

The Representation of Syntactic Meaning as the Environmental Symbolic Reality in The Novel *The Lorax* By Dr. Seuss

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Abstract

The research discusses the syntactic meaning in each syntax category that is specifically included in the form of ecolexicon, representing the environmental symbolic reality. The syntax categories are focused on elaborating the phrases and sentences consisting of the specific ecolexicon: biotic and abiotic references. This research is focused on the syntactic meaning that represents the environmental symbolic reality found in The Lorax novel by Dr. Seuss. There are two objectives for the purpose of this research, 1) to identify the forms of the syntactic meaning of the environment in the novel The Lorax by Dr. Seuss and 2) to describe the forms of syntactic meaning representing the environmental symbolic reality in the novel The Lorax by Dr. Seuss. This research uses the Ecolinguistics theory from Fill & Mühlhäusler because the theory is relevant to addressing the correlation between environmental problems depicted in the linguistics discipline in the novel The Lorax by Dr. Seuss. In this research, the researcher uses a qualitative method that is explained descriptively based on this research using a library study as a reference. The result of this research found ten forms of syntactic meaning divided into six phrases with 14 data and four sentences with 19 data. Then through the syntactic meaning found, they represent the environmental symbolic reality consisting of Waste Disposal and Pollution with 11 data, Endangered Species 10 data, Climate Change 1 data, Water 1 data, and Deforestation 10 data.

Keywords: Syntactic Meaning, Environmental Symbolic Reality, Ecolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

As social beings relating to each other, Human requires to communicate to make a clear purpose of their daily verbal life. Language is used to deal a communication among humans. The systematic study of human language is well-known called linguistics. Linguistics can coexist by discussing the theme of the environment and its problem. This combination is best known as ecolinguistic. Fill & Mühlhäusler (2001) mentioned that the term “Ecolinguistics” is derived from two joined disciplines, namely ecology (environment) and linguistics. This ecolinguistic study was initially introduced by Einar Haugen in his article entitled "Ecology of Language" in 1972. Haugen prefers language ecology to other terms found in his study. The comprehensive coverage is the reason for selecting it, and the linguist may work jointly with other social sciences to conceive Haugen's language's interaction (p. 57). Therefore, the research ecolinguistics the researcher conducts aligns with the concept of figuring out the environmental problem consisting of the syntactic meaning.

The study of syntax has something to do with words, clauses, phrases, and sentences. They are needed to comprehend to form types of information combined and finally become clear thoughts or expressions for humans to communicate to each other. All meaning in communication is produced grammatically from there. Meaning in grammatical emerges because words in a sentence function. Concerning study morphology, words have meaning, yet the meaning will vary in discourse, sentence, clause, or phrase. Fill and Mühlhäusler (2001) stated that grammar creates the potency within which humans act or enact their cultural being. The use of grammar makes meaning possible and limits what can be meant (p.179).

In *The Lorax* novel, the essence of this book tells the plight of the environment and the Lorax itself, who speaks for the trees against the greedy Once-ler. The book is commonly known as a fable concerning the danger corporate greed poses to nature, using the literary element of personification to give life to the industry as the Once-ler and the environment as the Lorax. This children's book is intended to give an awareness of the environment where human lives. It can reveal what's commonly happening in this world. The facts in this book leastwise become concrete evidence of emerging the ecological situation phenomenon in reality and literature. Language as the object of linguistics plays a significant role in considering the novel's ecological issue. Language, there, reveals a discussion prone to exhibit the symbolic reality.

Symbolic reality refers to phenomena that take place in the world. In finding the meaning of the reality symbolized, the object should be related to one another. we are surrounded by many daily symbols and icons. Everything around us is reducible as a symbol. Therefore, the symbol may occur when one another expresses phenomena or things in life. There must be a constant and ordered relation between what is reciprocally asserted. The symbolic reality here in the research object concerns the environment.

Environmental issue becomes a never-lasting matter in the world, especially for those who implicitly or explicitly put it in literary work, is a fascinating topic for the researcher to study. It is a fascinating topic to remember such matter will make a better change to our world. The

researcher elaborated on this matter in a theoretical way. It consists of analyzing whether or not the work symbolically examines the environmental issue. Also, it is questioning if the language's system is syntactically found as the meaning to preserve nature or as a reminder of what possibly happens if we damage or preserve nature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

LINGUISTICS

Studying linguistics is very important since language is a fundamental tool of communication among human beings. Human beings process language under several rules or principles needed with the result that language produced by human beings has the quality of being the only one of its kind. Concerning Linguistics study, it has specific structures, as mentioned by Charles. F. Meyer (2009) to Leech (1983) as below:

Rules governing the pronunciation of sounds; the ways that words are put together; the manner in which phrases, clauses, and sentences are structured; and, ultimately, the ways that meaning is created; Principles stipulating how the structures that rules create should be used (e.g. which forms will be polite in which context, which forms will not). (Meyer, 2009: 6-7)

From the previous description, what can be drawn by the researcher is rules are considered as a study under the scope of grammar and principles within the province of pragmatics. Grammar rules operate at some levels known as phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (Charles. F. Meyer, 2009: 7-8). These linguistic structures are used as a theory of the study of linguistics. Concerning the object of linguistics is the language itself. Language must be profoundly understood so that the language produced by humans is acceptable to human communicators.

ECOLINGUISTIC

Ecolinguistics, short for ecological linguistics, is a branch of linguistics discussing the ecological context in respect of linguistics. Fill & Mühlhäusler (Fill & Mühlhäusler 2001:1) defined that all the distinct approaches connecting the study of language with ecology were carried together in the early 1990s, and a unified, even though it was still different, linguistics branch was established, which was called ecolinguistics. This study was first introduced by Einar Haugen (1972) in his Ecology of Language article. Haugen prefers the term ecology of language rather than other terms related to this study. The selection is due to its broad coverage in it. Linguists can collaborate with other social sciences to understand language interactions (Haugen in Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001: 57).

In ecolinguistics, the language and community of its speakers are viewed as organisms that live in a systematic way of life with other organisms (Mbeti 2009: 2). Fill & Mühlhäusler (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001, p.126) also defined that "Some moments of ordinary talk involve

occasions in which nature is discursively represented, referenced, referred to, or otherwise made a symbolic resource. In such moments, nature, or, more precisely, common meanings about nature, are symbolically constructed".

Ecolexicon

The discussion of ecolinguistics is deemed to discuss on the lexicon level. According to Saphir in Fill & Mühlhäusler (2001), from an ecolinguistic perspective, the relation between language and environment is on the lexicon level. Lexicons are the stocks of words conceptualized as the wealth of language users. Moreover, lexicons are conceptualized as the word lists of the dictionary containing information (p.2). In the interdisciplinary study of the eco-lexicon, language units in the form of words, phrases, or units of language expressions containing information about the meaning of the language units describing the environment are called ecological lexicons. Hence, through this study, eco-lexicon seemingly becomes one of the main discussions relating to the ecological language that this research focuses on.

Types of referent

As a development of a theory included in the ecology of language, the researcher divided into two types of referents in the Eco lexicon: biotic and abiotic. It is leastwise concluded, through the definition by Fill & Mühlhäusler (2001) as follows,

Under physical environment is comprised of geographical characteristics such as the topography of the country (whether coast, valley, plain, plateau, or mountain), climate, and amount of rainfall, and what may be called the economic basis of human life, under which term have comprised the fauna, flora, and mineral resources of the region. Under social environment are comprised of the various forces of society that mold the life and thought of each individual. Religion, ethical standards, form of political organization, and art are among the more important of these social forces (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001, p. 14).

Based on the definition, the researcher considers the complexity of a symbol laid under the term physical and social factors, as mentioned in the previous chapter of how the term 'environment' is meant to be. Therefore, since the research considers how Eco lexicon is delivered, the researcher has concluded that physical factors, including animate such as flora and fauna, and inanimate such as water, air, etc., are comprised in this research.

Biotic

An ecosystem referring to a living or once-living organism is called biotic. Maxwell et al. (1985) elaborated that the ecosystem's biotic, or living, portion consists of three broad organisms: producer, consumer, and decomposer. These all form the communities of living animals, plants, and microbes of the ecosystem (p.23).

Abiotic

In contrast to biotic, abiotic refers to non-living physical and chemical elements in the ecosystem. As Jill Bailey (Jill Bailey, 2004, p.1) stated, "Abiotic, Nonliving. Abiotic factors are the physical and chemical aspects of an organism's environment, such as light, temperature, water, oxygen, and carbon dioxide."

Syntax

In linguistics, one of the branches focusing on sentence structure is syntax. It is more clearly defined by Fromklin (Fromklin 2003, p.118) that "the part of the grammar that represents a speaker's knowledge of sentences and their structures is called syntax." Fill and Mühlhäusler (Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001, p.179) briefly asserted that "Grammar, in the sense of the syntax and vocabulary of a natural language, is thus a theory of human experience. It is also a principle of social action."

ENVIRONMENTAL SYMBOLIC REALITY

Environmental symbolic reality refers to phenomena that take place in the world. The object should be related to one another to find the meaning of the symbolized reality. In this research, the representation of destruction phenomena is shown as the environmental symbolic reality.

Environment

The environment is the surroundings or conditions in which the living things, including a person, animal, or plant, live. Two factors refer to the term environment; firstly, it is based on the physical environment, such as the incoming radiant energy of the sun, air, water, and soil. Without one of them, then life would not be possible. Secondly, the biological environment encompasses the physical resources, circumstances, conditions, and events that affect the existence of living things as well as the survival of the relationship between an organism or group of them, including humans.

Disaster

The sequence of humans' activity may lead to ecosystem disturbance and destruction, impacting all living and non-living organisms in the environment. Those destructions are classified within several disasters that the researcher has limited the discussion into several disasters such as waste disposal and pollution, water, deforestation, endangered species, and climate change.

Waste Disposal and Pollution

The action of producing excessive waste and dumping it in the oceans will have a worse environmental impact. Another example is nuclear waste, hazardous, plastics, and electronic waste. Another dangerous thing is what is called pollution.

Water

Water is essential for maintaining an adequate food supply and a productive environment for the human population and other animals, plants, and microbes worldwide. Maxwell stated that “water is the essence of the living process. It is the most abundant and the most versatile of the chemicals of life. It is not surprising that water is a remarkable substance known-natural or synthetic in its physical and chemical properties alone. Because of water's importance to life, it is vital to understand its role” (Maxwell, 1985, p. 200).

Deforestation

Loss of trees to satisfy human business, such as making space for residential, industrial, or commercial projects, means oxygen is produced, and temperature and rainfall are affected. Mohan K Wali defines deforestation as " the removal of a forest where the land is put other land uses and covers” (Mohan K. Wali, 2010, p.266).

Endangered Species

Human activities, such as illegal logging, waste disposal, and any other lousy sequence, will impact other species on Earth. It will lead to a habitat loss problem that becomes clear for the species, and habitats are becoming extinct due to human activity. It causes disequilibrium in natural processes like pollination and threatens ecosystems.

Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, but since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels (like coal, oil, and gas), producing heat-trapping gases. Some industrial facilities use fossil fuels and renewable sources. The problem of climatic variability and change is dedicated to climate change.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher first collected the data from *The Lorax* novel supporting references regarding the relevant theory. Furthermore, the researcher identified the descriptive data that are relevant to the theories to conduct the analysis and interpretation. This research focuses on the forms of syntactic meaning of the environment and how these forms could represent the environmental symbolic reality as depicted in *The Lorax* novel. The researcher used the qualitative descriptive method because the data source of this

research is a novel that requires profound understanding of what the implications within the novel are that further be presented in the analysis in the form of description.

The data of this research are collected by repeatedly reading *The Lorax* novel and marking the relevant excerpts. After obtaining a sense of what to research, the researcher determined the research's central idea: applying syntactic meaning linked to the environmental symbolic reality. Having a proper textual form of the novel is essential for putting evidence and analyzing method, so this is the reason the researcher bought a book of *The Lorax* to conduct the research. Next, the researcher will collect secondary data regarding the research topic, ecolinguistic perspective. The researcher obtained these references online, citing the works of previous studies and definitions by experts and then compiling them to make a coherent and comprehensive research paper. The researcher then after analyzed and interpreted the data based on the research problems proposed, the researcher then conclude the result of the analysis accordinf to the theory perspective chosen, describing whether the findings are in line with the theory or not. To provide the trustworthiness of qualitative data, this study applied the triangulation method by Denzin (1987).\

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FORMS OF SYNTACTIC MEANING

In this discussion section, the researcher explains the type of reference referring to the ecological terms found in the *Lorax* novel through a syntactic meaning. The type of reference is divided into two categories: biotic lexicon and abiotic lexicon. Then, the syntactic meaning is restrictly divided into phrase and sentence.

Phrase

A collection of words consisting of at least two or more words is called phrases. Here the researcher found the syntactic meaning in six category. Namely, noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, prepositional phrase, present participle phrase, and gerund phrase.

1. Noun Phrase

The forms of syntactic meaning first discussed are the collected phrases referring specifically to noun phrases.

a. Biotic

The first biotic factor in the ecosystem is firstly discussed on a creature called “bird” found in the excerpt below,

"At the far end of town where the Grickle-grass grows and the wind smells slow-and-sour when it blows and no birds ever sing excepting old crows ... is the Street of the Lifted Lorax" (Seuss, 6).

In the previous excerpt, the researcher found the phrase No birds in the sentence is categorized as a part of a noun phrase consisting of “no,” a determiner expressing quantity,

followed by “birds” referring to the noun. Birds and other living organisms on the Earth are categorized as biotic factors. Biotic factors are living or at least once-living organisms in the ecosystem. These are obtained from the biosphere or are capable of reproduction. Since birds is a creature that lives among other species and other biotic factors, the biosphere (also known as ecosphere) is an ideal dwelling for their kind, which in this case refers to the zone of life on Earth. Therefore, the use of the lexeme “bird” in the preceding excerpt is suitably adjacent to categorizing the term referring to biotic reference.

b. Abiotic

Other types of reference, besides biotic factor, is abiotic factors. Abiotic factors are obtained in the excerpts as follows,

"Once-ler! You're making such smogulous smoke!" (Seuss, 45).

The researcher found that noun phrases are applied through the sentence. The use of the noun phrase is commenced with the determiner “such” acts as an adjective and is followed by another adjective, “smogulous.” Then, the smoke is applied to the head of the phrase. Visible gases or vapors that appear due to burning are known as smoke. Smoke occurs when there is incomplete combustion (not enough oxygen to burn the fuel completely). Smoke can contain many different chemicals and fumes. However, smoke is primarily carbon (soot), tar, oils, and ash. Smoke is categorized as a non-living chemical and physical environmental factor that eventually affects the ecosystem badly.

2. Verb Phrase

The following forms of syntactic meaning are the collected phrases referring specifically to verb phrases.

a. Biotic

The discussion of Truffula Trees is included in the verb phrase as follows,

"Now...thanks to your hacking my trees to the ground, there's not enough Truffula Fruit to go 'round." (Seuss, 40).

The researcher focused on the phrase, “thanks to your hacking my trees to the ground.” Here, the researcher found that using the verb phrase is crucial to making the discussion more coherent. The “trees” in the phrase specifically refer to the indirect object, which becomes the specific discussion in this part. Truffula fruits is artificial things or object or non-sentient beings resembling the actual thing in the world, which in this case refers to fruits produced by the plants or trees in a specified time. Fruits have integral roles in the reproduction of each kind of tree. Fruits of plants accommodate seeds for the future generation of a tree to grow. Since fruits have an essential role in a tree, they also have a significant role in ecosystems. Accordingly, the lexeme “fruit” as a product of a tree is suitable to be grouped as a biotic factor.

b. Abiotic

The lexeme “pond” is found in a set of the verb phrase in the sentence as follows,

"You're glumping the pond where the Humming-Fish hummed! No more can they hum, for their gills are all gummed." (Seuss, 52).

In the excerpt, the researcher focused on using the verb phrase that defines a sentence's occasion. After the subject, it is followed by the auxiliary verb "are" and followed by the verb in present continuous "glumping" and "pond" as its head. A pond is classified as an abiotic factor in the ecosystems since it influences every organism. The pond is defined as a small area of still, fresh water. The pond's behavior differs from a river or a stream because it does not have moving water. Ponds are made or formed naturally or artificially, filled by an underwater spring or rainwater. The pond is categorized as an abiotic factor since it includes water within, and its whereabouts influence other ecosystem living or nonliving organisms. Therefore, the pond is suitable to be grouped as an abiotic factor that influences or lives in the environment.

Sentence

The basic unit of language which expresses a complete thought is called sentence. In this researcher, the researcher strictly discusses into four kinds of sentence namely simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, compound-complex sentence.

1. Simple Sentence

The following forms of syntactic meaning are the collected sentence referring specifically to simple sentence.

a. Biotic

The word "Truffula Tree" is found in the simple sentence representing biotic factors of tree as below,

"Then I chopped down a Truffula Tree with one chop." (Seuss, 23)

The researcher found that the word "Truffula Trees" are discussed in the form of a simple sentence. In the sentence, only one independent clause defines Truffula Trees very specifically. The role of the trees in the ecosystems is essential. Every part of a tree stores carbon from the trunks, branches, leaves, and roots. Based on Dr. Seuss's depiction, the tree is a tree with its trunk towering, and the crowns or canopies vary in colors. In addition to the color itself, it also produces fruits for the living creature to consume as well as its leaves (called Tufts) have silk kind of textured. Therefore, from the depiction, Truffula Trees is defined as a regular tree that supports life in the ecosystem.

b. Abiotic

The lexeme "cloud" is found in the simple sentence representing abiotic factors as below,

"Way back in the days when the grass was still green and the pond was still wet and the clouds were still clean, and the song of the Swoome-Swans rang out in space ..." (Seuss, 17)

The researcher found that the use of simple sentences is identified to create the meaning of the excerpt. The subject “the clouds” is the focus on what to discuss, followed by the complement that more defines what happened to the clouds. Clouds are formed through evaporated water. More precisely, they are made of water drops or ice crystals floating in the sky. Clouds generally form within the troposphere, the first and lowest layer of the atmosphere of the Earth, or the layer of atmosphere that is closest to the earth. Certainly, clouds are classified as non-living things yet significantly act on the Earth. Clouds assist in regulating Earth’s energy balance by reflecting and scattering solar radiation and by absorbing Earth’s infrared energy. During the day, the reflection of the solar energy reflected by the clouds reaches Earth back into space. It hinders the planet from becoming excellent thermal. In addition, clouds can act as a blanket, trapping Earth's heat by absorbing it released by the planet's surface.

SYNTACTIC MEANING REPRESENTS THE ENVIRONMENTAL SYMBOLIC REALITY

In this discussion section, the researcher explains the representation of the environmental symbolic reality in the syntactic meanings found in the first research question. To interpret the researcher use the method of denotation and connotation that the interpretation will be scientifically delivered. There are five kinds of ecological destruction made by human and will part of it discussed as below:

Endangered Species

"At the far end of town where the Grickle-grass grows and the wind smells slow-and-sour when it blows and no birds ever sing excepting old crows ... is the Street of the Lifted Lorax" (Seuss, 6).

1. Denotation

The researcher focused on the noun phrase “no birds,” which consists of the determiner “no” as a determiner expressing quantity, followed by the head “birds” coming from lexeme “bird.” It denotes explicitly an absence of the egg-laying vertebrates called birds in the environment.

2. Connotation

The researcher found that human activity affects the absence of a species of birds in The Lorax novel. The noun phrase “No birds” expresses every living creature that can fly is scarcely found chirping in the sky anymore. A statement showing an exception afterward is stated as “no birds ever sing excepting old crows...” The exception also refers to other living creatures, the same species called birds, however different from their kind. The researcher deemed that *old crows* connote a barren place; meanwhile, *no birds* as a noun phrase connotes that there is no more living creature (birds) occupying or existing in the ecosystem. This case is categorized; as a result of humans spoiling nature and eventually endangering the living organisms or species in the ecosystem. The living organisms may be perished or leave their habitats because all living organisms’ actual place in nature is ruined or maybe exploited by

humans without paying so much attention to the equilibrium between humans and ecosystems. Thus, there is no proper place for them to dwell anymore.

Waste Disposal And Pollution

"From the rippulous pond came the comfortable sound of Humming-Fish while splashing around" (Seuss, 20).

1. Denotation

The researcher deemed that the use of noun phrase in the previous excerpt showed the natural behaviour of water based on *The Lorax* depiction. There stated that a natural behavior of the environment where the species live. Water that's rippulous denotes that there is an active habitat and creatures live underneath.

2. Connotation

The researcher identified a symbolic reality of the environment through the previous excerpt, referring to a state of waste disposal and pollution. The sentence describes it as a past event of living creatures inhabiting their habitats in the water ecosystems. The quality of healthy water makes all living organisms choose to dwell within. And yet, the researcher interprets after the disaster made by human, in this case with building a factory and producing a big impact for the water environment. The water is contaminated by what the factory produced, all the waste is thrown into the water without infiltration. Therefore, the quality of water is no longer the same as it is used to be.

Deforestation

"Then I chopped down a Truffula Tree with one chop." (Seuss, 23).

1. Denotation

The researcher deemed that the simple sentence demonstrated showed an act of starting cutting down the tree. It denotes more or less of an action cutting down the tree in the first attempt in one smack.

2. Connotation

The symbolic reality of the environment depicted in the sentence connotes that there is an activity of chopping down the tree in the environment. Basically, it is okay if not over-exploited, yet what is found in reality is not like that. There is so much illegal logging for the purpose of making something. The practice of deforesting is not aligned with reforestation. Consequently, nature will be ruined, and the ecosystems will be threatened.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this research are based on the finding of the research. The findings are the forms of syntactic meaning and how the syntactic meaning represents the environmental symbolic reality in *The Lorax* novel by Dr. Seuss. Based on the findings of the research, the

researcher concludes that the representation of the syntactic meaning as the environmental symbolic reality in the novel *The Lorax* are dominantly portraying using noun phrases as the syntactic meaning which represents or portrays the issue of waste disposal and pollution in the environment. Then, it is followed by the form of prepositional phrase. Following after, the use of verb phrase, adjective phrase, present prepositional phrase, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. In other words, the representation of environmental symbolic reality are displaying using those two phrases category: noun phrase and prepositional phrase. Furthermore, the researcher concludes that the next representation of the syntactic meaning representing the syntactic meaning as the environmental symbolic reality in the novel *The Lorax* are dominantly portraying using noun phrases as the syntactic meaning which represents or portrays the issue of deforestation in the environment. Then it is followed by form of simple sentence and compound sentence. And, the minor syntactic meanings are revealed using verb phrase and gerund phrase. Thus, the next major representation of the environmental symbolic reality are displaying using those phrase and sentence category: noun phrase, simple sentence, and compound sentence. Another representation of the syntactic meaning as the environmental symbolic reality in the novel *The Lorax* are also concluded by the researcher using compound sentence and complex sentence. The researcher found that those syntactic category are displaying the issue of endangered species. It is followed by the noun phrase, simple sentence and compound-complex sentence. Therefore, the representation of environmental symbolic reality “Endangered Species” are portraying using two sentences category: compound sentence and complex sentence. The researcher, then, lastly concludes that the representation of the syntactic meaning as the environmental symbolic reality in the novel *The Lorax* are dominantly portraying using prepositional phrase as the syntactic meaning which represents or portrays the issue of climate change in the environment and the use of simple sentence are used representing the issue of water as the environmental symbolic reality.

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