



Multimodal Analysis of Interactive Meaning in Selected Picture Book Biographies About Greta Thunberg

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at identifying the types of interactive meanings, the use of interactive meaning in illustration and phrases of two picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg and the compatibility between the interactive meaning in illustrations and phrases of two picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg, *Greta and The Giants* and *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg*. This study was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative method. The sources of data were taken from two picture books. The research instrument was the researcher herself by using a tool including laptop and books. The results of

this research showed that in *Greta and The Giants*, there were thirteen types of interactive meaning with the total of 22 illustrations. As for the results in *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg*, there were ten out of thirteen types of interactive meaning with the total of 13 illustrations. The total number of data were 35 illustrations and 130 phrases. Interactive meaning in *Greta and The Giants* and *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg* were both compatible to giving information about climate change awareness.

Keywords:

Picture Books, Multimodal Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Picture book is one kind of children literature which combines visual and verbal narratives in an illustrated form that aim to help children to connect things they have observed with the one they reason. Bamford (2003) said that children start to recognize familiar faces and objects by the age of one and start using visuals to communicate with and about the world by the age of three. It means that they start to have the ability to recognize and understand ideas conveyed through images or picture which this activity also known as visual literacy skill. The reason why visual literacy is important in conveying the meaning

and moral on a picture book because it is easier to interpret art than read a long text. Beside that, it helps in developing a sense of awareness, picturebooks allow children to develop a broader perspective even at a young age.

Therefore, the picture book is mostly combined visual and verbal narratives through various ways such as print book, e-book, and read aloud book videos which aimed to introduce new event and emotion for the young readers. Moreover, most of young readers still incompetence in grasping information from a textual form which shown that the correlation between multimodal and young reader is very important because multimodal implementation can help children's struggle in reading through the combination of text with image, gesture and audio.

According to Ginny Osewalt's (2019) opinion in her article titled 'Why do some kids have trouble understanding or remembering what they read?', she shared some tips in managing a child who has trouble with reading based on her fifteen years of experience as in teaching elementary students. Osewalt explains that it's important to help the child become an active reader so they can re-reading confusing portions of the text and looking for context clues around a sentence or phrase, for example the pictures in nearby sentences can help kids understand the meaning of the words. It means that introducing multimodal literacy to young children can develops their comprehension skills and encourages them to understand the ways media shapes their world.

Picture books are usually full of fairy tales and generally depict friendship as the theme of the book. Although picture books are known to be familiar with fictional story, it does not mean that there is no picture book based on true stories. For instance, there is picture book biography entitled *Greta and The Giants*, a nonfiction narrative with beautiful illustration and inspirational story. *Greta and The Giants* is a biographical picture book of young activist Greta Thunberg written by Zoë Tucker and illustrated by Zoe Persico. Greta Thunberg is an environmental activist from Sweden who famous for her action in against climate change.

As described by Nikolajeva & Scott (2006), texts in picture books tell the meaning of the images, resultantly the images illustrated the content of the text. Whereas multimodal analysis considers as an approach to examine how meaning made through various modes such as illustration, gesture, sound and video. As described by Kress (2010), essential to this form of analysis is a view of modes as socially and culturally shaped "semiotic resources for making meaning". To interpret the picture book, we can use multimodal analysis to explore

the meaning of illustration and text in the book.

METHOD

This data was analyzed using qualitative research. The data of this research are focused on certain aspect. The main source of the research were two selected picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg. The first one is a picture book biography entitled *Greta and The Giants* written by Zoë Tucker and illustrated by Zoe Persico in 2019. The second is *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg* written by Isabel Sanchez Vegara and illustrated by Anke Weckmann.

There are several steps in collecting the data, as for instance: reading, observing, note taking, interpreting and categorizing. In accordance with Hesse-Biber & Leavy's (2011), memo notes help you develop your ideas about your data, synthesize your data, integrate your ideas, and discern relationships within the data. Thence, observing and note taking can be said as the vital part in technique of collecting data while conducting a research with subject of analysis and interpretation.

After the data has been collected, then the researcher analyze the data based on the following steps :

- Organizing and preparing the data from the two selected picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg by taking some notes.
- Reading and observing illustrations and texts in two selected picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg until obtain some general information and idea, then represent its interactive meaning in line with the theme of this study.
- Gathering all information that have been taken during the data collection and dividing them into several categories, list of categories is made by grouping topics that relate to problem of this study.

DISCUSSIONS

Interactive choices found in illustration and text in selected picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg

Image act and gaze (Demand)

Image act and gaze is a meaning system applied by creator in images or sign which aims to deliver the social meaning through the visual contact. Image act and gaze divided into two, which determined by the gaze direction of represented

participant. (Demand in *Greta and The Giants* - Illustration 1 -)

Image act and gaze (Offer)

In line with Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 119) that an image which does not contain represented participant or looking directly at the viewer has a role as an item of information. (Offer in *Greta and The Giants* - Illustration 2 -)

Social distance and intimacy (Close shot)

Social distance and intimacy is a meaning system used by creator to convey the social meaning based on the type of shot. Close shot applied in a picture to implying an intimate distance between the represented participant and the viewer. (Close shot in *Greta and The Giants* - Illustration 18 -)

Social distance and intimacy (Medium shot)

As explained by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006:124) that medium shot are showing the represented participant approximately until the waist. Medium shot applied in a picture to implying a close social distance between the represented participant and the viewer. (Medium shot in *Greta and The Giants* - Illustration 7-)

Social distance and intimacy (Long shot)

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006:) a picture which is shown in long shot indicating there is far social distance between the represented participant and the viewers. (Long shot in *Greta and The Giants*- Illustration 3 -)

Horizontal angle and involvement (Frontal angle)

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 136) explain that the frontal angle says as it were, 'what you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with'. By using frontal angle, a picture tell the viewers about involvement. (Frontal angle in *Greta and The Giants* - Illustration 9 -)

Horizontal angle and involvement (Oblique angle)

An opposite from the explanation before, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 136) state that a picture with oblique angle implying 'what you see here is not part of our world, something we are not involved with'. Oblique angle in *Greta and The Giants* - Illustration 6-)

Vertical angle and power (Low angle)

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:140) low angle is chosen to make a picture look imposing and awesome and give an impression of superiority. (Low angle in *Greta and The Giants* -Illustration 4-)

Vertical angle and power (Eye-level angle)

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:140) state that the point of eye-level angle is to show there is no power difference. An eye-level angle applied in a picture to pass on equality between the represented participant and the viewer. Eye-level angle in *Greta and The Giants* -Illustration 8-)

Vertical angle and power (High angle)

Based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:140) explanation, high angle used in a picture to flatten the represented participant morally by reducing them to ground level and makes the represented participant look small and insignificant. (High angle in *Greta and The Giants* -Illustration 12-)

Declarative mood

Declarative is a system of mood used by creator in text or phrases which aims to deliver the expression of opinion and attitude through a statement, declaration or explanation. (Declarative in *Greta and The Giants*-Illustration 2-)

Imperative mood

Imperative is a system of mood used by creator in text or phrases which aims to deliver the expression of opinion and attitude through a command, instruction or direction. (Imperative in *Greta and The Giants* - Illustration 14-)

Interrogative mood

Interrogative is a system of mood used by creator in text or phrases which aims to deliver the expression of opinion and attitude through a question. Interrogative in *Greta and The Giants* (Illustration 9)

Interactive meaning constructed in illustration and text in selected picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg

Image act and gaze (Demand)

Demand in *Greta and The Giants* (Illustration 14)

Illustration above categorized into demand image because most of the represented participants are looking at the viewers. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 118) state that some kind of relation is formed by the facial expression of the represented participants. In line with this statement, smile in Greta's face indicates a request to the viewers to enter a relation of social affinity with her, to join her environmental protest and fight climate change

together just like many others represented participants who shown in the background.

Image act and gaze (Offer)

Offer in *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg* (Illustration 1)

For the image act and gaze aspect, this illustration classified as an offer image because the three represented participants do not look at the viewers. Therefore, all the represented participants act as pieces of information to the viewers for introducing the main character of the story. The lacking of particular gaze direction indicates that this illustration expects the viewers to notice that this book will review a biography of a young environmental activist named Greta Thunberg.

Social distance and intimacy (Close shot)

Close shot in in *Greta and The Giants* (Illustration 18)

Relating to social distance and intimacy aspect, this illustration applies close shot to portray the represented participants' expressions. In accordance with Kress and van Leeuwen statement (2006:126) that a depiction in personal way is show to make the viewer feels as if he or she can see it in reality and close enough to touch it. Thereby, portraying the represented participant in this distance gives an impression as if the viewer would be close enough to see the Giants' expression in reality

Social distance and intimacy (Medium shot)

Medium shot in *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg* (Illustration 2)

From the social distance and intimacy interpretation, this illustration applies medium shot to make the portrayal of all represented participants shown from the head to the waist. Consequently, this shot determine kind of distance that appear between the represented participants and the viewers. As for medium shot, it forms a far personal distance which allow the viewers to recognize the faces of Greta's family members and imaginarily already acknowledged them in reality.

Social distance and intimacy (Long shot)

Long shot in *Greta and The Giants* (Illustration 1)

In terms of distance and intimacy, a long shot is applied by showing the full-length portrayal of the picture book's characters to the viewers. This long shot indicates the beginning of the story and inform the viewers that this story will talk about environment issues by showing nature, animal and human figure at the same time.

Horizontal angle and involvement (Frontal angle)

Frontal angle in *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg* (Illustration 4)

This illustration selects a frontal angle to portray all represented participants from the front side. This kind of angle signifies that all objects shown in the illustration is part of the viewers' world, most of the people included the viewers have been experienced and known things like school, classroom and friends.

Horizontal angle and involvement (Oblique angle)

Oblique angle in *Greta and The Giants* (Illustration 10)

An oblique angle is chosen to portray the represented, the little girl who is reading a newspaper. This type of angle indicates that there is impartiality instead of involvement between the represented participant and the viewer. It signifies that the viewers do not affect the ideas contemplated by the represented participant, Greta.

Vertical angle and power (Low angle)

Low angle in *Greta and The Giants* (Illustration 4)

For the vertical dimension, a low angle is chosen to show the represented participant's power, especially the giants. As it might be seen, the giants portrayed much bigger and almost fill the entire illustration. This kind of angle make the objects in illustration give impression of sturdy and powerful.

Vertical angle and power (Eye-level angle)

Eye-level angle in *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg* (Illustration 4)

For the vertical dimension, this illustration applies an eye-level angle to imply that there is no power difference between the represented participant and the viewer. Therefore, this illustration indicates that everyone is equally responsible to contribute in strike for fighting climate change.

Vertical angle and power (High angle)

High angle in *Greta and The Giants* (Illustration 16)

For the vertical dimension, this illustration applies high angle to make the giants appear to have more power over another represented participants by depicting Greta and friends in small size.

Declarative mood

Sentence above uses a declarative mood which state that the giants (human) start to exploit the environment by cutting down trees for their needs.

Imperative mood

Sentence above uses an imperative mood to give a command to the giants for quitting their bad habit which harms the environment.

Interrogative mood

Sentence above applies an interrogative mood to ask a question and demands support to help overcome the damage that has occurred in the forest.

The importance of compatibility between the interactive meaning of the illustrations and texts in the picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg

For explaining the importance of the compatibility between the interactive meaning of the illustrations and texts in the picture book biographies about Greta Thunberg, the researcher will look at Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott's examination about the balance between illustration and text produced by picture book creator (an author and illustrator) in a book entitled *How Picturebooks Work* on 2006.

Based on this examination, Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2006:29-39) state that the reason of the balance between illustration and text are important because narrative presences are also significantly altered in ways that strongly affect the mood and tenor of the picture book.

It found that the relationship between the protesters and the giants, or between text and picture are revelatory in climate strike scenes. The illustration expands the text's hints at the protesters' complaints, suggested by the sign board and words that demand climate action.

Pursuant to Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2006:29-39) examination on the balance between the images and text from children picture books, it can be concluded that the compatibility between the illustration and text is important because the text's existence is also significantly making adjustments to the mood and message of the illustrations in the picture book.

CONCLUSIONS

Having identified and analyzed all the data, the findings of this research could be concluded as follows:

- There are thirteen types of interactive choices found in *Greta and the Giants*, they are: demand, offer, close shot, medium shot, long shot, frontal angle, oblique angle, low angle, eye-level angle, high angle, declarative, imperative, interrogative. Meanwhile

in *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg*, there are found ten types of interactive meaning, they are: demand, offer, close shot, medium shot, long shot, frontal angle, oblique angle, eye-level angle, declarative, imperative and low angle, high angle and interrogative are not used in illustration and text of this picture book.

- All types of interactive meaning based on Kress and van Leeuwen's theory in illustrations and phrases of picture book biography *Greta and the Giants* are applied to conveying about climate change and raising environmental awareness through strike for climate action lead by Greta Thunberg. As for the picture book entitled *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg*, the ten types of interactive meaning are applied to introduce young environmental activist named Greta Thunberg who had succeed inspiring many people to take an action against climate change.
- *Greta and The Giants* and *Little People Big Dreams – Greta Thunberg* considered to have a compatible interactive meaning between their illustrations and phrases prove by the system of mood dominated in the two picture books is intended to **giving information** rather than demand an action.

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