

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter revolves around the introduction of the research including the background of the study, the research question, the aim of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the research methods, the clarification of key terms and the organization of the paper.

#### **1.1 Background**

One of the primary ways to support children in developing the cultural awareness is through the use of literature. Children's literature can be used to explore and develop appreciation for cultural differences (Creany, et.al, 1993) since they are made and created specifically for children for the sake of conveying messages on many themes of social issues such as their own culture and family, cultures around the world, geography, history, community and so on (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2005). Furthermore, according to Hunt (1995) children's literature is inseparable from the phenomena or issues that are related to life and behavior of children. In order to convey a moral message to the children, children's literature revolves around good behaviors that can be applied in their daily lives through particular phenomena, events and imaginative stories (Nodelman, 1996).

One of the genres on children's literature is a picture book. Nodelman (1988) highlights that a picture book is considered as a children's book simply because it tells us about childhood experiences, for instance: enjoying birthday party, losing tooth for the first time, camping out and telling ghost stories, getting a new pet and dealing with family problems. Further, he says that in the picture book, the words say what the pictures cannot reveal and the pictures show what the words cannot tell. The verbal and the visual speak and show, and both of them construct the new meaning (Nodelman, 1988). The new meaning produced by visual and verbal can either support or contradict each other (Chen, 2010). However, ideally, supported by the combination of words and pictures, a picture book helps children to understand and comprehend the story easily. Thus, it enables children to obtain the message containing good lessons through the story presented.

Moreover, a picture book can be used as a media to introduce one culture or stereotypes. Children's picture books can convey values, reflect a culture, and provide children with another way of perceiving life (Stan, 1999). Understanding a country or culture through the perspective of a literary character who lives in different country can create a personal relationship with a place that is not possible through other media (Creany, et. al, 1993). This assumption is manifested in society for the purpose of making the interaction between children and around their society filled with the culture values and formed their characters as well. In this way, children as an object of educational process which guarantee the continuity in terms of social and culture.

In addition to the information encountered in the children's picture book, compelling fictional stories also help children gain a deeper understanding of people and cultures (Tompkins, 2001). Thus, every children's picture book, whether it is implicitly or explicitly contains ideology as the culture values. Furthermore, culture is the way of life of people such as the sum of their learned behavior patterns, attitudes and material things (Miranda, 1994). It means that culture as general patterns can distinguish among groups of people based on their characteristics.

There are several studies which investigated the representation of culture in children's picture book. Creany, et.al (1993), for instance, conducted the study about the representation of culture in children's picture books. He discovered that the representation of culture in the children's picture book is revealed through the illustration, thus, the illustration in children's picture book gives children the opportunity to see the similarity among people as well as to appreciate the differences. Furthermore, Roy (2008) who investigated a critical discourse analysis of the representation of Asian Indian folktale in US American children's literature found that Eurocentric imperial ideologies continue to inform the formulation of race, gender and nation in U.S children's books, where the popular expectations about India are dictated by colonial stereotypes in approaching multiculturalism in the US. Additionally, Kuo (2005) adopted a postcolonial critique to represent Taiwanese culture in children's picture books. His findings suggested that Taiwanese picture books offer the child reader of the postcolonial experience and introduce them the privilege regarding to the imperial center.

Inspired by those studies above, this present study attempts to analyze a picture book entitled *It's Amma's Birthday Tomorrow* by Janaki Sooriyarachi (2008) using the theory of representation by Hall (1997). The reason employing Hall's (1997) theory is because it deals with cultural representation that occupies the important place in the study of culture. Moreover, Joyce & Gaudin (2011) theory about multimodal approach is also used to analyze the narrative and grammar of design in the picture book.

## **1.2 Research Question**

The study raises one question to be answered:

1. What kind of culture is represented in the picture book entitled *It's Amma's Birthday Tomorrow*?

## **1.3 Aim of the Study**

In line with the problem of the study above, this present study attempts to reveal the representation of culture in a picture book entitled *It's Amma's Birthday Tomorrow*.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to investigate the culture which is represented in a picture book entitled *It's Amma's Birthday Tomorrow*.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Since this study focuses on investigating the cultural representation in the picture book entitled *It's Amma's Birthday Tomorrow* written by Janaki Sooriyachrachi, it is expected that theoretically the study aims to increase the knowledge of literature to children, particularly in terms of culture. Further, practically, this study can be used for teaching about culture to children of elementary school.

## **1.6 Research Methods**

This present study employed a descriptive qualitative method because it aimed to describe and interpret the cultural representation in a picture book entitled *It's*

*Amma's Birthday Tomorrow* by Janaki Sooriyachrachchi. As suggested by Belk (2006, p. 15), a descriptive qualitative method is the method which is "interpretative and subjective". Further, a descriptive qualitative method is a method that attempts to describe and investigate the particular phenomena and current situation (Sevilla, et. al., 1992; Gay, et.al, 2006). Hence, the descriptive qualitative method is an appropriate method for this present study.

The data were collected from the picture book *It's Amma's Birthday Tomorrow* which was written by Janaki Sooriyachrachchi. The data were presented in the form of images and words which were critically analyzed using cultural representation that proposed by Hall (1997) and multimodal approach in the picture book by Joyce and Gaudin (2011).

### **1.7 Clarification of Key Terms**

The followings are some of the terms used in this study that needs to be explained and clarified to avoid misinterpretation and ambiguity:

1. Children's literature is inseparable from the phenomena or issues that are related to life and behavior of children. It is made and created specifically for children for the sake of conveying messages on childhood life (Hunt, 1995). In addition, it can be used to explore and develop appreciation for cultural differences (Creany, et. al, 1993).
2. Picture book is one of the genres in children's literature. In the picture book, the words say what the pictures cannot reveal and the pictures show what the words cannot tell. The verbal and the visual speak and show, both of them constructs the new meaning (Nodelman, 1988).
3. Culture is the way of life of people such as the sum of their learned behavior patterns, attitudes and material things. It is considered as general patterns which can distinguish among groups of people based on their characteristics (Miranda, 1994).
4. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It involves the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things (Hall, 1997).

## **1.8 Organization of the Paper**

The organization of the paper is divided into five chapters and they are as follows:

### **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the introduction of the research including the background of the study, the research question, the aim of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the research methods, the clarification of key terms and the organization of the paper.

### **CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The chapter discusses related theories of the study which are used to analyze and interpret the data of the study. This chapter also presents some previous studies that are related to the issue.

### **CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The chapter consists of the research design, the subject and context of the study, the data collection, data analysis, data presentation and the synopsis of the picture book.

### **CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This chapter provides the findings based on the research question and discussions of the study.

### **CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This is the last chapter of the study. It presents the conclusion based on the findings and discussions in the previous chapter. Additionally, it also contains the suggestions for further study.