CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This first chapter serves as the primary description that sets the nature of the present study in investigating the interpersonal meaning built in a digital interactive story book and how the interpersonal meaning can engage readers to read. It consists of background of study, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, definition of key terms and organization of thesis.

1.1.   Background of the Study

It is commonly known that reading for children particularly in their early age is very crucial.Early reading experiences can develop children's foundational skills in literacy that directly translates into later school success (Moody, 2010). Reading also prepares children to enter to personal development, and to social, economic and civic life (Holden, 2004). In spite of these aforementioned facts, some children found that reading can be really frustrating (Paris & Stahl, 2005). They still frequently give following comments when they have to read. "I hate to read" or "I never read a book"(Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006).This phenomenon becomes the apparent challenge in promoting reading activity for children.

Reading activity, particularly reading printed or traditional books in digital era is not a preferable activity. In today's digital world, they prefer to spend many more hours per day online than they do reading traditional paper books (Eisendle, C., et al., 2010; Stewart, 2012; Agosto, 2012). This situation becomes a true challenge to promote reading activity since most of their time both at home and school are accompanied by digital technology (Tsai, Pei-Shiuan & Manlai, You, 2013; Chiong, C., & C. Shuler, 2010; CouseL.J., & D. W. Chen, 2010; Willoughby, T. & Eileen W., 2008; Calvert, et.al., 2005; Downey, et.al., 2000).

Further, Chiong and Shuler (2010: 7) confirm that digital technology phenomenon has bombarded children's lives everywhere, as if there is no escape from it:

> The phenomenon was observed in grocery stores, on the subway, at shopping malls and in coffee shops. What we informally observed were children - even very young children - playing on digital devices with accessible touch screens.

On the other hand, digital technology in a form of digital storybook is able to help promoting reading engagement. Some children prefer to read digital storybooks for personal reading than traditional storybook because digital storybooks provide not only a large selection of book titles but also interactive features that catch children's attention (Jones & Brown, 2011; Doiron R. , 2011). These multimodal features in a digital storybook including verbal text, image and animation are likely to shape the way children analyze meaning delivered within a text (Eisendle, C., et.al., 2011; Mioduser, *et al.,* 2000).

The way authors and illustrators design a digital interactive storybook through the intersemiosis between image, text and animation can be considered as their way to deliver meaning. This intersemiosis or so-called multimodality offers freedom for readers for meaning making interaction (Ahmad &Baig, 2017). Each mode is employed to reach maximum effect and benefit in delivering message (Kress, 2010). While communicating, people making three kinds of meanings simultaneously including ideational, textual and interpersonal (Eggins, 2004). Among these three kinds of meanings interpersonal meaning is considered as the evidence of the engagement that is created between the represented participants and the readers (Guijarro, 2011).Through the interpersonal meaning, an author and illustrator can express how intimate he/she is with the readers by combining the available interpersonal choices (Eggins, 2004). Since the role of a narrative text in a form of digital interactive storybook is to entertain its readers, then applying a friendly or so-called as intimate relationship through the interpersonal choices can make the readers feel entertained.

However, the use of multimodal features in a digital interactive storybook can distract children from the essence of reading itself if they are not well-designed. According to Moody (2010), digital storybooks or electronic storybooks with lower quality may offer distracting digital features including animations and sounds unrelated to the story. Therefore, it is very important to investigate how to design these features for the sake of children's reading engagement for digital storybooks are proven to increase children's reading outcome (Moody, 2010; de Jong & Bus, 2002; Stewart, 2012; Jones & Brown, 2011, Matthew, 1997). Nevertheless, these previous studies on reading engagement which involve digital book have neglected the intersemiosis between image, text and animation which are employed in the digital books.

Particularly in this study, The Mouse deer and Crocodile digital interactive storybook by Qajoo Studio is chosen as the subject of this study. This digital interactive storybook also aims to entertain its readers through Indonesian folktale and fable. This book is considered as the top 10 paid application for children from Indonesia (Similar Play App Stats, 2014; iTunes Preview, 2013). Considering this fact, analyzing this digital interactive storybook is worth to do because it already has many readers. Furthermore, based on the review of the users, this digital interactive storybook has a great illustration yet they never review the other elements employed in the digital book. For further detail information of this digital storybook see section 2.6.3.

Given that those challenging facts, conducting a research to identify how the author and illustrator construct the interpersonal meaning via language, pictures and animation employed in the digital interactive storybook entitled Mouse deer and Crocodile to engage children into reading the story would be necessary. Parallel to the reasons as just mentioned, this research is aimed to investigate the interpersonal choices afforded by the creator of a digital storybook entitled "Mouse deer and Crocodile" and to observe how the interpersonal choices can engage children into reading the digital storybook.

1.2.   Research Questions

As discussed above, this study examines the interpersonal choices afforded to the writer/illustrator in creating engagement between children as the readers and the represented participants (henceforth, RPs) of a digital storybook entitled "Mouse deer and Crocodile" by Qajoo Studio. Further, this study seeks to observe the way of interpersonal choices employed in the digital interactive storybook engage children into reading.

The problem of the present study is formulated in the following research questions:

1.   How is the interpersonal meaning realized through the verbal, visual and animated elements in "Mouse deer and Crocodile" digital interactive storybook by Qajoo Studio?

2.   How does the interpersonal meaning realized through the verbal, visual and animated elements in "Mouse deer and Crocodile" digital interactive storybook by Qajoo Studio engage children into reading the digital storybook?

1.3.   Research Objectives

Based on the research questions above, this research has two objectives:

1.   To identify the interpersonal meaning which is realized through the verbal, visual and animated elements in a digital storybook by Qajoo Studio entitled "Mouse deer and Crocodile".

2.   To observe how the interpersonal meaning realized through the verbal, visual and animated elements in "Mouse deer and Crocodile" digital storybook by Qajoo Studio engages children into reading.

1.4.   Scope of the Study

There are two main cores of this current study. First, is the analysis of interpersonal choices in the digital interactive storybook entitled "Mouse deer and Crocodile" by Qajoo Studio. Second, is the observation on how interpersonal choices in the digital storybook entitled "Mouse deer and Crocodile" can engage children into reading the digital book.

In terms of theoretical foundation, the first core of this study is limited to Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Grammar, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Grammar of Visual Design and Martinec (2001, 2000) Interpersonal Resources in Action. Meanwhile, the theoretical foundation used for the second core of this study is limited to theory of engagement proposed by Jones (2009) and Fredericks, *et al.* (2004).

In terms of data, the first core of this study is limited to interpersonal choices which are realized through verbal text, images and animation in the digital interactive storybook entitled "Mouse deer and Crocodile" by Qajoo studio. In the meantime, the data obtained for the second core of this study is limited to children's behavioral and emotional engagements which are obtained through observation, interview and questionnaire. Further detail of the data collection will be explored in Chapter 3 section 3.5.

In terms of data analysis, the aforementioned data, such verbal text, images and animation in the digital storybook entitled "Mouse deer and Crocodile" by Qajoo Studio will be analyzed using Systemic Functional Grammar proposed by Halliday (2004) to describe interpersonal choice which is reflected in the verbal text. In turn, the Grammar of Visual Design proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) will be used to analyze the interpersonal choices reflected in the visual mode including images. Then, the Interpersonal Resources in Action

proposed by Martinec (2000, 2001) will be used to analyze the interpersonal choices which are reflected in the animated element.

1.5. Significance of the Study

It is expected that this research will have significance at least in three different aspects that are theory, practice and policy. However, due to the limitation of this study, there are only two aspects that become the significant points of this study.

There are two theoretical significant points that are expected from this current research. First, it is hoped that this research will impart a contribution to the effort of understanding the importance of interpersonal choices in children's literature. Second, it is hoped that more choices and perspectives of the topics in the research applying Systemic Functional Grammar as the analytical tool to uncover the interpersonal meaning in children's literature.

In a practical perspective, this research will be beneficial particularly to the researcher herself, parents and the digital storybook' script writer. First, this study will give guidance for teachers in making decision which reading materials is suitable for children. Second, this study is hoped to help parents who are concerned with the effort of engaging children into reading digital storybook. Third, this study is hoped to give a better understanding for the digital storybook's script writer on arranging semiotic modes in the digital storybook for children.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

There are some key terms to understand the essence of this present research. The definitions of those key terms are illustrated below:

1. Reading engagement: it is the way readers connecting with the text which in turns make readers motivated to read for pleasure, knowledgeable in their construction of meaning from text and socially interactive while reading (Guthrie, *et al.*¸1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie, *et al*., 2004; Brozo, W.G., 2007)

2. Interpersonal meaning: it refers to the meaning exchanged by the interactants in the communicative interaction. It is also concerned with enacting social relationship between the illustrator/writer, represented participants, readers in a specific text (Guijarro, 2011; Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 2004)

3. Visual grammar: it refers to a set of socially constructed resources for the construction of meaning via visual images (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)

4. Digital interactive storybook: it is a digital form of a book with features similar to those of a traditional print book including pages that "turn" and digital features that can assist the reader such as text-to-speech options, and hypermedia (e.g., animations and sound) (Paciga, 2011; Verhallen & Bus, 2009)

1.7.   Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters with the description as follow:

1. Chapter 1 covers background of study, aims of study, research questions, significance of the study, clarification of terms and organization of thesis.

2. Chapter 2 covers categories of literature reviews comprised the general concept of reading, the process of teaching reading to children, the literature review of children's reading engagement including definition, factors and dimension of reading engagement, the general concept of systemic function linguistics including interpersonal meaning in verbal

7

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7

mode, visual mode, and animation mode, a brief explanation of multimodal discourse analysis, the criteria for selecting children's book, also an overview of digital interactive storybook, the connection between all variables employed in this study in a framework of communication and previous studies.

3. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of collecting and analyzing the data, including the design, participants, data collection techniques and analysis.

4. Chapter 4 discusses the findings and discussion of the obtained data from digital interactive storybook in terms of the interpersonal meaning constructed in verbal, visual and animation which are triangulated with observation, interview and questionnaire.

5. Chapter 5, the last, present the conclusion of the study and some recommendations for improving children's reading engagement by using digital interactive storybook in EFL contexts and for further study.