

TEACHING GENDER QUALITY THROUGH TEACHING BYATT'S *THE SHADOW OF THE SUN* FOR EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTARCT

A study on teaching prose is also expected to emphasize on critical thinking of the students in learning English as a foreign language. One of the appropriate topics is teaching gender quality through English novel. This article is based on a study which addresses questions: (1) Why do the women exclude in educational realm? (2) What is the gender quality pictured in Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun*? (3) How is gender quality in *The Shadow of the Sun* reflecting excluding women in educational realm. Theories about excluding women in educational realm, women in Indonesia, and teaching literature are discussed and criticized as well as analyzing Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun* in answering these questions. The findings of this research are: (1) Women exclude in educational realm because education for women based on educational norms for men, reproductive education, and systematic devaluation of women. (2) The gender quality pictured in Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun* is about a daughter who faces her life as the effect of patriarchal system. (3) The gender quality exclude women in educational is about the main character, Anna and every woman in the story.

Key Words: *Gender Quality and Teaching Literature*

INTRODUCTION

Historically there is masculine power base in Indonesia. Traditionally and historically the man is the only one that is educated and he is educated in things that reflect traditional masculine pursuits. The man is superior to the women in family and in community. Education is only for the men and women only stay at home. This is known as “wanita dipingit di rumah” (this literally means that women of school age should stay at home). The woman's main responsibility is to manage the affairs of the household. The private and public spheres are separated. The women are encouraged only to pursue her traditional role which lies outside of the public sphere.

Today, through government legislation women are given the same opportunity as men (in theory) to be educated. This means that the government does not obstruct a woman's opportunity to obtain an education. This is stated in article 31 (1) of the Indonesian Constitution, which states that “every citizen has the right to be educated,”. Subsequently efforts to provide mass formal education for everyone were initiated across the archipelago of Indonesia (Gey-Gardiner & Suprpto, (1996:96). This means that logically and constitutionally there is no distinction between men and women in education. The repercussions of this are that women are not supposed to be discriminated against as long as they

have

The traditional patriarchal system dominates for Indonesian people. The first priority in gaining the education is men. For the family facing the difficult economic condition the possibility to gain diplomas are greater for men than for women. Degrees provide entry to higher status and therefore priority to obtain them is to be given to the male (Hofstede, 1991:67). Oey-Gardiner and Suprpto (1996:95) points out that patriarchy in Indonesia is reflected by a large gender bias in education and employment. Women in most of culture are dominated by men in class (Tannen, 1990:209). They do not really show their ambition as this comes across as a negative, threatening trait. On the other hand, the men tend to speak up in class and are expected to be vocal and ambitious.

As a result the patriarchy still exists and the traditional role of women is largely unchanged, except that she now has access to masculine education. Even though a woman can receive a tertiary education it will not bring about equality for her. The interesting point is that it is not ever mentioned that the education is a patriarchal one. Both women and men are motivated to gain education from elementary school and university level as stated in article 31 (1). In implementation, it is not mentioned that women and men are judged differently for scholarships. People are therefore under the impression that their education is unbiased. Even though they may be a career woman, the woman's main duty is as a house wife and a mother. Indonesian women's roles tend to be limited to the domestic sphere rather than the public domain where men prevail (Krisnawaty, 1993:159). The first priority was their duty to fulfill their essential nature as housewives and the educators of the younger generation" (Katjasungkana, 1992:3).

Teaching situation at English Study Program in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, at The University of Riau is reflective of many other campuses throughout Indonesia as the male students throughout Indonesia as the male students are given priority over the female students. The men dominate the public aspects of the class and are always chosen as the leaders of the class, the students' association, as well as in the group of student teachers involved in teaching practice.

There are some studies and theories why the women are excluded from the educational realm (Martin, 1982:145) points out that there has been a constant misinterpretation throughout the centuries of the thoughts of many notable thinkers in regards to the education of women. As result academia, in disciplines like history, psychology, literature, fine arts, sociology and biology, are based according to gender. This patriarchal understanding of women not only omits women from the education process but also ignores woman's experience and does not include it in the formal educational process. The women who are fortunate enough to be educated are educated only in male values. Martin acknowledges that women are not only educated in male values but they are educated in a masculine way.

Women are often the first educators. Their roles as mother and prime career mean that a maternal (feminine) way of being educated is often (mostly) the first sort of education that an individual receives. As a result the ways of understanding this form of education are deeply impeded within all of us.

The problem is that traditional patriarchal education separates male from female, private from public and formal education from informal education (such as that received at home from the mother). Women are associated with reproduction and the household and these areas are constantly marginalized by masculine interpretations of texts. As a result women are devalued. Two spheres are created, the private (vocational education) and the public (liberal education). Women are relegated to the private (vocational education). This education prepares people to carry on the productive process of the society, liberal education; however, it is not considered adequate preparation for productive process. Women are therefore denied any access to power.

Patriarchal education will naturally contradict the experience of the woman. Martin concludes that women should be included in a reworking and reunderstanding of education. In doing this the imbalance that perpetuates patriarchal dominance can be cured. "An adequate ideal of the educated person must join thought to action, and reason to feeling and emotion." (147). The dichotomy that exists between these might also be seen as a product of the division drawn between man and woman. The reduction of this division can only result in a better rounded, balanced education.

These sorts of problems need to be addressed carefully. One of these ways is through the teaching of literature which gives a picture of similar situations in other countries. A comparison can be made by students. Literature is as a cultural practice involving reading, evaluation, and teaching (Morris, 1993:60). These students who are learning English are able to compare the subject matter of English novels to Indonesia. Kuo (2005) also points out that literature in view of gender stereotypes might help teachers better understand the issue and the problem of stereotyped female roles in their teaching sources.

One of the literary works to be used is a contemporary English novel. Barlett (1998:91) states that narrative has a potential to reveal patterns of how we are shaped both as women and academic women, and how we learn to teach students about ourselves as scholars and women. As stated in curriculum implemented in English Study Program the appropriate novels to be used are contemporary novels. Therefore, Byatt's *The Shadow of The Sun* is assumed to be an appropriate novel.

Focusing upon my own experience as a teacher of English literature to the students of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, I studied how some of these problems may be gradually changed by the teaching of socially relevant texts. I have found that *The Shadow of the Sun* is useful in highlighting

the problems about excluding women in educational realm and is able to be adapted the situation of discussing these issues in a way that can allow the teacher some discretion if it is needed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a library research. The data collection technique is by collecting sources related to this topic. The sources used are books, articles, and novel. They are on the area of gender, and teaching literature in Indonesia. They were read, criticized and interpreted in order to answer the first question of this research. The result of the critics was classified into gender in education, and gender in education for Indonesian women. This critic was interpreted by referring to Byatt's *The Shadow of The Sun* as the novel used for this study. Before the critic was interpreted, Byatt's *The Shadow of The Sun* was analyzed in term of finding the plot of the story. This analysis is to find out what happen to the characters and to find out the causal relationship of events in order to answer the second question of this research.. The result of the analysis and the result of the critic were interpreted in order to answer the third question of this study. .

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The data collected in this study show the answer of the research questions. The answer of the first question: "Why are the women excluded in educational realm?" is based on the result of analysis and interpretation to the main text. It proves that there are three reasons why the women are excluded in educational realm. The first one is that women are educated in male values and in masculine way. Martin (1982:145) points out that patriarchal understanding of women not only omits women from educational process but also ignores woman's experience and does not include it in the formal educational process. Martin sates "As long as women can enter the educational realm in practice – as they can do today – what the difference it makes that educational philosophy does not acknowledge gender as bonafide educational category." Women who are fortunate enough to be educated only in male values and masculine way.

The second reason why the women are excluded in educational realm is that the women education is based on reproductive education. Martin (1982:135) speaks of the fact that women are often the first educators. Their role as a mother means that a maternal (feminine) way of being educated is often (mostly) the first sort of education that an individual receives. The problem is that traditional education separates male from female, private from public and formal education from informal education (such as that received at home from mother).

Women are associated with reproduction and the household and these areas are constantly

marginalized by masculine interpretation. Women fall outside of the public sphere. Two spheres are created, the private (vocational education) and the public (liberal education). Women are relegated to the private (vocational education). This education prepares people to carry on the productive process of the society. Liberal education, however, it is not considered adequate preparation for the productive process.

The third reason is because of the systematic devaluation of women. One means of access to power in education. The fact that education offered formally excludes women is more harmful as it means that women who become educated are trained to think in ways that devalue their own gender. A patriarchal education will contradict the experience of the woman. This means that formal learning might become more difficult for her.

In conclusion, the answer of the first question of this study is that there are three reasons why women exclude in educational realm: (1) women are educated in male values and in masculine way (2) the women education is based on reproductive education. (3) The women in educating face the systematic devaluation of women.

The answer of the second question of this research “What are the gender quality pictured in Byatt’s *The Shadow of the Sun*?” is based on the analysis of Byatt’s *The Shadow of the Sun* reflecting gender quality. The finding proves that the gender quality pictured in Byatt’s *The Shadow of the Sun* is about a daughter who faces her life as the effect of patriarchal system.

The analysis of Byatt’s *The Shadow of The Sun* indicates that this story is relevant to a discussion of patriarchal dominance as the plot centers around the oppression of a woman, Anna, by her father, Henry, and investigates her struggle under the weight of this oppression, Anna the protagonist, undergoes much resistance to the notion that she might be able to develop her own autonomous personality. Through the novel Anna counters people who hold solutions for her yet these involves shedding her father, a move made difficult by the social reliance she has been conditioned into accepting.

The novel is reflective of a childhood that conditions within the protagonist the need to behave in a manner that exhibits low uncertainty avoidance, and to be respectful of a high power distance between her and her patriarch. Yet upon meeting the character Oliver, Anna is given the opportunity to view differently, less constraining possibilities for herself.

Anna rebels against traditional norms, seeking to study. However she soon falls back into the influence of patriarchal oppression when she falls pregnant. The domestic trap that motherhood brings enables her to lose control of her life again and have it decided by the two males who are competing for her affections.

The novel shows the insidious nature of the patriarchal oppression upon a woman who would other wise quite able to control her own life. It shows the father as the decision maker for her daughter and emphasizes the fact that his will dominates hers. All of the women within the novel are accepting of the decisions made for them by the males of the story and exhibit behavior that serves to perpetuate this system.

Anna's difficulty in constructing her own personality reflects the difficulty of all women in such a system must find establishing themselves as independent thinkers in change of their own destiny.

The answer of the third question "How does gender quality in *The Shadow of the Sun* reflect excluding women in educational realm?" is based on the reasons why women exclude in education. The gender quality in *The Shadow of the Sun* reflect excluding women in educational realm is analyzed based on the reasons why the women exclude in education. The result of analysis shows the reflection of the women educated in male values and in masculine way is about the main character, Anna and every woman in the story. (Anna's mother and Oliver's wife).

The reflection of women are educated in male values and in masculine way is in term of educating Anna by his father's ways, educating Anna's mother by his father, and educating Oliver's wife by Oliver. Anna, the protagonist undergoes much resistance to the notion that she might be able to develop her own autonomous personality. His father never considers her mother's idea in educating her. Oliver never concerns his wife's sense in doing in doing things that he has to do. The novel shows the insidious nature of the patriarchal oppression upon a woman who would other wise quite able to control her own life.

The reflection of the women education based on reproductive education is in terms of Anna's position as a daughter. She is not given the chance to confess what she wants and to express her own sense. She is directed to follow what her father means. Her father also treats her mother as a house wife who delivers children and works on household. Oliver supposes his wife only as a house wife who just stays at home and should not what is going on her husband. Oliver does not treat his wife in good manner because he is rather disappointed because he can not have a child form her. The novel shows the insidious nature of the patriarchal oppression upon a woman who would other wise quite able to control her own life.

The reflection of the women in education face the systematic devaluation of women in terms the decision that makes by men does not concern the position of the women as the women. The novel shows the insidious nature of the patriarchal oppression upon a woman who would other wise quite able to control her own life. It shows the father as the decision maker for her daughter and emphasizes the fact that his will dominates hers. All of the women within the novel are accepting of the decisions

made for them by the males of the story and exhibit behavior that serves to perpetuate this system.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Women in most of culture are dominated by men in class (Tannen, 1990:209). The traditional patriarchal system dominates for Indonesian people. Oey-Gardiner and Suprpto (1996:95) points out that patriarchy in Indonesia is reflected by a large gender bias in education and employment. These sorts of problems needs to be addressed. They need to be addressed carefully. One of these ways is through the teaching of literature which gives a picture of similar situations in other countries. By criticizing related theories and analyzing Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun*, the writer found three main objectives as the answer the research questions: (1) Women exclude in educational realm because education for women based on educational norms for men, reproductive education, and systematic devaluation of women. (2) The gender quality pictured in Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun* is about a daughter who faces her life as the effect of patriarchal system. (3) The gender quality exclude women in educational is about the main character, Anna and every woman in the story. This study indicates that the specific problems with education can be countered carefully by inclusion of socially relevant texts in teaching literature.

Education in Byatt's *The Shadow of The Sun* is a vehicle for protagonist to construct an identity for Anna that is independent of her father, yet it also portrayed as something that threatens the patriarchy and therefore meets with resistance from her father. Moreover, whilst it does help the main character develop positively it might also be seen as something that will bring about frustration for her as it contradicts many traditional social norms.

It is expected that this Byatt's *The Shadow of The Sun* can be used to teach Indonesian students about their own culture, in a way that is not directly threatening as the setting and characters are removed from Indonesia. It is important to encourage the students to draw upon their own life experiences in order to make sense of what they are learning. The teacher can use the examples given in the novel to encourage students to be reflective of their own experiences with gender inequality in society, and how this might be perpetuated by a supportive educational system.

In this way a teacher is able to give a picture about the education system within which she is a part and raise issues that deal with the patriarchal nature of education, where it stems from and how it is perpetuated. The notion of incorporating a reproductive educational perspective into education is not directly touched in Byatt's novel, but it can be easily alluded to by contrasting the private and public realm of the protagonist, pointing out the exclusive nature of each to the other and eliciting from the nature why they think this so. The aim of the educator is being to encourage critical thinking in student.

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