

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study, which covers the background of the study, research question, purpose, scope and significance of the study, the research design, clarification of key terms, and organization of the research paper.

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Fantasy is one of the most popular literary genres. Chadbourn (2008) believes it is because fantasy fulfills people's desire to read for fun and to escape from reality. Unlike science fiction that tends to be more technological and contains 'big' ideas, fantasy fiction is quite easy to read (Nicole, 2015). Since it is set in a fictional universe full of mystical creatures, fantasy stories give the readers new experiences that are unfeasible in the real world. Through its fantastic elements, fantasy offers a chance to break free from the rational world people live in. One of the fantastic elements that commonly appear in fantasy genre is the presence of magic.

According to Bailey (2006), magic can be defined as the use of extraordinary power to make possible something impossible. It means that magic can do things beyond human reasoning. It is the key element which drives fantasy stories (Sammons, 2010; Saricks, 2009). In fantasy stories, the presence of magic usually appears in the form of magical abilities, magical creatures, or magical phenomena. It helps to advance the whole story to be more interesting by building the tension and struggles for the characters.

An example of fantasy fiction that shows a strong presence of magic is *Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowling. *Harry Potter* has fascinated people around the world with its magical settings and the magical abilities possessed by its characters. The story itself mainly takes place in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry with an orphaned boy named Harry as the main character. He,

unexpectedly, has a deep bond with Lord Voldemort, the cruelest wizard in the history. His fate has brought him to the mission of killing Lord Voldemort. Along the journey, he undergoes many failures and trials, but also receives magical help from his friends, teachers, and even magical creatures, such as Dolby, the elf. A similar story comes from the novel *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones. Set in the early 20th century where magic is commonly used everywhere, the novel tells a story of a young girl named Sophie who is turned into a 90-year-old woman by a witch's curse. Her journey to break the curse has led her into a wizard Howl's moving castle. During her journey, Sophie experiences magical events which force her to deal with magic. These magical events, in turn, lead her character to develop in particular ways, as she views the world differently.

Both major characters in *Harry Potter* and *Howl's Moving Castle* undergo a change of state after they experience magical events. It then becomes a turning point for them to go on a magical adventure to complete a mission. Basically, the characters in fantasy genre are always interconnected with magical events in order to pursue their goals (Nikolajeva, 2002). They start their journey with the help of magic, fight with magic, and, in the end, accomplish their 'happy ending' with the aids of magic as well. The presence of magic in both novels helps to construct the story by creating some challenges for the characters. As they deal with magic, the characters' traits may undergo some changes. Over the course of the story, the characters may gradually develop as a result of the magical events they are confronted with along the journey (Sefton, 2011).

With regard to the importance of the presence of magic in fantasy, researchers have conducted several studies. For example, a study by Watts (2006) analyzed how magic constructed the logic of the novel *Harry Potter*. She applied Nikolajeva's (1988) magic law as its framework. This study revealed that the logic of the novel *Harry Potter* was constructed by making limitations on the magic; there is not only *the rule* for the magic, in which the way magic is possible to use but also *the law* for magic, the limitation on how the magic is allowed to be used. Another study that employed magic laws approach was conducted by

Amelis (2013). She used Riordan's *Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief* as her object of the study and combined Nikolajeva's (1988) magic laws and Tolkien's (1966) function of fantasy as her frameworks of analysis. This study revealed the magical features in the novel portray certain magic laws and functions of fantasy, which helped to construct a story to be more interesting, believable, and related to human life. There is also a study conducted by an Indonesian student, Hamzah (2008). Her study was carried out to investigate the function of fantasy in the novel *Stardust* and *Neverwhere*. She used functions of fantasy by Tolkien (1966) to analyze her study. She pointed out that the fantasy world served as a place for the major characters to escape and find their true selves.

Drawing on the above studies, the present study also relates to the presence of magic in a fantasy story. Specifically, it aims to analyze the development of the major character in the novel *Howl's Moving Castle* since the major character in the novel undergoes the appearance-changed as a result of the magical power which impacted on her whole life. The study employs Nikolajeva's (1988) magic laws as the framework of analysis. This theory operates as tools to discover how the magical element, in this case magical events, influence the development of the major character.

## **1.2. Research Question**

Relevant to the background of the study above, the question this study aims to answer is:

How do magical events influence the development of the major character in the novel *Howl's Moving Castle*?

## **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

Corresponding with the research question above, this study aims to discover how magical events influence the development of the major character, Sophie, in the novel *Howl's Moving Castle*.

#### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

*Howl's Moving Castle*, published in 1986, was written by D. W. Jones. The present study only focuses on the magical events that happen in the novel that influence the development of the main character, Sophie. It is particularly interested in analyzing Sophie after she was cursed by the witch, thus revealing the impacts of magical events in the novel *Howl's Moving Castle* on the development of the major character.

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Fantasy fiction has become a popular object of many literary research studies. However, only a few researchers appear to have adopted the theory of magic laws in their studies. Moreover, most of the studies only focused on analyzing how these fantasy elements construct the story in general. Therefore, the present study is expected to provide better insights into understanding fantasy fiction as well as provide readers perspectives on how magical elements can be used in the story to develop the character.

#### **1.6. Research Design**

In order to find out the influence of magical events on the development of the major character in the novel *Howl's Moving Castle*, this study uses textual analysis approach. This method is chosen since the collected data are processed to derive meanings in the form of narrative rather than numbers. According to McKee (2003), textual analysis is an approach where the researchers gather information about how people make sense of the world. By performing textual analysis on a text, we try to make an intelligent guess at the most likely interpretation that can be created of that particular text. Since the object of this study is a novel, hence, this method is appropriate to be applied in this study.

The data were collected from the novel *Howl's Moving Castle* by focusing on the magical events that happen to the major character, Sophie. The character Sophie was chosen since she was the one whose fate had already been decided but, later, experienced the magical events which change her whole life. The data

were collected by critically selecting the sentences and paragraphs that specifically relate to magical happenings. They were then analyzed and interpreted through connecting the magical events to Nikolajeva's (1988) magic laws. The selected magical events were categorized into magic laws by Nikolajeva (1988): consistency and limitation. This approach operates as a tool to find out how the magic works in the story. After the magic laws were determined, the textual evidence were analyzed to see whether there were any differences to Sophie's character before and after the magical event happened. After it was analyzed, the impacts of the magical elements on the development of Sophie's character could then be clearly seen.

### **1.7. Clarification of Key Terms**

- Character Development : The change the character undergoes over the course of a story (Sefton, 2011).
- Magic : The use of extraordinary power to make possible something impossible. (Bailey, 2006).
- Magical Event : Something that happens outside the normal working of cause and effect; in which, there is intrusion of supernatural elements or the accomplishment of a fixed spell (Stableford, 2009).
- Fantasy : According to Nikolajeva (1988), the most important feature of fantasy is the presence of magic: magical being, magical events, the secondary world, a peculiar sense, sense of wonder, and the destruction of the natural laws.

### **1.8. Organization of Paper**

This paper is organized into five chapters.

Chapter I presents the background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of paper.

Chapter II reviews theoretical frameworks which are related to the issue in this present study. This study is under the framework of Nikolajeva's (1988) Magic Laws. Other related theory, such as elements of a novel, character development, fantasy, functions of fantasy, and magic in fantasy are also discussed in this chapter. In addition, this chapter also discusses a few previous studies that are related to the present study.

Chapter III explains the research method used in the present study. It covers the research question, research design, data source, data collection, data analysis, data presentation, and a brief summary of the analyzed novel.

Chapter IV elaborates the findings of the study. It presents the analysis, findings, and discussion of findings which are related to the research question.

Chapter V is Conclusion and Recommendations. This chapter shows the conclusion of this study based on all the findings and discussion in the previous chapter along with several recommendations for future study in the same field.