

**THE NEED FOR SOCIAL SKILLS AS REFLECTED ON NATSUME
SOSEKI'S *BOTCHAN* NOVEL: A SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE
APPROACH**



Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Getting the Bachelor Degree of Education
in English Department

by
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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA
2018**

APPROVAL

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PUBLICATION ARTICLE

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A320140227

Publication article has been approved to be examined by

The Consultant



Dr. M. Thoyibi, M.S.

NIK. 410

ACCEPTANCE

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Accepted and approved by the Board of Examiners

School of Teacher Training and Education

Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

In April 2018

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang keterampilan sosial di dalam novel *Botchan* karya Natsume Soseki dengan menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi sastra. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi keterampilan sosial, mendeskripsikan bagaimana keterampilan sosial digambarkan, dan alasan penulis mendiskusikan keterampilan sosial dalam novelnya. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Terdapat dua data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini, yaitu novel karya Natsume Soseki yang berjudul *Botchan* sebagai data primer dan data sekunder seperti buku, jurnal online, tesis, artikel, dan internet. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga indikator keterampilan sosial seperti kemampuan meredam konflik, kemampuan meredam amarah, dan kemampuan menyampaikan perasaan dan pikiran. Ketiganya digambarkan melalui karakter tokoh, latar tempat, alur cerita, dan gaya kepenulisan. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa novel ini sebagian terinspirasi dari pengalaman Natsume Soseki sebagai penulis novel ini, selama mengajar di sekolah menengah yang mana menjadi latar dari novel ini, selain itu novel ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan keprihatinan Natsume Soseki tentang kualitas pendidikan selama zaman Meiji.

Kata Kunci: keterampilan sosial, *Botchan*, Natsume Soseki, Sosiologi sastra

ABSTRACT

This study discusses social skills in *Botchan* novel by Natsume Soseki using the sociology of literature approach. The purposes of this study are to identify indicators social skills, describe how social skills are described, and why the author discusses social skills in his novel. This research is a qualitative descriptive research. There are two data used in this research, the novel by Natsume Soseki entitled *Botchan* as primary data and secondary data like books, online journals, theses, articles, and internet. The results show that there are three indicators of social skills such as the ability to cope conflict, the ability to cope anger, and the ability to communicate feelings and thoughts. All three are portrayed through characters, setting of place, events, and style. The results also show that this novel are partially inspired by Natsume Soseki's experience as the author, during teaching in the middle school which is the setting for this novel, and this novel aims to show Natsume Soseki's concern about the quality of education during the Meiji era.

Keywords: social skills, *Botchan*, Natsume Soseki, sociology of literature approach

1. INTRODUCTION

Social skill is an important thing of human being life which is naturally social.

Social skills are an art or ability of an individual in dealing with social life.

Without these skills, the human being is not smooth in interacting with other people, so the life will be less harmonious. Therefore possessing social skills becomes essential for human being for successful adaptation.

Social skills do not only become attention of psychologists, sociologist, educators, but also an author such as Natsume Soseki. Natsume Soseki is one greatest Japanese author, novelist, literary expert who has interest in discussing social skills in his works.

One of his works is his novel entitled *Botchan*. This novel discusses about social skills. *Botchan* novel was written by Natsume Soseki in 1906 and becomes popular novel that is read by Japanese. This novel tells about the life of a young man who was born in Tokyo, but then after graduating from Tokyo's School of Physics went to small town in Shikoku to become a mathematics teacher. Because of his characteristics and his artless social skills, he had many problems and conflicts experienced by him with the people around him. At the beginning of the story, the novel tells about Botchan's childhood, naughtiness and his relationship with his family and his elderly maid named Kiyoko. Graduated from school, he became a math teacher. This is where the story really begun where the character Botchan deals with his workplace. In the end of the story, Botchan went back to Tokyo.

Botchan novel has been studied by other researchers by using varied formal objects and theories. There were researchers that examines disharmonization between *sensei* and *gakusei* based on sociology of literature approach (Dona, 2011), the bond between Kiyoko and Botchan (Khisnaya, 2015), the influence of family on Botchan characteristics (Firana, 2012), characters and conflicts (Sari, 2012), the temperament of cerebrotonia and sociophobia of Botchan based on psychoanalytic theory (Paulana, 2012). There were also researchers that investigated this novel based on linguistic theory. From all previous studies, it is shown that there were no researchers who have analyzed the need for social skills and for that reason, the researcher has interest in analyzing the issue in this novel in this current study.

For the researcher, there are other several exciting reasons for researching this novel and the issue. The first reason is because the novel is a classic Japanese and also that this novel is definitely not an ordinary novel because it is one of the works of the greatest novelist from Japan named Natsume Soseki. Then, after reading the biography of the author, the setting of place that the story took place is also a place where the author had become a teacher there. The last essential reason is the reason why the researcher studied the issue, because based on previous studies, there were no researchers who have researched the issue in this novel. Besides, for the researcher who is prepared as a teacher to be, it is essential to perform an analysis of social skills which are one of the education elements in order to enrich the knowledge about social skills and the importance of possessing social skills.

Related to the approach used by the researcher in this research, the sociology of literature approach is the suitable approach, because the issue being analyzed by the researcher in this current research had a close relation with what happened in the society because it can not only happen in literature but also in real life. The sociology of literature approach is an approach that considers literature as a social document that can be used to see the phenomenon that happened in the society. (Swingewood, 1972). The sociology of literature approach is also an approach that considers literature as a mimesis of the author's social life (Wellek and Warren, cited in Damono, 1978). Then the sociology of literature approach considers literature as a medium to teach something that relates to the social reality (Wellek and Warren, cited in Damono, 1978).

So based on the explanation above, the researcher conducted a study entitled **THE NEED FOR SOCIAL SKILLS AS REFLECTED ON NATSUME SOSEKI'S *BOTCHAN* NOVEL: A SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE APPROACH**. This study is aimed to identify the indicators of social skills, how Natsume Soseki illustrates the social skills and to reveal the reasons why Soseki exposes the issue through his novel.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study belongs to descriptive qualitative research. There are two objects in this research namely formal object and material object. The material object of this research is the novel entitled *Botchan* and written by Natsume Soseki and the formal object is the issue that reflected on the novel. The type of the data is divided into two data namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data are taken from the novel entitled *Botchan* and the secondary data are taken from books, online articles, online journals, thesis, internet and any documents that have correlation with the object being studied. In conducting this study, there are some steps done by researcher as follows reading the novel carefully, searching information and any documents that relates to this research in the books, articles, journals, internet etc, reading and reviewing the time when this novel appears and author's biography, taking essential notes from both primary and secondary data. In analyzing the data, the researcher used descriptive method and sociology of literature approach. The steps done by researcher to analyze the data are classifying the collected data into catagories., analyzing the data, making conclusion and suggestion.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Indicators of Social Skills

The reseacher found three indicators of social skills in this novel. They are ability to cope conflict, ability to control anger, and ability to communicate feeling and thought. The following are the indictaors of social skills.

3.1.1 Ability to Cope Conflict

Ability to cope conflict is one of social skills that belongs to interpersonal skills. In this context, ability to cope conflict refers to being calm not giving resentful reactions. In this novel, it is depicted when Botchan was in conflict with the students. Because of his quick tempered and honest character ,conflicts handled by him with emotions by giving resentful reactions that make the conflict was getting worse. Then, he realized that

being honest and brave is not enough to face the conflict between him and the students (Soseki, 1906, p.38-39).

3.1.2 Ability to Control Anger

Ability to control anger is one of social skills that belongs to self management skills. In this context, ability to control anger refers to ability to see other side of a thing. This social skill is depicted when Botchan was provoked by Red shirt. He was provoked that Porcupine is one who planned the incident happened in dormitory. He was angry, but then he tries to control his anger by attempting to see the other side of porcupine and forgets his bickerings with Porcupine. Botchan was so glad that Porcupine's speech at the meeting represents his thought. He was just simple-hearted follow that he forgot about his anger to Porcupine (Soseki, 1906, p. 60)

3.1.3 Ability to Communicate Feeling and Thought

Ability to communicate feeling and thought is also one of social skills that reflected on the *Botchan* novel. In this context is the ability to communicate feeling and thought ability to communicate feeling and thought refers to being self confidence what will be delivered is the truth and based on the facts. This social skill is illustrated when Botchan wants to deliver his opinion at the meeting that is held to discuss and decide what action should be taken regarding to the incident that took place in the dormitory when Botchan did duty night. (Soseki, 1906, p.55-59)

3.2 Depiction of the Need for Social Skills

3.2.1 Through Characters

3.2.1.1 Quick Tempered character

Soseki portrays the need for social skills by creating quick tempered character. Based on www.meriamwebster.com , a person who is quick tempered is a person who gets annoyed and angry easily. The need for social skills can be seen through character Botchan who has quick tempered character. When Botchan and his brother played chess, his brother was fraudulent by taking wrong steps and so proud of himself

because he was successful to put Botchan on difficult situation. Botchan was angry, then he throw the chessman on the forehead of his brother until become injured and bled. (Soseki, 1906. p. 5)

3.2.1.2 Disrespectful Character

Soseki created disrespectful character to describe the need for social skills. In this novel, the students represents disrespectful character that illustrate the need or social skills. The disrespectful character can be seen when Botchan teaches the students in his first day. Botchan is a Tokyo fellow who is used to speak fast. The students teased Botchan and ask him to speak slower impolitely (Soseki, 1906, p. 75). The evidence shows the disrespectful character of the students who insult Botchan that speaks too fast.

3.2.1.3 Stubborn Character

Soseki illustrates the need for social skills by creating stubborn character. To face stubborn character, social skill is needed. In this novel, stubborn character represented by Porcupine. He is a head math teacher in the school where Botchan works. Here is the evidence that show stubborn character of porcupine. (Soseki, 1906, p. 85)

3.2.2 Through Setting of Place

The setting of place describes the location of the events told in a story. In the novel Botchan, Soseki depicts social skills through the setting of place. There is workplace which used by Soseki to portray the issue. Workplace is place in which interactions took place. In the workplace, we will work with many people who have different characteristic. Strong social skills will enable an individual to talk and work with all the type of people. In this novel, the work place is represented by school where Botchan woks.

3.2.3 Through Events

Soseki describes the need for social skills through creating events. There are 3 events which portray the need for social skills:

- 1) Conflicts with the students (p. 23, 27-28, 32-36)
- 2) Conflicts with the fellow teacher (p. 54)
- 3) At the meeting (p.55-59)

3.2.4 Through Style

Based on <https://literarydevices.net> the definition of allegory is a figurative language used by author in which abstract ideas and principles are described in terms of characters, figures, and events. In this novel the name “Botchan” has hidden meaning. Based on www.literatureforum.com, Botchan is a Japanese word that has literary meaning as young master or green young man. Out of the literary meaning, Botchan is possibly used by Soseki to describe an individual who is naive or a person who shows a lack of experience.

3.3 Soseki’s Concern on The Issue

Soseki’s reason to expose the issue the need for social skills is to tell his slightly experiences he had when he taught English at an old school system. He said that he was not the suitable person to be a teacher, because he had no endowments required for being a good teacher. He took the job as a teacher, because at that time, being a teacher is a job that he could get easily after graduating from Imperial University. It can be concluded that why he exposes that is to retell partly his own experience and to describe the sad fact that happened at that time that there was no true educators at that time in Japan, because a person who have deficit social skills can be also a teacher. In addition, for him it is also sad fact that the students were taught by false teachers.

3.4 Discussion

Having analyzed the novel, the researcher deals with discussing the finding as reflected on Botchan novel. The need for social skills for us is to develop personality, develop work skills, increase quality of life, physical health, improve psychological health, and also cope with stress . There are three social skills ability to cope conflict which refers to being calm, wise and not

delivering resentful feedback. Ability to control anger which refers to attempting to see other perspective and ability to communicate thought and feeling which refers ability to communicate feeling and thought refers to being self confidence what will be delivered is the truth and based on the facts.

Portrayed in the novel, Botchan is actually a good person but at the same time he has difficulties to engage with the environment because his artless social skills. These all things also makes the situation become stressfull and decrease his career.

Related to the approach used by the researcher in this research, sociology of literature approach is an approach that considers literature as social document that can be used to see the phenomenon happened in the society (Swingewood, 1972). Sociology of literature approach is also an approach that considers literature as a mimesis of author's social life (Wellek and Warren, cited in Damono, 1978). Then sociology of literature approach considers literature as a medium to teach something that relates to the social reality (Wellek and Warren, cited in Damono, 1978).

There is correlation between the novel and the background of author's social life. *Botchan* novel is partly inspired by the experiences of the author himself namely Natsume Soseki. After graduating from Imperial university, Natsume Soseki worked for an old middle school in Matsuyama in Shikoku which become the setting of place of this novel. He said that the students he taught was like the students described in the novel, however he did not behave like Botchan. In addition, he realized that he was not suitable to be a teacher because he thought that he did not have ability required being a teacher. The reason why he took the job, because at that time, being a teacher was a job he could get easily. Moreover, he said that it is sad fact that the students were taught by false teachers.

Related to literature as social document, this novel has relation to the phenomenon of educational institution in Meiji era. Like Natsume Soseki's other novels, this novel is a satire of the real condition when this novel

appears. The educational institutions at that time just focuses on technical knowledges and just produces graduates with deficit social skills. The educational institutions just produce typewriter who are not be able to encourage the students to be creative so that they cannot their potential.

4. CONCLUSION

The need for social skills for us is to find own identity, to develop work skills, develop personality, increase productivity and career, increase the quality of life. Having analyzed and discussed this novel, the researcher draws conclusion.

Firstly, the indicators of social skills found in this novel are ability to cope conflict, ability to control anger, ability to communicate thought and feeling . Ability to cope conflict refers to being calm, wise, and not delivering resentful feedback. Ability to control anger refers to attempting to see other perspective. Ability to communicate feeling and thought refers to being self confidence what will be delivered is the truth and based on the facts. Ability to cope conflict can be seen when Botchan was in conflicts with the students, ability to control anger can be seen when Botchan was in conflict with Porcuine which is his fellow teacher. Ability to communicate feeling and thought can be found when there was a metting at the school to discuss and decide what action should be done regarding to the incident in the dormitory.

Secondly, social skills portrayed by Natsume Soseki through character, through events, and through setting of place. The need for social skills are portrayed through three characters. They are quick tempered character represented by Botchan, disrespectful character represented by the students, and stubborn character represented by Porcupine. There are three events that illustrate the need for social skills. They are the conflicts with the students, conflicts happened with the fellow teacher, and at the meeting. Ththrough seting of place, the place that portrays the need for social skills is workplace which represented by school where Botchan works. . The last is the need for social skills is also portrayed through style namely allegory which is in this novel represented by name Botchan which is a japanese word and its meaning is young master or green young man.

Thirdly, Natsume Soseki's reason to expose the issue the need for social skills is to tell his partly experiences he had when he taught English at an old school system. He said that he was not the suitable person to be a teacher, because he had no endowments required for being a good teacher. He took the job as a teacher, because at that time, being a teacher is a job that he could get easily after graduating from Imperial University. It can be concluded that why he exposes that is to retell his own experience as a teacher and describe the sad fact that happened at that time that there were no true educators at that time in Japan, a person who have deficit social skills can be also a teacher. In addition, for him it is also sad fact that the students were taught by false teacher. In short words, Soseki's reason to expose the need for social skills is inspired by his own experience and at the same time he wanted also describe the real condition of the phenomenon that happened at time namely the sad fact about educational institution.

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