

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses background of the study, reason for choosing topic, statement of the problem, aim of the study, scope of the study, research methodology, significance of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

In general, people assume that sex and gender are mutually related, in a sense that male must display masculine acts such as strong and brave, and female must act in feminine fashion such as gentle and sensitive. According to Bertens (2001) and Morine (2009), sex is determined biologically which refers to the way individuals distinguishes male from female through the biological characteristics. Meanwhile, gender is used to denote the differences between male and female that are shaped by social factors, in which individuals (male and female) see themselves as masculine and feminine in society. To add more, in Butler's view (1990) gender refers to a set of performance where there is no appropriate limit in performing, for example, cooking does not mean that one is a female or repairing car machine does not mean that one is a male. Although generally male acts manly and female acts womanly, it is possible for individual to be a feminine male or a masculine female in which femininity is found in male's body and

masculinity can be discovered in female's body. Thus, one's sex and one's gender have not to be interrelated.

The ideas of sex and gender are closely associated with the term identity. Identity refers to the concepts of the sameness and difference that individual has in the real world which relate that individual to others (Woodward, 1997; Week, 1990 cited in Barker, 2000). One's sexual identity is not the same as his/her gender identity (Stets and Burke, 2001; Butler, 1990) because, as stated previously, sexual identity is determined biologically when people see person as male or female, while gender identity is a social construction in which people see individual as masculine and feminine.

Pertinent to the statement about gender identity above, Woodward (1997) and Bressler (2002) assert that the emergence of gender identity difference (masculinity and femininity) is caused by the convention of binary opposition. Binary opposition creates a stereotype for each sex and gender where male should act masculine and female ought to present feminine act. Therefore, if individual's sex and gender does not match with its labeled stereotypes, society will think that it is a serious matter since they generally have expectations about how individual should behave. It is possible for society to expel, to avoid or to discriminate individuals who do not act appropriately as he/she should be. As a matter of fact, doing the things that inappropriate with the labeled gender does not mean that the individual is not a real man or a real woman because individual's act can be

influenced by its personal choices which determine its willingness to be a subject that he/she wants to be.

The term choice is closely associated with subjectivity. According to McCallum (1999) subjectivity refers to the concept of personal identity that is possessed by individual as a subject. In this case, a subject means individual's position in society. As a subject, individual is able to be whatever he/she wants to be such as being masculine or feminine, being an introvert or extrovert, being a good or bad person, or anything. Everything depends on his/her choices that can make them feeling pleased to do anything they like.

Issue about one's gender identity and subjectivity is often presented in the literary works, especially in young adult fictions. One of young adult fictions that present the issue about gender identity and subjectivity is A. A Philips' *"If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell"*. This novel reveals the issue about one's gender identity (masculinity and femininity) and subjectivity that are experienced by the main male character of this novel. It presents the story about the teenager social life which deals with the main character's inner life, child-parents relationship, sibling and friendship. It tells about a boy who prefers to love and play girl things rather than boy things.

In this study, the writer focuses her attention to the performance of feminine and masculine qualities and the construction of subjectivity of the main character. Therefore, the writer here wants to analyze the ways in which feminine and masculine qualities are performed by the main character in A. A Philips' *"If*

You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell" and want to investigate the subjectivity that is constructed by the main character in this text.

1.2 Reason for Choosing Topic

The writer chooses this topic because the issue about young adult gender identity and subjectivity is current. Gender identity issue is one of the various challenges that can be experienced by young adults in adolescence period. Generally, boys like playing sports, meanwhile girls prefer to play the doll. However, there are some boys and girls who dislike the things that are stereotypically labeled to them. Some boys love playing a doll and some girls love playing sports. They just do the things that they really want to do. Unfortunately, the things that they like stereotypically do not match with the gender they identify with. This problem makes those boys and girls feeling confused with their gender identity.

This issue is found in A. A Philips' "*If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell*". The character in this novel is a boy, but he prefers to play with dolls rather than play baseball or football. He is trapped in the stereotypical convention of being a male. This novel also tells about his struggle to perform masculine qualities. Thus, this topic is chosen by the writer because the issue about gender identity and subjectivity in A. A Philips' *If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell* is considered as an interesting thing to discuss.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

To specify the problem to investigate, the writer attempted to formulate the question as follow:

1. In what ways are feminine and masculine qualities performed by the main character in the text?
2. How is subjectivity of the main character constructed in the text?

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study is aimed to disclose the issues of young adult gender identity and subjectivity in A. A Philips' *If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell*. The research is expected to:

1. Find out the ways in which feminine and masculine qualities are performed by the main character in the text.
2. Find out how subjectivity is constructed through the main character's choices in the text.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In this study, the novel entitled *If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell* written by A. A Philips is chosen as the focus of the study. The writer limits the study on analyzing gender identity and subjectivity of the main character in the text.

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Design

This study is conducted in the form of a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research is aimed at describing the data intensively. The data analyzed are not to accept or to reject the hypothesis, but the result of the study is the description from the textual analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Subana and Sudrajat, 2001; Alwasilah, 2002). This study describes and illustrates data related to facts, situation and phenomenon which happens when study is being conducted and presents as it is.

The writer uses descriptive qualitative method because the subject of the research is A. A Philips novel entitled *If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell*. The writer wants to analyze and describe the situation and the phenomenon that happens in the story of the novel. The data can be gained by identifying the feminine and masculine qualities that are performed by the main character in the novel and by investigating the subjectivity of the main character that is constructed in the novel. It can be established by analyzing the character's description, action and thought, conflict, conversation, symbol, and image.

1.6.2 The Procedure of the Study

The writer found the subject research that is novel of A. A. Philips' *If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell* and determined the main issue about masculine-feminine qualities and subjectivity. Then, the writer formulated the

research question which concern to the issues. After that, the writer tried to find and to note down the textual evidence about feminine-masculine qualities and subjectivity of the main character. Next, the writer collected the references and theories about adolescent literature, gender identity, and subjectivity to be applied in this study. And then, the writer analyzed the data to answer the research questions. Finally, the conclusions and the suggestions were drawn based on the findings.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The writer expects that the result of the study can be used to improve the library collection about literature that is related to gender identity and subjectivity.

The writer also expects that this study can be used as the reference for the next researchers in English Department or everywhere who are interested in investigating the issue of gender identity and subjectivity.

1.8 Clarification of Terms

There were some terms used in this paper that might need to be clarified:

1. Adolescence is a transition phase of human life from childhood to adulthood when the kids are no longer kids but not quite adults. It is defined to someone who is between the age of 12 to 21 (Geldard and Geldard, 2004).

2. Subjectivity is a concept of personal identity that is possessed by individual as a subject that is individual's position in society. (McCallum, 1999)
3. Identity is expressed through forms of representation, how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by individual, which are recognizable by individual itself and by others (Barker, 2000). It is about the sameness and difference, about the personal and social, about the relationship between individual and surrounding people, and about what makes individual different from others (Week, 1990 cited in Barker, 2000).
4. Sex refers to the biological characteristics that separate male from female which have been predestined by God (Bertens, 2001; Morine, 2009).
5. Gender refers to the way in which given culture see individuals (male and female) as masculine and feminine in the society. It is socially constructed and fundamentally does not deal with the biological aspect (Bertens, 2001; Morine, 2009).

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study is presented into five chapters. Each chapter is divided into subtopics that elaborate the investigated issue.

Chapter I is introduction. This chapter consists of background of the study, reason for choosing topic, statement of the problem, aim of the study, scope of the

study, research methodology, significance of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the study.

Chapter II is theoretical foundation. This chapter contains the explanations of theoretical frameworks which are relevant with this present study.

Chapter III is research methodology. This chapter contains the methods of how to investigate the data provided. It discusses subject of the study, research questions, research methodology, procedure of the study, and data presentation.

Chapter IV is findings and discussion. This chapter contains the result of the study after conducting the research.

Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion.