

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The mystery genre has evolved significantly since its popularity in the 19th century, expanding across various media forms such as books, movies, podcasts, video games, and comics. Each of these formats brings unique strengths to storytelling, allowing for a diverse range of narratives that engage audiences. The genre encompasses everything from traditional detective stories to modern psychological thrillers, continuously evolving to offer rich experiences for a wide demographic, including children and young adults. Mystery stories are characterized by their narrative style and structure, typically beginning with a problem or crime that needs resolution. Clues are gradually revealed, leading to heightened suspense as the protagonist investigates potential suspects and motives before ultimately solving the mystery.

The intricacy of sentence constructions within the mystery genre is vital in augmenting narrative richness and captivating the reader's interest. This complexity is not merely a stylistic choice; it serves as a fundamental mechanism through which authors weave intricate plots and develop multifaceted characters. A significant element that adds to this intricacy is the incorporation of relative clauses, which are essential tools for creating layered meanings and enhancing the depth of the narrative. Traditionally relative clauses are known as adjective clauses which function as postmodifiers of noun phrases or antecedents. According to Goldin-Meadow and Karmiloff-Smith (2021), these subordinate

clauses can be embedded within the main phrases and are introduced by relative pronouns referring to their antecedents. Quirk et al. (1985) further categorize English relative clauses into restrictive and non-restrictive types; the former provides essential information that identifies the noun, while the latter offers nonessential details.

Authors of mystery novels frequently utilize elaborate sentence forms to build suspense, elaborate on character development, and subtly impart essential information. For instance, a well-placed relative clause can provide crucial context about a character's motivations or background, allowing readers to form a deeper connection with them. Consider a sentence like "The detective, who had spent years unraveling the city's darkest secrets, felt a chill run down his spine as he entered the abandoned mansion." Here, the relative clause "who had spent years unraveling the city's darkest secrets" not only enriches our understanding of the detective's character but also heightens the tension of the scene.

Moreover, relative clauses enable authors to convey complex ideas without breaking the flow of the narrative. By offering supplementary details about a noun without initiating a new sentence, these clauses enhance the overall storytelling experience. They allow for a seamless integration of information, which can be particularly effective in a genre where every detail may hold significance. For example, a sentence like "The victim, whose body was discovered in the old library, had been a prominent figure in the community" not only informs the reader about the victim's identity but also hints at potential motives and connections that could be explored later in the story. In addition to building suspense and providing context, the use of relative clauses can also

create a sense of immediacy and intimacy. When authors employ these constructions, they invite readers to engage more deeply with the narrative, encouraging them to piece together clues and draw connections between characters and events. This interactive element is crucial in the mystery genre, where readers often take on the role of amateur sleuths, trying to solve the puzzle alongside the protagonist.

Understanding relative clauses is vital for writers as they contribute sophistication and specificity to writing. They allow authors to expand upon ideas without needing to create separate sentences, thus enhancing clarity and maintaining readability. Literary works like novels serve as rich sources of linguistic data for analyzing relative clauses in context. For example, Lauren Oliver and H.C. Chester's *Curiosity House: The Shrunken Head* is a children's mystery novel that exemplifies the use of relative clauses throughout its narrative structure. This novel is the first edition of the "Curiosity House" series, categorized as children's literature, falling under the mystery and detective subgenre. The novel *Curiosity House: The Shrunken Head* published in 2015 tells the story of a group of orphans named Phillipa, Sam, Thomas, and Max, who live in Dumfrey's Dime Museum of Freaks, Oddities, and Wonders. When the museum's most prized possession, an Amazon Shrunken Head is stolen, the orphans embark on a thrilling quest to recover it. Along the way, they unravel a series of murders and find out the secret of their pasts.

This novel is particularly suitable for exploring relative clauses due to its layered narrative that frequently provides information about characters, settings, and events. By analyzing the relative clauses within this novel, we can gain