

The Diction used in the Novel on the Reader in a Novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson

Soraya Balqis¹, Ummah Faradila², Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana³

^{1,2,3} Postgraduate Program of English Education

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

Jl. Gajayana No. 50, Dinoyo, Kec. Lowokwaru, Kota Malang 65144

Submission Track:

Received: Nov 01, 2023

Final Revision: Jan 25, 2024

Available Online: Jan 31, 2024

Keywords:

Diction, Novel, Connotative,
Denotative

*Corresponding Author:

malaindah@uin-malang.ac.id

Copyright@2024 (Balqis et al)

Abstract: Diction is the selection of the right words to form sentences that meet the requirements, have a harmonious meaning, and are successfully communicated to the listener so that language misunderstandings do not occur. Based on its meaning, diction in this research is separated into two categories: denotational meaning and connotative meaning. This research aims to describe the types of diction found in the novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murdered by Holly Jackson". In this research, we used qualitative methods to obtain data. In this qualitative approach, we used a case study approach. The data collection technique in this method is by describing or investigating the subject or object. Descriptive methods are also used for research procedures or solving problems which are investigated by describing subjects or objects as well. Based on the results of the data analysis, there are two types of diction based on meaning. The novel also succeeded in making readers feel what was written in the novel. For this reason, the author has also succeeded in making readers enjoy the plot of the story while the most dominant meaning is that research is widely used now that it fits the context of the story in the novel.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

INTRODUCTION

Humans and their lives are the form and result of literary works. Literature is an expression of a person's inner thoughts by describing a language. Not only that, literature has a deep understanding of not only expressing an imaginary story or the writer's dreams, but also a creative work of writing in managing the ideas that he/she will convey. The literary works also have different compositions from history books, but not all compositions are different, literary works also contain the truth found in history books. Literary work is an imaginary artistic life created by the author. Life in literary works is a writer's fantasy, which is motivated by the writer's desire or aspirations to create a beautiful work of art. Literary works are a form and result of creative work, which essentially uses language to express how human life is. There are many literary works in this world, one of which is the novel.

A novel is a form of literary work that uses language as a medium to convey stories, ideas and messages to readers. Choosing the right language can influence readers in terms of understanding, appreciation and identification in the novel. Abrams (in Nurgiyantoro, 2013) states that novels express something freely, presenting something in more detail and involving more complex problems. This conflict is a story element that is included in the formation of the novel. Constantakis (2010) states that a novel consists of many parts that

interact with each other to form a coherent unit. This novel is a fictional (imaginary) the story that tells about life in a world which is built through elements of characterization, storyline (conflict and resolution), the point of view and so on. It can be concluded that the novel is a realistic human story several related element in it.

Language is a means or medium for conveying the author's ideas or thoughts which will be expressed in a work, namely a novel. Pradopo (2010). From these expressions, the author can use an effective and coherent language style which will make it easier for readers to understand. The reason is that this work will foster literary values that have artistic value. Language has a role as a means of expressing and conveying messages in a literary work. One of the intrinsic aspects of a novel is language style, where language style is an element that is able to attract the reader's first impression. Keraf and Faricha (2015) argue that stylistics or language style is part of diction which is related to individual expressions, characteristics or things that have artistic value. The author also uses language style to beautify his writing.

Diction is used by the author in choosing the right words to create a certain meaning in a literary work. By using diction, the author can arrange word for word in his writing. The written expressions must be understood by the reader correctly. Therefore, authors or writers must be able to choose the right diction for their writing. According to Pradopo (2010), poets choose the right words to express their feelings and thoughts as precisely as their inner experiences and express them with expressions that can capture their souls. The function of this diction is to express the author's ideas to other people to avoid mistakes in interpreting and feeling what the author feels. The previous lesson in the article "An Analysis of Diction in Maya Angelou's Selected Poems". This reveals that the author also tries to use different words in his daily life, therefore everyday language is not enough to describe what the author has experienced. Writers also have their own way and language in conveying messages in their writing. In essence, writers also convey their feelings and ideas accurately in a literary work. According to Pradopo (2010), if words are chosen or arranged in such a way that their meaning creates aesthetic imagination, such as diction.

This research will discuss the influence of the choice of language used in the novel on readers in the novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson. From several influences on the choice of language used in the novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson. The choice of language used in this novel has various functions, such as informative, expressive, impressive and educational. The choice of language used in this novel also shows Holly Jackson's easy-to-understand writing style, which is able to create an interesting, exciting and entertaining novel. Regarding the topic that has been explained, the author intends to convey the problematic questions, as follows: What is the diction used in the novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson?

THEORETICAL SUPPORT

Diction is the strategic choice of words based on audience, context, or situation. It can also express additional meaning or a particular style. Diction determines a writer's writing style and tone, and can also communicate implied and layered meanings beyond the literal definition of words. The novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" is a young adult mystery thriller that follows the protagonist, Pippa Fitz-Amobi, as she investigates a closed murder case for her school project. The novel is written in a combination of first-person narrative, diary entries, transcripts, and multimedia text.

The diction used in the novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson has a significant influence on readers. This helps readers to understand and relate to the characters, especially Pippa, and immerse themselves in the story. This also creates a

balance between informal and formal, realistic and imaginative, and humorous and serious tones, which makes the novel interesting and entertaining. Diction also contributes to the novel's genre and themes, as it creates a sense of mystery, suspense, and intrigue

METHOD

According to Sugiono (2016), research methods are a scientific way to obtain data for specific purposes. In this research we used qualitative methods to obtain data, in this qualitative approach, we used a case study approach. Case studies are qualitative research in which researchers conduct an in-depth exploration of programs, events, processes, and activities with one or more people. Apart from that, we also use descriptive methods for research procedures or solving problems that are investigated by describing the subjects or objects used in the form of people, institutions, society and others. (Sugiyono, 2014).

In carrying out the action, we conducted research on readers or reviewers regarding the novel. In this case, we observe how well the reader understands the diction in the novel. From these observations, we gathered several facts and informations about the choice of language style used by the writer. The diction we use is diction by meaning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* is a work written by Holly Jackson which was published in 2019. The novel tells the story of a teenage girl named Pippa Fitz Amobi who carries out an investigation into the murder case of Andie Bell, a popular side who was suspected of being murdered by her boyfriend, Sal Singh, who later committed suicide. Pippa feels that Sal is innocent and tries to prove the truth with the help of Sal's younger brother, Ravi Singh. In the process, Pippa discovers new evidence and dark secrets that threaten her life. This novel is full of twists and puzzles that make readers curious and involved in the story.

The diction used in "*A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*" by Holly Jackson is characterized by a blend of conversational and descriptive language. According to the reader's review, this novel employs a contemporary and accessible vocabulary, fitting for a young adult audience. It often incorporates the language and tone that resonate with the experiences and dialogue for teenagers, making the narrative engaging and relatable.

Additionally, the author employs a mix of suspenseful and atmospheric descriptions to create a compelling and immersive reading experience. In this novel, the author uses a format in the form of interview transcripts, personal notes, and investigative evidence which makes this story feel more real. Based on research data on diction that have been obtained in the novel as follows:

Diction according to meaning

1. Connotative Meaning

"I am about to begin my final year project: an independent study of a subject of my own choosing. And I have chosen murder." (page 1).

In the sentence "*I am about to begin my final year project: an independent study of a subject of my own choosing. And I have chosen murder*". The words "*begin*" and "*choice*" indicates that Pip is brave, enthusiastic, and curious about the murder he has chosen as the subject of his project. The words used in the sentence above have a connotative meaning. The words "*beginning*" and "*choice*" in this sentence not only show Pip's determination, but also his courage, passion, and curious personality and attitude. According to Chaer (2013), connotative meaning is meaning that refers to the emotional and associative aspects of a term. The language style used in the words "*start*" and "*choice*"

only shows an existing fact or reality, without providing additional meaning or figurative meaning.

"Sal Singh is the monster in our city's closet. The shadow that every parent snatches from their child. The face that every child sees in their nightmares." (page 9).

Sentences contain connotative meaning. The words *"monster"*, *"closet"*, *"shadow"*, *"snatched"*, and *"nightmare"* not only indicate something that exists in the real world but also describe negative, tense, scary and sinister feelings and views towards the figure of Sal. Singh admitted to being the killer of Andie Bell. These words give the reader a sensation and impression of the character Sal Singh and the murder case in the novel. The language style used in the novel is in the sentence *"The shadow that every parent takes from their child."* The language style used includes the personification which means the use of words used to describe human nature to compare and enhance the impression in a sentence and the next language style is in the sentence *"Sal Singh is a monster in our city's closet."* This is included in metaphorical language. A metaphor is a style of language used by using words or groups to express something that does not match its meaning. Understanding metaphor is related to age because age affects people cognitive, language and social development. According to Deckert, Schmoeger, Schaunig-Busch, & Willinger (2019) understanding Metaphors is related to age, research shows that there is a strong positive correlation between age (from childhood to adolescence) and identification and understanding of metaphors.

"I smiled back, but it felt fragile. It was like the mask I'd worn in the last few weeks was starting to crack." (page 65).

The sentence above is connotative. The words *"fragile"*, *"mask"*, and *"crack"* not only indicate the physical condition or existing objects, but also describe Pip's feelings of being fragile, depressed, and dishonest with himself because he has hidden it from the people closest to him. The words above give the reader a certain nuance about Pip's character and his conflict. The connotative words above provide a factual meaning to the story but do not provide additional meaning.

"I felt a surge of adrenaline as I pressed the call button. I did this. I was going to talk to the brother of a murderer. Or, more precisely, the brother of the boy accused of murder." (page 73).

The words *"surge"*, *"adrenaline"*, *"hit"*, and *"accused"* are the connotative meanings in the sentence. The word meaning does not indicate an existing physical phenomenon, but describes Pip's mixed emotions of excitement, courage and doubt when contacting Ravi. The language style used in the sentence *"I want to talk to the brother of a murderer."* is hyperbole. According to Keraf (2015), hyperbole is a style of language that contains excessive questions by exaggerating something. Hyperbole is also used to give a strong, dramatic, or humorous impression of something, by exaggerating the actual facts.

"This is a story. A story with evidence, facts, and clues. A story I can solve. All I have to do is find the truth." (page 113).

The sentence above is included in the connotative meaning because it contains the words *"story"*, *"evidence"*, *"facts"*, *"clues"*, and *"truth"*. This word shows something that exists in the real world but also emphasizes Pip's language as someone who likes reading, writing and researching. He will see the murder case as an interesting story and challenge him to solve it. The language style used in the sentence *"A story with evidence, facts and clues."* The language style used is ellipsis. According to Sriyanto (2014), ellipsis marks are used to mark disjointed sentences or omitted parts of sentences. The ellipsis also indicates that part of a sentence has been omitted, to write unfinished speech in a conversation.

2. Denotative Meaning

The meaning of definite, objective, and consistent words with reality is called denotative. The meaning of terms about the facts that are mentioned in the narrative, such as character names, locations, dates, events, and supporting documentation, is known as the denotative in Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*. In this book, some instances of denotations are:

"Oh god, this is what happened when she was nervous or backed into a corner; she started spewing useless facts dressed up as bad jokes. And the other thing: nervous Pip turned four strokes posher, abandoning middle class to grapple for a poor imitation of upper." (page 2 part 1)

What is meant by the sentence the denotation in the sentence above is when Pip feels nervous, therefore, he makes his attitude change, this is a cause-and-effect phenomenon. So, when Pip feels nervous, he will make his punches stronger.

"She sat down next to them, Josh and her dad's worn-out breaths making the sofa cushion swell and sink against the backs of her legs" (page 4 part 2)

In the sentence above, the denotation sentence is located in the sentence "Josh and her dad's worn-out breaths making the sofa cushion swell and sink against the backs of her legs" In this sentence, it describes how normal it is for someone to feel tired. Normally, everyone will rest when they feel tired. The diction of the word rest is described by a sentence "Making the sofa cushion swell and sink against the backs of her legs".

"She stopped by the shop on her way to buy a king-size chocolate bar to help mend Lauren's king-size broken heart." (page 22 part 3)

The sentence above includes a denotation sentence, where in the sentence "a king-size chocolate bar to help mend Lauren's king-size broken heart." This means that big chocolate can heal a very deep broken heart too, means equality in any case. This can also refer to balance in doing something.

"I . . . I think it's because we'd had some time to think about it, and we knew we could get in trouble for lying. None of us thought Sal was involved in what happened to Andie, so we didn't see the problem in telling police the truth." (page 40 part 5)

The sentence above contains a denotational meaning of because this sentence means that Pip was afraid of the lies, he had told, they also never thought that Sal was involved in Andie's death. It is normal for humans to feel afraid when they make a mistake.

"Ravi strode up to the till and gave the woman working there one of his perfect smiles. He placed the milk down and said, 'Just that, please.'" (pg 48 pt 6)

What is meant by the denotation sentence in the sentence "above is gave the woman working there one of her perfect smiles." this sentence explains that Ravi is teasing.

Discussion

This novel is full of twists and turns and puzzles that make readers curious and involved in the story. The diction used in Holly Jackson's "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" is characterized by a mixture of conversational and descriptive language. We analyze using narratives that are often in line with styles and language that are experienced in teenage dialogue, thus making the narratives interesting and relevant. The text we examine is about the meaning.

The words used in the sentence above have a connotative meaning. Sentences contain connotative meaning. The connotative words above provide factual meaning to the story but do not provide additional meaning. The words "soaring", "adrenaline", "hitting", and "accusing" are connotative meanings in the sentence. The language style used in the sentence "I want to talk to the brother of a murderer". is hyperbole. According to Keraf,

hyperbole is a style of language that contains excessive questions by exaggerating something.

The meaning of terms regarding the facts mentioned in the narrative, such as character names, locations, dates, events, and supporting documentation, is known as denotative in *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson. The diction of the word rest is described by the sentence "makes the sofa cushions swell and sink against the back of the legs".

CONCLUSION

Humans and there are forms of literary works. Literature is an expression of a person's inner thoughts by describing a language. Not only that, literature has a deep understanding of not only expressing an imaginary story or the writer's dreams, but also a creative work of writing in managing the ideas that he will convey. The literary work is an imaginary artistic life created by the author. Life in literary works is a writer's fantasy, which is motivated by the writer's desire or aspirations to create a beautiful work of art. Literary works are a form and result of creative work, which essentially uses language to express how human life is. There are many literary works in this world, one of which is the novel. A novel is a form of literary work that uses language as a medium to convey stories, ideas and messages to readers. Choosing the right language can influence readers in terms of understanding, appreciation, and identification in the novel. This conflict is a story element that is included in the formation of the novel.

This novel is a fictional story that tells about life in a world that is built through elements of characterization, storyline, point of view and so on. It can be concluded that the novel is a realistic human story using several related elements. Language is a means or medium for conveying the author's ideas or thoughts which will be expressed in a work, namely a novel. From these expressions, the author can use an effective and coherent language style which will make it easier for readers to understand. The reason is that this work will foster literary values that have artistic value. Language has a role as a means of expressing and conveying messages in a literary work. One of the intrinsic aspects of a novel is language style, where language style is an element that is able to attract the reader's first impression. Keraf and Faricha argue that stylistic or language style is part of diction which is related to individual expressions, characteristics or things that have artistic value. The author also uses language style to beautiful his writing.

Diction is used by the author in choosing the right words to create a certain meaning in a literary work. By using diction, the author can arrange word for word in his writing. Therefore, authors or writers must be able to choose the right diction for their writing. The function of this diction is to express the author's ideas to other people to avoid mistakes in interpreting and feeling what the author feels. The previous lesson in the article "An Analysis of Diction in Maya Angelou's Selected Poems". This reveals that the author also tries to use different words in his daily life, therefore everyday language is not enough to describe what the author has experienced. Writers also have their own way and language in conveying messages in their writing. In essence, writers also convey their feelings and ideas accurately in a literary work. According to Pradopo (2010), if words are chosen or arranged in such a way that their meaning creates aesthetic imagination, such as diction. This research will discuss the influence of the choice of language used in the novel on readers in the novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson. From several influences on the choice of language used in the novel "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson. The choice of language used in this novel has various functions, such as informative, expressive, impressive and educational. The choice of language used in this

novel also shows Holly Jackson's easy-to-understand writing style, which is able to create an interesting, exciting and entertaining novel.

In this case, we observe how well the reader understands the diction in the novel. From these observations, we gathered several facts and information about the choice of language style used by the writer. The diction we use is diction by meaning. The novel tells the story of a teenage girl named Pippa Fitz Amobi who carries out an investigation into the murder case of Andie Bell, a popular side who was suspected of being murdered by her boyfriend, Sal Singh, who later committed suicide.

His novel is full of twists and puzzles that make readers curious and involved in the story. The diction used in "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" by Holly Jackson is characterized by a blend of conversational and descriptive language. It often incorporates the language and tone that resonate with the experiences and dialogue from teenagers, making the narrative engaging and relatable. Additionally, the author employs a mix of suspenseful and atmospheric descriptions to create a compelling and immersive reading experience. In this novel, the author uses a format in the form of interview transcripts, personal notes, and investigative evidence which makes this story feel more real.

REFERENCES

- Constantakis, Sara. 2010. *Novels for students: presenting analysis, context & criticism on commonly studied novels*; Vol.33. New York: Gale Group.
- Chaer, Abdul. (2013). *Pengantar Semantik Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Deckert, S., Schmoeger, M., Schaunig-Busch, I., & Willinger, U. (2019). The development of metaphor comprehension and its relationship with verbal ability, non-verbal reasoning and semantic fluency. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1–14.
- Faricha, Nury Ziyadatul. 2015. "Use of Diction and Language Style in the Novel "Daun yang Jatuh Tak Pernah Membenci Angin" in the NOSI Journal Volume 2, No. 9, February, p. 148-149
- Keraf, Gorys. 2015. *Diksi dan Gaya Bahasa*. Print 3 Jakarta: PT Gramedia.
- Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. 2013. *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press
- Pradopo, Rachmat Djoko. 2010. *Pengkajian Puisi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Sriyanto (2014). "Seri Penyuluhan Bahasa Indonesia Ejaan". Center for Development and Corrections, Language Development and Development Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture, Jakarta.