CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher describes the background of the research, the problem of the research, the objective of the research, and the significance of the research.

1.1. Background of Research

Politeness is a universal aspect of communication that maintains social harmony. Leech (in Djalilova & Obidovna Zarnigor, 2022), argues that politeness is a social norms, and each society has its own set of social norms, consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe certain behaviour, a certain order of things, even ways of interpreting certain social contexts. Meanwhile, Brown & Levinson (in Fathi, S., 2024), highlight politeness as a universal strategy to avoid conflict. In addition, they emphasize that every interaction potentially threatens someone's "face," therefore politeness strategies serve as crucial mechanisms to preserve relationships. Recent studies show that politeness applies not only to everyday conversation but also to literature such as novels, which reflects cultural values and ethics.

As literary works, novels serve both as reflections of society and as instruments for emotional learning. Contemporary literature influences how individuals perceive the world, fostering empathy and reinforcing societal values. Nurgiyantoro (in Hasanah & Daud, 2024), argued that novel, with their detailed and realistic conversations, create a rich context for teaching and understanding pragmatics, as they showcase how dialogue drives plot and reveals character traits. Even in this digital era, fantasy fictions including Barnhill's novel *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* (2016) remain relevant because they teach universal values such as kindness, politeness, and solidarity. In the novel, Kelly Barnhill introduces Xan, the main character, as an elderly witch who is full of compassion. Xan's politeness is represented through speech acts that soothe, protect, and prioritize empathy toward children and society.

The novel offers in depth interpersonal relationship dynamics, such as Luna and Xan's, which reflect politeness in emotionally charged situations. For example, when Luna is afraid of her grandmother's condition which is Xan "Grandma, why are you still walking? You should be sitting. I think you should sit down right now. Oh, look. A log for sitting on" (Barnhill, 2016, p. 119), this reflected one of the maxims that already told by Leech (in Trifani & Rohana, 2023), politeness strategies is split into six maxims that known as the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim, this example shows how sympathy maxims are used in this novel. Apart from that, this novel not only depicts

everyday interactions, but also moral and social conflicts, making it an ideal object to be analysed from a pragmatics point of view.

Xan's politeness is interesting to be analyzed because it opens a window into how children's literature instills moral values through language. Another reason is that in the novel Barnhill presents Xan as a character whose politeness strategies embody empathy, care, and moral responsibility. By studying this, people might see how novels function as the cultural lens, not merely as the fictional entertainment but also encode the social norms, ethical frameworks, and communicative practices.

It is important to study the politeness strategies in this novel, because it helps us to understand how literature transmits values across generations. Furthermore, without scholarly attention the politeness embedded in children's literature risks being overlooked, weakening literature's role in transmitting ethical and social values. In addition, neglecting politeness studies in literature may contribute to a decline in awareness of how language sustains cultural identity and social harmony. Another impact is the academic stagnation, in which pragmatics research would remain narrowly focused on spoken interaction, ignoring literature as a rich site for politeness strategies. This limits interdisciplinary growth between linguistics, literature, and education.

From these points of view, the researcher conducts a research entitled *Uncovering The Politeness Strategies of Xan as The Main Character in The Novel "The Girl Who Drank The Moon" by Kelly Barnhill*. Previous research has been conducted by Tawakkal (2023) in politeness. However, in her research she focuses on analyzing the positive and negative strategies of politeness in a different novel entitled "The Chronicles of Narnia". Other researchers have conducted the same novel. However, they discuss different things in the novel. Shintia (2020), discusses the elements of fantasy that exist in the novel, while Sagala et al (2021), analyze the types of phrasal verbs and the translation techniques used to translate English phrasal verbs into Indonesian. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap.

1.2. Problem of Research

In this point, the researcher states the problem of the research which is formulated as follow:

How do the politeness strategies exist in Xan as the main character in the novel "The Girl Who Drank The Moon" by Kelly Barnhill?

1.3. Objective of Research

In this point, the researcher states the objective of the research as: To find out how the politeness strategies exist in Xan as the main character in the novel ”The Girl Who Drank The Moon” by Kelly Barnhill.

1.4. Significances of Research

The significance of this research are theoretically and practically in which described as follow:

1) Theoretically

This research is expected to provide information to the readers and literature students about the politeness strategies that exist in Xan as the main character in the novel ”The Girl Who Drank The Moon” by Kelly Barnhill.

2) Practically

This research is expected to provide information for next researchers, especially those who are interested in analyzing novels. It is also expected to be a reference for those who are interested and developing the study of the novel ”The Girl Who Drank The Moon” by Kelly Barnhill.