

EXPLORING LANGUAGE STYLES IN ONLINE BEDTIME STORIES FOR CHILDREN: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract: As essential knowledge tools, books appeal to a broad audience, including children, teenagers, and parents, with Bedtime Stories particularly captivating for children at night. This study examines the sociolinguistic characteristics of Bedtime Stories, emphasizing the variety of language styles used by authors to engage a child's imagination. Analyzing children's stories from online sources, focusing on five selected narratives, the researchers reveal a range of language styles - formal, informal, casual, and colloquial - with informal style being the most prevalent. Additionally, this study identifies diverse language functions, including expressive, directive, referential, and phatic, with a significant emphasis on expressive functions. These insights extend our understanding of language use in bedtime stories and suggest directions for future research. Further studies should explore a broader and more varied sample, utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods, deepening our grasp of language styles in children's literature, particularly in the digital era. This exploration is crucial for comprehending how adaptable and diverse language styles can effectively engage children globally, fostering their cognitive and emotional development in our interconnected world.

Keywords: *bedtime story, function of language, language style*

INTRODUCTION

In the vast landscape of knowledge transmission, books stand as indispensable resources, enriching a wide range of audiences from young children to adults (Abidasari et al., 2021). Within this rich literary spectrum, Bedtime Stories occupy a unique niche, weaving magical narratives that capture the imagination of children at the end of the day (Sapriyani, 2013). Far from being mere tools of entertainment, these stories offer a

plethora of benefits, significantly contributing to the cognitive development and mental agility of young minds, as emphasized by the findings of Pulimeno et al. (2020).

The practice of sharing Bedtime Stories transcends the realm of routine storytelling; it fosters an intimate bond between children and their primary caregivers, often mothers, creating a nurturing environment that is conducive to emotional and psychological development (Fatin, 2014). This ritual extends beyond the strengthening of familial ties, sparking a child's inherent curiosity and laying a robust foundation for their lifelong engagement with literature and the broader world of learning (Abidasari et al., 2021). As children embark on their critical journey of learning to read and speak, Bedtime Stories play a pivotal role. They serve as a gateway to a vast expanse of vocabulary and expressions, enriching their language comprehension and shaping their communicative abilities (Breiner & Gadsden, 2016; Haqqoh, 2016). The integration of diverse language styles within these narratives is instrumental in providing children with a sophisticated grasp of various forms of communication, thereby significantly advancing their linguistic prowess (Chaika, 1982).

The concept of "language styles" in Bedtime Stories is a focal point of this study. These styles reflect the intentional choices made by authors in their use of words and tone, and they adapt fluidly to the social context, as detailed in the works of Joos (as cited in Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015). From formal language in structured educational settings to the informal dialogue within the sanctuary of home, these styles manifest the rich tapestry of language variety (Lailiyah, 2018). This diversity, central to the study of sociolinguistics, offers profound insights into the dynamic relationship between language and the sociocultural fabric of society (Permatasari & Yulia, 2013). Sociolinguistics, an interdisciplinary field merging sociology and linguistics, delves deeply into understanding how language is influenced and shaped by social structures and cultural norms within communities (Marjiyanto, 2016). Holmes (1991) articulates that language is not a monolithic construct but one that exhibits significant variation across different social settings, mirroring and influencing the norms, values, and beliefs of communities.

Despite extensive research into language styles across diverse mediums such as social media, cinema, and advertising (Indra and Hamzah, 2018; Simamora, 2016; Sidabutar et al., 2018; Asridayanti et al., 2019; Pratiwi, 2019), there is a conspicuous absence of focused studies in the realm of digital children's literature. This gap is

particularly evident in the context of Bedtime Stories, which are increasingly being accessed through digital platforms. This study seeks to explore how the digital revolution is reshaping language styles in children's literature, with a particular focus on Bedtime Stories available in online formats. By examining the interplay between sociolinguistics and digital media, particularly in the context of children's Bedtime Stories, this research aims to uncover new dimensions and insights. It is posited that this underexplored area holds the potential for significant contributions to our understanding of the evolution of language use in children's literature in the digital age, thus offering a unique perspective to the existing body of sociolinguistic research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Exploring language style within sociolinguistics provides an insightful understanding of the complex dynamics of communication, self-expression, and social contexts (Nurjannah, 2014). Keraf (2010) emphasizes the significant role of language style in mirroring an individual's thoughts and personality, influenced by elements such as formality, structure, complexity, and tone.

Joos's (1976) model, "The Five Clocks", categorizes language style into five levels—frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. Each category reflects a degree of formality and appropriateness within different contexts. The frozen style, described by Nurgiantoro (2018), is characterized by high formality and a consistent tone, often used in ceremonial contexts and legal documents to convey solemnity and tradition. In contrast, the formal style is common in literature and academic discourse, characterized by complex sentences and an extensive vocabulary for clarity and precision (Coupland, 2007).

The consultative style serves as a bridge between formal and informal discourse. It is marked by adaptability and efficiency in communication, suitable for both professional and social interactions (Joos, 1967; McIntyre & Busse, 2010). The casual style, prevalent in informal settings, uses colloquial language and simpler sentences to create a relaxed atmosphere (Coupland, 2007). The intimate style, found in close personal relationships, employs a shared, private lexicon to reinforce emotional connections (Joos, 1967; McIntyre & Busse, 2010).

Mandell and Kirszner (2003) further categorize language styles into formal, informal, colloquial, and slang, highlighting the varying degrees of formality and specific vocabulary usage. Holmes's (2013) theory of language functions, identifying purposes such as expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and phatic, complements this categorization, revealing the multifunctional nature of language in human interactions (Wati, 2019).

The sociolinguistic perspective examines how language usage is influenced by factors like cultural norms, age, and gender. This approach offers valuable insights into varied communication patterns across different communities (McIntyre & Busse, 2010; Sapriyani, 2013), highlighting the fluidity and adaptability of language as it reflects diverse social realities. In summary, the investigation of language style within sociolinguistics enhances our comprehension of language use and human communication in various cultural and social settings. This literature review establishes a basis for examining how digital media influences language styles in children's literature, particularly in the context of Bedtime Stories, contributing to the evolving discourse in this field.

METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative research methodology, aligning with the framework established by Meyer and Willis (2016). In accordance with Creswell (2009), the qualitative data analysis incorporated various forms of data, including text, photos, and videos, collected from both online and offline sources. The research aimed to uncover insights into the language styles employed by authors in Bedtime Stories, with a focus on understanding the explicit messages conveyed through their use of language. This approach is grounded in sociolinguistics, offering a lens to deeply analyze how language is used in storytelling.

The primary data for this study were sourced from children's stories available on <https://freekidsbooks.org/subject/bedtime-stories>. This online collection provided a wealth of words and sentences for analysis, serving as a robust foundation for examining language styles in Bedtime Stories. The research instrument was a detailed review of these stories, with an emphasis on sentence structure and the various types of language styles used to communicate with readers.

Data collection was conducted in several phases. The initial step involved identifying and exploring popular Bedtime Stories on the selected website, with popularity gauged by the number of downloads. This metric was used under the assumption that higher download rates indicated greater reader interest. Stories with fewer downloads were deemed less indicative of general reader preferences. Following this selection process, the chosen stories were downloaded for in-depth analysis. The investigation focused on identifying and categorizing the types and functions of language styles present in these stories, guided by the theoretical frameworks of Mandell and Kirsznier (2003) and Joos (2007). This categorization was critical for addressing the study's first research question through descriptive analysis. Furthermore, the functions of the language styles were examined through the theoretical lens of Holmes (2013), addressing the second research question.

The analysis process entailed classifying the language styles identified in the Bedtime Stories based on criteria from Mandell and Kirsznier (2013) and Joos (2007). Subsequently, the functions of these language styles were analyzed in accordance with Holmes (2013). This comprehensive analysis allowed for an in-depth discussion of the findings, culminating in conclusions that were drawn from the data. The study's methodology was designed to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the language styles and their functions in Bedtime Stories, thereby making a significant contribution to the fields of sociolinguistics and children's literature.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the course of this research, the researchers undertook a dual inquiry, commencing with an in-depth contextual delineation of the data findings. Following this, the researchers categorized the language styles and functions deployed by authors in Bedtime Stories. The data under scrutiny were drawn from words and sentences extracted from Bedtime Stories, randomly selected from the diverse range available on the website <https://freekidsbooks.org/subject/bedtime-stories/>. From this assortment, the researchers handpicked the top five Bedtime Stories based on the highest rates, viewership, and downloads.

The initial Bedtime Story, "City of Stories" by Rukmini Banerji (2008), uploaded on January 20, 2017, accrued 35 rates, 3912 views (read online), and 10201 downloads.

This narrative centers around a young girl yearning for stories, with a character named Didi emerging to share captivating tales within a city setting. The second Bedtime Story, “Sam Sam and Marzipan” by Ryan (2016), uploaded on December 6, 2017, garnered 7319 views (read online), 10 rates, and 15035 downloads. Narrated by a four-year-old named Sam and his talking cat Marzipan, this imaginative adventure unfolds in a magical world. The third Bedtime Story, “I Don’t Want to Go to Sleep” by McGregor (2018), uploaded on December 6, 2018, also amassed 7319 views (read online), 10 rates, and 15035 downloads. This story depicts a girl grappling with sleep and finding solace in her mother’s stories. The fourth Bedtime Story, “What is Love” by Agnes and Salem de Bezenac (2012), uploaded on December 03, 2016, attracted 32568 views (read online), 6 rates, and 266183 downloads, beautifully exploring the facets of love. Lastly, the fifth Bedtime Story, “God and My Pencil” by Agnes and Salem de Bezenac (2013), uploaded on December 03, 2016, received 18177 views (read online), 4 rates, and 62944 downloads. This story creatively delves into the symbolism of a chair, intertwining themes of God and prayer. The ensuing data analysis comprises thorough explanations and interpretations of these Bedtime Stories, seeking to unveil the diverse language styles and functions authors employed to captivate their readers.

Style of Language Found in Bedtime Stories

The style of language found in Bedtime Stories encompasses a variety of word choices. As discussed by Joos in Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), individuals may employ formal and informal speech styles depending on the context. According to Mandell and Kirsznier (2003), there are four main types of figurative language: formal style, informal style, colloquial style, and slang style. Additionally, Joos, as mentioned in Coupland (2007), identifies five types of figurative language: frozen style, formal style, consultative style, relaxed style, and familiar style. These diverse language styles contribute to the richness of expressions and interactions in the stories, adding depth and complexity to the narrative.

Formal Style

The formal style of language use involves the utilization of complete sentences with specific words, primarily observed in written communication and formal settings. It is more commonly encountered in writing than in spoken language, finding prevalence in diverse settings such as job interviews, business trips, dinner parties, prestigious

ceremonies, meetings, and academic papers. An illustrative example demonstrating the formal style is presented below:

Example 1

The Mayor: "What is to be done now?"

Council of Ministers: "No one is working, and nothing is happening in the city."

(From "City of Stories" by Rukmini, 2008, page 24)

In this excerpt from "City of Stories" by Rukmini (2008), a conversation unfolds between the Mayor and the Council of Ministers, addressing a significant issue in the city. The Mayor expresses his concern with the question, "What is to be done now?" to which the Council of Ministers responds, "No one is working, and nothing is happening in the city." This precise and professional language, consisting of complete sentences with specific words, exemplifies the formal style, adding formality and importance to the exchange. The author strategically employs the formal style to underscore the gravity of the situation, portraying the weight of the Mayor's concerns and the Council of Ministers' response, thus contributing to the overall tone of the Bedtime Story.

Example 2

Didi too looked small, surrounded by the fat and tall men and women of the Council of Ministers, no one smiled, and everyone looked at them with frowns and scowls.

(From "City of Stories" by Rukmini, 2008, page 26)

In this scene, where Didi and the little girl visit the Mayor's mansion by the sea, the author skillfully describes the serious atmosphere. Didi, a character, appears small and is encircled by the overweight and tall members of the Council of Ministers. No one is smiling, and everyone is observing them with frowns and scowls. The author employs precise grammar and appropriate formal language to convey the gravity of the moment. By utilizing the formal style in this sentence, the author effectively captures the significance of the scene, drawing the reader's attention to its importance and enhancing the overall narrative. The use of formal language accentuates the serious atmosphere and emphasizes the emotions and actions of the characters, contributing to the depth and richness of the Bedtime Story.

Example 3

“These stories have brought our big city to a halt. What do we do about this?” asked the Mayor in his loud booming voice.

Her voice was not loud, but it was very clear. “Let there be one story every morning and one story every evening,” she said. “That way everyone everywhere will have stories, but they can also go back to doing what they have to do.”

“Excellent idea!” roared the Mayor.

The Council of Ministers clapped. The fat and tall men and women began to smile. The little girl loosened her tight hold on Didi’s fingers.

(From "City of Stories" by Rukmini, 2008, page 28)

In Example 3, a dialogue unfolds between the Mayor and Didi, taking place in the Mayor’s mansion by the sea, with numerous people present. The Mayor, in his loud and booming voice, addresses the issue that has brought the big city to a standstill. In contrast, Didi’s voice, although not loud, is clear and composed, showcasing her confident and articulate nature. Didi proposes a solution, suggesting one story every morning and evening, and the Mayor enthusiastically praises her idea. The Council of Ministers applauds, and the heavy atmosphere lightens as the fat and tall figures start to smile. The little girl, who had tightly held Didi’s fingers, relaxes her grip. The author adeptly crafts this conversation, maintaining the formal style through careful pronunciation and grammar choices. The use of formal language is fitting for the serious context and formality of the setting, emphasizing the significance of the moment and the importance of the characters’ words and actions. This language choice contributes to the overall seriousness and professionalism of the scene, enhancing the depth and impact of the Bedtime Story.

Informal Style

The informal style is less formal and more personal than the formal style. The use of contractions is common in this style. It lies between formal and colloquial styles and is often used in novels. The researcher found some data containing informal style, and they are as follows:

Example 1

There was once a little girl who lived in one of the BIGGEST and BUSIEST cities in the world.

(From “City of Stories” by Rukmini, 2008, page 1)

In this instance, the author introduces “City of Stories” by Rukmini (2008) with a vivid description of a little girl in a bustling city. The sentence sets the narrative stage, depicting the city’s vibrant atmosphere with vivid imagery. Describing various activities

in the city, the author utilizes straightforward language and a standard sentence structure to ensure reader comprehension. The language style is informal, employing easy-to-understand words and a relaxed tone, fostering reader engagement and accessibility.

Example 2

“MAMA! ... I need a glass of water. Please? Please?” “It’s time to go to sleep now. Goodnight, Nandi.”

(From “I Don’t Want to Go to Sleep” by Sarah McGregor, 2018, page 4)

In this excerpt, a conversation unfolds between a little girl and her mother in “I Don’t Want to Go to Sleep” by Sarah McGregor (2018). The dialogue, featuring the little girl’s bedtime requests, employs short sentences and simple language characteristic of informal communication. The informal style captures the authenticity of a parent-child interaction, enhancing relatability and engagement for young readers.

Example 3

Mama sighs: “What about an adventure? Do you want an adventure?” “..Yess..”

(From “I Don’t Want to Go to Sleep” by Sarah McGregor, 2018, page 4)

Example 3 portrays a brief yet captivating exchange between a mother and her little girl, offering an alternative to bedtime in “I Don’t Want to Go to Sleep” by Sarah McGregor (2018). Crafted informally, the dialogue reflects the warmth between parent and child. The use of standard language ensures comprehension and relatability, creating an endearing scene that resonates with both parents and children during bedtime routines.

In conclusion, these examples showcase the informal language style, enhancing the emotional connection to characters and the overall ambiance of the Bedtime Story. The use of simple language and an approachable tone contributes to the story’s accessibility and appeal, making it enjoyable for a broad readership.

Casual Style

Casual style is a language style that is typically used in informal situations among individuals who share similar backgrounds, such as age, sex, education, social status, ethnicity, and other factors. This style is characterized by the use of informal words, including colloquialisms, slang, and even taboo words, etc. The researcher has identified some data containing casual style, and they are as follows:

Example 1

“Come on Tock! Come on Dish! Come on Spoon! Gather around and listen!” says Sam Sam, As Tock waves his arms and joins Dish and Spoon to hear Sam Sam tell them about today’s adventure.

(From “Sam Sam and Marzipan” by Dan Ryan, 2016, page 4)

In this lively interaction from “Sam Sam and Marzipan” by Dan Ryan (2016), Sam Sam invites his friends Tock, Dish, and Spoon to join him for an exciting adventure. The dialogue is marked by a casual style, employing familiar and informal language typical of interactions among friends. The tone is relaxed and friendly, fostering a sense of camaraderie among the characters. The author adeptly integrates casual language to create an engaging and relatable atmosphere, allowing readers to connect with the characters and immerse themselves in the joyous world of Sam Sam and his friends.

Example 2

“Go to the island Tock!” Sam Sam yells. The island is made of coconut and trees are large ice cream cones filled with lollies!

(From “Sam Sam and Marzipan” by Dan Ryan, 2016, page 17)

In this imaginative scene from “Sam Sam and Marzipan”, Sam Sam instructs his friend Tock to go to a fantastical island made of coconuts, with trees resembling large ice cream cones filled with lollies. The casual language style adds a playful and informal touch to the interaction, aligning with the non-formal context of friends engaged in imaginative play. The use of casual language contributes to the story’s charm, making it delightful and accessible for young readers.

Example 3

Sam looks on, “Silly old cat!” he says.

(From “Sam Sam and Marzipan” by Dan Ryan, 2016, page 21)

In this brief yet expressive interaction, Sam Sam playfully refers to his cat Marzipan as a “silly old cat”. This casual and lighthearted exchange contributes humor and familiarity to the story. The casual language style mirrors the informal and affectionate relationship between a child and their pet. It establishes a sense of intimacy and warmth, making the Bedtime Story relatable and enjoyable for readers of all ages. The simplicity of the utterance adds to the overall charm of the narrative.

In conclusion, these examples illustrate how casual language enhances the emotional connection between the reader and the characters in the Bedtime Story. Using

casual language adds authenticity and relatability, making the story more engaging and memorable.

Colloquial Style

Colloquial style, characterized by the use of conversational language, imparts an informal and relaxed tone, often resembling spoken language. This style is less concerned with formalities and is typically found in everyday conversations. Here are examples of the colloquial style within bedtime stories:

Example 1

Her brother said, "Can't you see I am playing cricket?"

(From "City of Stories" by Rukmini Banerji, 2008, page 9)

In this snippet from "City of Stories", the brother expresses irritation at his sister's interruption with, "Can't you see I am playing cricket?" The use of the contraction "can't" instead of "cannot" exemplifies colloquial language. This choice adds authenticity to the character's frustration and renders the dialogue more relatable. The casual language mirrors typical interactions between siblings, enriching the narrative with a natural flow and emotional resonance.

Example 2

We're heading to sea! A big chocolate sea, with mountains made of marshmallow and ALL sorts of thing!" Sam Sam says excitedly.

(From "Sam Sam and Marzipan" by Dan Ryan, 2008, page 9)

In this section, Sam Sam excitedly shares his adventurous plans with his friends. In this lively exchange from "Sam Sam and Marzipan", Sam Sam enthusiastically shares plans "We're heading to sea! A big chocolate sea, with mountains made of marshmallow and ALL sorts of things!" The colloquial style is evident in the contraction "we're" and the informal expression "ALL sorts of things". This language choice creates an informal, conversational atmosphere, making Sam Sam's excitement more palpable and engaging for young readers.

Example 3

My older brother says that it's playing ball with me even when he'd rather play with cars.

(From "What is Love" by Agnes and Salem de Bazernac, 2012, page 8-9)

In this excerpt from "What is Love", the little girl describes her brother's expression of love: "My older brother says that he'd play ball with me even when he'd rather play with cars." The use of contractions like "he'd" and the colloquial expression

“play ball with me even when he’d rather play with cars” adds a genuine and familiar touch to the narrative. This colloquial style enhances the emotional connection between the characters, making the portrayal of sibling love more relatable and heartwarming.

In conclusion, these examples demonstrate how the colloquial style enriches bedtime stories by infusing them with the authenticity of everyday conversations. The use of contractions and informal expressions adds depth to character interactions, fostering relatability and emotional resonance with readers. Through colloquial language, bedtime stories become more than narratives; they become immersive experiences that connect with readers on a personal level.

Discussion

The research conducted a comprehensive examination of language styles and their functions within the context of Bedtime Stories, culminating in identifying 17 distinct language styles. The theoretical underpinnings of this study rested upon the frameworks established by Joos (1976) and Mandell and Kirsznner (2003). The primary objectives encompassed two critical research inquiries: the identification of language styles present in Bedtime Stories accessible through free online platforms and the comprehension of the purposes served by these language styles within the narrative context.

The empirical findings of this investigation unveiled a multifaceted array of language styles employed in Bedtime Stories. Notably, the formal language style, characterized by structured sentence constructions and the utilization of specific vocabulary, was observed in three instances. This observation resonated with Keraf’s (2010) assertion that formal language embodies clarity and precision in communication. In stark contrast, the informal style, typified by its reduced structural constraints and a more personalized tonal quality, emerged as the most prevalent, manifesting in seven instances. This predilection for accessible and relatable storytelling within the realm of children’s literature aligned harmoniously with Coupland’s (2007) observations regarding contemporary narrative preferences. Furthermore, the casual style, commonly encountered within comfortable, peer-like, or familial settings, and the colloquial style, renowned for its conversational tone, were identified in three and five instances, respectively. These findings alluded to the deliberate intention of authors to craft narratives that were both engaging and relatable, mirroring the cadence of everyday speech, in accordance with Nurjannah’s (2014) discourse.

An intriguing facet of the study was the highlighting of the conspicuous absence of certain language styles, including frozen, intimate, consultative, and slang. This absence offered an illuminating perspective on the distinctive narrative dynamics inherent to Bedtime Stories, which might not be congruent with the developmental stage and cognitive capacities of young children, the primary audience for these narratives. Bedtime Stories are meticulously designed to entertain, soothe, or educate young listeners in an engaging and accessible manner (Eck, 2006). The preference for straightforward, narrative-driven styles such as informal, casual, or colloquial was strategically employed to capture and sustain the interest of young listeners (Senn, 2017). Furthermore, the choice of language styles was inextricably influenced by cultural and contextual considerations, wherein complex or specialized language styles were judiciously avoided to ensure that the stories remained comprehensible and enjoyable for children, thereby facilitating their language development (Rabiah, 2012). The prevailing emotional tone of Bedtime Stories, characterized by gentleness, soothing qualities, and a nurturing demeanor, necessitated the adoption of language styles that harmonized with these emotional objectives (Sweeney, 2009).

In our study, the observation of both formal and informal language styles in Bedtime Stories was consistent with findings in other contexts. For instance, similar to our analysis, Nurjannah's (2014) study on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" and Abidin's (2018) research on the movie "Frozen" also noted the presence of these styles. This suggested that formal and informal styles are versatile tools used across various mediums, whether in talk shows, movies, or children's literature, to achieve objectives like clarity or relatability. Another commonality was the predominance of certain language styles. In our study, the informal style was found to be most prevalent in Bedtime Stories, echoing the trends observed in Muthmainnah's (2016) study on TV commercials and Abidin's (2018) in "Frozen", where specific styles were dominant in their respective contexts.

However, contrasts were also evident. Our study revealed a diverse range of 17 distinct language styles in Bedtime Stories, indicating a broader linguistic diversity compared to other contexts. For example, Permatasari and Yulia's (2014) research on Magnum advertisements primarily focused on linguistic simplicity, suggesting a more

limited use of language styles in advertising compared to the rich variety found in children's literature.

The specific context of Bedtime Stories for young children in our study significantly influenced the language style choices. Unlike Nasrum and Jamil's (2018) "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" analysis, where various styles including frozen and intimate were present, our study noted the absence of these styles, reflecting the unique needs and cognitive capacities of young children as the primary audience. This differed markedly from studies targeting broader audiences, such as Octaviana's (2016) on newspaper advertisements or Wardhani's (2015) on political slogans. Moreover, the emotional tone aimed for in Bedtime Stories – gentle, soothing, and nurturing – stood in contrast to the tones in other studies. For instance, Merjiyanto's (2016) examination of "Lampu Hijau" newspaper highlighted informal, funny, and frontal styles, indicating a different emotional tone and purpose.

In conclusion, our study on Bedtime Stories, while revealing shared aspects in the use of formal and informal styles across various media, uniquely highlighted the diverse application of a wide range of language styles in children's literature. This diversity, significantly shaped by the target young audience and the specific emotional and educational objectives of the narratives, stood in contrast to the varied objectives and target audiences of other studies, leading to different selections and applications of language styles. Summarily, this research has substantially enhanced our understanding of language usage within the genre of children's Bedtime Stories, providing novel insights into deliberate authorial strategies in terms of language style and function. These findings make a meaningful contribution to the sociolinguistic literature and offer invaluable insights for future research in children's literature, particularly in the context of the digital age. The study effectively underscores the dynamic and crucial role of language in the art of storytelling, highlighting its paramount importance in engaging and aiding the comprehension of young readers in the digitally mediated world of children's literature.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study has effectively illuminated the diverse array of language styles present in Bedtime Stories, particularly emphasizing the prevalence of informal language across seventeen instances. The analysis identified three instances of formal styles, seven of informal styles, three of casual styles, and four of colloquial styles, while also taking note of the absence of frozen, intimate, consultative, and slang styles. Concerning the functions of language, the examination classified them into four categories—expressive, directive, referential, and phatic—placing particular emphasis on the expressive function. This underscores the deliberate use of language by authors to evoke emotions, underscoring its importance in engaging the audience in Bedtime Stories. This research has deepened our understanding of language choices within the realm of children’s literature, accentuating the vital role of tailored language in crafting enthralling narratives for young readers. It offers valuable insights for authors, educators, and researchers alike, contributing to the cultivation of a love for reading and the stimulation of young imaginations.

Suggestion

For future research, it is suggested to expand the scope beyond the limited sample of five Bedtime Stories used in this study. Utilizing a larger and more diverse collection of stories could offer a broader understanding of language styles within this genre. A comparative analysis involving both children’s and adult narratives might provide insights into language style variations across different age groups. Although the qualitative nature of this study offers detailed insights, its limited generalizability points to the value of incorporating quantitative methods in future research for more universally applicable results. Additionally, exploring Bedtime Stories in languages other than English, and employing language style theories pertinent to those languages, such as those by Keraf or Nurgiantoro for Indonesian, could yield richer, culturally nuanced understandings. This study, serving as an initial exploration, lays the groundwork for more extensive research that, by incorporating a mix of methodologies and diverse theoretical perspectives, could significantly contribute to the field of children’s literature, enhancing our comprehension of language use in Bedtime Stories.

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