

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the research, research problem, objective of the research, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research and definition of the key terms.

#### **A. Background of the Research**

Literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word. The definitions, therefore, usually include additional adjectives such as “aesthetic” or “artistic” to distinguish literary works from texts of everyday use such as telephone books, newspapers, legal documents, and scholarly writings (Klarer, 2004). It is the imaginative work that pictures the human life in a society which can be enjoyed, understood, and used by society. Literature is a means of social expression, a mirror of life, and interpretation of human expressions that help us understand how to live (Kennedy, 2007).

Literature has many forms of work, one of which is the novel. The word comes from the Italian, *Novella*, which means the new staff that small. This word developed in England and America, and later on developed in the region from other forms of narrative nonfiction, such as letters, biographies, and history (Aulia & Simanjuntak, 2022);(Endraswara, 2022). Due to a shift in society and development time, the novel is not only based on data nonfiction, author of novel can change according to the desired imagination

(Aliyev, 2021). This is the meaning of the novel in a conservative perspective.

Along with the development of the literature world, novels have expanded their meaning (Girsang et al., 2023). Presumably, the most evident of these characteristics are that it is a verbal object (that is, an object consisting primarily of linguistic elements such as words and punctuation marks) and that it is written primarily in prose (Fakhirah Nur Inayyah & Marudut Bernadtua Simanjuntak, 2022). It may appear that because a novel is a verbal entity, it cannot contain nonlinguistic materials such as images, maps, diagrams, and drawings. However, this is not the case because, by definition, being a verbal object does not necessitate being constituted entirely of linguistic elements (Mustantifa & Nurmaily, 2022). It is also worth mentioning that writing in prose is consistent with incorporating nonprosaic textual features (such as verse) - and thus the fact that a novel is written in prose does not indicate that such a novel cannot include such elements. According to Aliyef (2021), there have been several expansions in the definition of a novel -- this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

“The Railway Children,” by Edith Nesbit, is a literary novel that has enthralled generations of readers since its debut in 1906. Against the backdrop of a picturesque English countryside, this captivating tale creates a tapestry of emotions, adventures, and the changing power of family relationships. This research project tries to untangle the thematic depth and

narrative subtleties that have made “The Railway Children” a beloved literary masterpiece through an exhaustive analysis of the novel's literary content (Nesbit, 2012).

“The Railway Children” is set in the peaceful rural community of Three Chimneys and introduces readers to the lives of the Waterbury children—Bobbie, Peter, and Phyllis—whose world is turned upside down when their father inexplicably disappears, leaving them to confront the rigors of life without him. Nesbit's novel, set in the picturesque splendour of the English countryside, welcomes readers into a world where the railway line runs just beyond their home, indicating not only the physical connection to the outer world but also the metaphorical rails along which the story evolves.

According to a previous research titled “*The Railway Children and Their Acts of Heroism*”, Intan Wardyani and Candria (2022) stated that “The Railway Children” delves into themes of tenacity, adaptability, and the enduring power of familial love as the Waterbury children navigate the intricacies of their new life and uncover the secrets of the railway. Furthermore, Nesbit depicts the children's emotional journey as they deal with their father's absence, acquire important life lessons, and create unbreakable ties with the colorful characters they meet along the way (Intan Wardyani & Candria, 2022).

Meanwhile, another previous research titled “*The Empowerment of Children in Edith Nesbit's The Railway Children*” by Adam Anshori (2016), the researcher argued that Nesbit's narrative skill is evident in her rich

characterizations. Bobbie, the story's eldest and protagonist, emerges as a symbol of unyielding courage and tenacity. Peter personifies adventure and curiosity, whilst Phyllis personifies innocence and kindness. Through their discussions, actions, and interactions with the residents of Three Chimneys, these characters come to life, weaving a rich tapestry of human emotions and connections(Anshori, 2016).

However, despite great acclaim and recognition, a full analysis that dissects the layers of meaning, symbolism, and thematic complexity within "The Railway Children" is noticeably absent. Therefore, research question revolves around the requirement to perform a rigorous literary content analysis of Edith Nesbit's novel that has never been done before.

## **B. Research Questions**

The following are the research questions based on the background of the study above:

1. What are figurative languages used in the novel "The Railway Children" by Edith Nesbit?
2. What is the moral message in the novel "The Railway Children" by Edith Nesbit?

## **C. The Objective of the Research**

This study aimed to:

1. To explore the figurative language used by Edith Nesbit in the novel "The Railway Children"
2. To investigate the moral message of "The Railway Children" novel

#### **D. Scope and Limitation of Research**

The researcher restricts the scope of this investigation in order to avoid misunderstandings about it. This research focuses on a rigorous content analysis of the figurative language used in Chapters 1–3 of Edith Nesbit's acclaimed novel, "The Railway Children." These first chapters serve as a microcosm of the language strategies used throughout the story, offering a typical sample from which to deduce the novel's overall patterns and themes. By focusing on this particular piece, we hope to convey the core of Nesbit's figurative language use and its influence on narrative structure, character development, and thematic resonance. Through a rigorous investigation of the metaphors, similes, images, and other literary techniques used in these chapters, we hope to identify underlying motifs and interpretative nuances that add to the novel's aesthetic appeal and narrative complexity. By diving into the complexities of language within this narrow framework, we want to reveal insights that illuminate Nesbit's stylistic decisions and expand our comprehension of "The Railway Children" as a literary work.

For the limitation of the research, this research is primarily concerned with evaluating the figurative language and moral message in "The Railway Children" novel, limiting the scope of the examination to certain literary elements and themes. As a result, while the findings may provide useful insights into the novel's creative merits and interpretative aspects, they may have limited use in larger educational contexts. Furthermore, it is critical to recognize that the study is limited by the subjective character of literary

interpretation, which may incorporate inherent biases and restrictions into the results.

### **E. Significance of the Research**

The findings of this study are expected to benefit the teacher, the student, and other researchers.

For students, this research is a helpful instructional resource for them, particularly those who are studying literature and want to expand their understanding of literary analysis. Students have access to a model of critical thinking and textual interpretation through deconstructing the novel's intricate narrative structure, character interactions, and E. Nesbit's literary skill. This activity gives children the analytical tools they need to engage with literature on a deeper level, cultivating a lifetime respect for the complexity of literary works. Furthermore, "The Railway Children" thematic investigation gives the students with insights into universal human experiences, enabling empathy and a broader view on society values and relationships.

For teacher, the result of this research has the potential to considerably benefit educators by providing them with enhanced educational tools. By delving into the educational concepts and moral teachings embedded in "The Railway Children," teachers can use the novel as an informative resource in their classrooms. The research findings help educators identify teaching moments, allowing them to promote discussions on subjects such as resilience, adaptability, familial relationships, and the impact of historical and social contexts on literature. Furthermore, teachers can use this research to lead

students through literary analysis, assisting them in appreciating the complexities of storytelling and the interplay of literary elements, so improving their overall literary competency.

For other researcher, the result of this research is expected to be an example of scholarly exploration in the realms of literary analysis and thematic examination, for its relevance reverberates not only within the setting of the specific research challenge, but also to other researchers involved in the study of literature and related subjects. The research's diverse consequences and contributions ring out as a demand for further exploration and intellectual conversation.

## **F. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid confusion and ambiguity among the terminology used in this study, the definitions of essential terms are as follows:

### 1. Literature

Kusch (2017) defined literature as a set of texts (a general term for objects made of words, no matter what their format) whose purpose includes, but extends beyond, communication, in which the language itself is as much a part of the end product as is the content. Those texts might include everything from lyric poetry to feature films and television series that use language not only in the typed screenplays but also in the spoken performances of script and body language and in the relationship between the words and screen images (Kusch, 2017).

### 2. Content Analysis

Creswell (2023) describes qualitative content analysis as a flexible method of analyzing qualitative data that uses inductive and deductive approaches or a combination of both approaches in data analysis. It is a widely used qualitative research technique that allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Creswell, 2023).

### 3. Figurative language

Figurative language is the use of words or expressions to convey meanings beyond their literal interpretation, often through metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole, to create vivid imagery or express complex ideas in a more impactful way.

### 4. Moral message

A moral message is a guiding principle or ethical lesson conveyed through a story, experience, or discourse, aiming to instruct individuals on proper conduct, virtues, and values. This message can be explicitly stated or subtly implied, offering insight into the consequences of actions and the importance of moral integrity and character.

### 5. The Railway Children

This keywords refers to the specific novel written by Edith Nesbit, first published in 1906, and typically distinguished by its depiction of children's adventures and family dynamics in the background of a rural railway location.