

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The Bell Jar is a famous novel written by Sylvia Plath in 1963. It explores feminism and psychological themes. The story follows a girl named Esther Greenwood who got accepted into an internship to work in a magazine publisher in New York. However, she experienced struggles in fulfilling her identity and social norms. She became lost and confused about what she wanted to be. To make things worse, she faced the expectations from society for her to be a good wife for her non-virgin boyfriend, Buddy Willard. Moreover, she tried to write a novel, failed, and ended up depressed. Furthermore, her narratives show some unusual behaviors such as indifference to activities, sleeplessness, unable to focus, and suicidal thoughts which indicated mental illness (Hunt & Carter, 2012:29). Eventually, she committed suicide by sleeping pills overdose and failed and later was treated in a mental institute.

Depression is not only reflected in a person's behavior and emotions, but also in their communicative way. According to Beck et al. (1979:12), individuals with depression tend to develop negative thinking patterns that are reflected in how they perceive themselves, others, and environment. These negative patterns often affect their language in which they frequently express dissatisfaction, hopelessness, self-blame, pessimism, and negative evaluations of situations. Therefore, analyzing the language of depressive individuals could give understanding to their psychological condition.

One way to analyze the relationship between language and psychological condition is through expressive speech acts. Yule (1996:53) proposed that expressive speech acts are speech acts that state what the speaker is feeling. In addition, Searle (2012:15) added that expressive speech acts are kind of illocutionary acts that express the speaker's psychological state. Moreover, expressive speech acts also provide understanding on how the speaker build and communicate their emotional condition.

The complexities of Esther's emotional and psychological condition could be reflected in her expressive speech acts. Therefore, the current study will try to explore the expressive speech acts used by Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar* novel to discover her depression. This topic is important because expressive speech acts could give deep understanding of Esther's psychological condition and emotion. Furthermore, by combining expressive speech acts and negative cognitive bias, this study would provide an understanding of the reflection of depression in language.

1.2 Research Questions

In accordance with the problem, the writer proposes some research questions.

1. What kinds of illocutionary forces in expressive speech acts that are related to depression used by Esther Greenwood during her depression in *The Bell Jar*?
2. How is negative cognitive bias indicated through Esther Greenwood's expressive speech acts during her depression in *The Bell Jar*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

There are some objectives that this research tries to fulfil.

1. To explore the illocutionary forces of expressive speech acts that are related to depression used by Esther Greenwood during her depression in *The Bell Jar* novel.
2. To analyze how negative cognitive bias is indicated through Esther Greenwood's expressive speech acts during her depression in *The Bell Jar*.

1.4 Previous Studies

There are several studies that have explored expressive speech acts in various novels and movies. The first study by Firmansyah (2022) aimed to analyze the types and uses of expressive speech acts in *To Kill a Mockingbird* novel focusing on the main character, Atticus Finch. The researcher classified the utterances into types of expressive speech acts proposed by Yule and Norrick, then distinguished between direct and indirect forms and analyzed their functions and values. The study founded that Atticus Finch frequently used expressive speech acts to criticize, reflecting his character's values and interactions in the novel.

Another study by Elhamsyah & Ambalegin (2023) tried to investigate the varieties of expressive speech acts used by the characters in *Looking for Alaska* novel. Using Martinez's theory, this study tried to identify and categorize the different forms of expressive speech acts in the dialogues. The researchers found 20 expressive speech acts and concluded that these utterances help to illustrate the characters' emotions, regrets, gratitude, and sympathy.

Purwati (2023) conducted research on *Marriage Story* movie to examine the type of expressive speech acts that the characters used. The researcher applied Searle's six types of expressive speech act theory in analyzing the data. From the 69 utterances, it is found that thanking is the most common expressive speech acts. This indicated that the characters wanted to show appreciation for something through thanking.

Furthermore, Aritonang & Ambalegin (2023a) tried to analyze the expressive speech acts in *Avatar: The Way of the Water* movie using pragmatic identity method and pragmatic competence-in-equalizing technique. They found 46 utterances in which complaint is the most dominant while condole and congratulate are not found in the movie. The absence of condole and congratulate is because death is common in war and victory is an obligation that they must do.

Al Mirrah et al. (2024) tried to analyze the use of expressive speech acts in *A Perfect Life* novel to discover the character development and narrative progression. Using expressive speech acts theory that Austin proposed and developed by Searle, the researchers found that dislike and apology are the most dominant while pain, joy, and pleasure are less used. They concluded that dislike, the most prevalent expressive speech acts, reflected significant emotional and narrative weight in the character's interactions.

Moreover, Kurniasih & Mulatsih (2022) analyzed types of expressive speech acts that the main character produced in *Encanto* movie using Searle's six types of expressive speech acts. The findings indicated that expressive of attitude became the most dominant expressive speech acts because the main character

wanted to express her negative feelings such as dislike, complaining, and criticizing.

A study by Hendra & Ambalegin (2023) aimed to explore the types of expressive speech acts in *The Aftermath* movie using theory of expressive speech acts (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). The researchers also used pragmatic identity method and pragmatic competence-in-equalizing in the analysis process. From the 59 utterances, it is found that thank is the most frequently used because the speaker got advantages from the hearer that he used thank to express gratitude frequently.

Besides earlier studies that explore expressive speech acts, several studies have also tried to analyze depression using Beck's cognitive theory. A study by Anggarwani et al. (2024) aimed to analyze the depression experienced by Helen Knightly in *The Almost Moon* novel using Beck's depression theory. The findings showed Helen's depressive behavior including negative view of the world, negative view about the future, negative self-schemas, arbitrary inference, selective abstraction, personalization, and dichotomous thinking. Moreover, these depressive behaviors also affected Helen in making unexpected actions and became a fugitive.

Wulandari & Kholik (2026) analyzed the emotion and depression of Lengka in *00.00* novel using Beck's cognitive triad approach. The findings indicated that Lengka experienced various negative emotions, including fear, sorrow, anger, disappointment, despair, and persistent psychological pressure. Moreover, Lengka's depression is shown in how she tends to blame herself, see herself as worthless, view her environment as emotionally threatening, and believe

that her future is hopeless. These suggest that the novel shows the complexity of depression in adolescents.

Lastly, a study by Tanti (2024) tried to analyze the depression disorder experienced by Nicholas in *The Son* movie. The researcher used Beck and Alford's theory to find the depressive symptom and Judith and Peacock's theory to find the cause and impact of depression in Nicholas's life. The findings showed the depressive characteristics including emotional manifestation, cognitive manifestation, motivational manifestation, and vegetative and physical manifestation. Moreover, it is found that Nicholas's depression is caused by emotional shock from his parents' divorce and impacted in his trouble in concentration, sleeping, and the thought of death.

Based on the previous studies, it can be seen that many researchers have analyzed expressive speech acts in various novels and movies. These studies have important roles in conveying characters' emotion, relationship between characters, and narrative development in novels and movies. Moreover, there are also studies that used Beck's theory to analyze the mental and emotional condition experienced by characters. However, these studies tend to explore expressive speech acts and depression separately. Therefore, further research that use expressive speech acts to examine psychological conditions such as depression could help to understand how characters express their emotional and cognitive states through language.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The focus of the current study is analyzing the expressive speech acts produced by Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar* novel using classification of illocutionary force in expressive speech acts theory (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985) and felicity condition. Moreover, this study also applies theory of negative cognitive bias (Beck & Weishaar, 1989).

