

TEACHERS' RECEPTION OF NOVEL "GURU: MENDIDIK ITU MELAWAN" AS FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the reception of vocational high school (SMK) teachers in Tegal Regency toward heroism ideology in the novel "Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan" (Teacher: Teaching is Resistance) by Eko Prasetyo and its implications for transforming language and arts education toward a sustainable future. Using a sociological literary approach with qualitative descriptive method, the study involved 50 SMK teachers comprising 25 male and 25 female teachers from 5 public and 5 private vocational schools in Tegal Regency. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and researcher notes, then analyzed using interpretive techniques based on Stuart Hall's reception theory and Bernstein's heroism ideology framework. Results indicate that all manifestations of heroism ideology appeared in the novel, with dominance in the value of loyalty to principles from the spiritual ownership aspect. Gender-based teacher reception showed significant differences: male teachers tended to interpret heroism within a citizenship and structural struggle framework, while female teachers emphasized empathy, sacrifice, and sincerity. Nevertheless, both genders shared common ground in viewing heroism as a moral responsibility to defend others' rights and maintaining consistent fighting spirit. Implementation of this reception in classroom policies reflects a shift from rule-based approaches toward a balance between discipline and empathy.

Keywords : literary reception; heroism ideology; classroom policy; sustainable education.

Introduction

Literary works reflect human life, embodying various ideologies and values that can influence readers' perspectives. All literary works are born from expressions, social circumstances, and thoughts expressed in writing (Saragih, et al., 2021). As one of the most popular forms of literature, novels have great potential to become a medium for transforming values in education. Eko Prasetyo, an Indonesian writer and education activist, through his novel "Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan," presents a narrative of teachers' resistance against an education system that they feel does not favor the interests of students and teachers themselves. In the context of

transforming language and arts education towards a sustainable future, the novel is relevant because it touches on the core pedagogical issues teachers face daily. The ideology of heroism contained within it is not merely about physical heroism, but also about moral fortitude, fighting spirit, and courage to fight injustice in education. Sustainable education transformation requires the presence of change agents at the classroom level, and teachers are the spearhead of this change (Goethals & Allison, 2012; Wongsrichanalai, 2016).

The reception of literary works by readers, particularly teachers, is a rapidly developing area of study in the sociology of literature. According to Hall (1986), the

reception of literary works is influenced by the reader's intellectual and emotional factors, which are strongly influenced by gender constructions. Gender differences significantly influence how individuals interpret literary texts, including the interpretation of the heroic values contained therein. Therefore, examining teachers' gender-based reception of the novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan* is crucial in understanding how the values in literary works can transform pedagogical practices in the classroom. The phenomenon underlying this research is the differences in the implementation of classroom policies by teachers, which result in conflict between teachers and student confusion. Data shows that 79% of the 63 vocational high schools in Tegal Regency experienced conflict between teachers when discussing problematic students during class promotion and graduation sessions. These differences were largely triggered by differences in gender perspectives in interpreting the values of heroism and responsibility as educators. This condition directly affects the school climate and the sustainability of the educational process.

Eko Prasetyo's novel "*Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan*" (Teaching is Fighting) presents a relevant solution because it presents a narrative about a teacher who is required to produce students with empathy, caring, and social responsibility, despite constant pressure from economic and political interests. This narrative closely relates to the reality faced by vocational high school teachers in Tegal Regency, thus potentially generating a rich and meaningful reception. Velle (2021) emphasizes that the heroism of today's teachers lies not only in grand deeds, but also in perseverance, professionalism, and flexibility in facing the various challenges of the education system.

Several researchers have previously studied literary reception in educational contexts. Ihsan (2023) demonstrated that reading literary works can influence an individual's

understanding of values and character. Sulistijani et al. (2022) found that teachers' reception of literary works can serve as a basis for formulating more relevant assessment policies. Wardana (2021) and Nafiah & Suryaman (2023) also demonstrated that readers from diverse backgrounds produce different interpretations of the same literary text. However, these studies have not directly linked literary reception to the formation of classroom policies and the transformation of language and arts education. A transformative approach to language and arts education emphasizes the importance of critical literacy as a means of developing students' abilities to interpret the world more deeply and responsibly. Luukka (2023) asserts that literature in language education functions not only as a medium for linguistic instruction but also as a means of value formation and self-reflection. This is in line with the goals of continuing education which emphasize the development of human beings who are not only academically intelligent, but also have a strong social and moral awareness (Unterhalter et al., 2022; Boiron et al., 2022).

This research integrates literary, gender, and pedagogical studies into a comprehensive analytical framework. Based on Hall's (1986) reception theory, this study analyzes how vocational high school teachers in Tegal Regency perceive the novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan* and how this reception is implemented in classroom policies. Thus, this research is expected to make a tangible contribution to efforts to transform language and arts education toward a more sustainable and equitable future. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of literary studies, ideology, and educational practices, which have not often been addressed simultaneously. Furthermore, the use of the novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan* as a medium for transforming pedagogical values represents a new effort to link popular literary works based on

educational realities with the formation of classroom policies. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for the development of language and arts education curricula that are more responsive to the needs of teachers and students, while also supporting the realization of sustainable and equitable education.

Based on the description above, this article aims to: (1) analyze the ideology of heroism in Eko Prasetyo's novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan*; (2) analyze the gender-based reception of the ideology of heroism in the novel by vocational high school teachers in Tegal Regency; and (3) analyzing the implementation of this reception in the formation of class policies as a basis for the transformation of sustainable language and arts education.

Method

This study uses a sociology of literature approach with a qualitative descriptive approach. The sociology of literature approach was chosen because the study examines the relationship between the text and the reader's ideology, which is formed based on their experience and cultural background. Data were obtained through analysis of the novel's text and interviews with vocational high school teachers as research subjects. This descriptive study aims to provide an in-depth description of the vocational high school teachers in Tegal Regency's reception of the ideology of heroism in the novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan* and its implementation as a determinant of classroom policy. This study adopted Moser's (1989) research design, which consists of four stages: (1) data provision, (2) identification of gender roles and needs, (3) data analysis, and (4) policy matrix and conclusion drawing. The data provision stage includes the collection of material objects in the form of the novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan* by Eko Prasetyo, as well as supporting references

for literary and gender analysis. This novel was chosen because it explicitly addresses the theme of education and the struggle of teachers, thus containing strong heroic values that are relevant to the research context.

The research subjects were 50 vocational high school teachers in Tegal Regency, consisting of 25 male teachers and 25 female teachers from 5 public and 5 private vocational high schools. The selection of subjects from two types of schools aimed to obtain data that represented the diversity of cultures and visions of schools in Tegal Regency (Oktari et al., 2024). The selection based on gender was intended to determine the differences and similarities in the reception between male and female teachers towards the ideology of heroism in the novel. The Indonesian Language MGMP in each school was mobilized as the coordinator of the research process. The data collection technique used non-tests which included: (1) Literature, namely the researcher read and analyzed the novel using data cards based on Bernstein's theory of heroism ideology (2020); (2) Closed interviews with 30% of the sample of 50 teachers, namely 8 male teachers and 8 female teachers; (3) Questionnaires given to all 50 teachers to determine the reception of the ideology of heroism and its implementation in class policies; (4) Researchers' notes during the data collection process; and (5) Documentation of teacher activities during the research process. The research instruments include data cards, interview guidelines, questionnaire sheets, and researcher notes.

The data validity technique used intrarater and interrater validity. Intrarater validity was conducted by ensuring that the research subjects had read the novel thoroughly before providing a reception, so that there were no misperceptions. Interrater validity was conducted by discussing the results of observations with fellow Indonesian language teachers who had adequate intellectual abilities and literary

appreciation capacity. The data analysis technique used Jauss's interpretive analysis which consisted of three steps: (1) providing literary readings to readers; (2) asking questions about readers' views; and (3) grouping the data results based on similarities in the readers' life experiences and cultural backgrounds. The data from the teachers' receptions were analyzed between one data and another based on gender differences to determine the level of similarities and differences in the meaning of the ideology of heroism. Furthermore, the results of the analysis were used as a basis for formulating mutually agreed-upon class policies as a form of sustainable transformation of language and arts education.

Findings & Discussion

The Ideology of Heroism in the Novel Guru: Educating is Fighting

Based on text analysis using data cards and Bernstein's (2020) theory of heroism ideology, all forms of heroism ideology were found in Eko Prasetyo's novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan*. Details of the data distribution are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Heroism Ideology in the Novel *Guru: Mendidik itu Melawan*

The Form of Heroism Ideology	Heroic Values	Amount of Data	Total
Moral Ownership	Prioritize common interests, Fight for the rights of others, Love the country, Uphold unity, Willing to make sacrifices	7, 7, 2, 1, 4	21
Competency Ownership	The skill of using knowledge as a weapon	3	3

Ownership of Courage	Brave, Sincere, Fighting spirit	7, 3, 7	17
Inner Ownership	Loyalty to principles, Upholder of justice	10, 1	11

Based on Table 1, the ideology of heroism in the novel is dominated by moral ownership (21 items), followed by courage (17 items), spiritual ownership (11 items), and competence (3 items). Although moral ownership is the most dominant, the most frequently emerging heroic value comes from the spiritual ownership aspect, namely loyalty to principle (10 items). This indicates that the construction of heroism in the novel emphasizes steadfastness in values and ideological resistance rather than purely physical action.

Loyalty to principle in the novel is manifested through various characters' thoughts, including the principle that schools must be institutions for developing the character of future leaders, not simply fulfilling market demands. This is reflected in the quote: "That's why education must not only involve active student work but also the belief that students are future leaders." (Eko, 2006:15). Furthermore, the principle that the government's role must be limited so that teachers have the freedom to educate.

Teacher Receptions Based on Gender

The perceptions of Tegal Regency vocational school teachers toward the ideology of heroism in the novel "*Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan*" (Teacher: *Mendidik Itu Melawan*) demonstrate differences and similarities based on gender. Table 2 presents a comparison of the dominant heroic values perceived by male and female teachers.

Table 2. Comparison of Male and Female Teacher Receptions

Male Teachers (Dominant ≥90%)	Female Teachers (Dominant ≥90%)
Prioritize common interests (100%)	Prioritize common interests (100%)
Fighting for other people's rights (100%)	Fighting for other people's rights (100%)
Valiant (100%)	Fighting spirit (100%)
Fighting spirit (100%)	Willing to sacrifice (88%)
Loyalty to principles (100%)	Sincere (80%)
Love country (12%)	Love country (0%)
Skill as a weapon (12%)	Skill as a weapon (0%)

Based on Table 2, male teachers perceived the ideology of heroism more strongly in terms of bravery, loyalty to principles, and contribution through expertise. Meanwhile, female teachers placed greater emphasis on self-sacrifice and sincerity. Both genders had equally dominant perceptions of prioritizing the common good, fighting for the rights of others, and having a fighting spirit.

Implementation of Receptions in Classroom Policies

The results of implementing the reception of the ideology of heroism in classroom policies demonstrate teachers' tendency to demonstrate tolerance with an empathetic perspective. Table 3 presents a summary of teachers' actions in various classroom contexts.

Table 3. Implementation of the Reception of the Ideology of Heroism in Classroom Policies

Context of the Event	Tolerant	Menegur	Minor Law
Students fall asleep while working for their families	48%	44%	8%
Students leave class for competitions	96%	4%	0%
Students accompany a friend who faints in the	62%	30%	8%

school health center			
Students struggle with group assignments while caring for a sick sibling	60%	32%	8%
Students are seriously ill and only attend exams	100%	0%	0%

Discussion

The Ideology of Heroism in Novels as a Reflection of Educational Transformation

Research findings indicate that all forms of heroism ideology, according to Bernstein (2020), namely moral ownership, competence, courage, and inner self, are comprehensively represented in the novel *Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan* (Teacher: Mendidik Itu Melawan). The dominance of moral ownership, with 21 items, indicates that Eko Prasetyo consistently constructs a narrative of heroism through social and moral actions, not just physical courage. This is highly relevant to the context of the ongoing transformation of language and arts education, where teachers are required to be agents of change with high moral integrity (Velle, 2021; Goethals & Allison, 2012).

The value of adherence to principles, which dominates the aspect of inner ownership (10 items), reflects ongoing ideological resistance to a market-oriented education system. In the context of sustainable language and arts education, adherence to this principle is a crucial foundation for teachers to maintain humanist and critical values in the learning process. Luukka (2023) emphasizes that literature in language education has a broader function than simply transferring linguistic knowledge, namely as a means of forming identity and critical awareness. Interestingly, the low number of data on the competency ownership aspect (3 data

points) indicates that this novel emphasizes value-based heroism and critical reflection more than technical expertise-based heroism. This indicates that Eko Prasetyo's educational transformation is more humanistic-critical than technocratic. This finding aligns with the perspective of sustainable language and arts education, which prioritizes human values, creativity, and reflection as core competencies (Unterhalter et al., 2022).

Gender-Based Reception and Its Implications for Educational Transformation

The differences in gender-based reception between male and female teachers reflect how social constructions and life experiences shape the interpretation of heroism in literary works. Male teachers tend to interpret heroism in terms of citizenship, structural struggle, and the use of expertise as a weapon of resistance. This can be attributed to a tendency toward a masculine mindset that is more oriented toward rationality, confrontational courage, and contribution to the larger system (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021; Skipper & Fox, 2022).

Conversely, female teachers emphasize empathetic and relational dimensions in interpreting heroism, such as self-sacrifice, sincerity, and social concern. This finding aligns with research by Gammon (2024), which shows that women tend to respond to texts or cultural representations through the lens of emotion and social relations. In the context of language and arts education, this empathetic orientation is invaluable because it provides a strong foundation for creating an inclusive and compassionate learning environment. Despite differences in emphasis, both genders share a common understanding of prioritizing the common good, fighting for the rights of others, and having a fighting spirit. These similarities demonstrate the existence of universal values that transcend gendered constructs of heroism. This is crucial for the

sustainable transformation of language and arts education because it identifies a common ground of values that can serve as a foundation for shared educational policies (Boiron et al., 2022; Jansson et al., 2024).

Implementation of Reception in Classroom Policies

The implementation of the reception of the ideology of heroism in classroom policies shows a significant shift from a normative-punitive approach to an empathetic-contextual approach. The tendency to show high tolerance, especially in cases of seriously ill students (100%) and those representing the school in competitions (96%), reflects the internalization of heroic values in the form of appreciation for students' struggles and sacrifices. This demonstrates that literary works, through a deep reception process, can transform teachers' paradigms from mere enforcers of rules to moral agents responsive to students' social realities.

This finding is highly relevant to the concept of sustainable transformation of language and arts education. Teachers who are able to balance discipline and empathy, between procedural justice and substantive justice, are prototypes of humanistic and responsive 21st-century educators. Black (2021) shows that teachers' identities and values significantly influence classroom dynamics and students' learning experiences. When teachers internalize heroic values through literary works, they not only change their thinking but also their behavior in dealing with the complexities of the classroom. Differences in implementation based on gender are also evident in the research data. Female teachers tended to be more tolerant in situations involving emotional and relational considerations, while male teachers tended to prioritize disciplinary and collective justice. However, none of the teachers imposed harsh punishments in any of the scenarios, demonstrating that the value of heroism had successfully

internalized a spirit of empathy and appreciation for students' struggles among all teachers, without exception.

Novels as a Medium of Transformation in Language and Arts Education

The role of the novel "Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan" (Teacher: Educating is Fighting) as a medium of transformation in language and arts education offers important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that literary works can serve as effective instruments for value change in pedagogical practice. Febriani et al. (2023) demonstrated that critical literary education can encourage value transformation and the formation of a more just social consciousness. In this context, Eko Prasetyo's novel successfully presents a narrative that not only entertains but also motivates and inspires teachers to re-imagine their roles as educators.

Practically, this study demonstrates that the use of novels based on educational realities in teacher professional development programs can be an effective strategy for transforming pedagogical paradigms. Luukka (2023) emphasized that the integration of literature in language education opens up opportunities to align learning objectives with the development of self-reflection and cross-cultural understanding. In the context of sustainable language and arts education, the novel "Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan" (Teacher: Mendidik Itu Melawan) can be utilized as study material in MGMP programs and teacher training to encourage a more humanistic transformation of values and policies. These findings also confirm that language and arts education has potential far beyond the transfer of linguistic and aesthetic knowledge. Through value-rich literary works, teachers can develop the moral awareness, social empathy, and reflective skills necessary to become transformative educators. Sheehy & Solvason (2025) emphasize that awareness

of values and ideologies in teaching practices is key to creating inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Relevansi dengan Sustainable Education

The concept of sustainable education emphasizes the development of individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also possess strong social, moral, and environmental awareness. The findings of this study indicate that the ideology of heroism in the novel "Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan" (Teacher: Mendidik Itu Melawan) is highly relevant to these goals. Values such as prioritizing the common good, fighting for the rights of others, and loyalty to principles are key elements of education oriented toward social and moral sustainability. Within the framework of transforming language and arts education for a sustainable future, this study makes a significant contribution. First, it demonstrates that literary works, particularly novels with strong ideological content, can be an effective medium for fostering a shift in pedagogical paradigms. Second, it confirms that a gender-based approach to literary reception analysis can identify shared values that can form the basis for more inclusive educational policies. Third, it demonstrates that the implementation of heroic values in classroom policies reflects a shift toward more humanistic, empathetic, and sustainable educational practices. The implication of these findings for language and arts education curricula is the need to incorporate literary works based on educational realities as study materials that not only analyze aesthetic and linguistic aspects but also encourage critical reflection on pedagogical values. Thus, language and arts education can be an effective vehicle for sustainable value transformation, for both teachers and students.

Conclusions

This study successfully analyzed the reception of vocational high school teachers in Tegal Regency towards the ideology of heroism in Eko Prasetyo's novel "Guru: Mendidik Itu Melawan" (Teacher: Mendidik Itu Melawan) and its implications for the sustainable transformation of language and arts education. All forms of heroism, according to Bernstein, are found in the novel, with the dominant value of loyalty to principles and the aspect of inner ownership. This indicates that the construction of heroism in the novel is more ideological-humanistic than physical-confrontational, making it highly relevant as a medium for transforming pedagogical values.

Teacher receptions based on gender revealed significant differences and similarities. Male teachers tended to interpret heroism in terms of citizenship, structural struggle, and the use of expertise as an instrument of resistance, while female teachers emphasized the dimensions of empathy, sacrifice, and sincerity. Nevertheless, both agreed that heroism is a moral responsibility to fight for the rights of others and an undying fighting spirit. The implementation of this reception in classroom policies demonstrates a clear shift from a normative-punitive approach to an empathetic-contextual approach, reflected in teachers' tendency to tolerate situations involving student struggle and sacrifice. These findings confirm that literary works based on educational reality have great potential as a medium for transforming values in language and arts education, encouraging teachers to become more humanistic, reflective, and just pedagogical agents, while simultaneously realizing the ideals of sustainable education.

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