

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the research. It consists of the background of the study, research question, aims of the study, scope of the study, methodology of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Hybridity, recognized as a key concept in post-colonial studies, is commonly defined as “the creation of new trans-cultural forms within the contact zones produced by the colonization” (Aschroft, Griffith and Tiffin, 2007, p. 108). It is considered as the product of oppression, and often associated with the interaction between Colonized and Colonizer. Homi Bhabha (1994, as cited in Meredith, 1998, p. 2) developed this term from literary and cultural theory to describe “the construction of culture and identity within the conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity”. At its simplest, hybridity refers to cultural intermixture. It is an encounter where the cultures of the Other (colonized) and Self (colonizer), local and global, or Eastern and Western meet (Ang, 2003, p. 8). According to Barry (1995, p. 198), the term hybridity is used to describe “the situation whereby individuals or groups belong to more than one culture”.

An example of group which belongs to more than one culture is a group of immigrant. According to Park (1982, as cited in Weiner and Richards, p. 103), immigrants live and share “the cultural life and tradition of two distinct peoples”. In

migrant communities, the notion of hybridity possibly exists because immigrants experience two cultures between their origin and host cultures. They negotiate the boundaries between two different cultures, adapting the host culture while simultaneously desiring to maintain their origin culture. As a result of experiencing two cultures, immigrants' identities gradually become hybrid.

The term hybrid identity is used to emphasize “the emergence of new forms of identity” (Golchin, 2011, p. 6). Hybrid identity may refer to the mixture of more than one identity that is positioned within an intercultural space –a space where in-betweenness and liminality exist. Smith (2008) suggests that hybrid identity cannot be constructed independently; however, it emerged from the unification of cultural elements. In line with this, Barker (2004) says that hybrid identity is the production of cultural exchanges. Besides, the formation of hybrid identity is often associated with the relationship between past and present. According to Weiner and Richard (2008), hybrid identity, which is experienced by immigrants, is shaped by their old cultures and their present experiences in their new homeland.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the issue of hybridity and hybrid identity. The track of hybrid identity can be found in literary works, such as film (Pascual, 2002), story cycle (Lambert, 2007) and novel (Michael, 2011; Obourn, 2008; Shields, 2007). The main characters occupy hybrid identity because they negotiate multiple cultures, or they already have a hybrid identity from birth (Pascual, 2002; Shields, 2007). Obourn (2008) finds that hybrid identity is resulted from love relationship between two people who come from opposite nations and cultures. Meanwhile, Lambert (2004) finds that the place where the main character lived in, affects his identity to become hybrid or double. The place itself is a hybrid space which consists of two or more different cultures and traditions. However, hybrid

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identity is often represented as the effect of ethnic and national cross-over, and the result of cultural clashing (Lambert, 2007).

This present research aims to investigate the issue of hybrid identity in the novel by Julia Alvarez entitled *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents* (1991). Written by a Dominican-American writer, this novel portrays the life of four Garcia sisters who migrate from Dominican Republic to the United States with their parents. As immigrants who live between Dominican and American cultures, the identities of the Garcia sisters become hybrid. Thus, by applying Bhabha's concept of hybridity (1994), this research attempts to uncover the issue of hybrid identity of the main characters in the novel.

1.2 Research Question

The research is geared towards answering the following questions:

1. In what ways are hybrid identities of the main characters constructed as evidenced in the novel?
2. How do the main characters manifest their hybrid identities?

1.3 Aims of the Study

This research is aimed:

1. To identify the ways hybrid identities of main characters are constructed in the novel.

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2. To observe how the main characters manifest their hybrid identities.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The research is limited only to investigate how hybrid identities of the main characters are constructed in the novel and how they manifest their hybrid identities.

1.5 Research Methodology

The research applies a descriptive qualitative method in the form of textual analysis. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006, p. 46), qualitative research “relies on the view of participants; ask broads, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes.” Qualitative researches focuses on analyzing words or pictures rather than numbers or using statistic in order to depict central phenomenon under study (Gay, Mill and Airasian, 2006).

1.6 Data Collection

The data of the research are critically selected from a novel entitled *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents* written by Julia Alvarez (1991). The collected data are in the forms of utterances, actions, thoughts and attitudes of the main characters which serve as the textual evidence that will answer the research questions.

1.7 Data Analysis

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The collected data are analyzed by using Bhabha's concept of hybridity (1994). The data are then categorized into in-between past and present and in-between Dominican and American cultures and languages. The data also categorized into the main characters' ways in manifesting their hybrid identities which are adopting American life, embracing American values and preserving Dominican cultures. In conducting the research, the following steps have been taken:

- Reading the novel closely to obtain comprehensive understanding of the related issues being examined.
- Collecting the textual data.
- Analyzing the data.
- Interpreting the data.
- Making conclusion based on the findings.

1.8 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, there are some significant terms that have to be clarified here:

1. Postcolonial criticism : A type of cultural criticism that usually involves the analysis of literary texts produced in the countries and cultures that have come under control of European colonial powers, or it can refer to the analysis of texts written about colonized places by writers hailing from colonizing cultures.

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2. Culture : Culture refers to the beliefs, language, values, norms and customs that people have to establish the way of life (Browne, 2008).
3. Immigrants : A group or individuals who left their homes to settle in new countries.
4. Hybridity : The assimilation of different cultural elements which create new meaning and identities.
5. Hybrid Identity : The double or mixed identities which is resulted from the interaction between two cultures.

Comment [R1]:

1.9 Organization of the Paper

This research will consist of five chapters. It will be organized as follows:

CHAPTER I

This chapter will focus on introduction of the research including the background of the research, research questions, aims of the study, the scope of the study, methodology of the study and the organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II

The second chapter will discuss the theoretical frameworks and the literature reviews as the foundation of the research.

CHAPTER III

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In the third chapter, the discussion will revolve around the research methodology describing the steps and procedures of the research as well as the data resources in conducting the research.

CHAPTER IV

The fourth chapter will present the findings and discussion of the research. It will be the part where the discussion of the research is elaborated.

CHAPTER V

As the last chapter, this section will be the conclusion of the research and the suggestion for further research.

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