

# **CHAPTER I**

## **BACKGROUND**

This chapter presents the background of the research, problem identification, scope of the research, statement of the problem, objectives of the research, and significance of the research.

### **1.1 Research Background**

Education is a noble process. It is not the only process to transfer knowledge from teachers or educators to learners. Moskovitz (1978), cited in Johnson & Johnson (1999), stated that "a principal purpose of education is to provide learning and an environment that facilitate the achievement of the full potential of students." It means that achieving total students' potential is by dealing with the cognitive or intellectual and the affective or emotional. Hence, education seems to humanise humans, which emphasises cognitive development and the development of affection and sensitivity to social issues to achieve students' potential. It refers to humanist education, which prioritizes affective development in the learning process since it aims to treat humans as humans (Effendi, 2019). Through education, learners could execute their own potential following their uniqueness (Effendi, 2019).

This educational process is also formulated in Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning (P21) about 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills such as Critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, collaboration, teamwork, and leadership, Cross-cultural understanding, Communications, information, and media literacy,

Computing and ICT literacy, and Career and learning self-reliance (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). These skills are needed to be understood to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence, the development of affection and sensitivity to social issues is vital since this is related to learners' feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions, which can build interpersonal relationships and social skills as formulated in the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> learning (Puurula et al., 2010). It also covers about students' moral, spiritual, and values development (Puurula et al., 2010). Thus, learners need to be introduced to various social issues in society from an early age, such as religious differences, ethnicity, religion, economy, and social and gender differences.

One of the various social issues is gender differences. Gender differences are defined as biological differences between sexes (Shannon, 2019). However, the differences occur and felt since it is influenced and reinforced by culture (Shannon, 2019). The existence of gender differences occurs because it focuses on a particular gender which raises excessive assumptions due to individual experiences and pays no attention to the influences of social role and role-change theories (Kim and Weseley, 2017). The belief will create gender stereotypes and gender bias which can discriminate particular gender. This bias is also affected by social role theory due to different expectations of society are different in which men and women take on specific roles and the role is accepted commonly (Kim and Weseley, 2017). Moreover, gender differences become an issue since it disadvantages particular gender caused by culture and society who believe in it. This condition formed and started within the family as parents begin to discriminate between men and women based on customs, norms, and beliefs regarding the nature, role, position, and duties

of both of them (Nurhafizah and Ardi, 2019). It automatically influences children about gender differences. Thus, it is vital to introduce gender following their gender without discrimination of another gender.

However, children have been introduced and taught about gender inequality (Nurhafizah and Ardi, 2019). It is done by society who has belief in a patriarchal culture and adopted the pattern to taught their children. Children need to be educated to have awareness about gender equality and avoid discriminating against others. This is in line with feminism which has the primary purpose of raising the status of women or raising gender equality (Brooker, Selden, Widdowson, 2005). It can be done through education by providing readings that contain feminism and gender equality. Thus, through education, children will have awareness about gender equality.

Education is a way to promote gender equality, and it needs to be built since children still young. According to Aikman and Unterhalter (2007) state curriculum in school need to change to affect students' interaction among students and teacher which insert gender equality in teaching. This can build a good quality in education, and students will take advantage by implementing gender equality values. Moreover, the importance of implementing gender equality values in school will decrease gaps, division, and conflict between men and women in society (Sahin, 2013). Thus, it needs to be done as early as possible to build awareness of gender equality.

Furthermore, introducing and implementing gender equality values can be done through literature. Primarily in children's literature, it provides a literary and cultural study that reflects real-life (Hunt, 2005). Literature also offers positive values that can benefit children in their daily life such as feminist values, character education values, and moral values (Suwastini, Lasmawan, Artini, and Mahayanti, 2020; Utami, Suwastini, Artini, and Kultsum, 2020; Suwastini, Utami, and Artini, 2021; Senawati et al., 2021). The form of children's literature such as stories, poetry, rhymes, folk tales, drama (Klarer, 1999). Children's literature is worth it for children. It also provides an illustration that can help children develop their textual information because they like and need a picture in their reading (Nodelman, 2008). Furthermore, literature for children has several benefits for children such as motivating them in learning, providing a natural language that helps them to develop vocabulary mastery, and engaging them to think critically (Senawati et al., 2021). Moreover, the values contained in literature can be understood and applied in real life. Thus, they will automatically have awareness about gender equality.

One form of children's literature which provides this value is novel. According to Widyahening & Wardhani (2016), a novel as literary work is excellent for teaching and learning because it offers moral education, messages, or advice in the story. The novel is categorized as a long story and fiction written in prose (Abrams, 1999). Furthermore, according to Boulton (2013), a novel is a branch of fiction that evolved late in history. Although the novel developed late in history, indulgence for stories seems to be as old as recorded humanity (Boulton, 2013). A great novel gives good knowledge and understanding about a picture of human life,

which means that it tells about human experience in reality. In addition, an excellent fictional image of life has various benefits, such as a model to educate our moral judgment, widen our sympathies, and make human goodness and necessity (Boulton, 2013). A novel as a reading material could give a typical example about character education, feminist value, and moral value that benefit children (Suwastini, Lasmawan, Artini, and Mahayanti, 2020; Utami, Suwastini, Artini, and Kultsum, 2020; Suwastini, Utami, and Artini, 2021; Senawati et al., 2021). Moreover, it can teach us the effect of an action or condition as an essential part of learning to sensible decisions shown through character characterization (Boulton, 2013). Thus, through reading novels, children can educate and entertain themselves in a positive way.

In line with feminism, according to Lorber (2001), feminism is a kind of social movement which has the primary purpose of raising the status of women. This movement has the concept to oppose patriarchal culture in which women fight for reaching gender equality (Brooker, Selden, Widdowson, 2005). The different treatment between men and women has been happening for a long time. This still becomes an issue nowadays. Not only women but girls are also treated differently from boys since they are still children. This is done by the society believing in a patriarchal culture. In addition, this might have happened since the community does not understand and aware of this issue. Therefore, to anticipate this misunderstanding and raise awareness about gender equality, it would be better to understand and know about feminism since they are children. This statement is supported by Vandergrift (1993) in his study about feminism, which mentions that

children should customary to feminism. Furthermore, building feminism in children can avoid a rise of sexual abuse's possibility to children (Angelides, 2004). Thus, feminism should be acquainted with children.

There is a novel which contains feminism value and gender equality for children entitled *Matilda*. *Matilda* is a novel written by Roald Dahl in 1988. In this novel, Dahl described Matilda as a genius little girl. Matilda had an extraordinary ability, but she got unfair treatment with her brother and the adults around her. Fortunately, with that intelligence, she managed to take advantage of her ability by giving punishment to adults who behaved rudely to her in various creative ways that she did. The main problem that she faced in this story was adults who prohibit and prevent her while she tried to educate herself. Her mother often left her to play bingo and never took care of her. It made Matilda became an independent child who can take care of herself. Moreover, her father did not like it if she read many books. Her headmistress also did not want her at school since Miss Honey told Miss Trunchbull that Matilda was a genius. Miss Honey was the only person who cared about Matilda. At the end of the story, Matilda lived happily with her beloved teacher, Miss Honey, and got what she wanted. Besides its good and funny story, this novel also won the Children's Book Award in 1988, included in the BookTrust website in the category of 100 best books for children in 2015, and as one of the top 100 best children's books in School Library Journal in 2012.

Furthermore, based on several studies that analyzed *Matilda*, this novel has several values: literacy practices, gender roles, heroism, and feminism. In term of literacy practices, it is supported by a study which conducted by Putri &

Retnaningdyah (2018). They found that *Matilda's* novel makes people care about reading and benefit themselves, especially children. This novel also served as good media to foster children's reading habits. Whereas, in terms of gender role, it is supported by Anggraeni (2016) and Adhithiya (1995). Both of them found that in *Matilda*, there was a different treatment obtained by other people in accordance with gender and age. In this case, children and women are considered weaker than adults and men. Further, in heroism, the previous researches had been done by Hansson (2012), Beuvais (2015), Yeni (2018), and Martens (2015). All of their research found that *Matilda* has incredible power, and it allows *Matilda* to empower herself and become heroic in the condition and situation she has been faced. The last, in terms of feminism, Pordadotir (2019), Dickinson (2017), Shaw and Fard (2018), Maynard (2019) have been conducted research focus on *Matilda's* characterization, which reflects feminism.

The researcher chose Roald Dahl's novel entitled *Matilda* because this novel is appropriate for children since it is one of the 100 best children's books and has many values shown by the characters in the story and the social issues such as literacy practice, heroism, gender role, and feminism. The values and issues presented in *Matilda* are considered relatable to their lives. Moreover, the feminist values which deal with gender equality are also contained in this novel. This can be used as reading material to build children's awareness about gender equality in the process of reducing and anticipating the introduction of the concept of gender which discriminates particular gender. Through their awareness about gender equity, it is expected that discrimination about a particular gender will be reduced, and they can

build interpersonal relationships and social skills without any pressure and disadvantage a particular gender. In addition, this novel also contains an interesting story that can encourage children's motivation to read, and many positive values reflected the characters can inspire them and applied it in their real life. Further, this novel also can attract readers of all ages. Hence, the researcher was interested in describing the characterizations of female characters in *Matilda* (1988) by Roald Dahl. Based on the previous researchers, this novel is focused on the main character only. Meanwhile, the present study focused on the feminist values represented in the characterizations of female characters from the perspectives of liberal feminism.

### **1.2 Problem Identification**

Children need to be educated in order to have awareness about gender equality. This is in line with feminism which has a goal to raise the status of women or to raise gender equality. It can be done through education by providing readings that contain feminism and gender equality. One of them is through the novel. It has advantages for children in their learning process, and it contains moral values which can be understood and applied in their real life. *Matilda* is a novel written by Roald Dahl in 1988. The story contains feminist values and gender equality for children because the target audience of this novel is children. This will help children to build their awareness of gender equality. This novel considered has feminist ideology since the novel contains strong female role models and other female characters with many special characterizations in showing feminist ideology, especially liberal feminism. Therefore, this study focused on investigating liberal feminism reflected by the characterizations of female characters in *Matilda* (1988) by Roald Dahl.



### **1.3 Scope of the Research**

The research limitation for this study was to analyze the characterizations of female characters in *Matilda*'s novel by Roald Dahl (1988), representing liberal feminist ideologies. This study focused on the elements of novel character and characterization. These several aspects were used to find out the characterizations of female characters in *Matilda* by Roald Dahl (1988) and the characteristics which represent liberal feminism.

### **1.4 Statement of the Research Question**

Based on the background of the study and the problem identification above, there were two statements of the problems as follow:

1. What are the characterizations of the female characters in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988)?
2. What are the liberal feminist ideologies represented through female characters in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988)?

### **1.5 Objectives of the Research**

Based on the research question above, the objectives of the study as follow:

1. To describe the characterizations of female characters in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988)
2. To elaborate liberal feminism ideologies represented in the characterizations of female characters in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988)

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.6.1 Liberal Feminism**

Tong (2009) stated that liberal feminism is a point of view concerning the equality of education, liberty, and suffrage, and right between men and women. In this research, liberal feminism points to how those things as the concerns are maintained by the six female characters in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988).

### **1.6.2 Character**

According to Gill (1995), a character is the object of the story that is revealed through a given identity. It could be recognized from its appearance, conversation, thought, and action. In this research, the character points to the person in the story of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988).

### **1.6.3 Novel**

According to Abrams & Harpham (2015), a novel is a kind of explicit narrative told by a narrator. It provides a long story and tells more than one character, and usually has plot development, making the reader not finish reading in one time. In this research, the novel points to a long story that contains moral values, particularly feminist values.

## **1.7 Significance of the Research**

The research significance describes female characters' characterization in *Matilda's* novel by Roald Dahl from a feminist perspective, especially liberal feminism. This description contributes theoretically and practically to give readers worthwhile information in the relation of the novel and real life. The significance of this study was divided into two; they were theoretical significance and practical

significance.

### **1.7.1 Theoretical Significances**

This research was intended to be significant for students who learn English as Foreign Language in learning literature. Especially for those who want to read the novel, engaging in a novel, or conduct textual research using a novel, it was expected to be useful theoretically since it was about analyzing the novel. There were two theoretical significances in this research, namely, Literature Learning and Language Learning.

#### **1.7.1.1 Literature Learning**

Literary work provides many advantages for readers. It can be valuable, authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment, and personal involvement (Hismanoglu, 2005). First, it can be a valuable, authentic material since it gives learner experience learn as a native speaker who can make learner become familiar with the different linguistic structures, communicative functions, and meanings (Hismanoglu, 2005). The second, learning literary work gives cultural enrichment since it is a doorway into another culture which could give foster a sense of awareness to learn other cultures (Floris, 2004). Further, learn through literature can help learners to develop their critical thinking because they cannot say something without understanding their reading, and it makes them should motivate themselves in reading (Kataja, 2018). It is a benefit for personal involvement. The last, it can enrich the language and develop learner's mastery of four basic skills, especially for reading and writing (Senawati et al., 2021). Thus,

learning literature has many advantages for readers.

### **1.7.1.2 Language Learning**

This research was expected to be significant for language learning. Learning a language can be learned in various ways. One of them is literature. Learn through literature could enrich language use since it introduces various forms of language for the learners, especially those who learn English as Foreign Language (Kataja, 2018). Compared with a textbook, the language in literature is richer and has more varied. Moreover, literature provides many linguistic features that can make learners feel challenged in learning rather than using a textbook (Babae and Yahya, 2014). This could be a motivation for learners in develops a language by mastering four basic skills in learning a language. Moreover, according to Babae and Yahya (2014), learners will be capable of learning language by using the idiomatic expression, being creative in the target language, and accurately speaking through literature. Thus, literature has benefits in learning a language.

## **1.7.2 Practical Significance**

### **1.7.2.1 For Students**

Students having an interest in English as a Foreign Language and interested in literature obtained new information about feminism and liberal feminism. Through literature, they can learn about history and culture. It can enrich their knowledge and take many advantages from learning. Besides, this research provided them information about the novel entitled Matilda, which has moral values, character values, and social values that can be applied in their life. Further,

through novels, students can develop their skills in English, such as reading skills, and also expand students' vocabulary mastery (Senawati et al.,2021). Besides, the student can adapt Matilda's literacy practices in their real-life (Putri & Retnaningdyah, 2018). They can apply Matilda's reading habits because reading can enrich their knowledge as Matilda did in the story. Moreover, the benefits that they can get through reading Matilda was they can know that adult is not always right, and it was useful to remind them to prepare and protect themselves from adult hoodlum (Yeni & Ariska, 2019).

#### **1.7.2.2 For Teachers**

This research was intended to give benefits for the teacher in teaching language, especially English. Through literature, the teacher can use literary work such as novels as an effective teaching medium. The teacher can design the lesson by employing novel as a learning medium since it is considered as an interesting and worthy concern (Sage, 1987 in Hismanoglu, 2005). The teacher could read aloud the story of the novel in order to benefit the students in the development of the basic skills (Senawati et al., 2021). Besides that, while teaching the student, the teacher can be applied moral value through this novel and build students' positive character. The teacher can suggest students read a novel because it contains moral values, character values, and social values that will be useful to their lives. Furthermore, the teacher can provide an illustration in designing the material for students since it helps the students to understand and remember specific detail about what they have read (Erhat, 2017). In addition, the teachers can use this novel as learning media since this one of the good media to foster children's reading habits

(Putri & Retnaningdyah, 2018). The teachers could help students to build their awareness about gender differences to avoid the different treatment for particular gender through the reading material (Blangsinga, et al., 2020)

### **1.7.2.3 For Parents**

This research was expected to give information that reading novel is not only entertaining but also educating. Information that contains about moral values, character values and social values in a novel, especially in the novel entitled Matilda, parents can suggest their children read it at home. Besides that, this novel also gives a piece of information about parenting styles that will be useful in treating their children. From the novel, parents can learn to treat their children without differentiating them between girl and boy and not intimidate the children with something they want to do (Beauvais, 2015). Moreover, parents can avoid addiction to television and start to follow Matilda by support their children to read many things about children's literature.

### **1.7.2.4 For Society**

Through this research, society might be open-minded by do not treat people differently based on their gender, status, and age. Through feminism thought, this can be used to educate people about social issues in order to make life into harmony by respecting each other. Society can respect, appreciate and support women who want to educate themselves, avoid women subordinate, and stop doing violence to a woman. Then, especially for women in society, women can do everything that they want to do freely without pressure from whoever. Furthermore, Dickinson

(2017) argues that through Matilda, the author wants to inspire readers to turn to books in order to find their own self-empowerment, regardless of their gender, size, or circumstances.

#### **1.7.2.5 For Other Researchers**

For other researchers, this research was intended to give advantages for them in conducting similar research. The result of this study could be used as an empirical review. Besides, this study can be used as guidance for other researchers in conducting research in analyzing novels, especially in using a feminist point of view. They can find convenient sources such as Sarah Gamble, Judith Lorber, and Rosemarie Tong as their reference in reading and writing the theory. Moreover, this research could be a model for those who want to conduct qualitative research, especially in analyzing a text.

