

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow (2022) is a novel written by Zoulfia Katouh that is set against the Syrian civil war, which highlight the emotional and psychological impact experienced by the victims of the war. The phenomenon that is highlighted in this story is the depression experienced by Salama as the main character as she goes through many heavy and traumatic experiences caused by the war (Shabbir et al., 2024: 931). Salama witnessed the death of her entire family in a neighborhood explosion, and later began hallucinating a figure named Khawf, who constantly whispers dark thoughts into her mind. She also clings to the presence of her sister-in-law, Layla, who has already died but whom she still believes to be alive. Throughout the story, Salama's decision to leave Syria is challenged by Kenan, a young man who risks his life to fight for Syria. These experiences shape Salama into someone who constantly expressed language that carries sorrow, depression, and emotional exhaustion.

The language used by Salama can be analyzed through expressive speech acts. According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985: 38), the purpose of an expressive act is to convey the speaker's emotions or attitudes. Searle and Vanderveken (1985) divide expressive speech acts into several types, including apologize, thank, condole, congratulate, complain, lament, protest, deplore, boast, compliment, praise, welcome, and greet. Lament, as Searle and Vanderveken (1985: 213)

explain, is the speaker's verbal expression of sorrow or dissatisfaction toward a particular state of affairs, without necessarily attributing blame or responsibility to the hearer. It differs from complaining in that its illocutionary force lies primarily in communicating grief or regret rather than demanding further action.

Lamentation is theoretically important because it is different from a general expression of sadness, as lamentation reveals how the speaker positions themselves into a painful reality they have already presupposed to be true (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). Lamentation is even more interesting because, according to Searle and Vanderveken (1985), it does not always have to appear as a direct speech act. A person can lament something simply by feeling sorrow about it, which means lamentation must be analyzed in detail and supported by strong linguistic evidence of its illocutionary force in order to prove that an utterance truly functions as lamentation.

Language can be used to identify psychological disorders such as depressive disorder as humans use language not only to convey ideas but also to express deep feelings, which ultimately reflect the speaker's psychological state. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013: 160–164), major depressive disorder is characterized by a persistent depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or worthlessness, fatigue, and difficulty coping with daily life. Unlike ordinary sadness, major depressive disorder involves deeper psychological suffering that affects the way a person thinks, feels, and responds to their surroundings. When feelings such as hopelessness, guilt, fatigue, and

worthlessness become persistent and begin to dominate a person's emotional state, they may indicate the presence of major depressive disorder, and these symptoms are often revealed through the language a person uses.

Previous studies on *As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow* have examined psychological aspects such as PTSD and hallucination, as seen in Gebali (2025) and Shabbir et al. (2024), as well as literary aspects related to Salama's individuation and personality, as examined by Aliyya (2025). However, these studies have focused on trauma response and character development without examining the linguistic structure through which Salama's psychological condition is expressed. Specifically, no study has explored how lamentation, as an expressive speech act with both assertive and expressive dimensions, can serve as linguistic evidence of depressive symptoms. This creates a gap that this research aims to fill because while previous research has studied that Salama experiences psychological distress, none has shown how this emotion is manifested in her language.

Therefore, the expressive speech act theory from Searle and Vanderveken (1985) is chosen because it provides a specific framework to analyze the deeper layers of language use that reflect emotions such as lamentation, particularly through the forces of illocutionary point, propositional content, sincerity condition, and degree of strength. In addition, the theory of Major Depressive Disorder from APA (2013) is applied to support the analysis, as it provides a clinical framework to identify depressive symptoms reflected in Salama's expressions. This study applies both theories to examine how Salama's expressive speech acts of

lamentation represent the symptoms of Major Depressive Disorder based on APA (2013), addressing a gap that despite the previous studies acknowledging how language reveal personality, there are novelty have left unexamined which is the specific linguistic framework through which depressive symptoms are expressed through lamentation.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background stated previously, several research questions have been identified to specify the analysis conducted in this research:

- a. What are the functions of expressive speech act of lamentation uttered by Salama Kassab?
- b. How does expressive speech act of lamentation represents Salama Kassab's major depressive disorder?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Referring to the background stated previously, this study outlines several objectives to clearly define its purpose.

- a. To identify the functions of the expressive speech act of lamentation uttered by Salama Kassab.
- b. To examine the representation of Salama Kassab's major depressive disorder through her expressive speech acts of lamentation.

1.4 Previous Studies

Numerous previous studies have been conducted using expressive speech act analysis. The first one conducted by Ardiati (2022) examines expressive speech acts of apology in Indonesian and Japanese based on the expressive illocutionary

force proposed by Searle and Vanderveken. The study employs the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle proposed by Leech to analyze apology strategies in both languages. The findings show that Indonesian apologies tend to follow the Cooperative Principle through more direct expressions, whereas Japanese apologies tend to follow the Politeness Principle by maintaining social relationship and showing consideration for the hearer.

Furthermore, Hamzah et al. (2019) specifically discuss the expressive speech act of in their analysis of the play *Riders to the Sea* and proves that the speech act dramatizes the sufferings of the character and how the dramatist makes heavy use of the lamenting speech act since the utterances dealing with their emotions from the tragic events that they encounter. Ahmed (2015) examines how lamentation as a speech act is used by Al-Khansaa and Gray in elegy poems commemorating deceased loved ones. The study combines pragmatic analysis with a sociolinguistic perspective to analyze how cultural differences influence the interpretation of the speech acts expressed in the poems. The findings show that lamentation is regarded as a speech act of sincere expressive assertion, through which speakers express psychological truth and feelings of sadness in commemorating the deceased. However, the study is limited because the use of lamentation is limited within the context of grief and mourning resulting from death.

Furthermore, Nadira (2024) also uses expressive speech acts of lamentation to reveal the characterization of Meredith Grey in *Grey Anatomy's* serial and the findings reveal that Meredith Grey frequently uses non-verbal cues such as facial

expressions to characterize her personality. This research then proved that anger, great sadness, and disappointment can be functions of lamentation. However, this classification is not entirely strong because Searle and Vanderveken (1985) do not explicitly mention anger and disappointment as categories within lamentation.

Safreni et al. (2025) tries to conduct a study combining expressive speech acts and trauma in the analysis of judicial murder case of Judge Jamaluddin. It identifies expressive acts such as pain, like, dislike, sorrow, and apology, and Freud's trauma theory namely interpersonate trauma and attached trauma. It is said that interpersonate trauma is predominantly represented by expressive speech acts in this judicial case as the main data source. The topic itself is interesting and complex, as it offers fresh insights, but the trauma theory is not really highlighted. Hidayatullah et al. (2022) tries to conduct similar study using speech act and quality maxim with the movie *A Beautiful Mind* as the subject. This research is discussed the representative speech act and the quality maxim of schizophrenic communication. The problem statements in this research are what kind of representative speech act is uttered and how the quality maxim takes role in schizophrenic.

Similar studies on *As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow* about trauma and PTSD have been conducted by Gebali (2025) and Shabbir et al. (2024), showing similarity in focus but differences in result and weakness. Gebali (2025) studied the novel by focusing on Salama's mental disorder, specifically the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), applying PTSD theory with a psychological perspective. The result proved that Salama's PTSD can be seen through symptoms

such as avoiding reminders of the traumatic event frequently, intrusive thoughts, feeling constantly anxious and on the edge, and arousal and reactive symptoms, with the cause coming from the explosion that made her lose her family, and they also analyze the effect of PTSD. In contrast, Shabbir et al. (2024) also discuss trauma and PTSD, but apply Herman's theory and show that war can disrupt normal brain development in children and young people, resulting in altered cognitive and emotional functioning, while also discussing adaptation, healing, and resilience. Both studies provide insights about trauma in the novel, but Gebali give more detailed symptoms analysis yet do not clearly mention the theoretical framework, whereas Shabbir et al. offer additional and broader insights but the quality of writing is not as strong.

Similar studies on *As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow* that focus on Salama's psychological condition have also been conducted by Fadhilah & Sumaryani (2025) and Aliyya (2025), while Zahid et al. (2025) offer a different perspective. Fadhilah & Sumaryani (2025) discussed Salama's hallucination as a sign of psychological disorder with Freud's unconscious mind theory, revealing that Salama experiences unconscious desire, fear, and trauma through hallucination, where Khawf represents guilt and anxiety and Layla symbolizes the comfort she longs for. Similarly, Aliyya (2025) also uses literary criticism with Freud's personality structure theory to show id, ego, and superego, revealing that Salama's character is well developed as she meets Kenan and learns to balance her personal desires and reality. Both provide meaningful analysis, but Fadhilah & Sumaryani give a well-researched insight although the discussion of hallucination symptoms

could be explored more closely, while Aliyya offers a clear character development analysis but uses a more common approach. In contrast, Zahid et al. (2025) analyze identity, trauma, and resilience using spatial politics and home-making theory, showing how war in Syria changes people's view of their country and showing that home is not only a place but a space shaped by memory and relationship.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on Salama Kassab as the main character in *As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow* (2022) and is limited to exploring how her expressive speech acts of lamentation, based on Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) framework, reflect symptoms of Major Depressive Disorder provided by APA (2013).

1.6 Writing Organization

This paper is structured and divided into several chapters to ensure it appears organized and based on its specific focus.

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

The introduction section presents the background of the study, explaining the reasons for choosing the topic, theory, and object of analysis. This section also includes the research problems and objectives, which define the focus of the study and highlight its novelty. The novelty is further supported in the previous studies section, which reviews related research and identifies existing gaps. Finally, the introduction includes the scope of the study and the organization of the paper.

CHAPTER 2 : THEORY AND METHOD

Chapter 2 consists of a theoretical framework which discusses the basic theory used to specifically reveal phenomena in literary works, then followed by research methods. Research methods are divided into 4 parts, namely type of research, data source, method of collecting data, and method of analyzing data. In each section, we discuss how the author obtains, processes, and presents the data and analysis that will be included in this paper.

CHAPTER 3 : RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results and discussion are the most important parts and serve as the core of the entire research. This section is written by revealing data that has been found by the author regarding existing phenomena and theories and then explaining them. Each description and data presented must be able to answer the research questions and objectives of the study stated in chapter 1.

CHAPTER 4 : CONCLUSION

The final and final part of this thesis is the conclusion. The conclusion section will briefly summarize the outline and interpretation results of this research, followed by suggestions for further research.