

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Literary criticism is recognized as an essential part of English language teaching (ELT) in which the functions are very beneficial both for the teacher and learner. Literary criticism takes significant role to elucidate literature in a way that the result will help the reader to increase their comprehension of a certain literary work that being analyzed (Curlette, 2018). It means that literary criticism can help readers to grasp not only the usual or most basic sense of literary text but also its meaning beyond the text. Bearing in mind that literary criticism has such a prominent role in the process of transitioning readers' fluency of English from 'literal' into 'metaphorical' stage, Curlette (2018) as a course developer and experienced English teacher claimed that the result of literary criticism can be used by teachers as one of the material in ELT to help learners in the process of their target language acquisition. Moreover, the utilization of literary criticism in ELT also brings another benefit in which the frequent use of it gives learners more exposure to the target language through literature. In fact, literature brings so many potential advantages to the learners' language acquisition process. Khan and Alamsari (2018) explained that literary text takes part as an essential role in the process of ELT that it can help the learners to enhance their communication competence, generate their motivation, as well as raise their cultural awareness (Khan and Alasmari, 2018). Literature has a special characteristic which is

containing the fun story and artistic value compare to other learning media such as essays, articles and printed textbooks so it will be more engaging for the learners (Kim, 2004). Besides, Jensen (2016) explained that the employment of literary criticism does not merely help English language learners in the process of language acquisition but also enhancing their social value especially by using the Marxist literary criticism theory.

Marxist literary criticism theory views literary works as the economic and ideological description which shows the interaction between people from different social classes within the society of specific time or era in which that literary work was produced (Abraham, 1999). From the perspective of Marxist theory, literary work is being analyzed beyond the form and structure which also make this Marxist literary criticism theory has been so critical with the formalism theory of literary criticism that considers literary work as an independent piece of entity without considering the influence of social, political, and historical background (Panda, 2015). The process of literary criticism from the perspective of Marxism theory which includes an act of analyzing problematic power within the society can help people to enhance their awareness of inequality issues within the society (Tyson, 2006). Moreover, based on the implication of research which conducted by Jensen (2016) the result of literary analysis from the perspective of Marxist criticism can be used in the process of teaching and learning especially in a discussion section in order to encourage students' critical thinking related with inequality issues in their surroundings. It can be said that the employment of Marxism literary analysis does not only give an advantage in the process of target

language acquisition but also awareness of social problems especially inequality issues during the English language teaching process.

The idea of inserting moral and social values as a significant part of the students' learning process has been globally recognized by several stakeholders in the education field as an important aspect in producing a good quality of output. The aim of national education based on UUD 1945 of Republic Indonesia Number 20 article 3 at 2003 mentions that the national education aimed at producing good quality of output which not only have great competence in the cognitive aspect but also have such an excellent moral and social value so they will be fully prepared to be placed among the society. The United Nation (UN) also supports the idea of how any educational system needs to insert in moral and social values to be a part of the students' process of learning as one of the four current and future education pillar stated by its organization UNESCO obligate that learner need to learn how to live together with the various type of people within the society. Furthermore, the current *Kurikulum 2013* has been launched as the realization of the aim of national education mentioned before in which this curriculum is expected to play a significant role in preventing moral deterioration through combining learning content with moral and social values (Hermawayati, 2014).

However, despite the fact that the government have already shown their effort to insert in the moral and social values in education, Hermawayati (2014) claimed that there is an occurrence of moral degradation in Indonesia which seen through issues like corruption, illegal logging, parking, plagiarism, gratification,

and drugs abuse that have been taken as culture in which it is very common to see people do that behavior in Indonesia. One of the reasons of that problem might be caused by the lack of material which is contained moral and social values. According to the result of a study conducted by Setiawan (2017) toward the representation of social values in the narrative texts that can be found in English textbooks produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the learning source of the senior high school students shows that they only focus on showing kindness, while fairness as another important issue in society only revealed explicitly throughout the narrative text in those textbooks. It means that the English textbooks which currently still recognized as the main sources for the teacher to deliver the materials including moral and social values are not representing the inequality issue in society.

In line with Cox & Strange (2010) who stated that literature has a vital function to build a rich personal and textual histories so people can connect their life to the society, a novel as one of the most popular form of literary work can be used as learning media in delivering moral and social values especially fairness within the society by conducting an analysis from the perspective of Marxism literary criticism. One of the best options that teachers can take in choosing the main resource in the English learning process is Kevin Kwan's first novel that launched in the year of 2013, *Crazy Rich Asians* as it not only recognized as a very popular novel but also a representative for inequality issues in society. It is considered as a very popular and successful novel from the fact stated by Lee (2018) that the novel was adapted to a movie by the infamous film production *Warner Bros* which remarked the history as the first all-Asian cast movie

produced by that label since 1990. The novel told about Rachel Chu's journey in Singapore as the main character where she was introduced to her boyfriend's super-rich family whose lifestyle was fragrance and mind-blowing that Rachel as someone from middle-class family background could not ever relate. It might sound like a typical romance storyline but it appears that there are so much more about that in which according to Rauch (2014), by analyzing the storyline from perspective of Marxism literary criticism the readers can understand the class struggles encountered by the major characters as a direct reflection of inequality issues in today's society.

Therefore, in this current study, Kevin Kwan's novel *Crazy Rich Asians* was analyzed from the perspective of Marxist literary criticism in which it was aimed at revealing the class difference and class struggle within the society that represented in this novel. The reflection of the class issues including class difference and class struggle is represented by the antagonistic relationship between the different social classes which it is identified by some conflicts among the characters from different social classes. It is believed that analyzing that significant element using the Marxism approach will help a lot of people to understand and aware of how is a society ruled by a certain class of social structure. This study is especially important for education where the teacher can use this novel as well as the result of this study to provide the students not only good authentic material as the source of English learning process but also give the students wider point of view to see the relationship between people from different social class through the interpretation of this novel using the perspective of Marxist literary criticism.

1.2 Problem Identification

Related to the background of this current research, significant problem is recognized that can be identified as follows:

Based on the research background, the idea of inserting moral and social values in the teaching and learning process have not successfully applied in the education field of Indonesia. According to Hermayawati (2014), there is an occurrence of moral degradation in Indonesia which seen through issues like corruption, illegal logging, parking, plagiarism, gratification, and drugs abuse. One of the factors that considered to be the reason of this problem is the learning material that fail to provide important issues in society including the inequality issue. According to Setiawan (2017), the English textbooks which currently still recognized as the main sources for the teacher to deliver the materials including moral and social values are not representing the inequality issue in society. The significant role of literary criticism from Marxist perspective on a novel can help the teacher to provide not only a good material for the acquisition of the target language but also can help the students to grasp the idea of important social problem like inequality issues.

The novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) as the globally recognized literary work is a good option to be used as the learning material and sources during the process of students' language learning due to the representation of relevant social issues reflected in this novel. It is believed that by analyzing this novel from the perspective of Marxist literary criticism, people will have wider point of view to see the value of literary work. From literary work especially novel that rich of social issues representation like *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013), people not only can

improve their language acquisition but at the same time they also can gain more knowledge about social and moral value in which it shows how people from different social classes interact and what kind of relationship that connects those social classes.

1.3 Limitation of The Study

This study is limited to the analysis of major issues that derived from the issues of class difference and the class struggles represented through the major characters of Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013). The study was focused on intrinsic element of this novel namely characterization, plot development, point of view, message, setting, theme, and style. Those elements are used to reveal the major issues of class difference which are discrimination and exploitation as well as major issues of class struggle which are resistance and mimicry conducted by the major characters in Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013).

1.4 Statement of Research Questions

1. How class difference issues represented in Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013)?
2. How class struggles represented through the major characters of Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013)?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Related with the current research's identification of problem, this study was aimed at achieving purposes as follows:

1. To identify class difference issues represented in Kevin Kwan's novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013).
2. To identify class struggles represented through the major characters of Kevin Kwan's novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013).

1.6 The Definition of Key Terms

In this sub-chapter, the related key terms are discussed as it can be seen in the following parts:

1.6.1 Marxist Theory

The Marxist theory is defined as a form of writing of Karl Marx's reflection on the situation of the society after the outbreak of the Industrial Revolution in England to create a clear description of the inequality issues at that time in hope that there will be a movement to against that system of capitalism (Gonde, 2009).

1.6.2 Class difference

According to Marx and Engels (1948), class difference is one of the social issues that arise because of the social class classification that divided society in to two sides which are the bourgeoisie and proletariat. The class difference issues come from the overuse of power by the bourgeoisie class to oppress the people who belong to the proletariat class.

1.6.3 Class Struggle

The class struggle is defined as the movement that conducted by the oppressed class to against the oppressions received from the dominant class (Marx and Engels, 1948). The class struggles are conducted by doing some revolutionary

act to stop or even attempt to take position or power of the dominant class in the structure of social class so the people from the upper-class will likely to unite to prevent those revolutionary acts come from the lower-class.

1.6.4 Novel

Novel is one of the types of literary work that becomes popular for the first time in the eighteen centuries in which it is defined as a peace of narrative units in form of commonly spoken language structure that arranged based on the reflection of imagination and experience of the human as the author (Choeda, 2019).

1.7 The Significance of the Study

This current research provided significant which is connected to the both aspect of theoretical and practical contributions as presented in the following sections.

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This study gives a contribution to three different theoretical aspects such as literature learning, language learning, and society.

1. Literature Learning

One of the theoretical significances of this study is to improve comprehension of literary work especially novel as the object of this analysis. According to the result of a study conducted by Khatib (2012), the employment of literary work as learning material, especially in the comprehension section, can encourage the language skill especially in the aspect of reading comprehension of the students. Through the process of literary analysis which requires a great

reading skill, the learner can improve their ability to shape the way of how they should think in order and structurally so they can fully grasp what is contained in a literary work. Thus, this present study can provide a significant value in the aspect of literature learning.

2. Language Learning

The expectation from the result of this current research is to give an improvement in the field of education especially in the learning process of English both as the foreign and second language as the object of a study. The employment of literary work in the language learning process is a very important (Collie and Slater, 1990). It is mentioned that literature has four aspects which can be the reasons why it is very beneficial for the learner to use literary work as one of their learning media. Those four aspects are meaningful authentic source, improvement of social awareness, encouragement of language acquisition, and personal value enhancement. Teachers are able to provide students a good exposure of the target language and representation of social value so that it can help students during the process of language learning as well as the improvement of moral and social value.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

The significance in the aspect of practical side of this study is aimed to give an improvement to several different groups of people including teachers and lecturers of English both as Second and Foreign language learners (ESL and EFL Learners) as well as the students and other researchers.

1. EFL Teacher

The outcome of this present study is anticipated to encourage the creation of learning process arranged by teacher and lecturer in designing an effective language learning process as well as providing the authentic media as the resource which also relevant in real life. The teacher of language learning cannot avoid the combination of language along with literature as a whole unit because they have interconnected relationships with each other (Ansari, 2013). The teacher needs to include literature in a language learning process to make the students get a whole unit of knowledge. Based on the implication of research which conducted by Jensen (2016) the result of literary analysis from the perspective of Marxist criticism can be used in the language learning process especially in a discussion with a topic of inequality issues in society. By using the result of this study in the discussion session, the teacher and lecturer also can include the important points of Marxism theory so it can encourage the students to think critically about their surrounding which can help them to do a reflection about the social interaction that they find in real life. With the help of that, the English learning process will be more fun and meaningful because it is related to real life.

2. EFL Students

This current study is aimed at helping the students to understand more about how important literature to be the thing that they need to consume every day. By using a lot of literary work as well as its criticism as the meaningful sources due to the aspect of its authenticity during the process of language acquisition, the students are anticipated to develop the interest of their reading

habit so they will have such a board knowledge and open-minded thought because they know a lot of thing from reading literary criticism. According to the result of a study conducted by Tsai (2012), the insert of enjoyable learning sources which is novel as a part of the students' process of learning the target gives an encouragement for students to stay focus. Therefore, from the help of the result of this research, the students are expected to gain both of the knowledge about the target language and social value that represent current society as well as to improve their interest in reading to broaden their point of view of life.

3. Society

The contribution that can be made from this study to the society is to provide an idea of social issues that happens within a society. According to Duhan (2015) through the process of literary criticism, people can take a look at history which also means that they can experience several important things which are the learning process of historical aspect of a certain society in a certain time and place. It means that this study can help people to broaden their point of view to see the relationship between people from different classes in society so they can do a reflection which can encourage the awareness of the existing issue in society. To sum up, the outcome of this present study is aimed at helping people gain more insight about relevant social issues that reflects current society so that they can be more reflective and aware toward social issues that happens in society.

4. Other Researchers

The present study is also aimed at encouraging and helping further related research as a reference. This present research focused on the Marxist perspective

on analyzing the society that represented in the novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013). Moreover, this present research is expected to help further researcher by providing useful and meaningful information on how to conduct similar researches.

