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The Readability of the Indonesian Translation of English Storybook's Lexis: A Perspective from the Adults Vs. Children Readers

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ABSTRACT

Children's storybook translation requires special attention to the linguistic aspects due to the cognitive development and prior literacy of the target readers. This study aimed to explore how the types of lexis—congruent and incongruent—in the children's storybook translation influences the readability of the text viewed by the dual perspectives; they were adults and children's readers. This research was a case study that employed a qualitative paradigm to explore how the lexis used in translated text affected the readability of the text by incorporating Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the primary analytical framework, focusing on the translation of lexis from English to Indonesian. This study revealed that the SFL framework could be employed as an approach to investigate the linguistic aspect of the children's storybook translation through the lexicon. By the symbolization process that resulted in congruent and incongruent lexis, this study showed that the children's storybook translator had attempted to reduce the number of incongruent lexis distribution from ST into TT (from 384 to 252). The shifting of incongruent lexis into congruent lexis made the lexis more explicit and concrete in the meaning-making. The integration of SFL with a dual-perspective readability assessment contributes an innovation and insights to conduct future relevant research in the translation studies. This study also reinforces the importance of the role of children's literature translators to own not only the linguistic competence but also the developmental sensitivity in translating text to be semantically accurate and cognitively accessible.

Keywords: Readability; Lexis; Children's Storybook Translation; Adult Experts; Children's Readers

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1. Introduction

Children's storybook translation requires special attention to the linguistic aspects due to the cognitive development and prior literacy of the target readers. This process demands that the translator ensure that the translated text is both engaging and comprehensible to the children's readers. The engagement and comprehensibility of the text are closely affected by its readability, a multifaceted concept that encompasses lexical density, grammatical intricacy, and the overall ease with which a text can be read and understood ^[1,2]. Several ways to reach the readability were done by adapting the complex themes and wordplay without losing the essence of the original text, simplifying language while maintaining the narrative's integrity, finding creative ways to translate idioms and puns into the target language (TL) ^[3,4]. Various translation techniques, such as amplification, explicitation, and modulation, also could significantly impact the readability of the translated texts ^[5,6], although sometimes the explicitation could lead to verbosity and deviations from the intended reading level ^[5].

There are many children's translated storybooks that are lexically unsuitable for the level of children's linguistic development resulting in difficulties in the readability and comprehensibility. That is due to several factors impacting the translation process. First, the translators often deal with translating specific cultural and linguistic terms that do not have a direct equivalent in the TL. Thus, they are required to choose either using strategies that belong to foreignization or domestication ^[7,8]. Second, the translators must consider the children's linguistic competence and cognitive development which are frequently imperfect yet. Thus, the use of complex nominal groups, complex and inappropriate lexis, abstraction, and technicality can inhibit the children's comprehensibility ^[9–12]. Therefore, it is important for the translators to apply the right strategies and sensitivity in dealing with the needs of the children's readers such as cultural adaptation and linguistic simplification to ensure that the translated text remains accessible and understandable by children ^[3,13]. The children's storybook translation requires a careful and creative approach to overcome various linguistic and cultural challenges.

In dealing with the linguistic simplification to gain the children's readability, a Systemic Functional Linguis-

tics (SFL) can be used to identify the lexis used in the text. Lexis is defined as a crucial component of the lexicogrammar, which is the combined system of vocabulary and grammar that functions together to create meaning in language. It is not only seen as a collection of words but also a resource for meaning-making to realize communicative events within a context ^[14,15]. In regard to the text readability, lexis contributes to the textual meaning that realizes the physical or social reality with its symbols in a text. This leads to characteristics of the language style used either spoken, written, or having a tendency to spoken or written ^[11,16]. Thus, it has a strong impact on the characteristics of the target readers towards the language style of the text.

In SFL, lexis is often associated with content words as a fundamental resource of meaning-making. They provide the necessary information to understand the message being conveyed ^[17,18]. They are the symbolic reality in the form of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that represent the physical or social reality. This symbolization can be done in two ways, either directly or indirectly contributing to the congruent and incongruent lexis ^[11]. Congruent lexis is a language form that directly represents experience or meaning with its symbols without using any grammatical metaphors or other indirect forms ^[19,20]. Meanwhile, incongruent lexis is a language form that indirectly represents experience with its symbols. It contains grammatical metaphor, abstraction, and technicality that make the meaning more dense and complex ^[11,20,21]. By focusing on the lexis, this approach can be employed to identify and investigate the shifts of lexis in the translation and evaluate its impacts on the readability from the perspective of adult and child readers.

This study combined SFL-based linguistic analysis with readability evaluation from two perspective—adults as the expert evaluators and children as the primary target readers—by considering the cultural context and reading habits. This study underlines the necessity of taking into account the children's developmental characteristics and preferences in the readability evaluation ^[22]. SFL provides a tool to analyze the text which is supported by the multimodal elements by highlighting the correlation of cultural context, discourse semantics, and lexicogrammatical resources that build up the meaning aligning with the purpose, target readers, and sociocultural context ^[23]. The SFL

approach, on the other hand, also enables a depth analysis towards thematic structure and thematic status in a text that can help improve the readability for the children through some strategies, such as the addition of explicit conjunctions and explicit identity chains^[24]. By combining the perspectives of adults and children, also considering the cultural context, this study not only improves the readability but also relevancy and readers' involvement, which is a crucial aspect in contemporary literacy^[25–27]. The experts can provide insights into the technical aspects of translation, such as the use of appropriate lexical and grammatical structures, while child readers can offer feedback on the overall enjoyment and comprehensibility of the story^[28]. Previous research has highlighted the importance of considering the actual readers' expectations and experiences, as these can differ significantly from those of the implied readers^[28] due to the fact that most studies focus on readability models and techniques without distinguishing between different reader groups^[1,2,29]. This approach, therefore, shows potential to be implemented in various contexts of education and culture, making it innovative and valuable in the field of literacy and linguistic research.

This study aimed to explore how the types of lexis—congruent and incongruent—in the children's storybook translation influence the readability of the text. The shifts of the lexis types from the source text (ST) and target text (TT) are also investigated to see how they impact the readability from two perspectives of adults and children's readers. In this context, understanding the use of lexis in the translated text takes a significant role in determining how easily and effectively the children can comprehend the content of the text. By analyzing the lexis, this study attempts to identify the elements that can enhance and inhibit the text readability, as well as how the lexis shifting from ST to TT influences the interpretation and comprehensibility of the children's readers. The results of this study are expected to give a deeper insight into the importance of choosing the right lexis in the TT. Thus, it can help support the development of reading materials which are more appropriate and beneficial to the children.

Considering the importance of the translation quality in support of the children's literacy and cultural value transfer, a deeper understanding of lexical aspects and readability becomes crucial in developing effective and

inclusive children's storybook translation. The quality of a good translated text not only ensures that the meaning from the ST is transferred accurately to the TT, but also takes part in shaping children's ways to understand and internalize the values within the story through the choice of lexis. Therefore, a research and development which focuses on these aspects will help produce the children's book translation which is not only attractive and readable, but also can enrich the children's literacy experience and introduce them to a variety of the existing culture. This is also expected to support the children's intellectual and emotional growth, build up a bridge to intercultural knowledge through high quality literacy as well.

2. Materials and Methods

This research was a case study that employed qualitative paradigm to explore how the lexis used in translated text affected the readability of the text, as viewed by perspectives of adults and children readers. This study applied Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the primary analytical framework by focusing on the translation of lexis from English to Indonesian.

The data were sourced from the English children's storybook "A Man on the Seat of Justice", which was translated into Indonesian as "*Di Kursi Pengadilan*". This book was selected due to its linguistic complexity and its intended readership. The original English version, intended for Level 4 readers, contains approximately 1,500 words and features a sophisticated narrative aimed at children with advanced reading abilities. Meanwhile, in the Indonesian version, this book was adjusted and classified at an intermediate level (*semenjana*), targeting children capable of independent reading without the need for adult assistance. Through a content analysis, a total of 1373 lexis in the source text (ST) were identified as analyzed data, comprising 1016 of congruent lexis and 357 of incongruent lexis.

To validate the data, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with three adult readers who also had expertise in translation studies and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Through this FGD, they also validated the components of congruent and incongruent lexis both in the source text (ST) and target text (TT). This was done to gain the perspectives of the adults' readers afterwards.

They investigated how the translation of the lexis and its impact on the readability of the Indonesian translated text. These experts also provided critical feedback on the trans-

lation shifts and the overall effect on the readability. The instrument for assessing the readability quality (**Table 1**) was adopted from Nababan et al. 's model ^[6,30].

Table 1. The readability assessment instrument.

Translation Category	Score	Qualitative Parameters
High readability	3	The words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences, or translation text can be understood easily by the readers.
Medium readability	2	In general, the translation text is understood by the readers, however there are certain parts that must be read more than once by readers to understand.
Low readability	1	The readers cannot understand the translation.

Meanwhile, to gain the perspectives from the target readers, the readability testing was conducted on three (3) Indonesian students ranging from 11 – 13 years old to adjust the book's suitability for intermediate level in the context of Indonesian children's readers. The testing was conducted at a separate time that lasted 1 – 2 hours for each participant to gather thorough data. Those students had different backgrounds of living and schooling. They also had different interests in reading habits, from not

very interested, moderately interested, and very interested (**Table 2**). They were then asked to read the Indonesian translated text while also assessing their understanding of the lexis. This was in line with the utilization of Skopos theory, which emphasized the importance of the target readers' selection. It could ensure the translated text was appropriate for children as the target readers. This involved understanding the target readers' age, education level, and cultural context ^[31,32].

Table 2. The profile of children's readers.

Name	Age (year-old)	Grade	Reading Interest	Living Area	Schooling Area
Student A	12	VI	Low	Rural	City
Student B	12	V	High	City	City
Student C	11	V	Moderate	Rural	Rural

In the end, it could be said that this research employed methodological triangulation to ensure the data validity and trustworthiness by integrating perspectives from expert evaluators and target readers. This analytical and experiential approach could reveal the understanding of how translated lexis influenced the reader's perception and cognitive accessibility.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained in accordance with institutional guidelines. Parental consent was secured for all child participants, and anonymity was maintained throughout the data presentation. All participants were informed of their rights and were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point.

3. Results

The results of this study explored how the English

lexis were investigated then how they were translated into Indonesian. In relation to the type of lexis, which was congruent and incongruent, it was investigated whether or not there were any shifts of the types after being translated; how it impacted the readability of the translated text; and how the adults' and children's perspectives on the text readability differed.

3.1. Lexis

Lexis in SFL was viewed as a word used to realize a social verbal process or a text. As its function is to make meanings in the text, lexis can not be defined apart from the context. In this section, lexis was seen from the textual meaning viewpoint, in which the process of symbolizing the physical or social reality into linguistic world could be done in two ways, congruent and incongruent realization system.

Congruent lexis was derived from the direct and transparent process of realization from the physical and social reality into the same symbolic reality. Meanwhile, incongruent lexis was obtained from the indirect and un-transparent process of realization from the physical and social reality into its symbol. This section elaborated on how the congruent and incongruent lexis were distributed in the source text (ST) and target text (TT). At last, this section also explained how the shifts happened and impacted the form of the lexis.

3.1.1. English Lexis in the ST

In the ST, there were a total of 1373 lexis found.

Table 3. The distribution of English lexis.

Source Text	Congruent	Incongruent	Total
	989	384	1373

The data of the congruent lexis was shown in these samples.

Datum 001/ST/Lex/Cong/V

They **shared** their farm-work.

The lexis **shared** represented a process or activity that was realized into a verb. This symbolization was direct and transparent. Thus, this lexis belonged to congruent lexis.

Datum 004/ST/Lex/Cong/N

They also shared their **money**.

The lexis **money** represented a thing that was realized into a noun as the symbol. This symbolization was direct and transparent. Thus, this lexis belonged to congruent lexis.

Datum 006/ST/Lex/Cong/Adj

Unshakable **mutual** trust was the basis of their relationship.

The lexis **mutual** represented a condition that was realized into an adjective as the symbol. This symbolization was direct and transparent. Thus, this lexis belonged to congruent lexis.

Datum 035/ST/Lex/Cong/Adv

Algu had served his teacher **diligently**, had scrubbed dishes and washed cups.

The lexis **diligently** represented a circumstance of manner that was realized into an adverb as the symbol.

After being analyzed, it was found that 989 of them belonged to congruent lexis, while the rest of them, 384 belonged to incongruent lexis (**Table 3**). By knowing this, it could be interpreted that the writer of the ST had attempted to meet the criteria of children's book writing. The number of congruent lexis was higher than the incongruent lexis. This made the children's reader think more concretely because of the direct symbolization of the physical and social reality into the same/congruent symbols. However, the number of incongruencies, particularly, needed to be further investigated; how then the translator dealt with them in the TT regarding the children's cognition as the target readers.

This symbolization was direct and transparent. Thus, this lexis belonged to congruent lexis.

Meanwhile, the data of the incongruent lexis were shown in these samples.

Datum 002/ST/Lex/Incong/NP

They shared their **farm-work**.

The lexis **farm-work** combined two words that could be classified as a noun phrase rather than a noun. The lexis farm-work was an indirect symbol due to its combination of two nouns that made it more abstract. The combination was used to describe a type of work related to farming activities which aligned with the characteristics of a noun phrase ^[33,34]. In addition, the word 'work' as the head noun also represented the indirect symbolization. The word 'work' actually represented a process in physical reality, but in this context, it was symbolized with a noun. Thus, it aligned with the incongruent lexis. To make it more congruent, the clause could be changed into "They worked their farm together".

Datum 005/ST/Lex/Incong/Adj

Unshakable mutual trust was the basis of their relationship.

The lexis **unshakable** was considered incongruent lexis due to its indirect symbolization. The lexis 'unshakable' was primarily derived from a process of 'shake' which is supposed to be symbolized in a verb. However, in

this clause, the lexis ‘unshakable’ symbolized a metaphorical adjective that represented a more abstract description of the head noun ‘trust’ that adds a layer of abstraction and complexity to the meaning^[35,36]. Thus, this lexicon belonged to incongruent one. To make it more congruent, it could be changed into “Their trust was firm.” The lexis ‘firm’ represented a condition that was symbolized directly in an adjective.

Datum 007/008/009/ST/Lex/Incong/N

Unshakable mutual **trust** was the **basis** of their **relationship**.

There were three incongruent lexis in this clause. The lexis ‘trust’ that actually represented a process but then symbolized with a noun. The lexis ‘basis’ that also realized a process but it was symbolized with a noun. The same case of the lexis ‘relationship’ that also represented a series of processes making relation which was symbolized into an abstraction. Thus, it was included in incongruent lexis.

Datum 011/ST/Lex/Incong/Coll

When Jumman went for *hajj* he **left his house in the care of** Algu.

As mentioned previously, lexis could not be separated with the context in the meaning-making. This datum showed that the lexis ‘left in the care of’ was a collocation, a combination of words which frequently occur together that could not be chopped to every single word to get the contextual meaning. This resulted in a layer of abstraction besides the existence of the word ‘care’ within. It represented a process that was supposed to be symbolized in a verb instead of a noun. This collocation indeed was included in incongruent lexis within the framework of SFL due to its specific lexical choices that convey complex relational meanings, its contextual dependency, and its role in systemic choices and lexical patterns.

Datum 027/ST/Lex/Incong/Idiom

Their friendship **took root** when they were children

and Jumman’s venerable father Jumrati used to teach them.

The same as collocation, the lexis ‘took root’ in this datum was an idiom that was also context-dependent in the meaning-making. The lexis “took root” conveys the idea of establishing a deep, lasting connection or foundation, particularly in the context of friendship. This figurative meaning was not directly derived from the words “took” and “root” which, when considered separately, did not imply the same relational depth. The idiom’s inclusion in incongruent lexis stems from its unique ability to encapsulate a complex emotional and social experience that could not be easily substituted with other phrases without losing its intended meaning.

Datum 153/ST/Lex/Incong/PV

Poor khala was **reduced to** suffering taunts almost daily.

The lexis ‘reduced to’ was a phrasal verb that contained polysemy which might have more than one meaning depending on the context. The combination of verb and particle was often random and unpredictable and contained idiomatic meaning. The meaning was untransparent and noncompositional, which was hard to understand without any specific idiomatic knowledge especially for English language learners^[37–39]. This analysis brought the phrasal verb lexis into incongruent lexis.

3.1.2. Indonesian Lexis in the TT

There were a total of 1251 lexis found in the TT. Compared to the total amount of lexis in the ST, there was a reduction lexis in the process of translation. The total amount of congruent lexis increased to 999, while the total amount of incongruent lexis decreased to 252 (Table 4). By seeing this distribution, it could be seen that there was an effort to adapt and adjust the translation to be well understood by the target readers throughout the congruent lexis composition.

Table 4. The distribution of Indonesian lexis.

Target Text	Congruent	Incongruent	Total
	999	252	1251

The data of the Indonesian congruent lexis were shown in these samples.

Datum 001/TT/Lex/Cong/Adv

Mereka bertani bersama.

The lexis **bersama** represented a circumstance of doing something together that was realized into a verb. This symbolization was direct and transparent. Thus, this lexis belonged to congruent lexis.

Datum 002/TT/Lex/Cong/V

Mereka **bertani** bersama.

The lexis **bertani** realized an activity in a farm which was included in a process in physical reality. It was symbolized with a verb that indicated a congruent symbolization. Hence, it was included in congruent lexis.

Datum 015/TT/Lex/Cong/N

Setiap kali Algu pergi, ia pun menitipkan **rumahnya** kepada Jumman.

The lexis **rumah** realized a thing, a building that has a concrete physical appearance to go home. Thus, it was symbolized in a noun which was direct or congruent between the physical reality and its symbol.

Datum 018/TT/Lex/Cong/Adj

Mereka tidak makan bersama setiap hari, mereka juga tidak menganut agama yang **sama**, tetapi mereka memiliki pemikiran yang **sama**.

The lexis **sama** indicated an identical condition to describe a thing. It was realized with an adjective where it was direct and transparent symbolization. Thus, it belonged to congruent lexis.

Meanwhile, the samples of incongruent lexis in the TT were shown as follows.

Datum 005/TT/Lex/Incong/Adj

Rasa saling percaya yang **tak tergoyahkan** adalah dasar dari hubungan mereka.

The lexis **tak tergoyahkan** was derived from the word *goyah* which meant ‘shake’, representing an activity or a process that is supposed to be symbolized into a

verb. However, in this context the lexis ‘*tak tergoyahkan*’ transformed into an adjective that described a condition of a thing. Thus, it underwent an incongruent symbolization. This somehow could make a reader especially a child to think more abstractly about what it was like.

Datum 007/008/009/TT/Lex/Incong/N

Rasa saling percaya yang tak tergoyahkan adalah dasar dari hubungan mereka.

Three incongruent lexis were found in this clause. The lexis **rasa percaya** represented a process of feeling a trust but then symbolized with a noun. Meanwhile, the lexis **dasar** in this context was a series of process that underlies a thought/ an idea or could be called a technicality, a process of naming physical or social reality through a nominalization ^[11]. Thus, it was symbolized with a noun. The same case of the lexis **hubungan** that also represented a series of process making relation which was symbolized into an abstraction through nominalization. Thus, it was included in incongruent lexis. Most of the incongruent lexis found in the Indonesian target text happened in this way. Most of them were symbolized in a noun through nominalization both in abstraction and technicality.

3.1.3. The Shifts of the Lexis

As aforementioned in the previous section, there was a change on the number of congruent and incongruent lexis from the ST to TT. It indicated that there were shifts on the lexical forms that happened during the translation process. The shifts happened frequently with the amount of 334, whereas the non-shifting happened 1039 times. See **Table 5**.

Table 5. The distribution of lexis shifts from ST to TT.

Shifts	No Shifts	Total Number of Lexis
334	1039	1373

The data showed that the shifts mostly happened in the form of incongruent lexis in the ST to congruent lexis in the TT.

Example:

Datum 002/Shift/Incong-cong/N-V

ST: They shared their **farm-work**.

TT: Mereka **bertani** bersama.

Datum 011/Shift/Incong-cong/Coll-V

ST: When Jumman went for *haji* he **left his house in the care of** Algu.

TT: Ketika Jumman pergi haji, ia **menitipkan** *rumahnya* kepada Algu.

Datum 013/Shift/Incong-cong/PV-V

ST: And whenever Algu **went away**, he left his

house in the care of Jumman.

TT: *Setiap kali Algu pergi, ia pun menitipkan rumahnya kepada Jumman.*

Datum 027/Shift/Incong-cong/Idiom-V

ST: Their friendship **took root** when they were children and Jumman's venerable father Jumrati used to teach them.

TT: *Persahabatan mereka bermula ketika mereka masih kanak-kanak.*

Datum 050/Shift/Incong-cong/AdjP-Adj

ST: Algu's father was an **old-fashioned** school man.

TT: *Ayah Algu memiliki pandangan yang kolot terhadap pendidikan.*

Nevertheless, the shift also happened from the changing of the form congruent lexis in the ST into incongruent lexis in the TT as shown in the following datum.

Datum 051/052/Shift/Cong-incong/N-N

ST: Algu's father was an old-fashioned **school man**.

TT: *Ayah Algu memiliki pandangan yang kolot terhadap pendidikan.*

The shift also could happen when the incongruent lexis in the ST was not translated at all in the TT.

Datum 074/Shift/Incong-none/N-none

ST: So, in case Algu does not benefit from the grace or company of his teacher Jumrati Sheikh, he would console himself by holding that he had left no stone unturned in the **quest** for education for his son but if the boy was destined to have no education, how would he have acquired it?

TT: *Jadi, jika Algu tidak mendapat restu dari gurunya, Jumrati Sheikh, ayah Algu akan menghibur dirinya sendiri dengan mengatakan bahwa ia sudah melakukan segala upaya demi pendidikan anaknya.*

The translation of the incongruent lexis **quest** was omitted in the TT.

The omission also happened to the congruent lexis in the ST that was not translated in the TT as shown in the example.

Datum 104/Shift/Cong-none/Adj-none

ST: From the postman and constable of the area to the peon at the **local** revenue office, everyone desired his grace.

TT: *Dari tukang pos dan polisi hingga petugas di kantor pajak, semua orang menginginkan berkat darinya.*

The translation of the congruent lexis **local** was omitted in the TT.

On the other hand, the no-shifting form happened also during the translation process. This no-shifting could be in the form of congruent to congruent or incongruent to incongruent. The samples are shown below.

Datum 003/004/Noshift/Cong-Cong

ST: They also **shared** their **money**.

TT: *Mereka juga berbagi uang bersama.*

Datum 007/008/009/Noshift/Incong-Incong

ST: Unshakable mutual **trust** was the **basis** of their **relationship**.

TT: *Rasa saling percaya yang tak tergoyahkan adalah dasar dari hubungan mereka.*

3.2. Readability of the Target Text

The option of shifting or no-shifting was absolutely the decision-making of the translator to reach the readability of the text, particularly to the target readers—the children. However, the nature of the translator who was an adult sometimes interfered the cognitive knowledge to produce the lexis in the target text. Definitely, a children's book translation needs a person who is not only good at looking for the equivalent meaning but also the style; the linguistics style of the children that seek the concrete lexis, which is congruent in the physical or social reality and the symbol. This section compared how the readability of the Indonesian translation text is viewed from the adults' and children's perspectives by focusing on the lexis in the TT.

3.2.1. Adults' Perspectives

Three adult readers were chosen by the criteria that they had an expertise in the translation and Systemic Functional Linguistics studies. They investigated through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) towards the lexis in the ST and TT that lasted for three days. Considering with the findings of congruent and incongruent lexis in the ST then the shifts and no-shifts to produce the lexis in the TT that turned into congruent or incongruent, the adults finally decided the score into 2,82. This score indicated that the book was easy to understand. The score was taken from the formula of,

$$\text{Readability score} = \frac{(3 \times 1250) + (2 \times 1) + (1 \times 122)}{1373} = 2,82$$

(Good)

Most of the data with the amount of 1250, they scored in 3, which meant 'high readability'. They resulted this from the interventions that were made; such as shifting incongruent lexis into congruent, shifting congruent lexis into incongruent, and no shifting neither from congruent to congruent nor incongruent to incongruent.

However, there was 1 datum shown in the Datum 001/Noshift/Cong-Cong that was scored with 2 for the sake of semantic redundancy. This datum is meant to have 'medium reliability

ST: They also **shared** their money.

TT: Mereka juga **berbagi** uang **bersama**.

The addition of the word **bersama** which meant showing togetherness, though it was congruent, it made redundancy on the meaning when combined with **berbagi**. The word **berbagi** already meant doing something with other people. Thus, this made an overlap in the meaning. The translation into 'Mereka berbagi uang' was more accepted and readable.

Nonetheless, there were 122 data scored as 1 which meant 'low readability'. This was the impact of reduction technique where the congruent or incongruent lexis were not translated into anything. It was left none. Since there was nothing to read as the result of the translation, it resulted in the 'low readability' by the adults' readers.

3.2.2. Children's Perspectives

Considering the nature of the children that read the storybook for enjoyment, the technique used to obtain data was done through readability testing. The in-depth interviews to three children were done in separate time that lasted for 2 hours for each. Each of children was asked their understanding towards every single data and confirmed towards their answers to check that they did understand the lexis.

The range of readability parameters was also adapted from Nababan, et al.'s model^[30]. When the children understood the lexis then they could explain the meaning of the lexis, the quality of the lexis readability was high (3). But, when the children recognized the lexis due to the familiarity of the lexis, but they could not explain the lexis properly; thus, score of lexis readability was medium (2). Additionally, when they did not know at all the lexis because of their first time met the lexis; they had no idea with them,

then the score of lexis readability was low (1). This low readability was also applied to the adults' perspectives. The shifts that produced no translation due to the reduction technique dropped the score into low readability (1). The data from children's perspectives were elaborated one by one due to their personal narratives.

a. Child 1

Child 1 was a 12 year-old girl in the sixth grade of a private elementary school in a city area. She was not really keen on reading literary books. When she was confirmed to several lexis, she did not know how to explain, and even she did not know some of them because of unfamiliarity with the lexis. Based on these issues, the overall score of readability in the child 1's point of view was 2,68.

The lexis belonged to congruent were frequently easily understood by her such as the lexis of *bertani* (Datum 002), *uang* (Datum 004), *salang* (Datum 006), *sama* (Datum 018). They symbolized physical reality congruently with the symbol reality. This congruent symbolization made her think concretely and directly to the mentioned lexis. Thus, that made it easy for her to understand the meaning. When confirmed, she could also explain the meaning of the lexis appropriately.

However, there were also some congruent lexis that she quite doubted of the meanings. Thus, they made it hard for her to explain. The lexis were *menganut* (Datum 017), *rami* (Datum 283), *rentenir* (Datum 451), *dengan tak acuh* (Datum 551). Although they were congruent lexis that were supposed to be direct in the symbolization, the Child 1 still found them quite hard to explain. The infrequency of her exposure with those lexis dropped the readability into 2 which was moderate readability.

Even, there were also some congruent lexis that she never heard before, such as *kolot* (Datum 050), *kapulaga* (Datum 349), *berkelit* (Datum 510), *raib* (Datum 1041). Her exposure on reading never met those lexis. Then she had no idea of them.

The incongruent lexis, on the other hand, drove her frequently to the score 2 (moderate readability). She found them hard to explain the meanings of the lexis such as *tergoyahkan* (Datum 005), *rasa percaya* (Datum 007), *dasar* (Datum 008), *hubungan* (Datum 009). And some of them scored with 1 because of no exposure with them such as *panitera* (Datum 093), *akta jual beli* (Datum 096),

hiruk-pikuk (Datum 393), *kenistaan* (Datum 712). However, despite that she dropped the scores into 2 or 1 in readability, there were some incongruent lexis that she understood easily when she found them, for instance *pemikiran* (Datum 023), *rahasia* (Datum 024), *persahabatan* (Datum 025), *pendidikan* (Datum 051). Though they were incongruent, she could still understand them because of the frequent emergence in her cognitive background. In the end when being asked to retell the story, this child could not deliver the story fluently.

b. *Child 2*

Child 2 was a 12-year-old girl living in a city area and studying at a public elementary school. She loved reading novel especially on teen literature. Her interest in reading affected the language exposure she gained. From her perspective, the quality of the text readability was 2,75.

The congruent lexis helped them a lot to understand the text easily. Most of them were scored in 3 that meant she understood and could explain the meanings easily, for instance on the lexis of *guru* (Datum 055), *pernah* (Datum 056), *mengatakan* (Datum 057), *penting* (Datum 064). The direct symbolization made it easy for her to think of the concrete idea. There was only 1 datum of congruent lexis that drove her into score 2. Though she ever recognized it, she did not know the exact meaning of the lexis. It was shown on the lexis *rentenir* (Datum 451). The score 1 which had the low readability was found on the congruent lexis that she never found before, such as *kolot* (Datum 050), *rami* (Datum 283), *kapulaga* (Datum 349), *berkelit* (Datum 510).

On the other hand, the incongruent lexis did make it hard for her to explain even sometimes the meaning they elaborated was not exactly suitable to the intended meaning though she ever found them. This frequently happened and finally made the score into 2 that meant moderate readability. The sample of the data shown such as *restu* (Datum 065), *berkat* (Datum 083), *pajak* (Datum 105), *pengetahuan* (Datum 113). They mostly happened in the form of abstraction, technicality, and nominalization. These made her think abstractly because of indirect symbolization. But if she read as a whole text, she could still understand the meanings by guessing the context of the story.

Some of the incongruent lexis also could fall into 1 which meant low readability because of their unfamiliari-

ty. It was shown such as in the lexis of *berkompromi* (Datum 519), *moral* (Datum 676), *kemerosotan* (Datum 677), *kepala dingin* (Datum 809). Datum 519 though, it seemed to be direct symbolization in the verb form, this lexis was previously driven from a technical process of 'compromise'. This lexis was borrowed from English to symbolize an agreement that was made by two parties in which each party offers some of the things they want to be dealt with so both of the parties have mutual benefits. Due to the first experience of knowing those lexis, she had no idea of them.

However, the incongruent lexis could also drove her with high readability. Some of the samples were shown in these lexis; *tak tergoyahkan* (Datum 005), *rasa percaya* (Datum 007), *dasar* (Datum 008), *hubungan* (Datum 009). She could understand those lexis easily by knowing that she frequently found those lexis in the reading books she ever read.

c. *Child 3*

Child 3 was a 11-year-old boy of a fifth grader of a public elementary school in a rural area. He loved reading especially on the academic textbooks, fables, and folklores. By his background, he made this storybook to be scored in 2,69 of readability quality.

His understanding was easily grasped by the frequent portion of congruent lexis distribution. This was simply a congruency of physical reality and symbol that made him think concretely to the meanings. It was shown by these samples, for instance *bersama* (Datum 001), *bertani* (Datum 002), *uang* (Datum 004), *sama* (Datum 18). His exposure to these congruent lexis made him easy to identify the meanings.

Nevertheless, there were also some of the congruent lexis that he did not feel sure with the meanings though he ever found them. This dropped the scoring into 2 as moderate readability. The samples were *dipindahnamakan* (Datum 140), *stabil* (Datum 708), *jurang* (Datum 711), *merauang* (Datum 1161). He attempted to guess the meaning by seeing the context of the text that sometimes less accurate though he ever found the lexis before.

His clueless knowledge on the unfamiliar congruent lexis he ever found that made him hard to know the meaning. Thus, it dropped the scoring into 1 (low readability). It was shown as in the lexis of *kolot* (Datum 050), *malang*

(Datum 152), *tandus* (Datum 164), *angkuh* (Datum 1211). This was probably caused by his literacy exposure.

Meanwhile, in the incongruent lexis, most of the lexis were scored in 2 in terms of its readability. It was shown by these sample data; *dasar* (Datum 008), *hubungan* (Datum 009), *berkat* (Datum 060), *gagasan* (Datum 082). The abstraction and nominalization made him think in an abstract way because of the incongruent symbolization.

The technicality in the incongruent lexis also could drop his readability scoring into 1 (low). This was caused by the unfamiliarity of those lexis, such as *panitera* (Datum 093), *akta jual beli* (Datum 096), *pajak* (Datum 105), *pas-*

al-pasal (Datum 602). He had not been exposed yet with those lexis.

However, there were also still the incongruent lexis that were easily understood by him. He recognized the meaning because of his familiarity with those lexis. They were *permasalahan* (Datum 603), *pertanyaan* (Datum 606), *pukulan* which meant psychological attack (Datum 607), *perubahan* (Datum 612).

In summary, the children's perspectives towards the Indonesian text readability could be drawn in the **Table 6**. From it, the overall average of quality from the children's perspective was 2,71.

Table 6. The readability quality from children's perspectives.

Name	Readability Quality
Child 1	2,68
Child 2	2,75
Child 3	2,69
Average	2,71

4. Discussion

The translation process from English (ST) to Indonesian language (TT) showed a significant shifting in the lexical realization, particularly the shifts from incongruent to congruent lexis. From 1373 lexis identified in the ST, there were 334 cases (24,3%) underwent lexical shifting, with majority involving the transformation of incongruent forms of the ST to be the more congruent structure in the TT. The congruent realizations are more typically found in the spoken language style and reading text addressed to children as the registers^[40]. They tend to represent the experience as physical or social reality more direct and concrete.

In the SFL, this typical shifting can be seen as an intentional simplicity to improve the readability, especially for children's readers. Their cognitive development supports more on the meanings which are concrete and experiential^[41]. The act of changing grammatical metaphor to be a clause reflects a translator's adaptive strategy to suit the cognitive load with the linguistic capacity of the target readers. The lexicogrammar in the SFL is very contextual, in which the congruent lexis is more easily accessed by the young readers^[42]. In this study, for example, the lexis

'left in the care of' which was contextually a collocation, was translated into '*menitipkan*'. It meant more direct to the symbolization from the physical reality. This strategy reduced the syntactic complexity but kept preserving the semantic meaning by making it more explicit.

The reduction on the amount of incongruent lexis (from 384 in ST into 252 in the TT) demonstrated a conscious effort to adapt the text to be more readable to the target readers. The translation addressed to children as the registers tends to 'domesticate' the source text^[43]. Changing the abstract and technical terms to be daily lexis are aimed to keep the readers' understandability and involvement.

The readability analysis revealed a complex interaction between lexical congruency and readers' understandability, either the adults or children. The adults, who owned more advanced cognitive and linguistic ability, gave the average of readability score 2,82. It indicated that the translated text was 'highly readable', which meant that it was very easily understood by them. Meanwhile, the children, though they had various level of reading interest and background, gave the average of readability score 2,71. It was lower than the adults' assessment. It indicated that in general the readability was 'good', though there were

some challenges in the understanding.

In the perspective of pedagogical linguistic, the congruent lexis in the TT such as *bertani*, *uang*, *rumah* enable direct symbolization to the physical reality, which aligns with Piaget's cognitive development theory, stating that children with the age of 10–12 years old are on the concrete operational stage^[44]. They start to think logically about the concrete events but still lack of abstract concept or hypothesis. This stage directly influences how the language is processed and understood. The language learning for children is more effective using concrete and contextual language than the abstract expressions^[45].

However, throughout the depth-interview with children in this study, it was found an important issue related to lexical familiarity. The congruent lexis such as *kolot* and *kapulaga* was assessed 'low readability' by the children because of their unfamiliarity. The frequency and vocabulary exposure are the stronger predictors to comprehensibility compared to the linguistic simplicity itself^[46].

Likewise, in some incongruent lexis such as *tak tergoyahkan* and *rasa percaya*, though structurally they were abstract and indirect to the physical reality, they gained 'high readability' from the children with high reading exposure. This indicates that the lexical abstraction does not automatically decrease the readability if there are adequate contextual cues and prior knowledge^[47]. The incongruent lexis become easily understood by the children with more advanced literacy experience, showing that lexical complexity can be bridged by the cognitive familiarity by the time. The abstraction, in the other hand, also can be challenging. It can potentially stimulate the cognitive resources^[48]. Hence, in the perspective of cognitive development, it is reasonable if the children in this study give lower score in the readability than adults due to the natural limit on the abstraction and familiarity on the lexis.

Another crucial issue identified in this study was the use of reduction technique—the lexis in the ST which was not translated in the TT. This technique though occasionally justifiable to avoid repetition or complexity^[49], causing 122 cases with 'low readability' level. For example, the idiomatic and metaphorical expressions which were fully omitted made readers lose the context and coherence as shown in the Datum 074 and Datum 104. The excessive reduction can undermine the faithfulness and interpretive

completeness of the text^[50]. Thus, a translator needs to have a careful decision to use this technique.

This study contributes significantly to the children storybook's translation discourse by incorporating the unit analysis of lexis as symbolization of meaning and involving dual readers' perspectives—the adult experts and children—which is rarely studied in the previous empirical researches. The prior researches have highlighted the importance of adapting the translated text with the children's cognitive characteristics and their cultural contexts^[51,52] but not yet come to deal with the lexis analysis. This present study has a contribution towards the lexis as meaning symbolization in the textual metafunction that can add a depth understanding how the language and meaning delivered in the translation. In addition, by involving the adult experts and children as the readers, this study also provides empirical data to explore how the different group of readers interpret the translated text. This overcomes the gap identified in the previous research that the arguments for translation strategy were often based on intuition than an empirical data^[53].

This study has a strong implication to the children's literature translators that congruent symbolization does not only help the readability but also aligns with children's cognitive development. Meanwhile, the selective retention to the incongruent lexis—if identified to be important in the context of culture or theme—it must be supported through a context, an illustration, or supporting simplified text to avoid the comprehension breakdown. The translators also need to balance the semantic faithfulness with the cognitive accessibility. In doing so, the application of semantic and communicative methods in^[49] needs to be considered to suit the target readers of the text.

Furthermore, this study also reinforces the SFL potential as a theoretical lens to assess not only on the structure but also the functional impacts from the lexical choice towards the meaning construction and reception. SFL through the lexis symbolization in the textual meaning, can define what simple language or concrete vocabulary is, in terms of children's literature. By the understanding of the lexical symbolization either congruent or incongruent, it can give a crystal clear on how to translate a text based on the reader's cognitive development. In the future, the employment of SFL's metafunction can be analytical guidance

to evaluate whether or not the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning from a text remain intact after being translated.

5. Conclusions

This study revealed that the SFL framework could be employed as an approach to investigate the linguistic aspect of the children's storybook translation through the lexicon. By the symbolization process that resulted in congruent and incongruent lexis, this study showed that the children's storybook translator had attempted to reduce the number of incongruent lexis distribution from ST into TT. The shifting of incongruent lexis into congruent lexis made the lexis more explicit and concrete in the meaning-making.

Though the adults' readers viewed this as a good strategy to improve the readability of the children's storybook, the children themselves viewed this as an opportunity to understand the text easily, but a challenge on the other hand. This resulted in the readability score of the children's perspectives being lower than that of the adults. The children's difficulty in understanding the lexis, either congruent or incongruent, was caused by their familiarity with them. The more frequently they were exposed to the reading text, the better readability they had, though sometimes, they could not really understand the lexis well. Their inability to derive the lexis into a concrete meaning was also caused by the indirect symbolization of the physical reality. The children's cognitive development, which was still on the concrete operational stage, found it hard to understand the incongruent lexis, which was abstract and technical.

This study offers a novel contribution to the field of translation studies by explicitly connecting the congruent and incongruent lexis with the impact on the readability, especially for children as the target readers. The integration of SFL with a dual-perspective readability assessment contributes an innovation and insights to conduct future relevant research in translation studies. This study brings practical implications to the practitioners and researchers as follows:

Children's literature translators should own not only linguistic competence but also developmental sensitivity in

translating text to be semantically accurate and cognitively accessible.

Educators should involve this integration of SFL in the translation studies by involving dual perspectives—adult and child readers—as teaching materials to prepare students with exposure to providing a good text which aligns with the target readers' cognitive development.

Future researchers hopefully can explore the integration of SFL and children's readers with a larger number of participants to gain the generalizability and strengthen the methodological transparency.

Future researchers can also investigate how the shifts of incongruent into congruent lexis in the translation impact the children's long-term lexical acquisition.

Author Contributions

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Ethical approval for this study was obtained in accordance with institutional guidelines. Parental consent was secured for all child participants, and anonymity was maintained throughout the data presentation. All participants were informed of their rights and were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Due to privacy and ethical restrictions, the data availability was not attached in this article.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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