An Analysis of Vocabulary and Writing Style in Korean Fairy Tales

Tin Tin Htwe[1]

Abstract

This research presents the vocabulary and the writing style in Korean children's stories. To investigate the writing styles of Korean children's stories, seven stories were chosen as the material for this research. Based on the study of these stories, plots, traditional customs, style, and tone which describe the nature of the characters were analyzed in this paper. This paper would be helpful for the Korean language learners who want to understand the writing style through fairy tales.

Keywords: writing style, vocabulary, reading fairy tales

Introduction

The reading habit in the target language should be cultivated in teaching a foreign language. Children grew up with fairy tales.   Even as they grow up, fairy tales still remain in their thoughts. As fairy tales are great and valuable sources for foreign language learning, reading the fairy tales will help the students to improve their reading skills, writing skills, and speaking skills progressively.

The seven Korean popular fairy tales used as materials in this study are "The Fairy and the Woodcutter", "Stupid Ondal and Princess Pyonggang", "The story of Heung-bu", "Kongji and Patji", "The Tiger and Dried Persimmon", "The Pound Snail Girl", and "Tokgabi and His Pranks". This research is organized as follows. Firstly, the compositions in the fairy tales are investigated. Through these stories, the types of writing are studied and analyzed from the literary point of view. The four main types of writing – expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative – are also discussed with example sentences in second section. Finally, the improvement of reading, writing and speaking skills through fairy tales are presented.

Literature Review

These studies helped the researcher in building and conceptualizing the present study.

Stories have a greater impact on everyone especially, the young. Rossiter (2002) points out below:

Stories are effective as educational tools because they are believable, rememberable, and entertaining. The believability stems from the fact that stories deal with human-like experience that we tend to perceive as an authentic and credible source of knowledge. Stories make information more rememberable because they involve us in actions of the characters. In so doing, stories invite active meaning making.

Fairy tales may have different versions around the world. The word choice may differ from daily usages. Cameron (2001) advocates that "a story can include some new language, but not so much that the story becomes incomprehensible".

Additionally, vocabulary used refers to a writer's selection of words as determined by a number of factors, including meaning both denotative and connotative, specificity, level of diction, tone, and audience. According to Wingersky (2009), "word choice often determines whether or not you get your message across. Making poor word choices and not writing appropriately for the audience can distract the reader so much that the message you intended to convey is missed."

[1]Daw, Lecturer, Department of Korean, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages

Besides, Mg Khin Min (Danuphyu) (1994) investigates the writing styles in short story. He claims that "read the whole story thoroughly, then, paragraphs, sentences and usages would be analyzed in order (Trs.)" Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze the writing style and vocabulary used in fairy tales.

Aim

The aim of this study is to analyze the vocabulary and writing style in Korean fairy tales.

Research Questions

The questions raised by the present study are:

1. What are the word choice and writing style of the seven selected Korean fairy tales?
2. How can student improve their language competency by reading the fairy tales?

Materials and Method

This research uses descriptive and analytical method. Data used in this paper were collected out of the Korean fairy tales "The Fairy and the Woodcutter", "Ondal the fool and Princess Pyonggang"(the weeping princess), "The story of Heung-bu", "Kongji and Patji", "The Tiger and Dried Persimmon", "The Pound Snail Girl", and "Tokgabi and His Pranks". The data were analyzed based on the literature theories from "စကားပြေသဘာဝတရား၊စကားပြေအတတ်ပညာ" of Mg Khin Min (Danuphyu), and Korean grammar books.

The analysis of vocabulary

As the short story genre, a fairy tale comprises the creation of setting, plot, characterization, theme, the word expression, sentence structure, paragraphs and paragraphing from writing style. Analyzing the usages in fairy tale, written language, spoken language, regional dialect and social dialect, euphemism and metaphor are also observed.

Written language and spoken language

In studying the word choice of the writer in plot, the sequence of events and characterization were described with written usages. The following sentences show that the final ending verb "습니다"is used in writing.

e.g(1) 온달이라는 아이가 살았습니다.A boy named Ondal lived.

e.g(2)"바보온달"이라고 불렸습니다. People called him "Ondal the Fool".

e.g(3) 그 소문을 듣게 되었습니다.It happened to hear that news.

The words which are related to the place and person, social class and the level of closeness/ degree of intimacy are found in spoken usages.

e.g(4) 저를 좀 도와주세요.(Place and Person)Can I ask a favour?

e.g(5) 저는 지금 쫓기고 있어요.(Social class)I have been driven out.

e.g(6) 사슴아.(Level of closeness/ degree of intimacy)My fawn!

e.g(7) 예쁘네.(Level of closeness/ degree of intimacy)Oh, pretty!

Social dialect and Temporal dialect

Social dialect is the type of speech, pronunciation, and vocabulary used to communicate in the language with a specific social class, group, age, gender or other aspects. Temporal dialect is applied by people in different time. The usages

which are belonged to social and temporal dialect are shown in sentences as follows:

e.g(8)아바마마. Abamama (father)

e.g(9)임자.The Owner.

e.g(10)보시오.See.

e.g(11) 주시옵소서. Please, give me!

e.g(12) 네 소원대로 해 주마.I will do whatever you want.

e.g(13) 무슨 상관이 있겠소.How does it relate?

e.g(14) 젊은이로다.It is a juvenile.

The usage "아바마마"(eg.8) was used to address to father in royal family before Chosonera, but it is not used and found today. The usages which are mentioned in Examples 9, 10, 12 and 13 have been used since 1392. The usage "옵소서" (eg.11) is mostly found in religious terms. The usage "젊은이로다" (eg. 14) is found in ancient literature.

Analysis of writing style in fairy tale

There are four basic prose styles used in writing. They are narration, description, exposition and persuasion.

Narration

Narration is a style of writing that relates to a series of events, from the opening event to the closing one. In studying the writing style, narration plays an important role. Some examples for beginning sentences of narrative writing are as follows:

e.g(15)옛날어느마을에. (Once upon a time in a village)

e.g(16) 먼옛날. (Along time ago)

e.g(17) 고구려시대에서는. (In the Goguryeo period)

e.g(18) 어느날. (One day)

e.g(19) 해마다봄이되면. (When the spring comes,-)

Description

Descriptive writing is a style of writing that focuses on describing a character, an event, or a place in great detail. Examples:

e.g(20) 눈을동그렇게뜨며. I will keep my eyes widely open.

e.g(21)뚝딱. The sound of cracking gourds.

e.g(22)도깨비들이"끽끽"하고. Devil said "KiKi."

e.g(23)공주가얼굴을붉히며말하자. The princess turns red.

In example 20, "동그렇게" shows the action of eye opening. The character opens the eyes widely. "뚝딱" and "끽끽" (eg. 21 and 22) are the alliteration which is the sounds creaking and the devil noises. "얼굴을붉히며"which is mentioned in example 23 shows the face is turning red and she becomes nervous.

Euphemism

The euphemism is expressed in sentences as follows:

e.g(24)나무꾼<u>님</u>. (The little Woodman)

e.g(25)온달<u>님</u>. (My poor Ondal)

e.g(26)형<u>님</u>. (Dear Brother)

e.g(27)기다리고 계<u>시</u>면. (If you are waiting,-)

e.g(28)말씀이<u>십니까</u>? (Do you speak?)

The affix "<u>님</u>"(eg.24, 25, 26) refers the politeness to address someone. When the particle "시" is added to the verb, the meaning of the verb will include politeness.

Metaphor

The following phrases are used for the figurative expressions.

e.g(29)그리운 내 옷. A nostalgic suit.

e.g(30)임어여. Darling.

e.g(31)눈깜짝할동안에. In the blink of an eye

e.g(32)입버릇처럼. Be used to way of speaking.

e.g(33)호박처럼동글게. Round like pumpkin.

Furthermore, the subtle hints are also found in metaphorical expressions.

e.g(34)가뜩이나울기잘하는공주는.The weeping princess

e.g(35)앞을못보는어머. Mother who cannot see the way

e.g(36)한없이울었습니다. I cried without control.

e.g(37)술이확깨는기분으로. To feel like a drunk

Exposition

Exposition is a subject-oriented writing style, in which the author explains a process, facts or figures. Some facts are described not only to take lessons but also to understand clearly in expository writing. Examples:

e.g(38)바보스러울 만큼 착하고 못 생긴 그 아이를 사람들은 "바보온달"이라고 불렀습니다. The naïve and ugly boy was called "Ondal the Fool".

e.g(39)동생은 마음씨가 착해 부모님께 효도하고 어려운 일을 당한 사람들을 앞장서서 도와주는 인정이 많은 사람이었습니다. My brother was known as a good-hearted and helpful person who looked after his parents.

Persuasion

The persuasive writing is found in following sentences;

e.g(40)공주는 남편인 온달에게 글을 가르쳤습니다. 고구려 사람들은 말을 잘 탈 줄 알고 무술도 잘 해야 남자 노릇을 할 수 있었습니다. 그래서 고주는 온달에게 무술도 배우라고 했습니다. 온달은 공주가 하라는 대로 잘 따랐습니다.The princess taught her husband Ondal. The people of Goguryeo were able to ride horses and to practice archery well. So the princess encouraged him to learn archery. Ondal just followed the advice of the princess.

Improvement of writing, reading and speaking skills through fairy tales

In language learning, it is needed to use the word correctly, and effectively. Then, students would have the ability to write and speak with grammatical and lexical cohesion.

Writing skills

Noun phrase, verb phrase and prepositional phrase are used in these fairy tales.

Adding the particles "은, 에, 는" the nouns are developed to noun phrases. They are found in the following sentences.

e.g(41)임금님은. The king

e.g(42)은거기에.There

e.g(43)흥부와놀부는.Hyunbu and Noby

Verb phrases with the final ending "습니다, ㅂ시다,ㅂ니까? "are found as follows:

e.g(44)말해 주었습니다. It is said.

e.g(45)탑시다. Let's take a ride.

e.g(46)무슨 말씀이십니까? What do you mean?

"숨김없이, 정신없이,열심히"are used in the following prepositional phrases.

e.g(47) 숨김없이 말해 주었습니다. I tell and let you know frankly.

e.g(48) 정신없이 칼을 둘렸습니다. Waved the knife willingly and freely.

e.g(49)열심히 일했습니다. Worked hard and well done.

Simple sentences and short sentences are mostly used in sentence construction. However, compound sentence, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences are also found with subordinating conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions.

Subordinating conjunctions

e.g(50)하지만 그대로 앉아 있을 수도 없는 일어나서 밭을 매기 시작했습니다.(I could not sit still, so I got up and started to dig.)

e.g(51)그러던 중 관원이 꽃신을 한 짝만 신고 있는 콩쥭을 보았습니다. (In that meantime, I saw that the lieutenant commander wore one side shoe.)

e.g(52)그리고 각 지방에서 온 젊은이들과 겨루와 가장 뛰어난 솜씨를보았습니. (I've seen the youngsters from all over the country and the greatest workmanship.)

e.g(53)그러면영감님은화를내는대신에. (Then, instead of getting angry,-)

Reading skills

Reading plays an important role for mastery of a foreign language. Reading literary text like fairy tales will give the language learner the opportunity to have a

better interaction with culture and people of target language, because fairy tales are known in different versions around the world. Celce-Murcia, et al. (1995) believed that the ability to read in second language is the most important way for autonomous language learning. It can be seen that the readers are being encouraged to use dictionary, and will understand the associated meaning of words through reading fairy tales.

Speaking skills

The students will also improve their speaking skills by reading fairy tales aloud. By studying metaphor and similes, they can choose the correct words and use effectively, speak figuratively and be able to speak coherently. In this way, their presentation skill and public speaking skills will improve.

Findings and Discussion

The Korean fairy tales are composed of various categories such as mysterious things, moral and life lesson, and critical thinking. The events and characterization are highlighted in fairy tales.

The narration in fairy tales tells the reader about the creation of the events, the imagination and decision of character, and actions create the movement within a story. It can also be considered that these things will enhance the understanding of the sequence and order of events in reading.

The descriptive writing is used to describe a person, place or thing in such a way to bring an imagination to readers.

The writer uses the persuasive writing to present his ideas through reasoning and logical thinking, in order to influence the reader by explaining the thoughts, ideas, desire, and decision of the character.

The expository writing introduces the perception of characters to each other.

To sum up, Korean fairy tales are written with common usages, especially using the simple terms, but the composition is a guide for those who want to write short stories figuratively. It will help students to improve grammar and to write correctly. Fairy tales are created with child fictional characters in order to promote patriotism and to elevate moral standard. Thus, it can be assumed that fairy tales fascinate children and encourage the language learner to upgrade the reading competence.

Conclusion

This study presented the vocabulary and the writing style of the seven selected Korean fairy tales. Although fairy tale is kind of children's literature, it has benefited the beginner who wants to speak and write in the Korean language practically. Reading fairy tales help learners to develop the ability to speak fluently and gain knowledge. Moreover, fairy tales could bring moral message to the readers. Therefore, it should be used as a teaching aid for students who are learning a foreign language to be able to exercise the extensive reading.

References

정용우(1995), *한국전래 동화 (1) 도깨비 바망이*, 서울, 첫번째

정용우(1995), *한국전래 동화 (2) 바보 온달과 평강 공주*, 서울, 첫번째

정용우(1995), *한국전래 동화 (3) 나무꾼과 선녀*, 서울, 첫번째

정용우(1995), *한국전래 동화 (4) 흥부전*, 서울, 첫번째

정용우(1995), *한국전래 동화 (5) 콩쥐 팥쥐*, 서울, 첫번째

정용우(1995), *한국전래 동화 (6) 곶감과 호랑이*, 서울, 첫번째

정용우(1995), *한국전래 동화 (7) 우렁이 색시*, 서울, 첫번째

ခင်မင်၊ မောင် (ဓနဖြူ) (၁၉၉၄) စကားပြေသဘောတရား၊ စကားပြေအတတ်ပညာ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မွေးပုံနိပ်တိုက်၊ တတိယအကြိမ်။

မြန်မာစကားပြေစာတမ်းများ (ပ+ဒု) တွဲ၊ (၁၉၈၃)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန် ပုံနိပ်တိုက်၊ ပထမအကြိမ်။

Cameron, L. (2001) "*Teaching languages to young learners.*" Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Dornyei, Zoltan and Thurrell, Sarah (1995) "*Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications.*" Issues in Applied Linguistics 6, no.2.

MyanmarCommision. (2001) "*English-Myanmar Dictonary.*"Yangon.

MyintMyint Maw, Daw. (2008) "*Korean-Myanmar Dictonary.*" Yangon: SeiKuchocho Press.

Rossiter, M. (2002) "*Narrative and stories in adult teaching and learning.*"(Report No. EDO-CE-02241). Washington, DC: Education Resources Information Center.

Wingersky, J., Boerner, J. and Holguin-Balogh, D.(2009) "*Writing Paragraphs and Essays: Integrating Reading, Writing, and Grammar Skills*", 6th ed. Wadsworth Cengage.