

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A sentence's structure is fundamental to build the meaning of the sentence. As stated before by Chomsky (1957), the syntactic structure of a sentence is crucial for determining its meaning. The form of a sentence has the aim of facilitating effective communication between writer and reader or speaker and listener. It is supported by Clark (1996) that the form of sentences and utterances is tailored to the shared knowledge and experiences of communicators, aiming to enhance mutual understanding. Thus, by carefully constructing sentences and adhering to appropriate syntactic rules, comprehensive meaning can be produced and effective communication can be achieved. "The dog chased the cat" and "The cat chased the dog" employ the same words but convey entirely different meanings due to their sentence structure. This phenomenon, known as "word order," is a fundamental aspect of language that determines the subject, object, and relationship between elements within a sentence (Fromkin et al., 2018). Furthermore, the placement of modifiers, such as adjectives and adverbs, can also alter the meaning of a sentence. For instance, "The old man sat on the bench" and "The man sat on the old bench" convey different messages due to the positioning of the adjective "old" (Radford et al., 2009). The researcher then finds the relationship

between sentence structure and its meaning is an interesting topic to be studied and discussed using a linguistics approach. Studying how words are organized into structures that convey specific meanings provides insights into the cognitive processes and linguistic capabilities.

Linguistics is known as the scientific study of language and its structure. According to Hockett (1958), linguistics is the scientific study of language, aiming to uncover the general principles underlying all human languages, as well as describing the particular characteristics of individual languages. Researchers studying languages look at the structure of languages, how they evolve over time, how people learn them, and how they are employed in speech. Aspects of language structure and usage are the subject of several subfields within the larger discipline of linguistics, including phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and historical linguistics (Yule, 2016). The phenomenon of the relationship between sentence structure and meaning as mentioned before is a combined problem between two different subfields of linguistics; syntax and semantics. According to Chomsky (1957), syntax is the study of the rules and principles that govern the structure of sentences. It refers to how words and phrases are arranged to form grammatical sentences in a language. Semantics, on the other hand, is the study of meaning of language (Lyons, 1977) which is concerned with the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences, focusing on how language conveys and represents ideas and concepts.

Furthermore, there are subterms within the syntax branch known as grammatical relations and in semantics known as semantic roles or thematic roles. Grammatical relations refer to the syntactic configurations that words take in relation to one another based on the rules and structures of a given language. As stated by Van Valin (2001), grammatical relations are the syntactic relationships between a verb and its arguments, such as subject, object, and indirect object, and are essential for understanding how different languages structure sentences and convey meaning. Semantic roles, on the other hand, describe the underlying relationships that participants have with the action or state described by the verb or predicate. According to Jackendoff (1987), thematic roles are conceptual roles that participants in an event play, such as Agent, Patient, Experiencer, Instrument, and Goal. These roles are part of the verb's argument structure and are essential for interpreting the meaning of sentences. Understanding the correlation between grammatical relations and thematic roles is crucial for unraveling the intricate mechanisms of how meaning is expressed and interpreted in language.

Despite their centrality to the study of language, in-depth investigations into grammatical relations and semantic roles remain relatively sparse compared to other linguistic domains. One key reason for this rarity is the sheer complexity involved in analyzing these foundational yet abstract concepts. Furthermore, much prior research has treated grammatical relations and semantic roles as discrete categories, overlooking

their scalar and multi-faceted properties in actual language use. Given these obstacles, many researchers have favored more constrained linguistic phenomena to investigate. This is proven by how the researcher finds it difficult to discover available previous studies as references. For the past five years, there are only two previous studies found as references for this study, the article “Grammatical Relations and Semantic Roles of English Active Clauses in Reference to Crazy Rich Asian Novel” by Adisiswanto, et al., (2023) and “Grammatical Relations and Semantic Roles of Arguments in English Verbs of Transfer “Convey”” by Dwipayana, et al., (2023). Other previous studies about grammatical relations and thematic roles are also found but relatively separated as two different topics.

This research titled Grammatical Relations and Thematic Roles used in Main Clauses of the Short Story “The Ugly Duckling” has the same problem and purpose with the two previous studies which is to identify the grammatical relation and thematic roles. However, this research uses a different object of the research. Short story titled “The Ugly Duckling” by Hans Christian Anderson is chosen as the object of this study as it contains narrative text. This story is a classic work of children's literature and is widely available in multiple editions. The version selected for this research is sourced from a reputable publication to ensure the text's accuracy and authenticity. The chosen version for this research is the translation from the website AmericanLiterature.com which the researcher found online and available digitally. "The Ugly Duckling" was chosen because it provides a

rich context for analyzing grammatical relations and thematic roles. The story's narrative style, which includes descriptive passages and dialogues, offers a diverse range of clause types and structures. Additionally, the universal themes and straightforward language make it an ideal text for examining how grammatical and thematic elements contribute to the overall meaning of the story. Moreover, studying the sentence structures and semantic roles employed in this text can provide deeper insights of how the author skillfully employs various syntactic patterns as well as how meaning is constructed.

This research on grammatical relations and thematic roles in short story "The Ugly Duckling" used the books "Beginning Syntax" by Linda Thomas and "Semantics" by John I. Saeed as theoretical references. It has several deep and fundamental reasons. First, grammatical relations is an important aspect of syntax that helps us understand how the words in a sentence are related to each other and how the sentence structure is formed. "Beginning Syntax" by Linda Thomas provides a comprehensive guide to these concepts, explaining how subject, object, and complementation interact in a sentence, as well as how these relationships can influence the overall meaning of a text. On the other hand, thematic roles explained in the book "Semantics" by John I. Saeed, are a crucial concept in semantics for understanding how meaning is conveyed through the distribution of roles such as agent, patient, theme, and others in a sentence. By combining understanding from these two books, researchers can analyze the text in

more depth, identifying how the grammatical structure supports the distribution of thematic roles. This approach not only enriches linguistic analysis, but also opens up new insights into how writers use language to shape narrative and characterization, as well as how readers understand and interpret stories. As a result, this research can provide significant contributions to the field of theoretical linguistics and practical applications in literature analysis.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the research background, this research uses the syntax and semantic approach to identify and analyze the grammatical relations and thematic roles used in the narrative text of The Ugly Duckling short story by Hans Christian Anderson based on the Linda Thomas' "Beginning Syntax" and Saeed's thematic roles theory. The researcher chose main clauses of the narrative text with the exclusion of the dialogues on analyzing the thematic roles and grammatical relations in "The Ugly Duckling" which allows for a focused and structured approach to understanding the narrative.

1.3. Research Questions

1.3.1 How are grammatical relations constructed in the narrative text of the short story “The Ugly Duckling”?

1.3.2 What are the types of thematic roles used in the narrative text of the short story “The Ugly Duckling”?

1.4 Objectives of the Research

1.4.1 To find out the construction of grammatical relations in the narrative text of the short story “The Ugly Duckling”.

1.4.2 To identify the types of thematic roles used in the narrative text of the short story “The Ugly Duckling”.

