

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

Language is not only used to communicate information but also to express feelings, experiences, and ideas. One of the most powerful features in literary language is figurative language. Figurative language allows writers to say something in a more imaginative or indirect way. As Perrine (1982) states, figurative language is language that cannot be taken literally and is used for the sake of freshness and strength. Similarly, Abrams and Harpham (2009) explain that figurative language is a deviation from the ordinary use of words in order to achieve a special meaning or effect.

In literary texts, figurative language plays an important role in presenting emotions, creating atmosphere, and conveying complex meanings. According to Leech (2013), figurative language can be seen as a type of deviation that enhances the expressiveness of language. This kind of language is especially important in literature because it gives depth to the way characters and situations are described. Understanding figurative language is essential for interpreting the nuances and deeper meanings within a narrative, making it a vital aspect of literary analysis (Richards, 1965). A novel, as a type of literary text, can also use figurative language to make the story more interesting.

A novel is a lengthy narrative fiction written in prose that presents human experiences through connected events and character development. Wellek and Warren (1956) describe the novel as a fictional narrative in prose, generally longer than a short story, that attempts to represent life with more complexity and realism. In other words, the novel serves as an imitation of real life, portraying emotions, relationships, and social situations in a way that resonates with the reader's experiences. Figurative language in novels supports this by

enriching the narrative with emotional depth and psychological nuance. Through devices such as hyperbole and irony, authors are able to communicate inner conflicts and cultural values that literal language may fail to express. In this research, the researcher chose the novel by Jenny Han: *The Summer I Turned Pretty*.

This research focuses on figurative language in Jenny Han's novel *The Summer I Turned Pretty*. *The Summer I Turned Pretty* (henceforth referred to as *TSITP*) is a popular work of contemporary young adult fiction that contains many expressions of figurative language with engaging storytelling and relatable characters that make it an interesting research object for literary analysis. The novel captures the emotional and transformative journey of its protagonist, Isabel Conklin (Belly), a teenage girl who spends her summers at Cousins Beach with her family and childhood friends. The story is told mainly from Belly's point of view, which makes her the main character. However, other teenage characters such as Steven and Conrad also play important roles and contribute to the emotional dynamics of the story. Their interactions reflect common teenage experiences such as love, jealousy, confusion, and emotional growth.

Figurative meaning and semantics have a great relationship because without the knowledge of the meaning of the word, even connotative meaning, it is difficult to understand figurative meaning. Sometimes, people read a novel, poem, or newspaper, overlook non-literal expressions, and read them literally. Of course, the meaning of the expression becomes odd or not understandable. Therefore, figurative language becomes essential in the learning of vocabulary. While learning vocabulary supports the learning of semantics (Tarigan, 1995).

Through a semantic approach, this research seeks to highlight how Jenny Han employs figurative language to convey complex emotions, build vivid imagery, and enhance the narrative's aesthetic quality (Culler, 1975). By analyzing the figurative

language found in this novel, this research's primary objectives are to identify and analyze the hyperbolic and ironic expressions in the novel *TSITP* and to explain the contextual meanings behind these figurative expressions.

This research deliberately focuses on two specific forms of figurative language: hyperbole and irony. This selection is not based on mere frequency, but on their complementary thematic and functional roles within the narrative of a coming-of-age novel. Hyperbole serves as a linguistic reflection of the heightened emotional landscape of adolescence, capturing the characters' tendency to experience feelings of joy, boredom, and love with dramatic intensity. It is the language of subjective, natural emotion. In contrast, irony emerges as a sign of growing cognitive and emotional maturity. It signifies the characters' burgeoning awareness of the contradictions and disappointments inherent in relationships and life. Where hyperbole expresses the world as it feels, irony confronts the gap between how things should be and how they are. Together, these two devices map the protagonist's psychological journey from idealistic emotional expression to a more complex and nuanced understanding of her world. Therefore, this study will focus on the analysis of hyperbolic and ironic expressions in the novel *TSITP* to identify and analyze their occurrence, as well as interpret the contextual meaning of these expressions as part of the characters' emotional and psychological expressions.

1.2 Research Questions

In this research, the writer will propose three questions as follows:

1. What hyperbolic expressions are found in the novel *TSITP*?
2. What ironic expressions are found in the novel *TSITP*?
3. What are the contextual meanings of these types of figurative language in the novel *TSITP*?

1.3 Objectives of The Research

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify and analyze the hyperbolic expressions found in the novel *TSITP*.
2. To identify and analyze the ironic expressions found in the novel *TSITP*.
3. To interpret and explain the contextual meanings of hyperbolic and ironic expressions in the novel *TSITP*.

1.4 Limitation of The Research

This research is limited to analyzing hyperbolic and ironic expressions used by the main teenage characters (Belly, Steven, and Conrad) in Jenny Han's novel *The Summer I Turned Pretty* (2022 edition). These two types of figurative language identified based on the classification by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974), due to their strong emotional and narrative presence in the story. The contextual meaning of each expression is interpreted using Lyons' (1977) semantic approach. Expressions are not further classified into subtypes, and findings are only applicable to the selected characters within this novel.

1.5 Significance of The Research

Practically, the results of this research contribute to English lecturers by providing valuable insights into the teaching and understanding of figurative language. This research can serve as a reference for classroom materials, particularly in helping students recognize and interpret figurative language within literary texts. By enhancing the understanding of hyperbole and irony, educators can foster a deeper appreciation of language among students.

Furthermore, the findings of this research highlight how figurative language can enrich everyday communication. Understanding these expressions not only enhances the beauty and elegance of language but also allows individuals to convey emotions and ideas

more vividly in daily interactions. This research may encourage readers to incorporate figurative language into their own writing and speaking, thus promoting creativity and expression in their language use.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Analysis

Analysis is defined as the process of examining and interpreting figurative language expressions found in the novel in order to identify hyperbole and irony and to explain their contextual meanings

2. Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to expressions that go beyond the literal meaning of words to convey more complex or nuanced meanings. Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974) mentioned that there are 10 types of figurative languages: simile, personification, hyperbole, metaphor, irony, dead metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox, and allusion. Each of them not only leads to various meanings but also creates particular emotions and nuances. However, this research only analyzes two types of figurative language, namely, hyperbole and irony.

3. Hyperbole

In this study, hyperbole refers to a type of figurative language that uses deliberate exaggeration to emphasize meaning or create a strong impression (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1974). In the novel, hyperbolic expressions often serve to magnify emotions and highlight the intensity of adolescent experiences.

4. Irony

Irony in this research is defined as the use of words to express an idea that is opposite to their literal meaning (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1974). The ironic expressions found

in the novel generally highlight a contrast between what is stated and what is actually meant within the given context.

5. Novel

A novel is an expansive literary form that evolved from prose fiction, with its origins traced to the Italian 'novella', denoting a short piece of prose. It is characterized by its substantial length and the presentation of invented narratives, often reflecting aspects of real-life experiences and human conditions.

6. Semantic Approach

Semantic approach in this research is defined as the study of meaning in language, focusing on how words and expressions convey ideas beyond their literal sense (Lyons, 1981). This approach is applied to analyze figurative language in the novel, particularly hyperbole and irony, in order to interpret their contextual meanings.