CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In this thesis, I would like to analyse how *deixis*, *reference*, and *presupposition* are used in the misleading scenes in Agatha Christie's detective series entitled *The Body in the Library* and *The A.B.C Murders*. Besides, I would also like to relate these misleading scenes to their effects in supporting the elements of plot: *suspense*, *surprise*, and *foreshadowing*.

Crime and detective novels are still extremely popular with readers since this kind of novels allows the readers to get in tune with the writer and with the characters in the book. One thing that makes this kind of novels different from the others is that the writer loves to challenge the readers to solve and reveal the mystery before the detective in the novel does so. In such a novel, a crime is committed early in the story and the rest of the book is concerned with the detective's attempts to solve it, such as searching for the one who has committed the crime, the motives behind the crime, and the tricks used in committing the crime.

Agatha Christie is considered the most famous writer of detective stories in the twentieth century. Her detective stories use either first-person or third-person point of view. However, when the story applies first-person point of view, oftentimes the first person is not the detective who is investigating the crime and finally solving the mystery. And, when the story applies third-person point of view, oftentimes the third person who seems to dominantly appear in the story and make the investigation is not the detective who is going to reveal the mystery, either. Therefore, the readers are not able to read what is in the detective's mind.

Still, Agatha Christie provides the readers with hints and clues in order to enable them to participate in the process of solving the mystery. Yet, the readers will possibly be faced with two problems. First, they may have to know which hints are considered the real hints, and which ones will lead them to a wrong interpretation. Second, they have to be able to apply the real hints in the process of making a hypothesis.

Occasionally, it happens that some readers are excited when they think they have successfully solved the mystery before the story ends. Yet, when reading the final conclusion delivered by the detective, they find that their hypothesis is quite different or even far different from the conclusion. This may happen since the readers sometimes misjudge the real hints to be the fake ones, or vice versa. Certain scenes seem to contain hints and clues to help the readers to solve the mystery, but Christie actually provides such scenes to mislead the readers.

In this thesis, I would like to show how linguistic aspects such as *deixis*, *reference*, and *presupposition*, play an important role in creating the misleading

scenes. Those misleading scenes build the relationship between the readers and the writer. In order not to be misled, the readers have to be able to interpret the writer's intended meaning of the linguistic forms. Therefore, the linguistic area of my analysis will be Pragmatics, as it is concerned with 'the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader).' (Yule, 1996:3). Furthermore, the hints provided in the misleading scenes which are applied in Agatha Christie's detective series deal with the use of deictic and referring expressions, as well as building the reader's presupposition.

In my opinion, the misleading scenes in Agatha Christie's detective stories are provided not only to challenge the readers to solve the mystery on their own, but also to support the elements of plot in the story, which are *suspense*, *surprise*, and *foreshadowing*. In order that the readers can have the awareness of these elements, the readers are expected to read the story thoroughly.

Suspense deals with the readers' curiosity in revealing the truth behind the mystery, as well as finding 'whodunit.' In reading a detective story, the readers will generally grow eager to read on to find the answer to the mystery. On the other hand, the author will present *foreshadowing*, which plays an important role in a detective story since it contains hints and clues to help the readers solve the mystery. The last element, *surprise*, deals more with the solving of the mystery. It takes place when the resolution departs from the readers' expectation.

Finally, through this thesis I would like to show that Agatha Christie's detective stories are special, since the readers enjoy them not only for their entertaining storylines but also for the misleading scenes, which are created partly

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through the use of *deixis*, *reference*, and *presupposition*. The misleading scenes can surprise the readers at the end of the story.

Statement of the Problem

I would like to state the problems as follows:

1. Which scenes in Agatha Christie's detective series are considered misleading?

2. How are *deixis*, *reference*, or *presupposition* applied in *The Body in the Library* and *The A.B.C Murders* (by the author as the speaker) to create misleading scenes?

3. How do the misleading scenes support or build *surprise*, *suspense*, and *foreshadowing*?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems stated above, I would like to show:

1. the scenes in Agatha Christie's detective series that are considered misleading.

2. the way *deixis*, *reference*, or *presupposition* are applied in *The Body in the Library* and *The A.B.C Murders* (by the author as the speaker) to create misleading scenes.

3. the way those misleading scenes build *surprise*, *suspense*, and *foreshadowing*.

Method of Research

First, I read several Agatha Christie's detective stories to collect the data of misleading scenes in each story. Next, I examine the data to find expressions showing *deixis*, *reference*, and *presupposition*, and then I analyse the way they

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form the misleading scenes. Then I elaborate how those misleading scenes build and support the elements of plot: *surprise*, *suspense*, and *foreshadowing*. Finally, I write a report of my research.

Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis will be divided into four chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organisation of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the theoretical framework of the study. The data analysis is presented in Chapter Three. The last chapter, Chapter Four, is the conclusion of the analysis in the previous chapter. At the end of the thesis, I put the Bibliography and the Appendices.