

Ecolinguistics is part of a linguistic study that specifically examines the relationship between human language and the ecological environment, namely the environment of the physical universe, both the biotic and abiotic environment, the social environment, the cultural environment or the culture of a language community (Nuzwaty: 2019, p. 39). According to Fill and Muhlhausler, ecolinguistics is a linguistic study that explores the relationship between the environment (ecology) and the language used by humans to communicate in their environment (2001, p. 45).

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Haugen sees language metaphorically. The relationship that occurs between language and its environment is analogous to the ecological relationship that exists between animal and plant species and their environment. Language is seen as a species that lives in its own environment, like plants and animals that live in their respective habitats (Fill and Muhlhausler, 2001:43).

Language can live or reproduce, can also disappear or die like species that live in the natural environment. If the language is used by an increasing number of speakers, the language will flourish and develop in a sustainable manner. However, if the number of speakers of that language decreases and continues to decrease, the language has the potential to change, shift, evolve and even disappear or become extinct.

The consequence of this analogy gave rise to various lexicons that characterize biological ecological concepts transferred to language, such as environment, ecosystem, growth, diversity, conservation, interaction, and extinction. These concepts are used to view language from a different perspective. This idea is intended to transfer concepts, principles and methods from biological ecology to the study of language.

Changes that occur in the natural environment and social environment can affect changes that occur in a language. Conversely, vocabulary in a language can show socio-ecological changes in a community of language users in a particular area. In fact, according to Halliday (1990) people's behavior towards their environment is also influenced by the language they use.

In the ecolingistic study Story We Lived By (SWLB) developed by Stibbe (2015), ideology is understood as stories that live in a particular group of people that regulate people's mindsets and worldviews regarding the environment. These stories or discourses are conveyed through lexical selection, words, grammatical constructions and other linguistic features that are used normally by certain groups.. The discourse will influence people not only how people think and talk but also how people behave and act towards the environment.

Through these views, Stibbe distinguishes two categories of discourse used by a person or group of people to spread environmental ideology. These discourse are as follows:

1.1. Constructive discourse

Constructive discourse are ideas that support environmental preservation. This discourse is far more beneficial for the environment. This discourse is also called positive discourse. This discourse contains an invitation to support the environment, preserve and give rights to nature to remain sustainable and protected

1.2. Destructive discourse

Destructive discourse is discourse that displays ideas that are contrary to ecological wisdom. Actions promoted in destructive discourse tend to damage and rob the environment's right to remain sustainable. Violation of rights to flora and fauna as well as other environmental elements. This discourse seems to be campaigning for subtle exploitation of nature through the use of certain language features.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with research data in the form of constructive and destructive environmental discourse. The data source used a purposive sampling technique by specifying six titles of Indonesian children's fiction, namely *Mata dan Manusia Laut* (Mata and the Sea Man), *Dua Panglima* (Two Commanders), *Misteri Hilangnya Penyu di Pulau Venu* (The Mystery of the Disappearance of a Turtle on Venu Island), *Nathan dan Mimpi Merah Jambu* (Nathan and Mimpi Merah Pink), *Janji Sepasang Layang-layang* (The Promise of a Pair of Kites) and *Misteri Pulau Betuah* (The Mystery of Betuah Island). The data in this study will be collected using two techniques, namely data reduction and data presentation

Data reduction was carried out by means of, 1) observation, carried out through intensive reading activities to find and collect the data needed in this research; 2) record, classify, and categorize data that is relevant to the formulation of the problem to be analyzed using a predetermined theoretical framework. Presentation of data is done by classifying data according to the theoretical framework used in this study. At this stage, the researcher coded the data using numbers on each line of the sentences obtained. After the data is coded, the next step is presenting the data. Presentation of data is done by using tables or schemes.

Data analysis used the eco-linguistic theory model Story We Lived By (SWLB). The Story we lived by (SWLB) model of ecolinguistics is theory that reveals discourses or stories about the environment that live in society which show the belief system or world view of a group of people regarding the environment. The steps of the analysis as follows: 1) classify various environmental discourses used by the author in children's stories. 2) Analyzing patterns and structures of environmental discourse found in children's stories. 3) Classify environmental discourse according to pattern and structure. 4) Dissecting the lexicon structure that contains environmental elements in environmental discourse. 5) Dissecting the linguistic structure of environmental discourse to reveal the environmental ideological systems of characters and authors. 6) Classifying destructive environmental discourse found in children's stories. 7) Reveal environmental ideology that underlies destructive environmental discourse in children's stories. The research data is limited to the destructive environmental discourse used by the author.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Destructive environmental discourse

Children's stories are communicative events presented by the author to children's readers. Through a series of stories and the interaction of various formal elements of the story such as the setting, dialogue of the characters and the

background of the characters' lives, the author not only provides new experiences in the form of stories but also shows an ideology or worldview regarding the environment. One of the environmental ideologies embedded in children's stories is environmental ideology which is destructive. Environmental ideology that leads to violations of natural rights is narrated in the form of destructive discourses, such as the following several stories from the crew members.

"We are worse than fish thieves"

MML28:214

"We bomb fish!"

MML29:214

A number of data were found in the children's story entitled The Eye and the Seaman (Mata dan Manusia Laut). This story shows communicative events between the characters of Awak Kapal, Bambulo, Matara and Ladasi. In this incident, the four characters are on a ship that is heading to an area called the Atoll. The crew and Ladasi are workers who take part in smuggling fish bombs, while Bambulo and Matara are two friends who are stranded on a distant island. The two of them boarded the ship to go to the Atol island.

In several stories, *Awak Kapal* demonstrate a destructive environmental ideology. Through the use of certain language, the story characters show their low attitudes and commitment to nature. As in the quote MML28: 214, one of the characters in the story confesses that they did something more serious than stealing fish, namely bombing fish. Actions that consciously and brutally destroy and eliminate the right to live in nature for the sake of personal and group interests are behaviors that must be fought.

The linguistic features that make up the ecological discourse above describe how humans can engage in actions that harm the environment and at the same time benefit themselves. The discourse leads to economic discourse which is an important issue in ecoliguistic studies. Economic discourse is oriented to all aspects of human hard work which leads to the achievement of personal satisfaction with the consumption of various commodities.

The linguistic devices in the discourse help build children's perceptions as readers that animals or animals are commodities. The action as narrated in the discourse is an act of depriving animals of the right to live and reproduce according to their natural life. Stopping an animal's movement throughout its life is a destructive action to the environment.

Discourses that lead to violations of natural rights are also found in the speech of the residents in the story of the children of *Dua Panglima*, as quoted below.

"All because of that brainless beast"

DP7:80

"Kill the Elephant!

DP7:80

"Don't be afraid of elephants"

DP7:80

Elephants here are real enemies for us"

DP0.10:83

Some of the quotes above were found in a children's story entitled Dua Panglima (two commanders). The dialogue in this story is spoken by the village head who is furious to see a herd of elephants entering residential areas and destroying residents' houses and even causing one of the residents to die. This incident made the village head figure call on all residents to be hostile to elephants, even planning to kill these elephants.

Several statements by the Village Head character show the destructive environmental discourse in the children's stories. Disturbing the habitat of fauna in the forest will eventually cause an imbalance in the ecosystem. Illegal logging to open new residential areas has an impact not only on environmental problems but also creates social problems. The loss of elephant habitat, for example, will make elephants roam in residential areas. This condition can cause elephants to injure residents or damage residents' houses.

From this discourse, one can find destructive environmental ideologies. Young readers will understand a picture of violations of natural rights, which will continuously have an adverse effect on human life. Discourses that place nature as a passive object will generally be detrimental to the environment itself, so it can be stated that the narrative is contrary to ecological principles.

3.2. Constructive environmental discourse

1) Respect for the Environment

A number of constructive environmental discourses are found in children's stories that convey ideas or ideas to children's readers to support ecological wisdom. Some of them are like the following examples.

> Seeing the sunlight that only penetrated a little through the sidelines of the shady trees. This is the most delicious sight and smell that I loved during my lifetime on earth. I completely absorbed every element that I saw and felt in the forest.

DP20:123

Reading every element of language that builds the discourse, readers can find constructive environmental discourse that leads to respect for the environment. One indicator of an attitude of respect for the environment is the emergence of awareness about the value that the environment gives to humans.

The ecological lexicon contained in this sentence contains a positive value with a description of emotions that contain joy and amazement through visual responses. This sentence shows the awareness of the Manila character in the children's story *Dua Panglima* about the value given to him by the environment. Another example is in the following sentence.

> For me, the forest is one of the most beautiful places that God created on this earth.

DP0.2: 21

In the quotation above, ideas about the value and kindness of nature to humans are born from human sensitivity and awareness. However humans and nature, including all types of plants have a strong bond with one another. Not to mention green plants have great benefits for human health. The narratives featuring environmental lexicons with green nuances provide "fresh air" as well as "new breath" for humans to live a better life. Stories that call on readers to absorb the presence of the environment in human life can also be found in the following stories from Manila figures.

> For the first time I entered into the forest like this. It's so peaceful.

DP4:26

> Nothing stuck in my heart and mind other than having to part with the herds of animals in the forest.

DP6:40

The quote above provides positive affirmation for children readers to enjoy nature's treats so they really realize that humans deserve to protect nature so that it remains sustainable. Several discourses that have the same spirit in respecting the environment are also found in the following quotations.

> Living in the forest taught me that nature can always be co-opted. Nature follows what we do. If we destroy it, it will also damage us. For this reason, protecting nature is the noblest way because protecting it is the same as protecting ourselves.

DP5:39

Awareness about the positive value of the environment can be formed through reactions from sensory experiences and one's emotional experiences in nature. For example, admiration and gratitude for the creation of the universe. In these two sentences, the author seems to want to convey that forests can be human friends, can support

and benefit each other. What humans give to nature is exactly what humans can reap from nature. In the end, experiences make people understand that preserving the environment is the same as maintaining human life itself.

2) Respect for the Environment

Respect for nature or the environment is an indicator of ecological wisdom. Respect for the environment is marked by human awareness of the rights of nature, for example not to destroy, not to disturb and not to destroy. Physical closeness to nature can give rise to human sensitivity and natural attitudes towards nature. Feeling the presence of the environment that is truly real and has a positive effect on humans can be the reason why nature's rights must be respected.

Several constructive environmental discourses in children's stories that describe human respect for nature can be found in several sayings by the Bambulo character in the children's story Mata and the Human Sea as follows.

> Everyone is the same as catching fish with nets and kedo-kedo. Kedo-kedo is a kind of fishing line that they make themselves with coconut fiber.
>
> MML4:34

> They never use bombs and various poisons to catch fish.
>
> MML5:35

Some of the quotes above give examples to humans how best to behave in nature. The natural environment has provided many foodstuffs for humans. Humans may take and use it as needed, instead of taking it brutally for personal gain. The decision not to use bombs and poison when fishing will preserve marine life such as fish and coral reefs. This sentence can be one of the campaigns and education for countermeasures of destructive fishing.

Respect for the environment is not only based on awareness of environmental values, but is also triggered by certain myths or beliefs, especially among Indonesian people. Myths are understood as stories that are considered true by a group of people, usually containing interpretations of the universe. One example is found in the children's story *Mata dan Manusia Laut* through the constructive environmental discourse of the Bambulo character as follows.

> Everyone Sama has a twin brother in the ocean. Brother of the umbilical cord planted in the ocean. Siblings from the umbilical cord implanted in the latan shortly after the baby is born.
>
> MML2:27

> They never use bombs and various poisons to catch fish. For them, it would be against the Ocean Lord's prohibition. It will also damage and kill their twins.
>
> MML5:35

> Lummu is a sacred being for the Sama people.
>
> MML9:38

> Lummu is the protector of the Sama people!
>
> MML16:101

It is said that lummu-lummu is the incarnation of the umbilical cord of a baby born in the Sama area. Babies born in Sama, the umbilical cord is not planted in the ground but immersed in the ocean. Therefore, the Sama people believe that the lummu-lummu are their twins. Because believing in this story, the Sama people really protect the lummu-lummu, even if someone hurts this creature it is considered challenging the ruler of the seas.

Certain beliefs that live in the minds of a group of people are strong reasons to respect the environment. Respect is done willingly so as to foster pride in wanting to protect, care for, and preserve it. Ethics or values that are rooted in a society are internalized in the form of real attitudes towards nature (Akhmar et al., 2022, p. 539).

3) Attitude of Responsibility to the Environment

Some of the expressions of characters found in children's stories that voice the spirit of responsibility for the environment can be seen in the following quotations.

"Like this, sir. We have to prevent the killing of the elephant"

DP13:85

"I told you the elephants should not be exterminated. We will move them. We don't exterminate. Exterminate it means to be turned off."

DP19:109

"No one is setting off firecrackers"

DP21:152

Some of the quotes above are the expressions of the Manila character in the children's story Two Panglima who called on the people not to kill elephants. Even Manila figures gave ideas on how to resolve conflicts that occurred between residents and a group of elephants that destroyed settlements. The attitude shown by Manila figures represents an attitude of responsibility towards the environment.

4. Conclusion

Children's stories do not only offer the author's experiences that are entertaining and didactic in nature. Children's stories as a script also articulate the author's environmental ideology through environmental discourse. Environmental discourse becomes a forum for internalizing environmental ideology among child readers.

This research reveals destructive environmental discourse in Indonesian children's stories which shows the author's strategy in presenting environmental ideology. This finding is proven by the way children's story authors divide the characters into two opposing or conflicting parties. One group is in favor of preserving and fulfilling responsibilities towards nature, on the other hand there is a group that violates nature's rights.

The environmental discourse found can be compared with the values of ecological wisdom in Indonesia. Destructive environmental ideologies that are found can be eliminated or replaced with language tools that are more beneficial to the environment. Meanwhile, discourses that are constructive in nature need to be promoted as a form of resistance to destructive discourse. Things that need to be promoted include word choice, use of pronouns, presuppositions, and metaphors. This effort is made solely to shape character in child readers through instilling a constructive environmental ideology.

Expressing environmental ideology through destructive environmental discourse in children's stories can change children's views about the environment. Through a series of stories containing environmental discourse, children as readers are presented with imaginative events that reflect stories that might happen in real life.

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