



Stylistic Analysis of Selected Primary School Nursery Rhymes and Implications on Pupils' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This study carried out a stylistic analysis of primary school nursery rhymes and their implications on reading skills of pupils. The study utilized descriptive research design where five nursery rhymes were randomly selected from a nursery rhyme textbook. The selected nursery rhymes were based on the popularity of the rhymes among the primary school children. The data obtained from the study was analyzed stylistically using the levels of stylistic analysis which include graphology, phonology, lexical and syntactic levels. Findings demonstrate that all the words choice in nursery rhymes is deliberately simpler so that the readers may understand the theme and the message of the rhymes. The rhymes are often based on simple shorter sentences, although long sentences can occur as well. Based on the age of the children, information is presented in a simple manner. The stings of sentences are not too long for the children to comprehend and the phrases and sentences are logically linked together to create a cohesive and perfect rhythm. The occurrence of rhyming especially end rhymes facilitate children's learning faculty as they are reading the rhymes through the repetition of similar sounding words at the ending of a verse or line. This creates a mnemonic situation in which it is easier for the readers to memorise their reading through smooth and pleasurable reading experience.

Keywords: Linguistic Resources, Nursery Rhymes, Primary School, Reading Comprehension

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INTRODUCTION

Nursery rhymes play a vital role in a child's language development. As described by York (2011), nursery rhymes are simple poetry in nature written in a specific language that young children can learn and enjoy. Not only do children enjoy telling their own rhyming patterns, they also enjoy listening to nursery rhymes (Liao & Campbell, 2016). Hiba and Mazin (2021) explained that sometimes, nursery rhymes might tell little stories, sometimes strange stories whose meaning is lost in history, and they are sometimes padded out with nonsense words. Some of the rhymes are recited simply like poems, whereas many of them are in fact songs with associated melodies (Suwono, 2022).

Nursery rhymes are a great way for kids to learn new vocabulary in those vital first few years of life because they are short and simple. Children learn about rhythm, pitch, volume, and vocal intonation through the recognition of new words (Kroupová, 2014). They are also simpler to learn and remember than prose. This suggests that nursery rhymes are created and written most straightforwardly to cater for children's linguistic demands and to help parents and educators increase children's learning skills. These linguistic characteristics all help kids learn language (Septrisia, Suhono, Purnamasari, Utama, & Mustafidah, 2021).

The Linguistic Stylistics approach to stylistic analysis serves as the foundation for this work. Donald Freeman first used the word "linguistic stylistics" in 1968 to refer to the linguistic components that are employed to convey a certain subject matter. It investigates a text's linguistic elements. It is mostly focused on how language is used and how it affects a text (Udeze, Udeze, & Orji, 2017). It has to do with a style investigation that bases a large portion of its analysis on the empirical laws of language. According to Udeze, Udeze, and Orji (2017), the rules also cover the context, cohesiveness, figures of speech, and lexical grammar categories. Any linguistic construction within a literary work adheres to the "scientific rules" of the language. This implies that Stylistic analysis in linguistics refers to the identification of patterns of usage in speech and writing.

According to Adepoju (2016), linguistic stylistics pursues a scientific examination using instruments like the language's phonological, syntactic, and grammatical elements (Sari, Utama, Suhono, & Yawisah, 2019). According to Isidore (2010), an analysis of the use of a specific configuration of language in the realization of a given subject matter is conducted, measuring all the linguistic tools that came together to achieve a specific aesthetic goal. As a result, when the language in a work is researched, it is done so to determine how the author employed language to convey his ideas, not just for its artistic value (Utama, 2017). Graphology, phonology, lexico-semantics, and syntactic choices are some characteristics of linguistic stylistics. This theory is pertinent to the study since it examines the linguistic components of the text, which is its main focus. The use of linguistic stylistics identifies the language decisions that a writer of nursery rhymes has made as well as their results. To define the structure and purpose of language in the chosen nursery rhymes from a pictorial, phonetic, lexical, and grammatical standpoint that can be explained in linguistic terms, this study uses linguistic stylistics.

The goal of the current study was to descriptively analyze the linguistic resources buried in nursery rhymes that could support language learning. Nursery rhymes have been found to promote young language learners' ability to increase their language abilities and likely sub-skills. Although some research has been done on the relationship between learning a second language and nursery rhymes (Cardany, 2013; Kroupová, 2014; Hollindale, 2016; Millan, 2016; Sabrina, 2017; Hiba & Mazin, 2021), these studies have not taken into account the stylistic elements of nursery rhymes. Therefore, a thorough examination of the stylistic elements of nursery rhymes and how this affects students' reading abilities is necessary. As a result, the purpose of this study is to conduct a stylistic analysis of nursery rhymes used in primary schools and explore how it may affect students' reading abilities.

METHOD

In conducting the study, descriptive research design was utilized. The nursery rhymes textbook used for the study is *Mama Lisa's World: International Music and Culture*. This textbook, written by Lisa Yannucci and published in 2014 contains a collection of poems written as rhymes to help children in their nursery and early primary classes gather knowledge about environment and grasp the early concept of reading. The textbook is officially recommended by SUBEB for use and teaching of pre-school and nursery school children in Nigeria. A representative number of five nursery rhymes are randomly selected

for analysis. The selected nursery rhymes are based on the popularity of the rhymes among the primary school children. The five selected rhymes are Mary has a little lamb (Nursery Rhyme- NR 1 henceforth), Little Bo peep has lost her sheep (Nursery Rhyme- NR 2 henceforth), Mondays child is fair of face (Nursery Rhyme- NR 3 henceforth), Twinkle, twinkle little star (Nursery Rhyme- NR 4 henceforth) and London Bridge is Falling Down (Nursery Rhyme- NR 5 henceforth). The data obtained from the study was analyzed stylistically using the levels of stylistic analysis which include graphology, phonology, lexical and syntactic levels.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study analysed the stylistic features in selected nursery rhymes. The rhymes are analyzed from the level of graphology, phonology, lexical and syntactic features. Through these levels, the various structures, style, peculiarities, and complexity are extracted. This is elicited below

Graphological Features

This level recognizes the writing system of a language and studies the formal rules of capitalization, spelling, structure, the systematic formation and punctuation in the sentence. At this level of analysis of nursery rhymes, such things as picture and text, title of the poem and punctuation marks are considered and analysed.

Picture and Text

The importance of pictures and a nice visual aspect is undoubtedly a relevant part of the rhymes. Most of the texts of the rhymes are colourful and filled with pictures for illustration. This is to interest children to read the rhymes and those who are not able to read would be focused on the pictures and their own imagination. The relationship between the texts and pictures varies from rhyme to rhyme. It is either the pictures accompanied by text (NR 2 and NR 5) or a text accompanied by pictures (NR1, 3 and 4). This essence of the pictures is to give a concrete illustrations of the ideas communicated in the rhymes and also attracted the readers' attention to engage in the reading.



Figure 1: Example of a Rhyme accompanied with image in NR1

The picture in Figure 1 depicts two human and animal characters in a song, Mary (human character) and a little Lamb (animal character). Mary had a little lamb which was white as snow. The lamb follows Mary Everywhere. One day, it followed her to school. What is depicted in the picture frame relates with four sentences in verbal texts “Mary had a little lamb. Everywhere Mary went, the lamb was sure to go.” and “It followed her to school one day”. “It made the children laugh to see a lamb in the school.”. Perhaps due to

the limited space, textbook editors cannot and do not necessarily print out all pictures of teaching contents, but provide some vital relevant pictures to sketch out the key theme of certain teaching unit and offer some background information of teaching contents. In this way, readers can picture characters and establish settings in comprehension passages. Thus, learners' attention is attracted and proximity is achieved through the text and images

Title of the Poem

Another graphological feature of the nursery rhymes, which was discovered in the corpus, is the titles of the nursery rhymes. The title is often short and made up of combination of monosyllabic and disyllabic words. Also, the title is often drawn from the first line of the poems. The first lines of NR 1 to 5 are the titles of the poems. This is to ease the comprehension of children and the ability to memorize the verses that follows

Punctuation Marks

In the five nursery rhymes, each line starts with a capital letter which is also considered as a typical feature of a sentence beginning. However, capital letter in the rhymes does not signify a beginning of a new sentence. Capital letter is just a typical feature of English rhymes. Comma (,) and full stop (.) are the two dominant punctuation marks mostly used in rhymes. They occur at equal proportion. At the end of each line, there is a comma, full stop or the punctuation is missing. Comma usually signifies that the sentence continues; even though very often on a next line. The use of comma is to slow down the speed of reading or singing while the full stop indicates momentary stoppage

Due to the nature of the age of the readers, deliberate misspelling, acronyms or grammatical deviation for the purpose of foregrounding are not found. The English used is the contemporary English. Archaic words do not manifest in the corpus.

Phonological level

Nursery rhymes belong not only to written type of texts but also to spoken discourse. Therefore phonetic and phonological aspects of the language have to be taken into consideration. Moreover, one of the purposes of nursery rhymes is to enhance the ability to speak – to catch the melody, stress and rhythm of the language, to learn individual sounds properly. In this category of phonological devices usually employed in nursery rhymes, four elements were identified: Alliteration, Assonance and Patterns of rhyme

Alliteration

Alliteration is a figure of speech in which consonants, especially at the beginning of words, or stressed syllables, are repeated. Alliteration is useful for practicing individual sounds in English and makes the poem seem more balanced and cohesive. Below are some examples of alliteration:

Mondays child is fair of face
Tuesdays child is full of grace
Wednesdays child is full of woe
Thursdays child has far to go... (NR 3)

....And the child that is born on the Sabbath day
Is bonny and blithe, and good and gay (NR 3)

Little Bo peep has lost her sheep...
Little Bo peep fell fast asleep..... (NR 2)

Mary Had a Little Lamb Mary had a little lamb
and everywhere that Mary went, (Mary went Mary went) (NR 1)

Twinkle, twinkle little star (NR 4)

Iron and steel will bend and bow (NR 5)

In the analysis, all the five poems were found to contain the elements of alliteration. The ample use of alliteration helps in creating rhythm and musicality. For instance, the repetition of /f/ sound in fair of face, the sound /g/ in good and gay in NR 3 and the use of /t/ sound in “Twinkle Twinkle” enhanced the musical quality of the lines.

Assonance

Assonance can be taken as an opposite of alliteration for it is not a repetition of consonant but “repetition of a vowel sound in successive words” (Jackson 2007) Wainwright (2004) also adds that the vowel sounds are “close enough together to be noticed by the ear”

Little Bo peep has lost her sheep
Little Bo peep fell fast asleep
Then up she took her little crook (NR 2)

Thursdays child has far to go (NR 3)

Wood and clay will wash away,
Build it up with bricks and mortar,
My fair Lady. (NR 5)

Here there is repetition of the vowel sounds in the same line such as the sounds of /i/ and /u/ in NR 2, /a/ in NR 3 and /ai/ and /i/ in NR 5

Patterns of Rhyme

The rhyme pattern is an essential quality of a poem or nursery rhyme. Internal rhyme is a poetic device by which two or more words rhyme within the same line of verse while End rhyme is rhyme occurring at the ends of verse lines. This is applied to create poetic and musical effect and unify the nursery rhymes through sound repetition. In the corpus, there were not only short rhymes with a simple pattern such as aabb ccaa (NR 3), aabb ccdd (NR 4) and aab cccb (NR 5) but also longer poems with more difficult patterns – aabc bdeed (NR 1) and abcb adcd eb (NR 2). The occurrence of rhyming especially end rhymes facilitate children’s learning faculty as they are reading the nursery rhymes through the repetition of similar sounding words at the ending of a verse or line. This creates a mnemonic situation in which it is easier for the readers to memorise their reading through smooth and pleasurable reading experience.

Though, the nursery rhymes used for this study are in their written form, however, several phonological features connected to nursery rhymes occurred in the corpus. This can be partly because of the fact that nursery rhymes tend to be spoken and their written form functions only as a mean of preserving rhymes for other generations. The most visible feature is the rhyming and different types of rhymes. In alliteration, assonance and consonance which are considered as types of rhymes, many examples were found

Lexical Features

When learning a language, not only good pronunciation but also a wide range of vocabulary is crucial. Nursery rhymes are a very good source for learning new words as well as their meaning. Vocabulary, which is also called lexis deals with words and meaning associated with words. At the lexical level, the lexical choices made by a speaker will be examined. These include length of the words, lexical repetition, figurative expressions and lexical category as used by the creator of the rhymes

Length of the Words

In linguistics, there are three types of words which can be distinguished – Monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic words. Monosyllabic word contains one syllable only whereas disyllabic word “contain three or more syllables. Nursery rhymes included in the corpus contained mainly monosyllabic or disyllabic words. This shows that in English,

shorter words are more popular than longer words. Furthermore, shorter words better fit into the rhyme

Lexical Repetition

Repetition of words is a common feature of Nursery rhymes. There is the repetition of the same word, or a phrase, at the beginning or end of multiple lines or sentences. This technique is often used to create emphasis. In this case, the technique is very clear. Children can pronounce the word and know its various uses in different context. In all the nursery rhymes analysed, lexical repetition resonates through all of them

In NR 5 (London bridge is falling down), multiple lines begin with "London Bridge," such as in the first verse. London Bridge was repeated twice and four times at the level of the whole poem. This is to draw the children's attention to the main theme of the song, which is the collapse of London Bridge. It is noticeable that this rhyme is full of repetitive. This repetition is meant to simplify the song for the children

There is a repetition of the word "twinkle" in NR 4 (Twinkle Twinkle Little Star) which has created a musical quality in the poem. This makes it easier to be memorized. In addition, "Mary" and "lamb" was repeated in NR 1 (Mary had a little lamb) in order to reinforce the theme of the rhyme and through the repetition of "child" in NR 3, the children are able to understand the days of the week.

By using such repetitive phrasing, the creators of the rhyme were able to create a sing-song like rhythm and pattern that should appeal to young readers/listeners. This is usually the case in the most popular nursery rhymes.

Figurative Expressions

Another lexico-semantic feature that is note-worthy in the use of figurative expressions such as simile, metaphor, imagery, Onomatopoeia and rhetorical questions, all which added weight to the speech

Onomatopoeia

In the nursery rhymes and in the language of children in general, there are often words which function is to imitate the sound it represents. These words are referred to as onomatopoeia. The onomatopoeic expression which occurred in the corpus expressing the sounds of animal (sheep). This is seen in NR 2 where Little Bo peep who lost his sheep thought he heard them bleating

.....And dreamt she heard them bleating... (NR 2)

The early stage of children's speaking contains rather imitations of sounds than real words since especially small children like to produce noises and sounds and therefore the occurrence of onomatopoeia in rhymes is beneficial for relating the poem to their everyday sounds around them.

Simile

A simile is a device used to compare two different objects using a connector like 'like' and 'as'. In the analysis, simile occurs in the two of the rhymes used. This can be seen in NR 1 where "as" is used for comparison

MARY had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow (NR 1)

Mary's little lamb's fleece colour is compared to the whiteness of the snow. The simile in ' its fleece was white as snow' is a literary device used in this song for the purpose of making the child's imagination of the lamb more familiar

There is one simile used in the last line of the first stanza of NR 4 "Like a diamond in the sky."

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,

Like a diamond in the sky.

(NR 4)

It shows how the poet has compared the star to a diamond to tell how brightly shines. The star is compared to a diamond in which the brilliant twinkle of the star is as bright as the dazzling sparkle of the diamond

Metaphor

Metaphor is “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. Metaphor dominates NR 3 where children are taught the days of the week through direct description of how the child born in each day look like.

Through metaphor, each day represents a child. Each day of the week is associated with a child. Children born on Monday are “fair of face”, Children born on Tuesday are “full of grace” etc. rather than the use of ‘as’ and ‘like’, the poet directly associate different characteristics to children born on different days of the week. This help to create an impossible but fun and imaginary image to the readers.

Rhetorical Question

Though, in the five poems analyzed, only one made use of rhetorical question. This can be found in NR 4. This is because the cognitive ability of the children the rhymes are meant for isn't capable or developed to process abstract thoughts.

If you did not twinkle so?

(NR 4)

The rhetorical question in NR 4 is to charge the children to think and reflect on the importance of the stars. The traveller might be lost if everywhere is dark, thus, the twinkling of the stars help achieve light. The speaker asks another rhetorical question, trying to prove to the star that its light is important.

The use of these figurative expressions enriches the meaning and aids the understanding of the audience. It helps to create mental pictures in the mind of the audience which aided effective comprehension.

Lexical Word Class

Tabel 1. At lexical I Word Class, the lexical choices used in the rhymes are very simple lexical items. This can be seen in the few extracts shown below

<i>Determiner</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adverb</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>adjectives</i>	<i>Pronoun</i>	<i>Preposition</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>Person (Mary, Bo, Children)</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>steal</i>	<i>little</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>against</i>
<i>The</i>	<i>Days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday)</i>	<i>down</i>	<i>Is</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>in</i>
<i>Her</i>	<i>Animal (Lamb, Sheep)</i>	<i>everywhere</i>	<i>follow</i>	<i>dark</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>to</i>
<i>My</i>	<i>Places (School, London, sky)</i>	<i>alone</i>	<i>bring</i>	<i>fair</i>	<i>their</i>	<i>for</i>
<i>His</i>	<i>Things (Star, bridge, sun)</i>	<i>then</i>	<i>Build</i>	<i>hard</i>	<i>them</i>	<i>with</i>

In the corpus, category of the lexis used in the rhymes are related to the children's language. The noun encompasses words that refer to people, things, ideas, etc. The nominal are words that children are familiar with. The verbs are single action words. They consist of actions performed by the children on daily basis. Apart from their main function to describe a noun, adjectives modifies the noun both predicatively and attributively. All these are to explain that, irrespective of the lexical category, words are chosen in the nursery rhymes according to the target group of readers and their vocabulary; they are simple for children to understand.

Syntactic Features

The word syntax describes the grammatical relations that exist between words and other units within the sentence. Syntax looks at how words are combined to form larger grammatical units such as phrases and clauses. The focus of syntactic analysis here is the identification of the effects created by the various sentence types in the speech. Such aspects are sentence type, system of voice and mood, and cohesion

Sentence Type

Sentence is a complete structure found in written texts, bounded by sentence punctuation. Jackson (2007) claims that sentence is a "syntactic structure composed of one or more clauses and distinguishes between simple (one main clause), compound (two main clauses) and complex sentence (main clause and subordinated clause). Nursery rhymes are a special kind of a text. In poetry in general, the sentences are not structured identically as in for example prose or newspaper articles. In the nursery rhymes, the emphasis is put on rhyme rather than on creating proper and correct sentences.

However, there are 44 sentences in the five nursery rhymes that made up the corpus. Out of the 44 sentences, there are seventy simple sentences, eight compound sentences and nine complex sentences. This reveals the simplicity of the poems.

System of Voice and Mood

In the system of voice and mood, the poems are composed majorly in active voice. Passivity was uncommon as a result of the children grammar knowledge and a need to activate the actors of the actions in the sentences. The mood of the sentences is in complete declarative form. Interrogative or imperative sentences are few. In all the 44 sentences across the rhymes, only four sentences were imperative and two were interrogative in structure while others were in declarative form.

Cohesion

Cohesion is a term in functional grammar that relates to how texts (words and sentences) are held together lexically and grammatically as a whole. Cohesion and coherence of the rhymes are devices that make the rhymes understandable for the children in a sense that sentences are not put randomly together but there are connections between them. The cohesive devices which are going to be analysed are conjunctions, substitution and anaphora

Conjunction

Conjunction "signals a relationship between segments of the discourse" (McCarthy 1991). The main conjunctions found in the five poems are "and" and "but". "Or" was not found. This is because most of the sentences are in simple structure, simple enough for the readers to comprehend the information bit by bit. "And" was the most used conjunction (8 uses), followed by *but* occurring just once. This is seen in the extracts below

Mary Had a Little Lamb Mary had a little lamb
And everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go
it followed her to school one day, which was against the rule
It made the children laugh and play, laugh and play, laugh and play
To see a lamb in the school (NR 1)

Little Bo peep has lost her sheep

And doesn't know where to find them
 Little Bo peep fell fast asleep
 And dreamt she heard them bleating
 But when she awoke, she found it a joke
 For they were all still fleeting. (NR 2)

Saturdays child works hard for his living
 And the child that is born on the Sabbath day
 Is bonny and blithe, and good and gay (NR 3)

The position of each of the conjunction (and, but) was mostly at the beginning of the sentence. "and" occurred at both the beginning and middle of the sentences. The incidence of *but* in NR 3 was at the beginning of a sentence (line)

Substitution

Substitution is replacing one word for another to avoid repetition. Although substitution occurred in the nursery rhymes, the incidence is not high as nursery rhymes are not long parts of texts were substitution is highly recommended for not to repeat one word again and again. Nevertheless, even in shorter texts such as nursery rhymes, some examples of substitution were found.

Mary Had a Little Lamb Mary had a little lamb
 Its fleece was white as snow
 And everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go
 It followed her to school one day..... (NR 1)

Little Bo peep has lost her sheep
 And doesn't know where to find them
 Little Bo peep fell fast asleep
 And dreamt she heard them bleating.... (NR 2)

London Bridge is falling down,
 Build it up with silver and gold,
 My fair lady. (NR 5)

In the above extracts, "it" in NR 1 refers to the lamb, "them" in NR 2 refers to the sheep while "it" in NR 5 refers to London bridge. This is to avoid unnecessary repetition and achieve cohesion in such a way that the rhyme is not affected.

Anaphora and Cataphora

Anaphora and cataphora is a rhetorical device which is viewed differently by individual linguists. According to Cuddon (1998), the incidence of anaphora occurs mainly in poetry. Cuddon describes anaphora "the repetition of a word or group of words in successive clauses". In contrast to Cuddon, Biber (2002) do not see anaphora as a repetition of words but as a reference of two linguistic items. Anaphora is a "relation between two linguistic expressions such that the second one refers back to the first and in the cataphoric reference, the first linguistic expression refers forward to the second.

As nursery rhymes belong to poetry, the first explanation of anaphora given by Cuddon is to be taken into consideration as more examples of this type of anaphora were found in the corpus. This is seen across the study corpus from NR 1 to NR 5.

Build it up with wood and clay,
 Wood and clay, wood and clay,
 Build it up with wood and clay,
 My fair lady.

Wood and clay will wash away,
 Wash away, wash away,
 Wood and clay will wash away,
 My fair lady. (NR 5)

In NR 5, multiple lines begin with “London Bridge,” such as in the first verse that is well known. Examples appear throughout the other verses, such as “Build it up” and “Wood and clay”. The refrain, “My fair lady” is a great example as well as seen in the above extract.

When the blazing sun is gone,
 When he nothing shines upon,
 Then you show your little light,
 Twinkle, twinkle, all the night. (NR 4)

Anaphora is used in NR 4 with the repeat of “When” at the beginning of lines one and two of *the second stanza*. The repetition of “when” makes the rhyme cohesive.

Mary Had a Little Lamb Mary had a little lamb
 (little lamb little lamb), Mary had a little lamb
 It made the children laugh and play, laugh and play, laugh and play
 It made the children laugh and play

The repetition of “Little Lamb” and “laugh and play” in NR 1 functions as a device which provides artistic effects through rhythm which makes reading for children more entertaining and enjoyable. In the corpus, the usage of anaphora is intended to achieve an effect in which emphasis is secured through repetition. The repetitive structure of anaphora encourages children to remember the nursery rhymes by evoking and intensifying their understanding and emotional attachment to the nursery rhymes. All the elements of cohesion shows that the ideas are closely related to each other and can't be separate from each other, this flow of ideas is actually making the theme of the poem create a strong imagery in the poem and also the flow in their activities

To sum up, from the grammatical point of view, nursery rhymes are often based on simple shorter sentences, although long sentences can occur as well. Based on the age of the children, information are presented in a simple manner. The stings of sentences are not too long for the children to comprehend. The phrases and sentences logically linked together to create a cohesive and perfect rhythm

How do the stylistic features aid the reading comprehension of pupils at the pre-school and nursery schools?

With emphasis on structures and features which arose from this study, it is essential to note that nursery rhymes are good reading materials to develop the reading ability of the children across all levels of grammar, graphologically, lexically, phonologically and syntactically

The way nursery rhymes are written especially with the aid of pictures provide some background information or direct sensory perception for pupils to understand the theme of the rhymes. With apt use of images, children are enticed to read and interact with the text. This not only stimulates and promotes children's creativity but enable them to use their own imagination and judgment to predict and interpret the theme of the rhyme

Concerning lexis, nursery rhymes help to enrich vocabulary and they also function as a good source of practising rhyming of words. Nursery rhymes can help pupils to learn which words rhyme together when pronounced even though their written form seems not to rhyme at all. From the phonetic point of view, practising pronunciation is an essential part during the language learning process. Apart from individual sounds, there are also features such as rhythm which can be practised with the help of rhymes. One of the aims of nursery rhymes is to enhance vocabulary and strengthen the ability to speak. This can be

done by choosing the appropriate words as words themselves are very powerful. The analysis showed that nursery rhymes often contain shorter rhythmical words. One of the features of rhymes is the rhythm and repetition which helps children to memorise the poems

Apart from lexical and phonetic features, there are also some features from the field of grammar which can be found in nursery rhymes and thus has a specific focus. Each rhyme functions as a very useful source of authentic texts when talking about a particular topic in English lessons. For example, rhymes such as NR 3 is about days of the week, rhyme NR 4 discusses the star, NR 5 focuses on falling down and need to rebuild London Bridge while NR 1 and 2 is about pet animals.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that nursery rhymes have great advantage on English language learning. This is because nursery rhymes are not written for entertaining only. They provide several educational and social lessons and promote the linguistic ability of the children. Nursery rhymes are written in highly selected linguistic devices that match the children's mentality and their ability of comprehension and acquisition. Findings show that nursery rhymes intentionally choose simpler language so that readers can understand the rhymes' themes and messages. Although extended sentences can also appear, basic, shorter sentences are frequently the foundation of nursery rhymes. Information is delivered in a straightforward manner according to the children's ages. The length of the sentences is appropriate for young children. The phrases and sentences are logically linked together to create a cohesive and perfect rhythm. Rhyming is common in nursery rhymes, and end rhymes in particular help toddlers learn as they read by repeating words with a similar sound at the end of a verse or line. The occurrence of rhyming especially end rhymes facilitate children's learning faculty as they are reading the nursery rhymes through the repetition of similar sounding words at the ending of a verse or line. This creates a mnemonic situation in which it is easier for the readers to memorise their reading through smooth and pleasurable reading experience.

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