

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the general issues related to the present study, including the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, scope of the study, and research report organization.

1.1 Background of the Study

Arthur Miller is an American playwright. As people know that every playwright has their own styles to communicate with audiences or readers through their works. Arthur Miller has done some literary works. Back at the beginning of literary works in America, it began in the early 1600s in America. Yet, Englishmen were the earliest writers, not American. As time goes by, after the Revolution, dramas were produced. It started to appear and then became interesting. The American theatre, in the nineteenth century, had a lot of fine actors. Yet, the playwrights were not so great (High, 1986). Arthur Miller gave a new life to American drama after the World War II. His works are still popular even until now. Furthermore, many of his works are popular in literature field.

This study uses a literary work which is a play script entitled *Death of a Salesman* written by Arthur Miller. The play is the great American drama (Burt, 2008). It is a crucial work in the history of American theatre. There are three parts of the play: Act One, Act Two, and Requiem. This study focuses on the Act One, the beginning of the play. This study believes that there will be a lot of information given by the playwright about characters. *Death of a Salesman* talks about Willy Loman, Biff Loman, Happy Loman, and Linda Loman. There are not many characters appear in the play. Yet, the main characters are Willy Loman and Biff Loman. This study focuses on the main characters. Willy is a salesman. Willy and his wife, Linda Loman, have two grown sons, Biff and Happy Loman. The play is used by many researchers to be analyze. Some of the researchers (e.g. Emami, 2011; Zhao, 2015; Danqing, 2007) analyze the play in social culture. Other

researchers (e.g. Zaidi, 2012; Kamalakkannan & Manason, 2017; Nahvi, 2016; Saalh & Srayisah, 2017; Hooti & Azizpour, 2010) analyze the play too in other areas. Zaidi (2012) analyzes the characters and themes of the play. Yet, the study uses different theory. Thus, this present study will fill the gap in analyzing the characters using characterisation elaborated by Culpeper (2014). Besides, Nahvi (2016) analyzes the play focusing on the illusion of American Dream. Saalh and Srayisah (2017) analyze the play as the data to see the attitude of the university students.

This study belongs to Stylistics that is a Linguistic study that focuses on the style of the language. According to Burke (2014), Stylistics can also be called as “Literary linguistics”. Stylistics is so much alive in the early of the twenty-first century. Besides, university departments of language, literature, and linguistics teach and do researches in Stylistics (Simpson, 2004). Furthermore, Simpson (2004) supports that “stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*” (p. 2, author’s own emphasis). This study uses two theories which are characterisation which reveals how the impressions of the character are formed and powerful and powerless speakers which reveals power relation of the characters.

Each character has their own characteristics as what the playwright portrays. This study focuses on the impressions of the main character—Willy Loman. There may be researchers analyze the character of the play in the literature perspective. Besides, there may be not many researchers analyze the character in the linguistic perspective. Therefore, this study will give a contribution to the linguistic field. Culpeper (2014) states that impressions of characters can be seen through explicit cues, implicit cues, and authorial cues. This theory is used to see the impressions of the character that the playwright forms. Some of researchers (e.g. Erkan, 2012; Samuel & Dhanavel, 2014; Cortina & Lenkerd, 2008) focus on the character, Willy Loman. They analyze the character to gain something to reveal what Arthur Miller implies.

Most of the recent studies in characterisation seem to use novels, poems, and films as the data. Some researchers (Semino, 2014; Hubbard, 2002; Umar, 2015) uses novels as their data. Not many researchers use plays as the data. Some researchers (Chen, 1996 & Culpeper, 2000) uses plays as their data. Chen (1996) uses a play entitled *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose. Chen (1996) uses conversational implicature to find characters' personalities and ideologies. Conversational implicature is one of the theories used by the present study. Culpeper (2000) analyzes *The Taming of the Shrew* by Shakespeare. The focus is on the character named Katherina. Then, Hubbard (2002) uses a novel entitled *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austin as the data. Hubbard (2002) analyzes the two main characters of the novel. They are Elinor and Marianne. In the study, the focus is on conversation, characterization and corpus linguistics. Besides, Umar (2015) also uses a novel as the data. The novel is entitled *Witnesses to Tears* by Abubakar Gimba. Umar (2015) analyzes the protagonist. The study uses characterization techniques that are modeled by Culpeper. Zyl and Botha (2016) analyze comedy series *The Big Bang Theory*. They analyze the main characters, especially Sheldon Cooper. This study shows that the character differs from other characters. This study focuses on Stylometry and Characterisation. This study analyzes the characteristics of Frank. This study fills the gap in analyzing a play. As seen above that not many researchers use plays as their data.

As it is a play, the book itself is full of conversation. Conversation, according to Burke (2014), is a form of linguistic communication in which humans are the participants to develop or maintain relationships. Moreover, Have (2007) says that "conversation' can mean that people are talking with each other, just for the purpose of talking, as a form of 'sociability', or it can be used to indicate any activity of interactive talk, independent of its purpose" (p. 4). Liddicoat (2007) adds that "... it is important to understand how it is that people engage in this everyday activity as a structured social event" (p. 2). In a conversation, there is a role exchange between two people. A character speaking to another character is part of what the playwrights tell the audiences (Carter & Simpson, 1989). This

indicates that the playwrights have purposes in what the characters speak to other characters.

Linguisticians are familiar with conversation analysis as it is an approach that focuses on conversation. This study uses different conversation analysis for this belongs to Stylistics. Carter and Simpson (1989) say that “it (Conversation analysis) is an approach which stresses speakers’ own interpretations of the structure of interaction and it attempts to account for the ways in which utterances are sequenced in conversation” (p. 277). This study uses conversation analysis in Stylistics. Burke (2014) adds that CA can be a good analytic tool to literary dialogue in drama. It is done to show the relationships among characters. Conversation Analysis in Stylistics is different from Conversation Analysis that people know today. Conversation Analysis in Stylistics is done to see the relationships of the characters (Burke, 2014). Short (as cited in Burke, 2014) gives a set of questions in which it can be used to see who is the most powerful and powerless speakers.

The theory can reveal power relations between characters. Fairclough (2013) states that “power relations are not reducible to class relations” (p. 28). He says that there are power relations between men and women, young and old, and ethnic groups. To seek the power relation, there should be two characters or more as the power relation is obtained from their conversation. This study focuses on the main character, Willy Loman, and the other character who is significant in the story. The character is Biff Loman. He is the son of Willy. Willy and Biff often have conflicts. Even at the beginning of the play or in the Act One, they have some conflicts. Biff does not listen to Willy. Thus, it is interesting to reveal their power relation. The theory of powerful and powerless speakers in conversation seems new to researchers. There are not many researches using the theory. This study will fill the gap and hope to be useful for the future studies. This stylistics theory is suitable to analyze the play as this can reveal which character is the most powerful through conversation. Furthermore, this study will enrich conversation analysis in Stylistics.

There are not many researches about powerful and powerless speakers. Jones (2009) analyzes *Absurd Person Singular* by Alan Ayckbourn. Jones (2009) analyzes the conversation in the play. Besides, Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari & Pourseyedian (2013) analyzes *True West*. It is a play written by Sam Shepard. The study analyzes the turn management and topic control. This study will contribute to the analysis of powerful and powerless speakers as there are not many researches about that.

This study can give a contribution to stylistic analysis in a play. Besides, this study can also give a contribution to characterisation and conversation analysis in Stylistics for those are rarely used these days. Not many researchers use characterisation and conversation analysis in Stylistics to do their researches. Besides, many researchers tend to use novels, poems, and films. This study analyzes characterisation and conversation analysis in a play. This study believes that by doing this, the study can find how the characterisation and power relation in the play are shown. This study can also know what the playwright wants to convey. This will give a contribution to the linguistic field in which it will open a door to characterisation and conversation analysis in Stylistics as not many researchers may be familiar with the theories. Besides, this study also enriches the stylistic field and characterisation.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions focus on stylistic analysis in *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller:

1. How are the impressions of the main character formed in the play?
2. How are the conversation features indicating power relation distributed through the main characters?

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To find out how the impressions of the main character are formed in the play.

2. To find out how the conversation features indicating power relation are distributed through the main characters.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in three aspects of contribution. Firstly, this study can give a contribution to researches in characterisation and conversation analysis in Stylistics. Secondly, this study can give a contribution to readers. Thirdly, this study can give recommendations to writers. Moreover, this study can also enrich the field of Stylistics, especially in characterisation and power relation.

1.5 Clarification of Terms

For clarification, the important terms used in this study have been defined. The following terms are:

1. **Conversation:** Have (2007) says that “conversation’ can mean that people are talking with each other, just for the purpose of talking, as a form of ‘sociability’, or it can be used to indicate any activity of interactive talk, independent of its purpose” (p. 4).
2. **Conversation Features:** There are thirteen questions in order to identify the most powerful and powerless speakers as stated by Short (as cited in Burke, 2014).
3. **Characterisation:** Culpeper (2014) states that “(characterisation is) how we form impressions of characters in our minds” (p. 2).
4. **Power:** Kramarae *et al.* (as cited in Calvo, 1990) say that power is a capacity some individuals that can influence the behaviour of others.
5. **Power Relation:** Fairclough (2013) says that “power relations are always relations of struggle, using the term in a technical sense to refer to the process whereby social groupings with different interests engage with one another” (p. 28).

1.6 Scope of the Study

In order to keep this study stays in track, the scope of the study needs to be made. This study focuses on the act 1 of the play entitled *Death of a Salesman*. The

study is limited to the concern of characterisation in which this study focuses on Willy, the main character. This study chooses two significant characters, Willy and Biff Loman, to be analyzed using the conversation features to reveal the power relation.

1.7 Research Report Organization

This study will be organized into five chapters.

1. Chapter one is the introduction to the study. It consists of Background of the Study, Research Questions, Purpose of the Study, Significance of the Study, Definitions of Key Terms, Scope of the Study, and Research Report Organization.
2. Chapter two presents some literature reviews about characterisation, stylistics, conversation analysis in Stylistics including conversation and speakers and power, some previous studies related to the present study, and conceptual framework.
3. Chapter three discusses the research methodology such as research design, data collection techniques, data analysis, and conclusion of research methodology.
4. Chapter four explains findings and discussions from the play.
5. Chapter five provides conclusions, limitations, and recommendations derived from the study.

This thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices.