# Semantics Analysis of the Patriarchy's System toward the Woman's Silent Reflected in 'The Patience Stone' Novel

### Ani Musafa'ah

SMPN 44 Surabaya, e-mail: animusafaah@gmail.com

#### Abstract

Patriarchy is one of the great problems for every woman in the world, this problem finally is represented to a literary work, and one of it is Atiq Rahimi's The Patience Stone. This study was done by the aim to describe the semantics meaning of the patriarchy's system toward the woman's silent. To solve it by analysis, it requires a method that is reading, collecting data, and interpreting the data examined in the descriptive qualitative design. As the result of this study, it was found the silent voice of the Woman that can be said that patriarchy system can grab the rights of women, and what things that the Woman can deliver is the silent voice, the voice that can be a feminist movement for every sympathy to it. It represents, it says in very smooth whispers that there is still inequality caused by patriarchy, and the Woman cannot do anything. Overall, there were 14 data found representing the patriarchy's system faced by the woman as the main character in case of language meaning applied.

**Keywords**: semantics analysis, patriarchy, the woman, silent voice

#### INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is the scientific study of language on how it is put together and how it functions. In line with Abrams (1999, p. 140), Linguistics is the systematic study of the elements of language and the principles governing their combination and organization. Linguistics can be divided into three categories or subfields of study: 1) language in context, 2) language meaning, and 3) language form. In linguistics, the study of meaning is devoted to semantics. Linguistic itself has brought to the subject of semantics a certain degree of systematic objectivity combined with a view of the study of meaning as an integrated component within the total theory of how language works (Leech & Short, 1981). The language which uses the imaginary meaning is called language meaning in context as it is viewed in the literary works.

Literary work comes from the intention and the emotion of the author in facing the obstacles and problems of his own life and social life in which he is involved. It is because the author has sense of sensitivity towards what is going on in the social life, nature, and the world as well. It means that literary works is not taken for granted by the result of the author's fictions which do not have any sources of facts. Indeed, literary work is a result of the author's creation based on emotion that can reveal the aesthetic aspect whether it is based on its language or its meaning.

It is not easy to make a literary work. One needs to have sufficient prior knowledge, sense of sensitivity toward nature and human's life in society, and the capability of interpreting his ideas. There are various forms of literary works which are as the results of race peculiarities, diverse individual temperaments, or political circumstances securing majority of one social class which is thus enabled to propagate its ideas and sentiments (Roby & Barry, 1962, p. 286). One must be able to express his feeling, idea, zest of life, and his awareness toward a certain concrete through using language which can arouse the readers' intention. Thus, literary work is able to give the readers awareness of the social class, the truth of life, and also human's behaviors which enable someone to obtain the deep knowledge about human beings, the world, and life.

Novel is one of the literary works. As a literary work, a novel is written by using language to mean something other than its literal meaning in order to produce a special effect or new meaning. It means that the author uses intended language within its work to create the beauty on it. The use of imagery language actually can make the meaning of the novel more interesting and livelier. There are various strategies in applying the meanings in the novels used in their characters. One of the strategies is in the analyzing of the main character in the novels.

Furthermore, it is clear to see that those kinds of phenomena finally inspire some authors to write it down in beautiful work, and one of it is Atiq Rahimi with his novel entitled *The Patience Stone*. The main thing that is hidden in *The Patience Stone* is the way feminism is shown up. This novel, especially the main character, the woman, erodes the feeling of the readers to give sympathy and tears on what has happened to the woman. The woman cannot fight to the system of men he faces on, but she just can deliver it through a telling to her comate husband, which is not changing anything to her fair life.

Specifically, in *The Patience Stone*, there is told a woman sits in front of his comate husband. She tells everything she never confesses before because of some reasons. She is the wife of a soldier who is lying unconscious with a bullet in his neck,

and she calls her husband with *The Patience Stone* or "Sang-e Saboor," it is a mythical stone accords to Persian folklore that absorbs the pain of those who confide in it, until it eventually explodes. When the novel opens, the man has been comatose for over two weeks, and shows no signs of recovery. Frustration and despair on the woman's part gradually turn to angry rebellion and, uncertain whether or not he can hear her words, she becomes ever more talkative and outgoing as she gathers over their ten-year marriage.

Moreover, Patriarchy is one of the great problems for every woman in the world, this problem finally is represented to a literary work, and one of it is Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*. There, the Woman, as the main character is told with all sorrow, marrying by being forced, marrying with a photo, until she has to make pregnant with regardless the way and she has baby from another guy she never knows. It can be seen that the woman as main character reflects "handcuff" of women life against patriarchy in the social life of the novel. The Women uses her inability to comprehend and talk back to tell him things that she will not dare to say otherwise. It is an interested topic to explore because Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* is part of a Persian myth about a stone that has this phenomenal strength to listen to stories of suffering and sorrow. What sorrow that is delivered is from the heart voice of a woman that lives in the unfair world. The unfair world is caused by the inequality.

Lyons in (Tambunan & Sinambela, 2018) says that contextual meaning is the meaning of words according to the situations in which they are used. Different situations give different meaning. In Addition, in the particular situations the sentences will be equal in meaning. In addition, meaning is also defined as the information signaled about the kind of use a linguistic unit has in its social context (Manik; cited in Saputri, 2014, p. 34). A context means the part of speech of words and the things denote. It can be said that contextual meaning has meaning according to the text. It involves the function of word in sentence formation since different arrangement of the same word can convey different context. So, we can conclude that the contextual meaning is the meaning of the words according to the situation in which they are used. Different situation may give different meaning in a sentence (Saputri, 2014).

The Patience Stone is a 2008 novel by the French-Afghan writer Atiq Rahimi. It received the Prix Goncourt. It adopts the viewpoint of women, for whom war can bring

both suffering and a curious freedom. The novel tells in its discreet way of the hopeless plight and undeserved oppression of the women in Afghanistan. Atiq Rahimi's novel *The Patience Stone* depicts of the social, economic, religion, and political aspects of the Afghanistan. It shows how are the morality and honesty degraded by politically, socially, economically, and sexually in Afghanistan that can alert any conscious citizen in the world against immorality. A family situation as a representative of the Afghan women violence.

Since the study tries to explore the main character in the novel, the woman, in case of the portrayal of patriarchy society, feminism approach is used to analyze the data. Feminism emerged as a natural reaction to society's treatment toward women. Holbrook (1989: 48), feminism in general is a historical movement to give women equal politic, social, and economic right with men. Feminists try to struggle against treatment given by patriarchal society. They intend to put away the images given to them by men and to prosecute the equality of politic, social, and economic rights. They want to be not dependent on men and to have their own freedom from the men oppression. Furthermore, women struggle to achieve freedom has become a very dominant theme in literature since the rise and development of feminism, which studies various problems of women and creates awareness among them.

Concerning to the explanation mentioned, it is important to analysis the literary work in the novel by using semantics analysis in the contextual language used applied in selected novel. This study was conducted to describe the language in context used in the novel of *The Patience Stone*. The researcher took this study by the title "Semantics Analysis of the Patriarchy's System toward the Woman's Silent Reflected in the 'The Patience Stone' Novel'.

# **METHOD**

The researcher applied descriptive qualitative approach to examine how the portrait of the woman as the main character in the selected novel. In collecting data, this research focused on analysis and citations. The first step was reading novel. In this step, the novel entitled *The Patience Stone* became the object of the research. This was to reach the understanding all contents completely with all possibilities both intrinsically and extrinsically. The second was inventorying data. This step was in case of collecting

data through noting the quotations related to the statement of the problems and objectives of the study, it was including in words, sentences, and discourse that could represent patriarchy and feminism in Atiq Rahimi's The Patience Stone. The third was classification data. This step to classify the data based on the statement of the problems including the portrayal patriarchy and the way the Woman posited herself against it.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The researcher presented the findings based on the formulated problem. It was to describe the semantics analysis in case of language meaning used in the main character of the novel *The Patience Stone* written by Atiq Rahimi. Most of the problems faced by the woman were in the patriarchy's system roles. The patience stone, written by Atiq Rahimi, is the story of an Afghan woman spending her days for taking her husband in paralyzed condition by a bullet lodged in his neck (Rahimi, 2010). The woman, unknown name, reveals her loneliness as well as her resentment towards her husband for sacrificing her to the war. The longer she talks to her husband the bolder she becomes. In the story, the woman mostly faces the problems of patriarchy system within her family.

Patriarchy system is where men is fated to dictate/control women, and it rules to all part in the world (Fromm, 2002, p. 177). She can't do anything except following that system. She is just a woman and has no voice to demonstrate what she feels. But, when her husband in comate condition, she tries to utter and express everything she feels. This represent voice can be said as the silent voice because silent literally mean cannot be uttered directly, it exists but it is not heard and listened, even it cannot be heard nor listened. The voice symbolically shows the heart, the feel, and experience. The woman revisits her past many bitter stories involving her father and husband, who have both abused her physically. The things becoming issues are the problems faced by the woman. The following issues are described as below:

"'Forgive me', as she strokes his arm. I'm tired. At breaking point. Don't abandon me, you're all I have left. 'She raises her voice: Without you, I have nothing. Think your daughters! What will I do with them? They're so young..." (Rahimi, 2010, p.14)

The quotation above shows that the women is almost quit/surrendered. Her tiring and her frustration are caused by the condition of her husband and doing everything for

her husband. She hopes her husband getting better but nothing changes through her husband. This condition can make her angry, stressful and injustice. On the other hand, she also has to treat her children as a good mother.

"Don't be frightened, darling. I'm here. The mother reassures her: 'I wasn't shouting. I was talking to your father." They walk away from the door. Why are you calling my father Al-Qahhar? Is he cross?" No, but he will be if we disturb him. The little girl falls silent." (Rahimi, 2010, p.17)

Based on the quotation mentioned, it can be said that the woman is a good mother for her children and also a good mother for her husband. The way she asks to her children not to disturb their father shows that the woman keeps her husband lovely. Means that she doesn't want the husband gets worse by disturbing. It seems that the woman posits herself in treating her husband. On the other hand, it is easy and possible to do something bad, for instance, the woman can easily kill the man because he is now between the conditions of dead and alive. However, this is not the way the woman posits herself. She tries to be care and lovely treating her husband. Thus, in this story, the woman posits herself in facing condition that can make her gets anger easily. Although, the woman knows well her position in the patriarchy system.

"It's me who suffers! Me who cries!" (Rahimi, 2010, p. 21)

The quotation tells the images of obedience, respect, and orderliness, when combined with women's position in the tradition, contribute to the categorize of Afghan women, like all women in the world, as docile, obedient, quiet, intuitive, or timid. However, men should be aware of their quietness which can turn into power more strongly in them then men have.

"Oh yes bleeding...I was lying to him, of course. She glances keenly at the man, more mischievous than submissive. Just as I've lied to you...more than once! she pulls her legs up to her chest and wedges her chin between her knees. "But there is something I'd better tell you..." (Rahimi, 2010, p.28)

On the quotation, the woman admits to her comate husband that she has been lying to him. What she lies, is the thing happens when they firstly sleep in gathering. Pulling the plot before, the man comes after homing from war. He is as nervous as the woman in facing the first having sex. Then, they finally have a sex. The man feels

happy because he thinks that the woman is still virgin. The proof is, the blood melts down while the man penetrates his penis down. However, the blood that melts is the blood of menstruation. The man does not know, and he does not want to know. The way the man does it, the way the man treats his wife with regardless the condition of the wife appears something. It is a kind of a force, the claiming seems that the husband, as a man, has a power and right to do everything to the wife.

"Sometimes he won, sometimes he lost. When he lost, he would get upset, and nasty. He would come home in a rage and find any pretext to beat us...and also my mother." (Rahimi, 2010, p. 58)

The quotation above shows that the physical violence happened to the female characters in the story. The woman, her mother and her sisters were beaten by her father. It is implied from patriarchal culture allows the man to use force as a means of controlling his family. Therefore, it tells why the father does the physical violence to remind his wife and daughters within his family. Thus, it can be said that the women were the victims of physical abuse.

"For three years, I had been trying to imagine what you were like... and then one day you came. You slipped into the bed. Climbed on top of me. Rubbed yourself against me... and couldn't do it!" (Rahimi, 2010, p. 64)

The quotation tells the sexual needs that the establish part of her emotions are not met in her marriage since she is inferior to her husband even where sex is concerned. As it is known, one must remember that within a patriarchal society, sex becomes a tool for man to suppress woman, not a mutual interest to be shared doing together. In a short, it can be concluded that ignoring woman's felling in a relationship is also apparent of emotional abuse. In a fact, women are God's creature's having equality among the men.

"Your brothers have always wanted to fuck me! They...spied on me... constantly, for the whole three years you were away... spied on me through the little window in the bath house while I was washing myself." (Rahimi, 2010, p. 51)

The quotation mentioned reveals another grim reality behind the everyday lives of many Afghan women. In this context, the sexual fantasy stimulates their acts of masturbation serve to highlight the woman inferior position within her husband's family. Means that, the woman has traumatic experiences of sexual abuse done by her husband's brothers at the time her husband was at war. This condition demonstrates woman's lowly status within the family which shows that she never been respected as a sister-in-law by them. However, at the condition happened the woman still wants the husband to listen and understand her feelings as a wife.

"I loved her more than my own mother. She was generous. Beautiful. Very beautiful. Big hearted. She was the one who taught how to read, how to live ...but then her life took a tragic turn. They married her off to this terrible rich man. A total bastard. Stuffed with dirty cash" (Rahimi, 2010, p. 85)

The quotation tells marriages are common in Afghanistan. This in turn presents a worrisome situation as woman's emotional needs are not considered beforehand and she is often traded instead of being married off. It becomes suffering from an emotionally stagnant environment in their respective marriages under the shadow of patriarchy.

"But stupid Mullah has no idea what it's like to be alone with a man who... She can't find the right word or doesn't dare say it, and just grumbles softly... to be all alone with two little girls!" (Rahimi, 2010, p.9)

The Mullah is known as the religious leader. He and his men always come to his people' homes to see whether they do the obligatory religious ritual (prayers) or call them to listen to his preaches. In this story, the mullah seems doing not care what is really going on with the woman and her problems faced. This shows that the woman being ignored as her husband has too often abandon her and their children to struggle for the wars.

"I never wanted anyone to know that. Never! Not even my sisters! she leaves the room, upset. Her fears echo down the passage. "He's driving me mad. Sapping my strength. Forcing me to speak. To confess my sins, my mistakes. He's listening to me. Hearing me. I'm sure of it. He wants to get to me...to destroy me!" (Rahimi, 2010, pp. 60—61)

Focusing on the quotation mentioned, it is assumed that by responding the problems faced, the woman can't do anything except telling the truth of what she wants to deliver, what she feels and also what she hides for she doesn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. On the other hand, she realizes what she feels are the culture and social truth

towards her position in patriarchy's system of women. This is what happened to the woman, she is just a woman who has no voice and can't do anything. She thinks that by keeping in silent and not talking to anyone will be the best way to express her feelings.

"A hand, a woman hand, is resting on his chest, rising and falling in time with his breath. The woman is seated. Knees pulled into her chest. Head sunk between her knees. In the other hand, the left, she holds a long string of black prayer beads." (Rahimi, 2010, p.2)

Based on the quotation above, it means that one of the best ways, besides keeping on silence, is talking to God who is the Most One for everything, who is the Dominant One. When her husband is in comate, she always keeps on praying for her husband. This is what the woman does, she prays for her husband, although it seems no worth, no use because she thinks that her husband will be getting better. She believes in God, although her happiness is robbed by the injustice of the system of men. She keeps trying to be a good wife for her husband to posit herself within her family.

"Weapons become everything to you men... As soon as you have guns, you forget your women." (Rahimi, 2010, p.57)

The quotation means that the society seems to pursue and struggle more for power that they do for women. In this case, men have treated women unjustly. The society doesn't provide and give women freedom to get their rights as human being. The women couldn't have the strength of the power of the men.

"Your mother, with her enormous bust, coming to our place to ask for the hand of my younger sister. It wasn't her turn to get married. It was my turn. So your mother simply said, "no problem, we'll take her instead!", pointing her fleshy finger at me as I poured the tea. ..... As for you, you didn't even know this was happening. My father, who wanted nothing more, accepted without the slightest hesitation. He didn't give a damn that you weren't around! Who were you, really? No one knew. To all of us, you were just a title: the hero! And, like every hero, far away. Engagement to a hero was a lovely thing, for a seventeen-year-old girl. I said to myself" (Rahimi, 2010, p.53-54)

From the quotation mentioned, it is told that the woman does not have any right to choose which man she wants to be married to because her mother chooses the man for her. It identifies that the power of parents is strongly taking the children, and the children who get the bigger grab is woman. Women are considered as slow, weak, and

brittle. Thus, it is not right if women are given a chance to choose men. it can be represented by the woman that she has to admit that to be married with the husband is not what she wants.

"Three years! For three years I wasn't allowed to see my friends, or my family... it was not considered proper a young married virgin to spend time with other married women. Such rubbish!" (Rahimi, 2010, p. 54)

The quotation shows that the woman in the story is a victim of emotional abuse in her parent's home. As a married woman, she is forbidden to meet her friends because her mother-in-law assumes that it is dangerous to mingle with them regarding her husband is a way at war. She feels as a gap because her freedom is imposed by her mother-in-law.

Overall, indeed, it is authors like Atiq Rahimi who plays an integral role in addressing the dilemma of Afghan women and focuses on restoring their basic rights through fiction as a platform for further public discussion and social reformation. Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* can be considered as a bright portrayal of the Afghan woman's irritating trouble. Through the narration of the novella's unidentified character, the researcher was able to gather sufficient evidence to conclude that domestic violence against women was a persistent problem all over Afghanistan. Unquestionably, this novel is capable of giving the perspectives in the domestic violence against the woman.

# **CONCLUSION**

In particular problem, there is the classic problem that is faced by human, it is the problem of women. Women are always involved in the weaker or inferior creature, therefore, there is born a system named patriarchy where men dominate women in all aspect without regard who the men are. The meant representation is written in his novel entitled *The Patience Stone*. The Woman, as the main character faces a very deep conflict where she has to marry with a man she never knows and even in the ceremony of marriage the man is not in her side, and she has to marry with a photo. After the marriage, the man is in war, years pass and the man comes home, the man wants to have sex with the Woman while the Woman is in the time of menstruation. With regardless that, the man insists. After that, the man leaves her again. In this time, the Woman is not

pregnant, and it is known by her mother in law, the Woman is asked to have a pregnant, and she is finally asked to come to a priest. There, she is asked to sleep with a man she never knows. Based on the example, it can be taken a simple sentence, ironically, and bitter, for the Woman. It is called the jail of Patriarchy.

# REFERENCES

Abrams, M. H. (1999). *A Glossary of Literary Terms (7th ed.)*. New York: Cornell University.

Fromm, E. (2002). Beyond The Chains of Illusion: Pertemuan Saya dengan Marx dan Freud. Jakarta: Jendela.

Leech, G. N., & Short, M. H. (1981). Style in Fiction. London: Longman.

Rahimi, A. (2010). The Patience Stone. London: Chato & Windus.

Roby, C. R., & Barry, U. (1962). *Introduction to Drama*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Saputri, E. E. (2014). An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Rick Riordan's Novel Entitled "The Heroes of Olympics, Book Three: The Mark of Athena". Semarang: Dian Nuswantoro University.

Tambunan, E. R., & Sinambela, E. (2018). An Analysis of Figurative Meaning on Obama's Presidential Speech. *The Episteme Journal of English Literature and Linguistics Vol 4 no 2*, 11.