

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, research questions, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, and the scope and the limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of The Study

Language is a way for humans to communicate. Harnutomo & Firdaus (2024, p. 1) stated that through language, we can ask question, express opinions, and understand the world around us. Language functions as an essential tool for establishing connections with the world. It allows individuals to acquire information about unfamiliar subjects and provides a means to communicate feelings and ideas with clarity and precision. According to Nehe, A et al., (2022, p. 65) language as a conventional spoken or written symbol system used by people to communicate with each other. Spoken language may be found in songs, movies, speeches, and conversations. Written language may be found in novels, dramas, short stories, newspapers, poetry, and magazines. They are serving as a means of expression and communication.

Language is an essential element in literary works, as it is carefully chosen and structured to produce specific effects. Suryanti Tambunan et al., (2020, p. 169) define stylistics is one branch of linguistics that focuses on the style of language. Since this style of language frequently appears in literary works, stylistics is often employed as an approach to analyze such texts. In this context, stylistics focuses on analyzing how language is used in various contexts, both written and spoken, to create a particular effect or convey meaning. The text becomes better and provides a deeper experience for the reader due to the use of the right words to evoke the desired emotion, changes in sentence structure such as by providing an interesting rhythm and flow that can make the reader more involved in the narrative, and the use of figurative language that can add depth and beauty to the text.

Figurative language is a form of language use that involves indirect or non-literal meaning to convey ideas, emotions, or imagery in a creative and imaginative way (Leech, 1969). The use of figurative language is common in literary contexts because it enriches meaning and gives an attractive effect to the reader. Figurative language is a type of language that goes beyond its literal meaning. According to Tiarawati & Ningsih (2019, p. 80) figurative language means a non-literal meaning which means a style of language that does not use an actual meaning or literal meaning. Figurative language refers to the use of words in a literary context where the meaning is not immediately clear. Based on Leech (1969, p. 149), the term figurative language has several types to be classified, there are simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, metonymy, and irony.

Figurative language is employed in communication in a variety of situations, including everyday conversations, songs, newspapers, novels, etc. In literary works such as novels, figurative language often plays an essential role in expressing complex ideas creatively. Friar Saputra et al., (2024, p. 38) states that novel provide a platform for exploring complex themes and ideas, often delving into philosophical, ethical, and existential questions. This means that novels are not just entertainment, but also offer space for readers to reflect on big issues, such as the meaning of life, ethical dilemmas, or worldviews. Authors of novels can express complex ideas and nuanced emotions in ways that ordinary speakers would not be able to by using figurative language. Novels use figurative speech to entertain and lead to thinking. In novels there are various genres that can be explored by readers, such as romance, horror, science fiction, fanfiction, comedy, fantasy, and other genres. Besides being a source of knowledge, novels can also be a source of entertainment that contains messages for its readers. Therefore, authors use figurative language that helps the readers understanding the message in the novel.

In literary works, the use of figurative language becomes the author's main strategy to express ideas in a more imaginative and aesthetic way. One form of figurative language that is often used is simile, which is an explicit comparison between two different things using conjunctions such as “like” or “as.” For

example, in the description “Her smile was as bright as the sun”, there is a simile that compares a person's smile to the brightness of the sun. This comparison does not simply state that the smile is bright, but also implies that the smile brings warmth, happiness, and even strength that shines on the surrounding environment, just as the sun shines on the world. In this context, the simile not only builds a visual image, but also creates an emotional effect on the reader. This is the specialty of figurative language in literary texts-its ability to convey deeper and more complex meanings through non-literal expressions.

Mexican Gothic by Silvia Moreno-Garcia is a gothic horror novel that is rich of figurative language. The novel, which was released in 2020, well combines Mexican culture with gothic fiction components to create a strange frightening atmosphere. This story focuses on Noemí Taboada, a young lady from Mexico, who gets a disturbing letter from her cousin Catalina, who recently got married and moved into the creepy isolated homes known as High Place. Catalina begs Noemí to come save her in the letter, expressing her anxiety and discomfort that there is a serious problem with the house and those who live there. Noemí comes to High Place due to concern for her cousin's safety, where she meets weird happenings, creepy details, and a family with a tragic history. The novel creates a sense of fear and anxiousness through rich figurative language and vivid descriptions, drawing readers into its gothic world.

The writer chose *Mexican Gothic* novel because this novel is a powerful example of the combination of classic gothic elements with the unique culture and history of Mexico. It offers a fresh perspective on the gothic genre, not only relying on traditional elements like haunted houses and eerie atmospheres but also integrating social themes such as colonialism, racism, and gender inequality.

Mexican Gothic novel is rich in figurative language narratives. The author carefully considers how to express the environment in order to make the readers feel exactly how they are inside the novel. For these reasons, the writer is curious to study the use of figurative language in this novel. There are certain similarities between this study and others that have similar topics. First, H. Vega (2023)

conducted a study entitled “Anticolonial Feminism, Sylvia Moreno-Garcia, and the Female Gothic: A Textual Analysis of *Mexican Gothic*.” Second, M. Quesen (2024) conducted a study entitled “What Decays and What Stays: Understanding Gothic Violence and Colonialism in Silvia Moreno-Garcia’s *Mexican Gothic*.” Third, Parks (2024), conducted a study entitled “Vampires as Agents of Colonization & Colonialism in Recent Mexican Diasporic Gothic Literature.” The fourth previous study is by (McClelland, 2024) entitled “Grotesquely Gothic Textual Overflow: Depictions of Generational Female Trauma in Silvia Moreno-Garcia’s *Mexican Gothic*.” The last, Fitria (2022) entitled “Figurative Language in the Broken Wings by Kahlil Gibran: An Analysis of Language Style as Stylistic Effect.”

It can be concluded that to the best of the writer’s knowledge, there has been no previous study specifically analyzing the use of figurative language in *Mexican Gothic*. Therefore, the writer chose this topic to fill the gap in stylistic literary analysis. Moreover, this study may be of interest to students who are interest learning about literary stylistics. As a result, the writer decided to conduct a study entitled, “An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Silvia Moreno-Garcia’s *Mexican Gothic*: Stylistic Approach.”

1.2 Research Questions

1. What types of figurative language are found in the *Mexican Gothic* novel?
2. What do the figurative languages imply in the *Mexican Gothic* novel?

1.3 Objective of The Study

1. To identify the types of figurative languages in the *Mexican Gothic* novel.
2. To describe the implied meanings of figurative languages in the *Mexican Gothic* novel.

1.4 Significance of The Study

There are two expectations that can be obtained from this study, theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to support the development of stylistic approaches in the study of figurative language within literary texts. as well as provide wider insights to readers about the use of figurative language in literary works, especially in a novel.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, the writer hopes that this study can help readers who have an interest in figurative language in novels. Novels are considered an effective medium because they present visualizations narration, dialogue, character expressions, and language use, making it easier for readers to understand the figurative language used in the work.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is figurative language by referring to Geoffrey N. Leech (1969) theory, which identifies several types of figurative language, such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, metonymy, and irony. The main focus of this study is to analyze the use of these figurative language elements in the novel *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia. In the analysis process, the writer pays special attention to the author narration and utterances contained in the novel, to reveal how figurative language is used to enrich meaning and support the story.