

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In this thesis I would like to analyze the degree of powerfulness of a character in the novel *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell* by Chris Colfer. Colfer has written a lot of novels including *Struck by Lightning*, which was adapted into a movie. His novel *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell* was released on July 17, 2012 as the first part of *The Land of Stories* series, which consists of four novels; the other three are *The Land of Stories: The Enchantress Returns*, *The Land of Stories: A Grimm Warning*, and the last one is *The Land of Stories: Beyond the Kingdoms*.

*The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell* has received a lot of praises. According to *New York Times*, this novel is a best-seller novel. In addition, on October 10, 2015, the novel was rated 4.7 out of 5 stars by 653 reviewers on *amazon.com*. Moreover, at the same time, *goodreads.com*, where people can see books' recommendations and leave or read book reviews, gave a high rating to the novel—4.16 out of 5 stars—as reviewed by 2,935 reviewers. Thus, the ratings show that the novel is worth reading.

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The novel I choose to analyze, *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell*, is a story about Alex and Conner Bailey—a pair of twins who come to the Land of Stories where fairy tales are real. They have several adventures to collect the items to activate the wishing spell. The wishing spell is a legendary spell that can grant any one wish, but some items are needed for the spell to work. The twins have to collect the items by travelling to every kingdom in the world of The Land of Stories, for instance the Northern Kingdom, where Snow White lives and Sleeping Kingdom, where Sleeping Beauty sleeps for a long time. Their journey is not easy because they have to compete against the antagonist, the Evil Queen, who is also looking for the items for the spell.

I choose this novel because it has a lot of cliffhangers that make me curious about what will happen next. Even though the story Colfer wrote is taken from old-time fairy tales like Cinderella, Sleeping beauty, etc., he manages to present it in a new way—adding elements which are not present in the original stories and thus making it seems fresh. On top of that, Colfer’s characterization of the character is so vivid that readers are drawn into the story.

I analyze one of the major characters in this novel because I want to see how linguistic features can be used as a tool to analyze a character from a literary work. I believe this is something that can be developed to become a new field of research in linguistic field.

The character I analyze is the Evil Queen, the antagonist in the novel. In the story, the twins have to rally against her to collect the items as she needs them as well to free the person she loves. In the story, the Evil Queen succeeds in kidnapping the twins and stealing the items that the twins have collected for she

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has followers whom she can take advantages from. The Evil Queen in Colfer's book is different from the Evil Queen everyone knows; she is originally portrayed as a purely bad character who is lonely and does not have anyone close. Yet, in Colfer's book, the Evil Queen has someone that she loves very much; moreover, the Evil Queen's characteristics seem to change over the course of the novel.

When I read the novel, I think that Chris Colfer portrays the Evil Queen differently before and after she frees the man she loves. This piques my curiosity and therefore I am going to examine this difference by analyzing the degree of powerfulness of the Evil Queen using Functional Grammar.

This analysis belongs to the linguistic field of Stylistics. According to Simpson (2004), "Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*" (p. 2). I use the theory of Functional Grammar to know how the character is portrayed by the novelist.

Halliday's study (as cited in Gerot and Wignell, 1994) says that Functional Grammar is a study about meaning. There are three meanings in Functional Grammar; however, I will focus on the ideational meaning which consists of Transitivity analysis.

Transitivity is a central of processes (Gerot & Wignell, 1994), and processes are the tools I use in analyzing the character. Even though Halliday identified seven processes (Gerot & Wignell, 1994), Toolan (1998) states that a character's degree of powerfulness can be seen through Material process, without looking the other six processes.

The analysis of the degree of powerfulness is significant as this will allow readers to be more critical in reading. The readers will not only read for

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enjoyment but they can also understand the message that the novelist wants to convey; in addition, when the readers are able to analyze the characters, the readers will feel close to the characters because they understand the characters better.

(853 Words)

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

I would like to analyze the following problems:

1. How is the Evil Queen described as a powerful character by the novelist?
2. How do the material processes reveal the degree of powerfulness?

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

This analysis is done to:

1. find out the degree of the Evil Queen's powerfulness which has been described by the novelist.
2. find out how Material processes reveal the degree of powerfulness.

### **1.4 Method of Research**

First, I chose the data source to be analyzed. Then, I selected the data taken from the data source, after which I analyzed the data based on the theory of the degree of powerfulness in Functional Grammar. Finally, I wrote the research report.

### **1.5 Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis consists of four chapters. It begins with Chapter One, which is the Introduction that consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is Theoretical Framework, which explains the Linguistic area and the approach used in analyzing the data. In Chapter Three, there is the presentation of the data analysis. Last, in Chapter Four, Conclusion, I put forward my personal comments on the findings. Finally, the thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices.

