

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background, problems, objectives, significance and limitation of the study.

#### 1.1 Background

In Indonesia, ableism manifests in numerous challenges faced by individuals with disabilities across various aspects of life. Discrimination against people with disabilities is pervasive, leading to limited access to education, employment, healthcare, and social inclusion (Cameron L & Suarez C, 2017). This discrimination is evident in the lack of inclusive policies and resources in schools, hindering children with disabilities from accessing quality education. Similarly, discriminatory attitudes among employers and inaccessible workplaces restrict employment opportunities for disabled individuals. Access to healthcare services is also impeded by physical and communication barriers in medical facilities, as well as a shortage of trained professionals. Moreover, cultural attitudes that view disability with stigma and pity contribute to social exclusion and marginalization, impacting disabled individuals' participation in social interactions and community life. Public spaces and transportation systems often lack accessibility features, further isolating disabled individuals from full participation in society. Discrimination against the rights of people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities, is referred to as ableism.

Ableism, as defined by Redmond, refers to the systemic discrimination and prejudice against individuals with disabilities. This pervasive system of

exclusion and oppression affects people who have mental, emotional, physical disabilities and also intellectual disability. It results in unequal treatment, limited opportunities, and marginalization across various aspects of individuals' lives, including education, employment, healthcare, and social interactions (Nario-Redmond, 2019).

Intellectual disability is a term used when a person has certain limitations in cognitive functioning and skills, including conceptual, social and practical skills, such as language, social and self-care skills. These limitations can cause a person to develop and learn more slowly or differently than a typically developing person (Schalock, R. L, 2010).

Intellectual disability poses significant challenges for individuals, characterized by major difficulties or delays in acquiring skills across developmental areas such as motor skills, communication, social interaction, and learning (Adesokan, 2022). In Indonesia, individuals with intellectual disabilities encounter additional barriers due to ableism, including limited access to inclusive education, employment opportunities, healthcare services, and social inclusion. Discriminatory attitudes and inaccessible environments further compound these challenges, hindering the full participation and integration of individuals with intellectual disabilities into society.

The novel *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes illustrates the pervasive effects of ableism on individuals with intellectual disabilities through the journey of its protagonist, Charlie Gordon. This novel highlights the discrimination, prejudice, and societal treatment faced by individuals with intellectual disabilities,

emphasizing the urgent need for inclusive approaches. The research aimed to challenge ableist attitudes and practices in society, inspired by the novel's portrayal of the complexities of ableism and its impact on identity, agency, and human relationships. The research sought to contribute to a deeper understanding and advocacy for the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities.

### **1.2 Problems of the Study**

The Problems of the study were formulated in the following questions:

- a. How did the main character represent intellectual disability in the novel *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes?
- b. How did the novel portray ableism towards the main character in the novel *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problems, the objectives of this study were:

- a. To examine the portrayal of intellectual disability of the main character in the novel *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes.
- b. To identify and examine the act of ableism towards the main character Charlie Gordon in the novel *Flower for Algernon*.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of studying the portrayal of intellectual disability and ableism in the novel "*Flowers for Algernon*" by Daniel Keyes lies in its potential to deepen our understanding of societal attitudes towards individuals with

disabilities, fostering empathy and awareness while prompting critical reflection on the impacts of ableism on personal identity and social inclusion.

For students, so that they can avoid ableism in their daily lives. Researcher also hope that this research can tell the negative things that can be caused by the action of ableism against intellectual disabilities.

For future research, it is hoped that there will be more interdisciplinary studies conducted to develop a more comprehensive understanding of ableism and its effects. By integrating insights from various fields, such as education, sociology, psychology, and healthcare, future research can provide more nuanced and effective solutions to address the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. This interdisciplinary approach will enrich the knowledge base and contribute to more effective advocacy and policy-making, ultimately fostering a society that values and supports the full participation and inclusion of all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

This study primarily focused on the experiences of individuals with intellectual disabilities using the main character from the novel "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes as a reference point to illustrate the effects of ableism. While this approach provides valuable insights into the systemic discrimination and challenges faced by this group.