

**THE UNCANNY PHENOMENON PORTRAYED IN
KATHRYN STOCKETT’S “THE HELP”:
POSTCOLONIAL APPROACH**

THESIS



**By:
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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
PUTERA BATAM UNIVERSITY
2020**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana
Sastra**



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DECLARATION OF THE THESIS ORIGINALITY

I, Erlis, NPM No. 161210008

Hereby declare that this term paper entitled:

THE UNCANNY PHENOMENON PORTRAYED IN KATHRYN STOCKETT'S "THE HELP": POSTCOLONIAL APPROACH

Is my real work and this thesis has never been published before, entirely, partially, in the name of others or mine.

Batam, July 30th 2020



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The thesis has been approved to be examined on the date as indicated below

Batam, July 30th 2020



**Emil Eka Putra, S.S., M.Hum.
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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis fenomena uncanny dalam “The Help” oleh Kathryn Stockett dengan pendekatan poskolonialisme. Tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu mengidentifikasi fenomena uncanny dalam “The Help” oleh Kathryn Stockett dan bagaimana hal tersebut terefleksi dalam cerita. Penelitian ini juga menggunakan teori uncanny oleh Homi K. Bhabha. Peneliti mengumpulkan data dengan membaca novel serta menulis data yang cocok dengan masalah yang akan diidentifikasi. Setelah seluruh data terkumpul, peneliti menganalisis data dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan hasilnya akan disajikan dengan kata-kata dan kalimat. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa fenomena uncanny muncul dalam karakter melalui percakapan dan aktifitas mereka. Fenomena uncanny sering terjadi dalam pengalaman para pembantu yang mayoritasnya kulit berwarna yang berhadapan dengan kulit putih. Peneliti mengklasifikasi fenomena uncanny yang terefleksi dalam cerita menjadi perbedaan penggunaan toilet, perbedaan penggunaan penggunaan peralatan makan dan etika makan, perbedaan dalam menggunakan/memasuki properti publik, perbedaan dalam kebebasan berpendapat, perbedaan sekolah, dan perbedaan peluang kerja. Kemudian, cara fenomena uncanny tersebut direfleksikan yaitu melalui percakapan antar tokoh dan pengalaman para tokoh dalam novel karena penulis novel tersebut menggunakan sudut pandang orang pertama ganda, sehingga perasaan tiap tokoh dapat dipahami dengan mudah.

Kata Kunci: uncanny, poskolonialisme, Homi K. Bhabha

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the uncanny phenomenon in “The Help” by Kathryn Stockett with postcolonial approach. The purpose of this research is to identify the uncanny phenomenon and how it is reflected in the story. This research also uses the uncanny theory by Homi K. Bhabha. The researcher collected the data by reading the novel and writes down the data that is matched with the problem that is going to be identified. After all of the data has been collected, the researcher then analyzed the data with qualitative descriptive method and then the result is presented by words and sentences. The result of the research shows that the uncanny phenomenon mostly reflected in the maid’s (colored skin) experiences dealing with their boss (white skin). The researcher classified the uncanny phenomenon which reflected in the story into the differences in using restroom, difference in using eating utensils and eating etiquette, difference in using/entering public property, difference in freedom of speech, difference in school, and difference in job opportunity. Meanwhile, the way the uncanny phenomenon is reflected is from in the conversation between the characters and the experience of the characters as the author wrote the novel with multiple first person point of view, each characters’ experience can be understand easily.

Keyword: uncanny, postcolonial, Homi K. Bhabha

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Life is the greatest teacher because it educates even those who really hate to learn.” (Eraldo Banovac)

“Anything that you learn becomes your wealth, a wealth that cannot be taken away from you; whether you learn it in a building called school or in the school of life. To learn something new is a timeless pleasure and a valuable treasure. And not all things that you learn are taught to you, but many things that you learn you realize you have taught yourself.”

(C. Joybell C.)

I dedicated this thesis to:

My parents and my brothers who have always supported me, my friends who have encouraged me, and all of lecturers in Universitas Putera Batam.

Without all of your support, I am not who I am right now.

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Batam, July 30th 2020



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

According to Liliweri in (2018, p. 570), race is the characteristic and feature that used to classify people according to their skin color (black, white, Asian, etc). Meanwhile, Sussman in (2014, p. 207) stated that race is just a population with a particular set of gene frequencies that are constantly shifting due to migration, natural selection social and sexual selection, mutation, random genetic drift, and so forth. From the definition, the researcher can conclude that race can be identified as a group of people that are categorized into specific classification that is based on their common historical culture, nationality, or their birthplace. In these days, many people still believe that every person has different social class that once was applied in the colonialism era long time ago. This belief will create discrimination among the individual and grouping in the society. At last, the social gap between different races will create social deviation.

The differential among races could actually bring positivity and diversity if each individual appreciates one another. However, this difference has not always been taken positively by people. Some people still think that their own race is better than the others. This way of thinking can make people act harshly towards people who are not in the same race as theirs. Example can be taken from Independent News, January 9th 2019 where there was news about a former employee of MOSCHINO

who was suing the company for alleged racial discrimination. The store appeared to have a code word for black customers. The term was reportedly used when the black customer happened to be not a celebrity and did not have an appearance of rich people like wearing branded things or jewelry entered the store. The employee was asked to closely watch over the black customers who entered the store just in case they might steal something. From this incident, it can be concluded that the uncanny phenomenon that portrayed is the black customers still taken as a criminal, even though they live in the same place as the whites since long time ago.

In Madiong (2014, p. 227) racism is an ideology that justifies the domination of one particular racial group against another or a feeling of excessive superiority towards certain social groups. In other words, racism is generally associated with the different skin color or domination of specific race. In the colonialism era, the colored skin was usually treated as the lowest social class in the society and western was usually the contrary. It is mostly like inferior and superior class. This historical story is the common cause why people are still racist towards people with colored skin.

In the novel titled *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, racism still exists in that time and people with colored skin still could not get the same rights as the westerns as they did not get treated equally. Although they live in the same place as the westerns, they still did not get the feeling of being at home, at their safe place. This problem is known as the uncanny, where one does not feel that they are at home and in their safe place despite having a physical house. The uncanny phenomenon often appears among the colored skin because of the racism and discrimination. Therefore, the

uncanny phenomenon is related with postcolonial approach due to the social segregation that still occurs among the society in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

From the description above, it appears that some people still experience racism in modern days although racism was firstly 'introduced' by western during colonialism era where enslavement of colored skin people (especially black people) was vastly adapted. Therefore, the researcher is interested in racism especially the uncanny phenomenon occurring in the novel titled *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

The suitable approach the researcher will use is the postcolonial approach because *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett talks about the racism in colonial era with the theory of uncanny by Homi K. Bhabha. The postcolonial approach focuses on the uncanny phenomenon in the novel.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

The problem which will be analyzed in this thesis comes from the differences of races which create racism. This racism caused the colored skin being exploited by the westerns due to the dominancy in society. The colonialism has caused colored skin to suffer from the superiority of westerns. From the book, the researcher found some problems that can be identified:

1. Different skin colors affect the social class status between the colored skin and westerns in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.
2. The unhomely feeling that is felt by the character in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

3. The uncanny phenomenon that is reflected in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.
4. The way the uncanny phenomenon is reflected through the characters in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

Indicating to the identification of the problem, the researcher limits the problems into:

1. The uncanny phenomenon that is reflected in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.
2. The way the uncanny phenomenon is reflected through the characters in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

1.4. Formulation of the Problem

After the researcher decided what problems that wants to be analyzed, the researcher formulates the problems into:

1. What are the uncanny phenomenon that is reflected in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett?
2. How the uncanny phenomenon is reflected through the characters in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett?

1.5. Objective of the Research

The objective of the research about the uncanny phenomenon occurred in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett are:

1. To mention about the uncanny phenomenon that is reflected in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.
2. To find out how the uncanny phenomenon is reflected through the characters in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

1.6. Significance of the Research

1.6.1. Theoretically

The purpose of this research is to give further information regarding the uncanny phenomenon and also the situation in the colonization era especially for the colored skin's people. This research is also expected to give more information for the researcher about analyzing of the uncanny phenomenon in *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

1.6.2. Practically

This research is also expected to be helpful for the researcher and the reader to enhance their knowledge in literature field, especially in the postcolonial approach that mostly studies about the history of colonization. Through this assignment, it is expected to make the people to start to be considerate toward each other despite having different skin color or culture. Although in current era, the colonialism seems hard to find in this society, it still exists somewhere in this part of the world. This research is also hoped to be useful for further research about uncanny phenomenon in postcolonial approach studies.

1.7. Definition of the Key Terms

Uncanny : Freud (as cited in Huskinson, 2016) stated that uncanny is the subject's encounter of unconscious contents (such as experiences, feelings, memories, or ideas) that he or she has attempted to disown and neglect, but which have suddenly reappeared, causing unexpected and often unpleasant surprise

Unhomely : Bhabha (as cited in Byrne, 2009, p. 70) explained the unhomely is a paradigmatic colonial and postcolonial condition

Mimicry : Bhabha (1994) stated that mimicry is the imitation efforts carried out by colonized for the sake of appearing equal and considered as part of the colonialist.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2.1. Postcolonial Approach

Morozov (2013) stated that postcolonialism is a critical theory that aims to reveal the relations of power and discrimination. The power and discrimination in here symbolized the white skin and colored skin. Postcolonial study is identical with colonizer and colonized, which is usually addressed to the whites and colored skin. It is also easily identified by its characteristics.

According to Barry (2017, pp. 161–162), the first characteristic of postcolonial criticism is an awareness of representations of the non-European as exotic or immoral ‘Other’. Language itself, then, is a second area of concern in postcolonial criticism. The third characteristic of postcolonial approach is the emphasis on identity as doubled, hybrid, or unstable. The last one is cross cultural interactions.

While doing a research with postcolonial approach, the researcher should understand the three stages of phases which are ‘adopt’, ‘adapt’, and ‘adept’ because they provide a way of seeing postcolonial literature and stages of postcolonial criticism. Barry (2017, pp. 162–163) stated that the ‘adopt’ phase of colonial literature aims to adopt the form as it stands, the assumption being that it has universal validity. The ‘adapt’ phase aims to adapt the white skin to colored skin subject matter. In the last stage, which is ‘adept’, there is a declaration of

cultural independences where colored skin writers remake the form to their own specifications, without references to white skin norm.

The postcolonial criticisms rejected the demands to universalism made on behalf of Western literature and search to present its limit, especially the lack of empathize through boundaries of ethnic and cultural differences. They also examined the image of another culture in literature is the way of accomplishing its end. They display crucially silent of literature ion problems involved with imperialism and colonization.

The postcolonial criticism also foreground questions of cultural diversity and check their method in suitable literary work. They respect cultural polyvalency' and hybridity. It is the moment where groups and individuals belong to many culture. Last, they establish a mindset, not only suitable to postcolonial literatures, where states of marginality, plurality, and perceived Otherness' are taken as potential changes and origin of energy. There are many subject of the research that can be analyzed while conducting a research with postcolonial approaches and one of them is the theory of postcolonial studies called the uncanny' by Homi K. Bhabha. This theory is going to be discussed further in the next section.

The use of postcolonial approach in this research is based on Bhabha's explanation in his book *The Location of Culture* and *The World and The Home*. Bhabha used the concept of 'unheimlich' from Freud, which means 'unhomely' to explain the uncanny. Bhabha used the concept of the uncanny to describe about the

postcolonial experience because in the postcolonial approach there are borders that creates the gap between the colored skin and the whites which eventually confused them. The colored skin felt unhomely, not sure whether they are in the right place or not. In postcolonial criticism, it mostly studies about the differences among the culture in the literary texts. The problem is usually focused on specific issues such as gender, social class, and sexual orientation. In this research, the researcher used the theory of uncanny which is going to be discussed in the next section.

2.2. Bhabha's Concept of Uncanny

Bhabha (as cited in Rostami & Parvaneh, 2016), suggests that the concept of uncanny also as unhomely, too. Bhabha recalls the migrant's experience of uncanniness from familiar ideas like- half-life, repeats the life in the origin country. Someone who feels the uncanny phenomenon does not mean that they are homeless. They feel threatened and worried about their safety despite being inside their own house. This phenomenon often occurs on the immigrant and the colored skin which is identic with colonized people.

Freud (as cited in Huskinson, 2016) stated that uncanny is the subject's encounter of unconscious contents (such as experiences, feelings, memories, or ideas) that he or she has attempted to disown and neglect, but which have suddenly reappeared, causing unexpected and often unpleasant surprise. In *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, the protagonist characters went through many situations where they encountered uncanny phenomenon that caused by the antagonist characters.

Bhabha (as cited in Byrne, 2009, p. 69) also saw this uncanny moment, where what was strange becomes familiar, or what was familiar becomes strange, as having a critical role in the histories of the colonized. Byrne (2009, p. 70) stated that for Bhabha, the attractions of the uncanny as Freud discusses is are that notions of being unhomed, or the unhomely, resonate suggestively with the disturbed relation to home and belonging that Bhabha saw as characterizing migrant, exiled or refugee experiences. Bhabha (as cited in Byrne, 2009, p. 70) also explained the unhomely is a paradigmatic colonial and postcolonial condition. To feel at home and strange or estranged at the same time, or to feel not at home even when one is 'at home', might be painfully familiar condition for the colonized or postcolonial subject, a condition not limited to the migrant alone. The feeling of uncanny reflected through discrimination and racism.

From the statements above, the researcher can conclude that the uncanny often leads to the strange sense of relocation of the world and the home. Most of the uncanny phenomenon is caused by the discrimination and racism among people. Frantz Fanon (1967, p. 12) stated about a fact that white people often consider themselves superior to colored people. He also mentioned that colored people wanted to prove to white people, about they are having the same value and intellect, just in different skin colors. Fanon (1967, p. 17) then stated that a Negro acts differently with a white people and with another colored people. It means that they feel pressured around the white men, rather than around the colored skin. There are a few previous researches that were related to the uncanny and also the

feelings of unhomely which is going to be discussed in the next section.

2.3. Previous Study

The postcolonial studies about uncanny is still considered uncommon in literary field, but the researcher found that there are a few studies that is about uncanny and also another studies about postcolonial criticism that is related to the theory of uncanny.

The first previous research with the title of “Representing Third Spaces, Fluid Identities, and Contested Spaces in Contemporary British Literature” in AEDEAN journal by Fernandez (2009) is one of the many research that is related to postcolonial approaches. The authors believed that a homogenous views of British identity celebrated the third space and provided representation of British society’s contemporary. In here, identities are portrayed as space(s) and fluid as frequently bargained. Hence, owning entry to the spaces of representation that literature entrusts grants ethnically diverse female writers such as ones to handle the daily experience of redefine social spaces and hybrid individuals which accept their identity as British hybrid.

The second previous research in ALLS journal with the title “The Notion of Unhomeliness in *The Pickup*: Homi Bhabha Revisited” is also related with postcolonial approach. The journal is written by Rostami (2016) and talked about the main characters named Abdu and Julie in novel *The Pickup*. Abdu is an unauthorized immigrant in South Africa and he is dismissed to his motherland in

Arab. Meanwhile Julie comes from rich white family in South Africa met and fell in love with Abdu. She decided to move to the Islamic country. In the story, she found her lost personality in Abdu's motherland and chose to stay in that country. She tried to adapt herself to the Islamic traditions, cultured, and laws, while Abdu felt unhomey in his own motherland and even tried to move into the US. The author analyzed the two characters with the notions of unhomeliness, and in-between spaces. Their identity was not determined by the country. The most serious problem that was being studied in this journal is the unhomeliness in the post-colonialism era. The characters are portrayed wandering looking for their true identity. In process of social political oppression and colonization, many people abandon their motherland because of the unhomey feeling.

The third previous research that is related with postcolonial approach is written by Farahbakhsh (2016) with the title —Bhabha's Notion of Unhomeliness in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe: A Postcolonial Reading* in the *IJSELL* journal, described that the behaviors, actions and interactions from the characters were explored biased on Bhabha's concepts of unhomeliness, ambivalence and hybridity. The author analyzed that *Foe* is an anti-colonial novel which Coetzee pursues to portray the colonial discourse's ambivalence condition. The feeling of unhomeliness is discernable in the main characters' cultural identity as an aspect of hybridity. As discussed, Friday, Susan, and Crusoe experienced unhomey moments and felt torn between the two identities and cultures. They do not feel at home and live on borders in both culture. As the result, the feeling of unhomeliness made them

experienced the feeling of unable to find their sense of culture or identity. According to the author, this situation reflects Bhabha's demand about pure cultural identity do not exist; rather, they emerge from the hybridizing processes. During the course of the novel, Crusoe, Susan and Friday experienced ambivalence due to their unhomeliness feeling.

The fourth previous research which is related with postcolonial approach too, titled "Bhabha's Notion of 'Mimicry' and 'Ambivalence' in V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*" by Kumar (2011) from RW-JASCR journal is about how Bhabha thinks about the mimicry, ambivalence, and in-betweenness. The author explained about Bhabha's impression to interpret the typical postcolonial 'halfness'. In postcolonial studies 'mimicry' is considered as a desire to end the ties with 'for moving to 'other'. The natives feel confused about their origin and it makes them embrace the other culture, fashion, languages, and social life, only to experience the tormenting and prevailing ambivalence which destabilises their lives.

The fifth previous research titled "The 'unheimlich' in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*: A Reading Along the Lines of Homi K. Bhabha's Idea of 'Uncanny'" in AIJRHASS journal is also related with postcolonial approach and it is written by Bhandari (2013). This journal used the concept of 'unhomely' and 'uncanny' to the situation in the Eugene's household. The punishment he got from his childhood from the missionaries led himself to maintain the same measures of control in his home. Therefore, Eugene often punishes his children and also his own wife every time they make small mistakes. The home then became unhomely

under Eugene's control, who has conflict in the battle of his projected self with his native self. His inherent goodness is in battle with values developed as the influence of his education. This gap between the familiar values and assimilated unfamiliar values (acquired through education) recalls his uncanny sensation.

The sixth previous research titled "Lost-identity; A result of Hybridity and Ambivalence in Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North" in AJELEL journal, written by Esmaeil Zohdi (2017). This research talks about the British attempts to uplift their economy by marching into Third and Fourth World countries. They devalued the race, culture, identity, and language of others. Therefore, many colonized people moved into developed countries for getting education and saving their motherland. As the result, many colonized people who had moved into another country caused them to have dual and merged identity. Season of Migration to the North was written by Tayeb Salih in 1969 tells about Mustafa Saeed who sacrificed his own identity and life to travel to London and study, but eventually Mustafa lost his identity. The writer then tried to identify the cause of colonized people to have merged or dual identity and even lost identity with the theory of Ambivalence and Hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha.

The seventh previous research titled "The Cultural Relationship between English's and Indians as Reflected in 'A Passage to India' by EM Foster; A Postcolonial Analysis" in Menara Ilmu journal, written by Robby Satria (2018). This research talks about the portrait of the colonization's situation at that time. The writer in here analyses about the relationship between India and English during

the colonial period in the novel *A Passage to India* written by EM Foster which was issued in 1816. The data in this journal is taken from other sources from web and library research method. The writer applied the postcolonial theory of Orientalism by Edward Said to “*The Passage to India*” and found that the relationship between India and English was good but it clashed in the end and eventually formed the scene between two countries.

The similarity between the previous studies and the research that is going to be analyzed by the researcher is the studies used the postcolonial approach and this research is intended to identify the uncanny phenomenon that occurred as the problem. The phenomenon is also related to the one of the three phases in postcolonial criticism according to Barry (2017, pp. 162–163) which is ‘adapt’.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

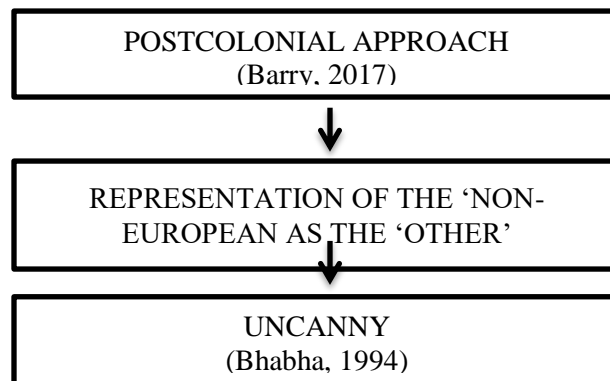


Figure 2.4.1 Theoretical Framework

By looking at the framework above, the researcher conducted the research by analyzing *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett with postcolonial approach. According to Barry, (2017) one of the characteristics of postcolonial criticism is the representation

of the non-European as the 'other'. Non-European in here is considered as the colored people. The focus of this study used the theory of Homi K. Bhabha about the uncanny phenomenon. This uncanny phenomenon is related with the representation of the non-European as the 'other' because the way the colored people treated differently, especially the segregation that occurs in the story shows postcolonial perspective where the racism and discrimination still existed. Taken as 'other' also means that the colored people are separated or differentiated from the social environment. This leads to occurrence of uncanny phenomenon which is identified from the characters through the story in the novel.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

In this research, the researcher used the qualitative research. Creswell (2009, p. 32) stated that qualitative research is used to explore the social and human problems that relates to specific individual or groups. The social and human problems that the researcher explored are about the uncanny phenomenon among the specific individual or groups that were being mentioned earlier which refers to the colored people.

3.2. Object of the Research

The object of this research is uncanny phenomenon in the novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett. This novel acts as the primary data because it is still original and considered as first-hand data, so its validity still reliable than secondary data. In addition, the researcher also used secondary data like previous research which was already mentioned in the previous chapter and other sources like journal, books, and other research that discussed about the postcolonial issues. The researcher then gathered the data from the novel and used the secondary data to supports the theory.

3.3. Method of Collecting Data

Creswell (2009) stated that qualitative observation is method used by the researcher by observing activities. There are four techniques, such as complete participant, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete observer (p. 239). Therefore, the researcher used complete observer technique, which is to observe

without participating. Then, the researcher concluded the way to collect the data into:

1. Applying critical reading which is reading each element of fiction of the story in novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.
2. Identifying the uncanny phenomenon and how the uncanny phenomenon was reflected through the characters, especially things that related with the action and conversation from the character itself, and also from other characters toward the main character in the novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.
3. After the issue has been identified, the researcher takes notes about the uncanny phenomenon that is found in the novel.
4. Classifying the data into a few segments which relates to the topic of the research.

3.4. Method of Analyzing Data

The steps in analyzing the data with qualitative design based on Creswell (2009, p. 247) are organizing and preparing the data, reading the data, and also interpreting the data. Organize and prepare the data for analysis. It involves reading, sorting and classifying the data into different types, depends on the source of data. Next, the researcher provided a general opportunity and information to understand its meaning. The final step of analyzing the data is making an interpretation in the findings of qualitative research which answered the problem of the research. In here, the researcher explained about what the researcher has found and learned about the topic that was being discussed.

3.5. Method of Presenting the Result Analysis

Method of presenting the result of analysis data is a method or ways that will be used in presenting data and conveying the findings. According to Miles and Hubermans (as cited in Creswell, 2009) narrative text is the form of data display that is often being used while doing a qualitative research. In this research, the researcher used this method to present the data in descriptive, narrative form.