

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the research and explains the reasons for conducting it. It covers the background of the research, identification of the research, the research limitations, the research formulation, and the purpose of the research. In addition, this chapter discusses the importance and significance of the research and provides definitions of key terms used in the research.

1.1. Background of the Research

Language is a very important tool of communication for people to express their ideas, feelings, intentions, and attitudes to others in different situations. By using a language, people are able to share information and influence other people's actions. In daily communication, people often use different kinds of expressions to ask, advise, warn, invite, and prohibit someone from doing something. Therefore, language is not only used as the medium of delivering messages but also as a means of regulating social interaction and maintaining relationships between people.

Among various kinds of expressions, prohibitive expressions occupy an important role because they are used to prevent, restrict, or forbid someone from doing something. Such expressions are commonly found in daily conversations, written notices, public signs, literary works, and other forms of discourse. Depending on the circumstances, prohibitive expressions can express different intentions. According to Khyon (2024), prohibition is one of the directive speech

acts aiming to prevent or stop someone from doing a certain action, and understanding prohibitive utterances requires both linguistic and pragmatic competence. This means that prohibitive expressions are not only grammatical forms but also communicative acts whose meanings are to be interpreted based on their contexts.

Literature is among the most precious sources for the research of language as it reflects human experience and social interaction. Drama, as a genre of literature, is unique in that the story is presented mainly through dialogues between characters. Through dialogues, characters express their feelings, intentions, and relationships with others. So the language of drama is an interesting object of linguistic analysis. Dramatic dialogues often resemble face-to-face communication and include different kinds of expressions that perform different communicative functions such as prohibitive, warning, requesting, and advising functions.

One of the literary works that has rich and meaningful dialogues is *Under the Gaslight*. The drama depicts interactions between characters with conflicts, emotional tension, power, and social relations. These interactions are reflected in several utterances produced by the characters. In several cases, characters try to make other characters stop, prevent, or prohibit doing particular things. Such phenomena indicate that there are prohibitive expressions in the drama. In addition, the story is developed through dialogues, so that the script of *Under the Gaslight* is full of linguistic data for the analysis of the expression and reception of prohibitive expressions in different communicative contexts.

Ideally, readers and students are expected to understand not only the grammatical forms of expressions used in literary texts but also the meanings conveyed by those expressions. However, in reality, interpreting utterances in drama is not always easy. The same prohibitive expression can have different pragmatic meanings depending on the speaker's intention, the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, and the context of the conversation. Therefore, readers often focus only on the surface structure of the utterance and miss the intended meaning behind it. This phenomenon shows that it is important to analyze prohibitive expressions better to understand the use of language in literary discourse.

Prohibitive expressions are also known to be important from prior work. Khyon (2024) observed that prohibitive utterances tend to be difficult for language users in that they require sufficient linguistic and pragmatic competence to express prohibitive meanings successfully. The results suggest that prohibition is a complex linguistic phenomenon that merits further investigation, especially in contexts where meaning is highly context-dependent and interpersonal relations are involved.

Several previous studies have investigated prohibition in different contexts. Ahdiansyah and Nalfiyah (2022) analyzed warning and prohibition expressions in English textbooks and found that English and Indonesian use different forms in expressing prohibition. However, their research focused on textbook materials, not literary discourse. Khyon (2024) examined the ability of Iraqi EFL university students to produce utterances of prohibition and found that many learners had

difficulties in conveying prohibitive meanings appropriately. However, the research focused on language learners, not literary texts. Furthermore, Pardomuan and Hellystia (2026) analyzed directive speech acts in English film discourse and found that prohibition and command forms are frequently used to establish authority and interpersonal power relations among characters. However, their research focused on film discourse and did not specifically analyze the forms and pragmatic meanings of prohibitive expressions.

The previous research shows that research into prohibitive expressions has mainly focused on textbooks, language learners, and film discourse. Although these studies have helped to understand prohibition from different perspectives, little attention has been paid to the analysis of prohibitive expressions in literary works, especially in drama. Moreover, previous research has seldom discussed both the grammatical forms and the pragmatic meanings of prohibitive expressions in dramatic dialogues. There is therefore a research gap that needs to be closed. The gap offers a chance to investigate the realization and interpretation of prohibitive expressions in a dramatic text.

Based on the phenomenon and the research gap that has been identified, the researcher is interested in conducting research titled *An Analysis of Prohibitive Expressions in the Drama Under the Gaslight*. The research aims at describing the types of prohibitive expressions found in the drama dialogues and the pragmatic meanings of the expressions in their contexts. As prohibitive expressions can be used in different contexts, with different connotations depending on the speaker's intention and the relation between the speaker and the hearer, it is important to

examine both their forms and meanings in an effort to reach a more complete understanding of language use in dramatic discourse.

This research is expected to make several contributions. First, it contributes to the field of research in English linguistics, especially pragmatics, by providing a better understanding of the forms and pragmatic meanings of prohibitive expressions inserted in literary discourse. Secondly, the findings are expected to help students and readers better understand prohibitive expressions in terms of both linguistic forms and contextual meanings. Finally, this research is expected to enrich previous studies by focusing on drama, an area that has received relatively little scholarly attention, especially in the context of prohibitive expressions. Therefore, the present research is hoped to be beneficial for the pragmatic research on prohibitive expressions in literary discourse.

1.2. Identification of the Research

From the research background, it can be seen that previous research has not paid enough attention to the use of prohibitive expressions in literary discourse. Prohibitive expressions are often used to stop or forbid actions; they are difficult to understand in dramatic dialogues because their meaning depends on the context, the speaker's intention, and the relationship among characters. Moreover, previous research has concentrated mainly on prohibition in spoken discourse, language learning, and textbook materials. However, research on prohibitive expressions in dramatic texts is still limited. These conditions indicate the need to research prohibitive expressions and the meanings they carry in the dialogues of the drama *Under the Gaslight*.

1. The forms of prohibitive expressions used in the dialogues of Under the Gaslight have not been identified systematically.
2. A dramatic dialogue requires a contextual interpretation of the meanings expressed by prohibitive expressions.
3. Understanding the meanings of prohibitive expressions in dramatic dialogues requires contextual interpretation.
4. Most previous research has focused on prohibition in spoken discourse, language learning, and textbook materials rather than literary works.
5. The research on prohibitive expressions in dramatic texts, especially in Under the Gaslight, has not been sufficiently done.
6. Research on prohibitive expressions in the drama Under the Gaslight is needed to deepen the understanding of the meanings dramatic dialogues carry.

1.3. Limitation of the Research

This research is limited to the analysis of prohibitive expressions found in the dialogues of the drama Under the Gaslight. The data are taken from the script of the drama Under the Gaslight. This research focuses on identifying and classifying the forms of prohibitive expressions used by the characters and analyzing the pragmatic meanings conveyed by those expressions based on the context of the dialogues. The analysis only covers utterances containing prohibitive expressions and does not discuss other types of expressions found in the drama. Furthermore, this research employs a qualitative approach to describe and interpret the data.

1.4. Formulation of the Research

Based on the background of the research, this research is formulated to answer the following research questions:

1. What forms of prohibitive expressions are found in the dialogues of the drama Under the Gaslight?
2. What pragmatic meanings are conveyed by the prohibitive expressions used by the characters in the drama Under the Gaslight?

1.5. Purpose of the Research

The purposes of this research are:

1. To identify and classify the forms of prohibitive expressions found in the dialogues of the drama Under the Gaslight.
2. To analyze and interpret the pragmatic meanings conveyed by the prohibitive expressions used by the characters in the drama Under the Gaslight.

1.6. Significance of the Research

The research is supposed to have theoretical and practical significance.

1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to contribute to the development of English linguistics, especially in research on prohibitive expressions. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the knowledge of the use of prohibitive expressions and the meanings carried by such expressions in literary discourse. Moreover, this research is also expected to provide references for future

researchers who want to do research related to prohibitive expressions, meaning, and language use in dramatic texts.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research is expected to provide a useful contribution to students, lecturers, readers, and future researchers. The results of this research are expected to be useful for students in increasing their understanding of prohibitive expressions and the meanings behind them in different contexts, especially in literary works. For lecturers, this research is expected to serve as an additional reference in teaching linguistics and literary research related to language use and meaning in discourse. This research is expected to give readers a better understanding of how the characters use prohibitive expressions in dramatic dialogues and how the meanings of these expressions are interpreted based on the context. Besides, this research is expected to provide information and references to future researchers who are interested in conducting further research on prohibitive expressions and other related topics within the discipline of English linguistics and literary discourse.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

The definitions of the key terms used in this research are given below to ensure a common understanding of the concepts discussed throughout the research.

1. Prohibitive Expressions

Ahdiansyah and Nalfiyah (2022), state that prohibitive expressions are expressions used to prohibit or prevent someone from doing certain actions.

These expressions are used to convey restriction and warnings in different contexts. Prohibitive expressions can be in various forms depending on the purpose of the speaker and the situation in which they are used. In this research, prohibitive expressions are the utterances used by the characters in the drama *Under the Gaslight* to forbid, prevent, or restrict certain actions.

2. Pragmatic Meaning

Hall and Mazarella (2023) state that the interpretation of meaning is through pragmatic inference, where hearers interpret the speaker's intended message not only from the literal meaning of an utterance but also from the surrounding context of the interaction. This shows that the interpretation of meaning depends on some contextual factors such as the speaker, the hearer, the purpose of the communication, and the situational context. Thus, pragmatic meaning is the meaning that is intended by the speaker and inferred by the hearer through contextual interpretation, not only through the linguistic forms. In this research, pragmatic meaning is the intended message delivered by the characters through prohibitive expressions in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight*, interpreted based on contextual factors such as the speaker, hearer, situation, and purpose of communication.

3. Drama

Tarbiyah et al. (2024) describe drama as a literary genre that tells a story through performance and dialogue between characters. Drama depicts human experiences, emotions, and social relationships through action and dialogue. In drama, the development of the story is represented through the interactions and

conflicts among the characters. In this research, drama is defined as a literary work that tells a story through dialogue and action, especially *Under the Gaslight*, which is the data source to identify and analyze prohibitive expressions.

4. Under the Gaslight

Under the Gaslight is a melodrama by Augustin Daly that explores social relations, moral dilemmas, and the realities of urban life in nineteenth-century America. The drama concerns Laura Courtland and other characters whose relationships reveal the issues of family, identity, and social values. The dialogue of the play shows the emotional tension, authority, and conflicts between characters that influence the development of the story. *Under the Gaslight* is a drama script written by Augustin Daly, which is the data source to identify and analyze prohibitive expressions and their implied meanings (Brien et al., 2025).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the present research. The review of related theories discusses key concepts and relevant theoretical perspectives on prohibitive expressions and drama. The theories serve as a basis for analyzing the forms and pragmatic meanings of prohibitive expressions in the dramatic script of *Under the Gaslight*.

2.1. Review of Related Theories

This section presents the theories related to the topic of the research. The theories are used as the foundation for analyzing the data and answering the research questions. Since this research focuses on prohibitive expressions and the meanings conveyed by those expressions in the dialogues of the drama *Under the Gaslight*, several theories are discussed in this section. They include the theories of expression, prohibitive expressions, the pragmatic meaning of prohibitive expressions, drama, and the synopsis of *Under the Gaslight*. These theories provide conceptual guidance for identifying prohibitive expressions and interpreting the meanings conveyed by the characters in the drama. In addition, the theories discussed in this chapter support the qualitative analysis employed in this research and provide a basis for understanding the findings of the research.

2.1.1. Expression

Expression is an aspect of language that serves as a means for people to express their thoughts, feelings, intentions, and attitudes in communication. Speakers use expressions to deliver messages and establish interaction with

others in various situations. Expressions are words, phrases, and utterances spoken to achieve particular communicative goals. According to Indriyani et al. (2022), expressions are an essential part of communication as they play a role in the development of communicative competence and facilitate interaction among language users.

The use of expressions is closely linked to social interaction and interpersonal relationships. In communication, speakers use different expressions based on the context and the purposes they want to achieve. Expressions are not only used to convey information, but they also help maintain relationships among interlocutors and create effective communication. Jeng, Bosch, and Perry (2024) argue that expressions contribute to interaction and influence how others perceive messages. Expressions are important in communication because they are involved in both exchanging information and maintaining social relationships.

Expressions have different functions depending on the communicative purposes intended by the speaker. Some expressions are used to express feelings, while others are employed to ask for information, provide suggestions, give warnings, or prohibit certain actions. The context influences the functions of expressions, the relationship between participants, and the intentions underlying the utterances. Farahani and Ghane (2022), state that linguistic forms may perform different functions according to the contexts in which they are used. Consequently, understanding expressions involves awareness of their forms as well as the communicative purposes they serve.

Expressions are also closely associated with the transfer of meaning in communication. Speakers choose particular expressions to ensure that their intentions are adequately expressed and understood by others. The same expression can have different functions in different contexts and situations. Davis, Jordan, and Maclagan (2024) state that expressions have communicative functions and meanings that language users accept. Thus, the interpretation of expressions does not only depend on linguistic forms, but also on contexts of production.

Expressions are a core part of language, used to communicate intentions and meanings. Their role depends on the speaker's purpose and the context. Prohibitive expressions, which prevent or forbid actions, are one example. Understanding expressions helps explain how language works in dramatic dialogues. This makes the research of expressions important for analyzing prohibitive language and the messages characters convey in *Under the Gaslight*.

2.1.2. Prohibitive Expressions

Prohibitive expressions are directive expressions used by speakers to prevent, forbid, or restrict the hearer from doing certain things. Using these expressions, speakers aim to influence the behavior of others by discouraging actions deemed undesirable or inappropriate. Prohibitive expressions are expressions used to express prohibition or prevent someone from doing certain actions (Ahdiansyah & Nalfiyah, 2022). Therefore, prohibitive expressions are not only grammatical constructions but also pragmatic expressions that

demonstrate the speaker's communicative intention to regulate the hearer's behavior in various communicative situations.

One type of directive speech act is prohibitive expressions. They can be realized in different linguistic means depending on the communicative purpose of the speaker, the relationship between participants, and the situation. The grammatical form of prohibitive expressions influences the directness and authoritarianism of the speaker when he expresses prohibition. Thus, prohibition is not limited to a specific grammatical construction, but can be implemented by a variety of linguistic strategies. This research categorizes prohibitive expressions into three main types: Negative imperative, modal Prohibition, and indirect prohibition, which serve as the theoretical framework for analyzing the prohibitive expressions in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight*.

1. Negative Imperative

The negative imperative is the simplest grammatical form of expressing prohibitive statements, as it gives the hearer direct instructions not to do a certain thing. Imperative negation is a specific grammatical construction that expresses prohibition through the use of an imperative mood with negation (Van Olmen, 2024). In English, the negative imperative is usually formed by putting the auxiliary *do not* or its contraction *don't* before the base form of the verb, thus producing a clear and explicit expression of prohibition. This construction is not to be confused with the ordinary negation, whose

main communicative function is to describe a negative situation, rather than to prevent the hearer from doing something.

The negative imperative is explicit in its grammatical structure, and therefore, there is little ambiguity in the speaker's intention. It is often used in situations that require immediate compliance, such as commands, warnings, instructions, and regulations. Its directness also shows the speaker's authority or the urgency of stopping an action from taking place. For these reasons, the negative imperative is considered the most explicit and recognizable type of prohibitive expression in English. It constitutes an important category for the identification of prohibitive expressions in dramatic dialogues.

2. Modal Prohibition

Prohibition may also be expressed by the use of modal verbs together with negative markers, and also by imperative constructions. Modal prohibition not only allows speakers to express restrictions, but also to communicate degrees of obligation, necessity, authority, or recommendation. Modal prohibition is generally a more indirect and grammatically explicit form of prohibition than negative imperatives. So speakers select different modal constructions depending on their communicative intentions and the interpersonal relationship with the listener.

Ouattara (2023) explains that negative forms of modal verbs express meanings that go beyond grammatical negation, with each modal having its

own pragmatic interpretation in relation to the communicative context. Modal constructions like *must not*, *should not*, *cannot*, and *shall not* express different levels of prohibition, obligation, restriction, or necessity. The interpretation of these forms depends on the modal verb itself, but also on the speaker's intention and the context of the utterance. Thus, modal prohibition provides speakers with a flexible linguistic strategy to express prohibition while at the same time communicating different degrees of authority, obligation, or recommendation.

3. Indirect Prohibition

Explicit grammatical constructions do not always express prohibitive expressions. In many communicative situations, prohibition is indirectly expressed by speakers through utterances whose prohibitive meaning is to be construed from the context and not from the grammatical form. This strategy is often used for politeness preservation, for mitigating the force of prohibition, or for maintaining peaceful interpersonal relations. Thus, the prohibitive meaning suggested is largely reliant on pragmatic interpretation.

According to Nagy C., Németh T. and Németh (2025), indirect directives are implicit pragmatic phenomena because the communicative intention cannot be determined only based on grammatical structures. The hearer rather infers the meaning from context, sequential interaction, and pragmatic inference. Khyon (2024) further defines prohibition as a kind of directive speech act that has the primary purpose of preventing or stopping someone from doing something. Successful understanding of prohibition

requires linguistic and pragmatic competence. Therefore, indirect prohibition is an important form of prohibitive expressions. Its prohibitive force is achieved by contextual interpretation, not by explicit grammatical markers.

As stated above, prohibitive expressions are directive expressions that are used to prevent, restrict, or forbid some actions in communication. These expressions can be realized in three major types: negative imperative, modal prohibition, and indirect prohibition. Each type is a different linguistic strategy of expressing prohibition. These forms differ in grammatical realization and degree of directness, but they all have the same communicative purpose: discouraging or preventing certain actions. Therefore, knowledge of these forms is the theoretical foundation for identifying and classifying prohibitive expressions in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight*, and it helps in further analysis of their pragmatic meanings in different communicative situations.

2.1.3. Pragmatic Meaning of Prohibitive Expressions

Pragmatics is concerned with meaning. This is because, often, speakers are saying more than their words mean literally. In conversation, the meaning of an utterance is not just the words used, but also contextual factors, e.g., speaker, hearer, situation, communicative intent. You cannot determine what an utterance means from its grammatical form. Saad (2026) states that the process of meaning in communication is mainly pragmatic. Context helps the speaker and listener to understand the intended message. Meaning is not a

matter of linguistic forms; it is a matter of interaction, of understanding situations.

Pragmatic meaning is the meaning that the speaker wants to convey and the hearer understands in a given communicative situation. By linguistic expressions we generally mean semantic meaning. Pragmatic Meaning: The meaning of utterances as produced by the context in which they occur. The meaning is understood as a pragmatic inference (Hall and Mazarella, 2023). The listeners may interpret meanings that go beyond the literal content of the utterance. Thus, meaning emerges through interaction and contextual understanding rather than from linguistic forms alone.

Pragmatic meaning refers to the meaning that a speaker intends and a hearer interprets in a specific context of communication. While semantic meaning concerns the conventional meaning of linguistic expressions, pragmatic meaning addresses how utterances are understood in terms of contextual circumstances. As Hall and Mazarella (2023) point out, the interpretation of meaning is a matter of pragmatic inference where hearers derive meanings that may extend beyond the literal content of an utterance. Thus, understanding pragmatic meaning requires taking into account linguistic information and contextual knowledge.

The interpretation of pragmatic meaning is highly context-dependent. Context includes various factors such as the participants involved in communication, their social relationship, the setting, and the purpose of the interaction. Fadhilah et al. (2024) state that pragmatic meaning is closely

related to contextual factors, as the same linguistic expression could have different meanings in different situations. Similarly, Nazhira et al. (2024) state that speakers tend to adapt their linguistic choices based on communicative purposes and contextual circumstances. Thus, the intended meaning of an utterance can be correctly understood only by taking into account the context in which it is made.

Pragmatic meaning refers to the meaning of an utterance used to prevent, restrict, or discourage a particular action in the case of prohibitive expressions. While prohibitive expressions are generally associated with prohibition, their meaning may vary in different communicative contexts. When a speaker prohibits an action, the prohibitive expression may serve as a direct prohibition. In other cases, it may function as a warning when the speaker wishes to protect the hearer from danger or undesirable consequences. It could also be advice, a prohibition, a warning, or an assertion of authority, depending on the relationship between the participants and the context of the interaction. Therefore, the meaning of a prohibitive expression is not determined by its grammatical form, but by its contextual analysis.

Pragmatic meaning also has a close relation with speech acts, in which the speaker uses the language to perform some communicative functions. According to Hågemark and Gärdenfors (2025), speech acts are intentional communicative acts in which speakers influence, direct, inform, or express attitudes to hearers. Prohibitive utterances are uses of language which make negative constructions and which do things like prohibit, warn, restrict, advise

or protect others. Consequently, the meaning of a prohibitive expression is largely determined by the speaker's communicative intention.

In literary works such as drama, the meaning of prohibitive expressions requires close investigation of the context of the dialogue. The same prohibitive expression may have different meanings based on the circumstances in which it is uttered. For example, an expression may be used as a direct prohibition in one scene, and as a warning or protective advice in another. The meaning can be known by considering the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, the events taking place in the story, and the communicative purpose of the utterance. Thus, contextual analysis is important to understand the pragmatic meaning of prohibitive expressions in the dialogue of drama.

Pragmatic meaning, as discussed above, is the meaning that is embedded in the intention of the speaker and the understanding of the hearer based on the contextual and communicative factors. The meaning of prohibitive expressions does not only imply prohibition, but also warning, advice, restriction, caution, protection, or authority, depending upon the context of interaction. The theory of pragmatic meaning provides an important basis for analyzing the meanings embedded in the prohibitive expressions used by the characters in the drama *Under the Gaslight*.

2.1.4. Drama

Drama is one of the literary genres that represent human experiences through actions and interactions among characters.

Unlike other literary works, drama mainly tells stories through performances and dialogues that show emotions, conflicts, and social relations. Dramatic representation reveals to the readers and audiences how the characters react to the given situation and relate to each other. Drama is a literary work that presents stories through performance and interaction between characters, allowing many aspects of human life to be expressed in meaningful ways (Tarbiyah, Putri, & Rohmana, 2024). Drama thus holds an important place in literary research, as it mirrors the linguistic and social aspects of communication.

Drama is closely related to the use of language, because the development of the plot and characterization is achieved through verbal interaction. Characters reveal ideas, emotions, intentions, and attitudes through utterances that aid in the development of the story. Dramatic texts, being predominantly made up of conversations between characters, provide a wealth of linguistic data for studying language in use. Dramatic language, as Evans (2023) explains, is a manifestation of individual styles and communicative patterns that are actualized in the dialogues of the characters. Drama, then, offers useful material for the research of expressions and meanings in literary discourse.

Dialogue is one of the essential elements of drama because it is the principal form of communication between characters. Characters reveal their personalities, build relationships, and create conflicts that impact the story's development through dialogue. Dialogue also comprises a variety of linguistic

forms that realize the communicative intentions of the speakers. Azizova (2023), describes dialogical speech in literary texts as a dynamic type of communication, characterized by interaction between participants and exchange of meanings through utterances. Besides, literary dialogues reflect the author's individuality and serve the aesthetic and communicative functions of a literary work. Therefore, dialogues in drama are not only conversations between characters, but also important means for conveying meanings and interpersonal relationships.

The aspects of language and situation in dialogue in drama need to be considered in interpretation. The meaning expressed in dialogues is influenced by the context of the interaction, such as the participants and the communicative purposes of the speakers. Literary dialogues are not isolated utterances, but are involved in the processes of meaning construction and interpretation. According to Tengberg, Johansson, and Sønneland (2023), meaning-making involves dialogue as an important part and a way to develop a deeper understanding in literary discussions. Accordingly, dialogues in drama provide a suitable context for investigating how language is used to express particular intentions and meanings.

Drama and dialogue represent inseparable elements because the story and the interactions among characters are mainly conveyed through language. The dialogues contained in drama provide abundant linguistic data that reflect emotions, intentions, and social relationships among the characters. Since prohibitive expressions are realized through utterances produced in

interactions, the dialogues in a drama become an important source for identifying and interpreting such expressions. Therefore, the research of drama and dialogue provides a relevant theoretical foundation for analyzing prohibitive expressions and the meanings conveyed by the characters in *Under the Gaslight*.

2.1.5. Synopsis of *Under the Gaslight*

Under the Gaslight was a melodramatic play by Augustin Daly, originally produced in 1867. It remains one of the great sensation plays of the nineteenth century because it has mystery, emotional conflict, and spectacular theatrical effects. *Under the Gaslight* fuses melodramatic plots and social and infrastructural spaces as features of urban life in nineteenth-century America (O'Brien et al., 2025). The drama represents the social relationships and problems of daily life, as well as the personality conflicts of the characters. So the play is an important part of the history of American theater.

This story is Laura Courtland's, and it is a series of struggles over identity, family relationships, and moral values. Byke creates tension and dramatic confrontations throughout the play, many of which create problems for Laura. According to Tarbiyah et al. (2024), drama presents human experiences and social interactions through the actions and dialogues of the characters. Through these interactions, *Under the Gaslight* illustrates themes of loyalty, sacrifice, and responsibility, which contribute to the progress of the story. Thus, the drama reflects various aspects of human life and social relationships.

There is also a famous railway scene in which Snorkey is tied to the tracks and rescued by a train at the last moment. This scene became one of the most iconic images in melodramatic theatre. It inspired many later dramatic works, as Evans (2023) notes; dramatic language and theatrical representation are involved in the construction of individual styles and memorable scenes that distinguish literary works from each other. The play is popular and unique due to the blend of emotional conflicts and spectacular events in *Under the Gaslight*.

The story of *Under the Gaslight* is told mostly through the characters' dialogue, but also through dramatic action. The dialogue has emotions, intentions, and interpersonal relationships that influence the development of the plot. Dialogic speech in the literary text is a variable form of communication, in which the meanings are transmitted from one participant to another (Azizova, 2023). Therefore, the dialogues in *Under the Gaslight* are influenced by many linguistic expressions that convey the communicative purpose and the characters' personality. The dialogues provide a rich data set for linguistic analysis, especially in the analysis of expressions and meaning.

Under the Gaslight has melodramatic features, social conflicts, and human relations in the characters' dialogues. The lines spoken by the characters represent different intentions and relations that help the story progress. Since the present research focuses on prohibitive expressions, the play's dialogues provide relevant linguistic data for identifying utterances used to forbid or prevent certain actions. Thus, *Under the Gaslight* is an appropriate

source for investigating the meanings encoded by prohibitive expressions in dramatic discourse.

2.2. Review of Related Findings

Previous research has shown that grammatical structures, as well as contextual and pragmatic factors, influence the semantic interpretation of language. Studies of prohibition, directive speech acts, and dramatic discourse indicate that meanings are constructed dynamically through interaction between speakers and hearers. Thus, the previous findings provide important foundations for understanding the functioning of prohibitive expressions in communication and literary discourse.

Ahdiansyah and Nalfiyah (2022) studied prohibition expressions in English and Indonesian and found that both languages use different linguistic forms to express prohibition. Their research showed that prohibition can be expressed through different grammatical patterns, depending on the communicative purpose and the linguistic system. The research paid more attention to the forms of prohibition, rather than the meanings expressed by those expressions in literary discourse. Thus, the present research extends the discussion by examining prohibitive expressions and their meanings in dramatic dialogues.

Similarly, Khyon (2024) studied the utterances of prohibition produced by Iraqi EFL university students. The findings showed that many learners had difficulties in producing and understanding prohibitive utterances accurately because the implementation of prohibition requires both linguistic and pragmatic competence. The research focused on language learners and communicative

competence, while the present research deals with the prohibitive expressions employed by fictional characters in a piece of literature.

Tang, Ogiermann, and Efeoglu-Ozcan (2026) studied directive speech acts with a special focus on prohibition as a communicative function. Their findings revealed that prohibitive statements are used to control the hearer's behavior and their interpretation is influenced by contextual factors, interpersonal relationships, and communicative intentions. However, the research focused on directive functions in communication rather than on the analysis of prohibitive expressions in literary discourse. Therefore, the present research examines the forms and pragmatic meanings of prohibitive expressions in the dialogues of a drama.

Oikonomou (2023) investigates the semantic variation of imperative constructions and claims that imperatives can have different modal force in different contexts. The research revealed that the meaning of imperatives is not fixed in syntax but is dynamically determined by pragmatic conditions. The results show that prohibitives are to be understood as contextual and not grammatical structures. However, this research was not about literary texts and therefore different from the present research.

House and Kádár (2025) investigated speech acts and interaction in second language pragmatics. They found that the meaning of directives depends not only on grammatical forms but also on interactive and contextual factors. In addition, the authors pointed out the significance of pragmatic competence in understanding speech acts such as commands, requests, and prohibitions. Unlike the present

research, their research focused on second language pragmatics rather than literary dialogues.

From the perspective of literary discourse, Evans (2023) investigated the language of drama and found that dialogues in drama are similar to communicative styles and patterns of social interaction in real-life communication. The research emphasized that dramatic texts provide valuable linguistic data for understanding the construction of meaning. In the same vein, Azizova (2023) investigated dialogical speech in literary texts and found that dialogue plays an important role in the negotiation of meaning and the development of characters. These studies confirm that drama is an appropriate context for studying linguistic expressions and their meanings.

Furthermore, the implied meaning of thanking expressions in students' drama performance entitled *The Pursuit of Happiness* was analyzed by Eripuddin, Jufrizal, and Agustina (2022). The findings showed that expressions of thanks conveyed different implied meanings depending on the speaker's intention and communicative context. The research also demonstrated that dramatic dialogues offer meaningful contexts for interpreting expressions and understanding interpersonal relationships among characters. The research focused on thanking expressions, but it showed the importance of contextual interpretation in understanding meaning. In contrast, the present research focuses on prohibitive expressions and the meanings conveyed by those expressions in the drama *Under the Gaslight*.

Furthermore, Eripuddin et al. (2026) examined the linguistic and performance difficulties that students faced in performing Augustin Daly's *Under the Gaslight*. The results showed that students encountered a range of linguistic difficulties and performance-related challenges in understanding and performing the drama's dialogue. The research concluded that *Under the Gaslight* presents rich linguistic features which demand careful interpretation and communicative competence. However, the research focused on students' performance and linguistic challenges rather than on the analysis of expressions and meanings. In contrast, the present research specifically investigates prohibitive expressions and the meanings conveyed by those expressions in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight*.

Pardomuan and Hellystia (2026) investigated directive speech acts in English film discourse and discovered that prohibition and command forms are often used to establish authority and interpersonal power relations between characters. Their findings also revealed that prohibitive meanings may be expressed directly or indirectly depending on communicative strategies and situational contexts. However, the research focused on film discourse rather than classical dramatic texts. Therefore, the present research contributes to literary pragmatic research by examining prohibitive expressions in the drama *Under the Gaslight*.

Based on previous research, it can be concluded that studies on prohibition have mainly focused on textbook materials, language learners, directive communication, second language pragmatics, spoken interaction, and modern

media. Although several studies have discussed expressions and meanings in dramatic discourse, limited attention has been given to identifying prohibitive expressions and analyzing their pragmatic meanings in literary works, particularly in the drama *Under the Gaslight*. Therefore, the present research attempts to fill this gap by identifying the forms of prohibitive expressions found in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight* and analyzing the pragmatic meanings conveyed by those expressions based on their contextual use.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

This research analyses prohibitive expressions in the dialogues of the drama *Under the Gaslight*, written by Augustin Daly. The research is based on the assumption that language is used not only to convey information but also to regulate behavior and to express particular communicative intentions. One of the linguistic expressions used for this purpose is the prohibitive expression. The expression functions to prevent, restrict, or forbid certain actions. According to Ahdiansyah and Nalfiyah (2022), prohibitive expressions are used to convey prohibition and may be realized through various linguistic forms. Similarly, Tang, Ogiermann, and Efeoglu-Ozcan (2026) explain that prohibition is one of the directive functions used by speakers to influence the behavior of others.

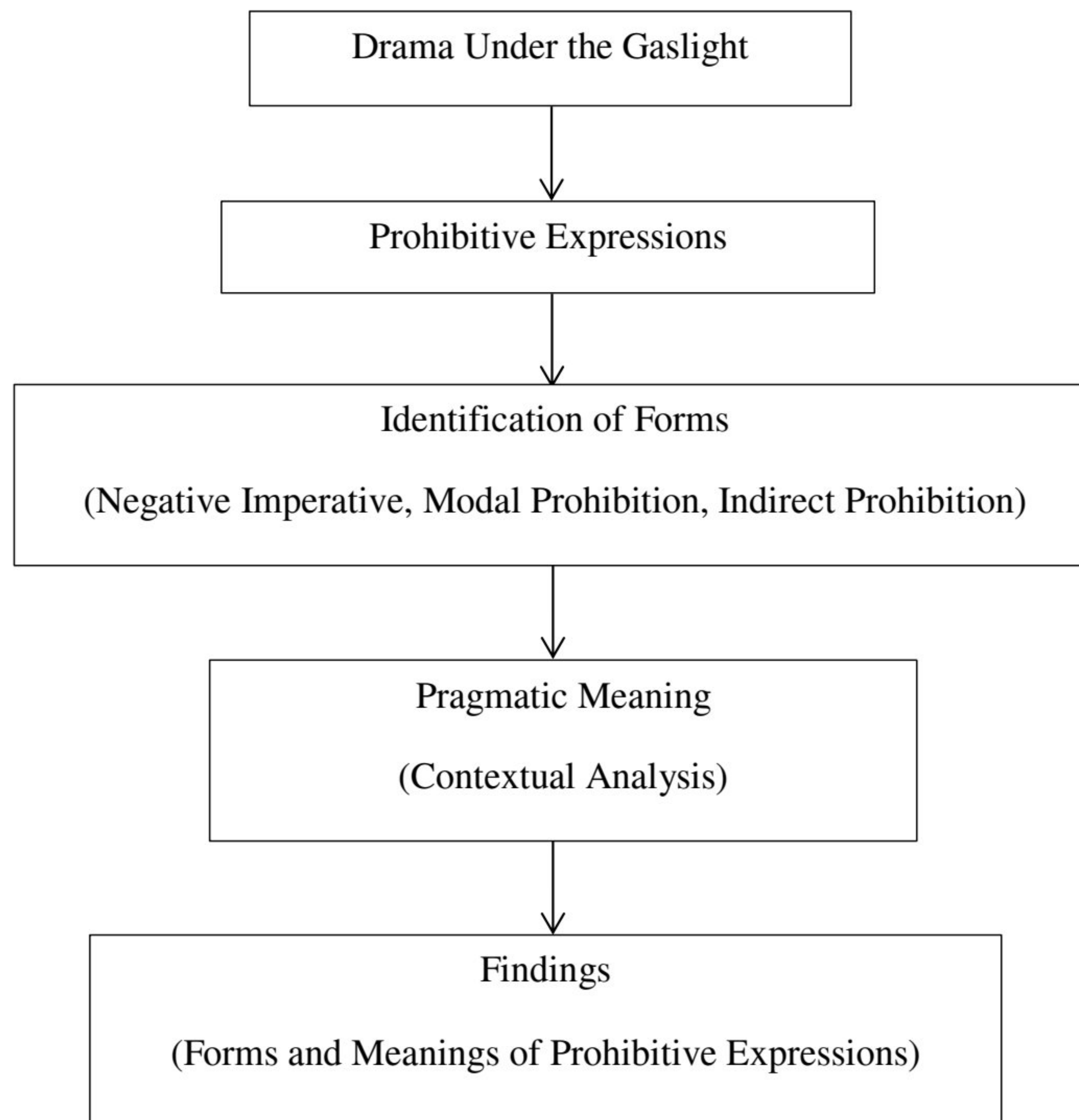
The first concept employed in this research is prohibitive expressions. Based on the theories of Ahdiansyah and Nalfiyah (2022), Van Olmen (2024), Ouattara (2023), and Nagy C., Németh T. and Németh (2025), prohibitive expressions can be realized in three main forms, namely negative imperative, modal prohibition, and indirect prohibition. These forms provide the theoretical basis for identifying

and classifying the prohibitive expressions as found in the drama. Therefore, the analysis begins by examining how prohibitive expressions are linguistically realized in the characters' dialogues.

The second concept is pragmatic meaning. Meaning is constructed through pragmatic processes of contextual interpretation (Saad, 2026). Likewise, Hall and Mazarella (2023), Fadhilah et al. (2024), Nazhira et al. (2024), and Hågemark and Gärdenfors (2025) argue that the interpretation of meaning is contingent upon contextual factors, speaker intention, communicative purpose, and social relationships. Therefore, after identifying the forms of prohibitive expressions, this research analyses the meanings conveyed by those expressions based on the contexts in which they occur. Through this analysis, prohibitive expressions may be interpreted as prohibition, warning, advice, restriction, protection, or other meanings depending on the communicative situation.

Based on the explanations above, the conceptual framework of this research consists of two interconnected stages. The first stage is to identify and classify the forms of prohibitive expressions found in the drama based on theories of prohibitive expressions. The second stage is to interpret the pragmatic meanings expressed by those expressions through contextual analysis. By combining the two concepts, this research aims to give a thorough comprehension of the forms and pragmatic meanings of prohibitive expressions used by the characters in *Under the Gaslight*.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework of the research is shown in Figure 2.1. The script dialogues in *Under the Gaslight* provide the textual data source for the analysis. The researcher classifies the utterances with prohibitive expressions into three forms: negative imperative, modal prohibition, and indirect prohibition. Once the forms are identified, pragmatic meaning theory is applied to each expression according to the contextual factors of the dialogue script to determine the intended meaning. Finally, the findings show the forms and the pragmatic meanings of the prohibitive expressions uttered by the characters in the drama.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research methodology used in this research. It includes the research design, object of the research, instrument of the research, technique for collecting the data, and technique for analyzing the data. In this chapter, the researcher explains the procedures used to collect, organize, and analyze the data related to prohibitive expressions found in the drama *Under the Gaslight*.

3.1. Research Design

The research design is an important part of research because it provides a systematic framework for addressing the research questions and achieving the research objectives. Creswell and Creswell (2023) define qualitative research as an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups give to a social or human problem. Qualitative research involves collecting textual data, analyzing information inductively, and interpreting the meanings of a phenomenon in its natural context. Therefore, qualitative research emphasizes description and interpretation rather than numerical measurement.

Based on the nature and objectives of the present research, this research employs a qualitative research design. The researcher chooses this design because the research aims to describe and interpret the prohibitive expressions found in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight* and to analyze the meanings conveyed by those expressions in their contexts. Qualitative research is considered suitable for the study of linguistic phenomena such as this in the sense that the interpretation of

meaning is affected by the speaker's intention, the relationship among characters, and the communicative situation.

This research uses a qualitative design to identify and classify the types of prohibitive expressions in the script of *Under the Gaslight* and to interpret the pragmatic meanings conveyed by the expressions in the context. The data are analyzed descriptively, taking into account the linguistic form of the expressions, the communicative situations in which they appear, the speakers' intentions, and the relationships between the characters. Therefore, a qualitative research design is a suitable framework to address the research questions and meet the objectives of the research.

3.2. Object of the Research

The object of this research is the prohibitive expressions in the dialogues of the drama *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly. The present research aims to identify and classify the prohibitive expressions employed by the characters to prevent, forbid, or limit certain actions, as well as to analyze the pragmatic meanings these expressions convey in their contexts. The data came from the script of *Under the Gaslight*, which has rich dialogue, reflecting the characters' intentions, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. The present research is therefore divided into two parts, namely, the forms of prohibitive expressions and the pragmatic meanings expressed by prohibitive expressions in the dramatic discourse of *Under the Gaslight*.

3.3. Instrument of the Research

The research instrument is an important component of research because it functions as a tool for collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting data. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument, directly involved in collecting data, examining information, analyzing findings, and interpreting meanings. Thus, the success of the research largely depends on the researcher's ability to identify, classify, and interpret the data systematically.

The researcher in this research serves as the primary instrument for identifying and analyzing prohibitive expressions in the dialogues of the drama *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly. The researcher carefully reads the script, identifies utterances containing prohibitive expressions, classifies these expressions based on their forms, and analyses the meanings conveyed by these expressions in relation to the contexts in which they occur. The analysis specifically examines how the characters use prohibitive expressions to prevent, forbid, or restrict certain actions, and how the intended meanings are interpreted through contextual factors such as the speaker, hearer, situation, and communicative purpose.

The research uses supporting instruments to facilitate data collection and analysis. The main sources of data are: the script of *Under the Gaslight*, note-taking sheets for recording the relevant utterances with prohibitive expressions, data classification tables for systematically organizing the forms and meanings of the expressions, and validation sheets for checking the accuracy of the

identification and interpretation of the data. The researcher can manage the data efficiently and perform the analysis in a structured manner with the help of these supporting instruments.

Table 3.1 Blueprint of Research Instrument

No	Research Questions	Aspects Analyzed	Indicators	Data Source	Instrument
1	What forms of prohibitive expressions are found in the dialogues of the drama Under the Gaslight?	Forms of prohibitive expressions	Identifying utterances used to prohibit, forbid, prevent, or restrict certain actions and classifying them into the forms of prohibitive expressions based on the theory of prohibitive expressions.	Script of Under the Gaslight	Researcher, note-taking sheet, classification table, and validation sheet
2	What pragmatic meanings are conveyed by the prohibitive expressions used by the characters in the drama Under the Gaslight?	Pragmatic meanings of prohibitive expressions	Interpreting the meanings conveyed by prohibitive expressions based on the speaker, hearer, situation, communicative purpose, and contextual factors in the dialogue.	Script of Under the Gaslight	Researcher, note-taking sheet, interpretation table, and validation sheet

3.4. Technique of Collecting the Data

The technique of collecting the data is an important stage in research because it provides procedures for obtaining data needed to answer the research questions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), qualitative research

emphasizes the collection and interpretation of textual data to understand a particular phenomenon. Therefore, this research employs document analysis because the data are obtained from the script of *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly. Qualitative document analysis is a systematic process of evaluating or reviewing textual data to determine trends, categories, and meanings that are relevant to the research objectives (Nicmanis, 2024).

The data of this research are in the form of utterances containing prohibitive expressions found in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight*. The instruments used in collecting the data are the researcher as the primary instrument, the script of the drama, note-taking sheets, data classification tables, and validation sheets. In collecting the data, the researcher conducted several procedures. First, the researcher read the script of *Under the Gaslight* repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the story, characters, and contexts of the dialogues. Second, the researcher identified and recorded utterances containing prohibitive expressions by using note-taking sheets. Third, the collected data were classified by form of prohibitive expression, based on the theory of prohibitive expressions. Fourth, the data were clustered into tables to further analyze the meanings delivered by the expressions.

The researcher read the script several times to recheck the identified data and validate it, ensuring consistency in the classification process. Validation sheets were used to check the accuracy of the data, the forms found, and the interpreted meanings of the prohibitive expressions. Each prohibitive expression was analyzed thoroughly in relation to the context, such as the speaker, hearer,

situation, and communicative purpose. The researcher made sure that through these procedures, the data obtained were accurate, relevant, and appropriate to answer the research questions.

3.5. Technique of Analysing the Data

Data analysis is an important stage of research, as it provides systematic procedures for organizing, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from the collected data. Qualitative data analysis involves three simultaneous activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2020). This research uses qualitative descriptive analysis because the objective is to identify the prohibitive expressions found in the dialogues of *Under the Gaslight* and to analyze the meanings conveyed by those expressions based on their contexts.

The researcher took several steps to analyze the data. First, the researcher reviewed all collected utterances containing prohibitive expressions and selected the data relevant to the research objectives. Secondly, the data were classified by the researcher according to the forms of prohibitive expressions based on the theory adopted in this research. Third, the researcher presented the data in classification tables containing the utterances, speakers, contexts, and categories of prohibitive expressions. Fourth, the meanings of the prohibitive expressions were interpreted by the researcher based on the contextual factors such as speaker, hearer, situation, and communicative purpose. Finally, the researcher concluded and verified the findings to answer the research questions.

The researcher re-examined the script and rechecked the classification and interpretation of the data during the analysis to ensure the validity of the data. Also, validation sheets were used to validate the accuracy of the identified forms and the interpreted meaning of the prohibitive expressions. Each utterance was carefully analyzed in its contextual background to ensure that the forms and meanings identified accurately reflected the message the characters intended to communicate. Through these procedures, the findings are expected to be valid, consistent, and relevant to the objectives of the research.