

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the main components of the study, including the background, research questions, objectives, and scope and limitations. It explains the rationale and significance of the study, identifies the key questions that guide the analysis, and states the objectives that the writer aims to achieve. In addition, this chapter defines the limitations of the study to ensure focus and cohesion. Together, these sections provide a clear foundation for understanding the direction, purpose, and contribution of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Klarer (2004) states that literature is referred to all forms of written expression. It includes all kinds of writing that show human thoughts, feelings, and experiences in various ways. Literature helps people understand themselves and others because it presents stories and ideas that reflect real emotions and situations. One form of literature is the novel. According to Oxford English Dictionary (as cited in Hawthorn, 2022), a novel is a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length that portrays characters and actions representing real life in either past or present times within a plot of varying complexity. In other words, a novel presents an extended fictional story that reflects human experiences, behaviours, and social realities through the interactions of its characters and the development of its plot. As literary work, a novel allows authors to explore various themes, conflicts, and meanings that resemble aspects of real life while maintaining its imaginative nature.

In understanding how a story is built, it's important to look at how elements work together to form a complete narrative. According to Novita et al. (2024), the narrative structure of a story can be seen in the way the story is written. This means that the order of events, the introduction of characters, the development of the conflict, and the final resolution all play important roles in shaping how the story feels and what it wants to communicate. A well-good narrative helps readers follow the plot more easily, understand the characters, and connect with emotions

presented in the story. When these elements work together effectively, the narrative becomes not only enjoyable to read but also easier to interpret and analyze. To understand the narrative structure of a story, semiotics is a suitable approach to use. Within this approach, Roland Barthes (1974) is one of the scholars who introduced the concept of the weaving of voices which consists of various codes. “Alongside each utterance, one might say that off-stage voices can be heard: they are the codes” Barthes (1974, p. 20). These codes are used to build a network through which the entire text flows, and the code was introduced as the five codes consisting of hermeneutic code, proairetic code, semantic code, symbolic code, and last one is cultural code.

In Roland Barthes’s theory, the term he originally uses is the five codes rather than the five narrative codes. However, the concept is often referred to as the five narrative codes because these codes are commonly applied to examine how narratives produce meaning. This term reflects the practical function of the codes in narrative analysis rather than the original wording used by Barthes. Nevertheless, narrative structure and the five codes should not be treated as the same concept. Narrative structure refers to the framework through which a story is organized and progresses, while the five codes function as analytical tools for uncovering meaning within that structure. In this sense, narrative structure provides the overall framework of the story, whereas the five codes allow the analyst to examine the detailed workings of meaning embedded in the text.

Further, to study this text down to the last detail is to take up the structural analysis of narrative where it has been left till now: at the major structures; it is to assume the power (the time, the elbow room) of working back along the threads of meanings, of abandoning no site of the signifier without endeavoring to ascertain the codes of which this site is perhaps the starting point (or the goal). (Barthes, 1974, p. 12).

With an understanding of how narrative works, it becomes easier to analyze how a novel presents its story in a simple yet meaningful way as in the novel *The Little Prince*. This novel was written and illustrated by French author and pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The novel was first published in English and French in the United States by Reynal & Hitchcock in April 1943 and published posthumously

in France after the liberation because Saint-Exupéry's works had been banned by the Vichy regime. According to Nandy (2021), *The Little Prince* has been named one of the most translated novels with more than 300 languages and dialects having translated it. Sales of this novel have also been phenomenal, with more than 140 million copies sold to date. *The Little Prince* was first published in Indonesia in 1950 by J.B Wolters, who published it simultaneously in Jakarta Indonesia and Groningen Netherlands. The story in *The Little Prince* begins when the main character was still a child. One day, he drew a boa constrictor eating an elephant. However, when he showed the drawing to adults, they told him to start learning other things such as arithmetic, geometry, geography, grammar, and so on. They also told him to stop drawing. In the end, the child stopped drawing and grew up to become a pilot.

In the next chapter, it is told that the pilot was stranded in the Sahara Desert because his plane was crashed. While trying to repair the plane, he was approached by a little prince who asked him to draw a sheep. After several drawings were rejected, the prince accepted a drawing of a box that the pilot said contained a sheep. During their time together, the pilot learned that the little prince was from Asteroid B-612, a small planet with three volcanoes and single rose. The little prince spent his days on his small planet caring for his rose and protecting this planet from the baobab trees. The little prince found himself in the region of asteroids 325 until 330. He began by visiting them in search of something to do and to educate himself. On each planet, he met adults with strange personalities, such as a king who wanted to rule everything, a proud man who wanted to be praised, a drunkard who was ashamed of himself, a businessman who was busy owning stars, a lamplighter who worked tirelessly, and geographer who only believed in eternal things.

This journey made him realize how strange adult's ways of thinking were. When he arrived on Earth, he met a snake that spoke with double meanings, saw the echo of his own voice, and found a rose garden that made him realize that his rose was not the only one. However, through his encounter with the fox, he learned that his rose was still unique because he was the one who cared for it. The story

continues with the prince's journey on Earth and his encounter with a pilot. With such an interesting story, this novel received a rating of 4,33 out of 5 on the Goodreads reading app. "This is not a book for children. It's for adults who remember being children and feel nostalgia for the simple comfort of childhood innocence but know they can never go back to it" (Nataliya, 2023).

Therefore, the writer of this study is interested in analyzing this novel because it is worth analyzing for its unique narrative structure. Thus, the writer used the novel *The Little Prince* from the Macmillan Collector's Library 2016 edition, and translated into English by Ros and Chloe Schwartz in 2010. This novel is chosen because it contains a complex narrative structure and rich semiotic elements that make it suitable for analysis. Using a semiotic approach, the exact theory that be used is the concept of the weaving of voices proposed by Roland Barthes (1974) in his theory of the five codes. With this theory, this study will analyze the codes found in *The Little Prince* and how these codes shape the plot of the novel.

To support the theoretical foundation and provide a clearer background for this study, it is important to review previous studies related to *The Little Prince* and Roland Barthes's semiotic approach. Several researchers have analyzed Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* from different perspectives. Fadqiliyah (2018) applied Roland Barthes's semiotic theory to examine the symbolic representations of wisdom reflected through characters and objects such as the rose, the fox, the snake, and the sheep. Maharjan (2022) investigated children's perceptions of the adult world by comparing *The Little Prince* and *The Giver* through childhood and psychological theories. Shanks (2008) employed Conceptual Blending Theory to analyze the role of spatiality and narrative construction in *The Little Prince*. Furthermore, Annuri et al. (2024) focused on the moral messages embedded in the novel and their potential contribution to character education among young readers. Azizah et al. (2025) examined the novel from semantic and pragmatic perspectives, particularly through the analysis of sentences, utterances, and presuppositions. Meanwhile, Jamil et al. (2024) applied Roland Barthes's five codes to Oscar Wilde's *The Doer of Good*, demonstrating how the codes, especially the hermeneutic code,

contribute to the development of narrative meaning and story structure. Although these studies provide valuable insights into *The Little Prince* and Barthes's theory, none of them specifically analyze how Roland Barthes's five codes build the plot in *The Little Prince*. Therefore, this study fills that gap by examining the implementation of Barthes's five codes and explaining how they contribute to the construction of the plot in the novel.

Even though previous studies have shared many useful ideas, there is still not much research that clearly uses Roland Barthes five codes to study *The Little Prince*. We still need to understand how these codes help the story build its plot. Because of that, this study aims to fill the gap by identifying which of Barthes five codes appear in the novel and explaining how each code supports the flow of plot. By using this approach, the study aims to explain how the five codes interact to connect narrative events and construct the plot of the novel.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the following research questions to guide the analysis.

1. What are five codes found in the novel *The Little Prince*?
2. How do the five codes build the plot in the novel *The Little Prince*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Therefore, this study fills that gap by examining the implementation of Roland Barthes's five codes and revealing their role in constructing the plot of *The Little Prince*.

1. To identify which of Roland Barthes five codes appear in the novel *The Little Prince*.
2. To discover how each code contributes to the development of the plot in the novel.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions related to the application of Roland Barthes's five codes in literary analysis.

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the development of literary studies, particularly in the field of semiotics. By applying Roland Barthes's five codes theory to *The Little Prince*, this study provides a deeper understanding of how codes function in constructing plot and generating meaning within a literary text. Furthermore, the findings of this study may enrich existing references on Barthes's semiotic theory and serve as additional scholarly resources for future studies related to narrative structure, semiotics and literary analysis.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study is expected to serve as a reference for students, researchers, and academics who are interested in applying Roland Barthes's five codes theory to literary works. The study also provides an example of how semiotic analysis can be conducted to examine the relationship between codes, plot construction, and meaning in a novel. In addition, the findings may support future researchers in conducting similar studies using semiotic approaches, particularly those focusing on narrative structures in literary texts.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is based on Roland Barthes theory of five codes, which serve as the main analytical framework for examining literary text. This theory provides the analytical boundaries of the study by focusing on how the five codes work inside the narrative structure of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. This study is limited to the novel *The Little Prince* from the Macmillan Collector's Library, London, in its 2016 edition and translated into English by Ros and Chloe Schwartz in 2010. The data of this study are utterances, words, phrases, and sentences found in the novel.