

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for the Study

English is a foreign language that plays crucial roles in communication nowadays. Particularly, it is accepted all around the world that English is the most important language for communicating and exchanging information regarding world events and new technologies from other countries. J.A. Foley (2002, p. 24) states that according to the British Council's Report in 2000, the number of people learning English worldwide has risen to over 1 billion people. In Thailand, English is not only taught as a foreign language in school but a number of Thai people working in some areas use English in communicating and completing their work as well. For instance, people who work in the area of international organizations and conferences, international banking, economic affairs and trade, tourism, tertiary education, international safety, international law, interpretation and translation, and technology transfer cannot avoid using English.

Nevertheless, in communicating, just being able to pronounce words correctly or forming a grammatically correct sentence are inadequate. Many teachers and researchers view that learning a language means learning not only the vocabulary, grammar, and sounds of language, but also how to use language appropriately in different situations. Put differently, an individual's ability to communicate effectively in English does not only depend on his or her grammatical competence of English rules for phonology, syntax and semantics but also requires the pragmatic skillfulness in order to know how to interpret the message of the speaker and the text appropriately and correctly.

A sentence used in different situations or by different persons may be interpreted in different ways. In spoken discourse, it might not be too difficult for the listeners to understand the sense of a sentence since speakers focus on some words or structures to add specific stress and intonation which help determine a particular meaning. In written discourse, it is very possible to be more complicated for readers to interpret and

understand such sentences because there are more means for expressing focus and emphasis.

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman(1999. p. 611) mention that focus and emphasis play a major role on the issue of meaning and use in English. Wherever the words and structures are focused, there will be an impact on the meaning or the way of interpretation. In written materials, there are not only the basic sentences, which are composed of subject, verb, object, and sometimes complement, but also the other patterns in which there are many techniques used for making sentences. The techniques generally include the use of clefts construction (a sentence in which special emphasis is given to one part such as the subject or the object by using a structure with *it* or *what*), fronting construction (moving a part of a sentence to the beginning in order to give it special emphasis), and emphatic words (giving special importance to a word in the sentence such as *do*, *own*, reflexive pronoun and logical connector). In a sentence, the writer may emphasize specific information such as the subject, object, adverb, or others. If the readers don't know what element the writer means to emphasize, they may not understand or even misunderstand the story as a consequence.

Thus, studying the way focus and emphasis work within the text is interesting and challenging. Moreover, the researcher has found that there is no previous study about the use of focus and emphasis constructions in any written material, especially in literature. Although there are many types of written discourse that are worth studying, the one which has drawn my interest the most is *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

Harry Potter is a well-known piece of literature written by J.K. Rowling. The Harry Potter books have been written in six episodes. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is the first episode of the Harry Potter series. The other episodes are *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, and *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, respectively. The first episode, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, has been chosen since it is the original British version and has been published all around the world. Moreover, it received many awards; for example, Nestlé Smarties Book

Prize 1997 Gold Medal 9-11 years, FCBG Children's Book Award 1997 Overall winner and Longer Novel Category, Birmingham Cable Children's Book Award 1997, British Book Awards (Nibbies) 1997-1998 Children's Book of the Year, Sheffield Children's Book Award 1998, Whitaker's Platinum Book Award 2001, and Anne Spencer Libbergh Prize 1997-1998 Children's Book of the Year. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone** has also been translated into many languages including Thai.

Aside from those awards, there are many people admiring and giving opinions to the Harry Potter books. For instance, Lady Laura Bush said "I read those books at home in Texas, but I felt like I was a world away, hiding in my invisibility cloak and making magic potions with Harry. A really good book makes you feel like you are part of the story". The writer herself stated that "I want to reflect that life can be difficult and confusing between the ages of eleven and seventeen, even when armed with a wand" (Ark. 2002, Online). Also, it has been said that the story and writing style in the Harry Potter book are fascinating. With the interesting writing style, it can attract the readers to follow the story with excitement through out the story. In each paragraph, the writer uses different writing techniques in order to focus on the important elements of the sentence. For instance, in some sentences or some words, the writer uses a capital letter to make the readers know what element (such as persons, action, and so forth) the writer wants

* This is the title of the original British version of the first book and the British publisher, Bloomsbury Publishing retained that title. Scholastic Publisher later published the book in the U.S. They have a different idea about the title of the book so they changed the title to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. In America it's called "The Sorcerer's Stone" because the publishers and the PR (Public Relation) knew nobody would be interested in a "Philosopher's Stone". They explained that the word philosopher connotes one who studies beliefs on human existence, God, the universe and so on. Nevertheless, a sorcerer would be a person practicing witchcraft, enchantment or magic. For the subject matter of the book is mostly magic and witchcraft, through their definitions, the word "sorcerer" makes more sense. Scholastic Publisher thinks that the British title gave a misleading idea of the subject matter. Hence, when the book published for American audiences has a different name due to conflicting interpretations between the USA and UK (Olson. 2002, Online).

to emphasize. In addition, there are other acclaims given to *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, as can be seen below (Rowling, 1997):

1. 'This is a story full of surprises and jokes; comparisons with Dahl are, this time, justified.' -- The Sunday Times

2. '*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* has all making of a classic. Rowling uses classic narrative devices with flair and originality and deliver a complex and demanding plot in the form of a hugely entertaining thriller. She is a first-rate writer for children.' -- The Scotsman

3. 'A richly textured first novel give life-off by an inventive wit.' -- The Guardian

4. 'A terrific read and a stunning first novel. Harry is a really memorable character. This is one of those books that can't be put down ; the story raced along and had me hooked to the last page. Joanne Rowling clearly has a remarkable imagination and this splendid first novel leaves me full of anticipation of what she might do next.'
-- Wendy Cooling, Children' Book Consultant

5. 'Mystery, magic, a spectacular cast of character and a splendid plot. This is a bold and confident debut from a splendid writer and storyteller.' -- Lindsey Fraser, Book Trust Scotland

Therefore, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is the best literature to be chosen for the study of focus and emphasis constructions in English.

Statement of Problem

As noted above, focus and emphasis play a major role in the issue of meaning and use of English. At present, more Thai children and adults like to read literature such as fiction and novels, since reading literature or other written discourses provides the readers fun and relaxation from their study or work. Besides, it is thus necessary for teachers to teach their students what focus and emphasis constructions are, how and when they are used. If students do not have such knowledge, it is difficult for them to understand what the writers want to communicate. Hence, the study of the use of focus and emphasis constructions in such literature should be conducted.

Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the use of focus and emphasis constructions in literature, specifically *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are focus and emphasis constructions used in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?
2. How frequently is each of the focus and emphasis constructions used in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?
3. When is each of the focus and emphasis constructions used in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?

Significance of the Study

This study will make English teachers to be aware that not only do the basic structures play a role in English grammar but "non-basic" structures such as focus and emphasis constructions play crucial roles in English grammar as well. Besides, the result of the study can be used as a guideline to develop existing curricula, especially in English for communication.

Limitation of the Study

The present study is limited to studying focus and emphasis constructions in a literature book. The literature used in this analysis is *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the first episode of the sixth-episode Harry Potter books, written by J.K. Rowling. It has 223 pages and is published by Bloomsbury Publishing. This study does not include some focus and emphasis constructions like emphatic adjectives and adverbs since there are heavy loads of adjectives and adverbs in the book and they are similar to regular adjectives and adverbs, and thus it is less possible to identify them correctly.

Definitions of Terms

To clarify particular terms that are used in this study, the following definitions are provided:

1. **Focus and emphasis constructions** refer to particular structures and functions (meanings) that the writer marks in the sentence to enable readers to understand more in the story. Structures used for focus are mostly on the issue of use, where as words and structures used to express emphasis are primarily concerned with meaning.
2. **Lexical devices** are the words such as *do*, *own*, adjectives and adverbs, reflexive pronouns, and logical connectors used in the sentence to emphasize sentential elements such as subject or object.
3. **Syntactic means for expressing focus and emphasis** are the movement of a constituent into a position in the sentence where we would not ordinarily expect to find it.
4. **Special focus construction** includes an explicit grammatical structure which frames the focused part of the sentence. There are four most important focus constructions in English: *it*-clefts, *wh*-clefts, passive voice, and nonreferential *there*.
5. **Emphatic *do*** is the verb "*do*", which is used as a lexical device to emphasize the action of sentence (represented by the verb).
6. **Emphatic reflexive pronouns** are lexical devices referring to reflexive pronouns such as *myself*, *yourself*, *itself*, *himself*, *herself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*, *themselves*, and *oneself* which are used in the sentence to emphasize a noun. Then, emphatic reflexive pronouns used as referentials and adverbials are excluded from this study.
7. **Emphatic *own*** is the word "*own*", which is used as a lexical device to emphasize preceding possessive adjectives.
8. **Emphatic logical connectors** are lexical devices referring to connectors such as *further*, *furthermore*, *also*, *moreover*, *besides*, *additionally*, *in addition*, and *in addition to*, which are used when the speaker or writer stresses the additionalness.

9. **Fronting** is a syntactic means used to focus something in a sentence. We can place special emphasis on some ideas by moving words or phrases from their usual place in a sentence to the front of the sentence.

10. **Fronting without subject-operator inversion** is a syntactic means by which the words or phrases that are emphasized are taken to the front of the sentence, without the inverting of the subject and verb in this sentence.

11. **Fronting with subject-operator inversion** is a syntactic means by which the words or phrases are taken to the front of the sentence, with the inverting of the subject and verb in this sentence. The focus part seems to fall into the delayed subject of the sentences.

12. **Negative fronting** is a syntactic movement by which the negative word is carried to the front of the sentence and followed by the inversion of subject and auxiliary. The fronting constituent must be the negative adverb such as *never, seldom, rarely, not once, not for, in no case, in no way, and no way*.

13. **Extend, degree, comparison fronting** is a syntactic means by which the extend, degree, and comparison are likely to be focused by placing them on an initial position of the sentence and followed by the inversion of subject and auxiliary.

14. **Present participle fronting** is a syntactic means by which the present participle is reversed to the front of the sentence. Present participle fronting must be followed by subject-operator inversion.

15. **Past participle fronting** is a syntactic means by which the past participle is moved to the front of the sentence and must be followed by reversing subject and verb.

16. **Adverbial fronting with or without subject-verb inversion** is a syntactic means by which an adverbial is brought to the front of the sentence whether or not the subject and main verb, when the main verb is not *be*, are also inverted.

17. ***It*-cleft** is a special focus construction in which the emphasized part is introduced by *it* and a form of *be*.

18. ***Wh*-cleft** is a special focus construction in which a special emphasis is given to the constituent(s) following some form of the verb *be*.

19. **Passive** is a special focus construction which is used when we want to focus on the person or thing that is affected by an action (receiver of the action), rather than the person or thing that performs the action. In this study, only particular independent complete clauses, (or main clauses, usually makes sense when standing alone) which contain full form (*be* + past participle) of the passive and sometimes have a *by* phrase (e.g. *he has been hugged by a complete stranger*) are our concern. Reduced forms such as a mere participle (e.g. *There will be books written about Harry*) are not counted.

20. **Nonreferential *there*** is a special focus construction in which "*there*" is used in order to introduce a new person or thing into what we are saying, to say that this person or thing exists, happens, or is to be found in a particular place. Thus, the introduced element is focused.

In short this chapter contains the introduction of the thesis such as the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, purposes of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study, and definitions of terms. It is supposed to make readers have background knowledge and understand more about this study. The next chapter is the review of related literature about focus and emphasis constructions. It presents types and definitions of focus and emphasis constructions, and previous research about the use of focus and emphasis constructions.