

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the introductory part of the present study including background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research method that consists of data collection and data analysis, clarification of key terms, and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Mallan (2017), children's literature is a social practice that consists of reading texts written and produced for children in various media such as print, visual, and film. Those media are used to teach children many things such as society, responsibility, friendship and many more. Although those media are considered helpful to teach children many things as mentioned before, still, parents should be more careful in selecting a media of children's literature that is suitable for their children. This is because children are naturally born innocent and easily influenced (Wakeman, 2014). In other words, it is necessary to provide them with good models of influence.

Films, for instance, is one of media of children literature that have been popular and used to introduce many things to children. Films consist of many visual images, colours and music that can attract children's attention. However, it should be highlighted that films for children audience are different from those for adolescents and/or adults audience. This is because children's films are made for the audience especially for children (Donald & Seale, 2013 as cited in Brown 2017). Besides, Kramer mentions specifically the age of target audience of children's films. According to Kramer (2002, as cited in Brown 2017), the target audience for children's films are children who are twelve years old or younger. Thus, it can be said that children's film is defined as a film for twelve-year-old or younger children as its target audience.

Since children's films are made for children, thus, the films should be suitable to be watched by them. In order to know whether a children's film are suitable for children or not, we can assess its content. According to Naidoo and Dahlen (2014),

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inappropriate scenes such as violence and sex should not be included in children's films. Brown (2017), on the other hand, explains further regarding which features should be and not be put in children's films. Brown (2017) mentions that there are five features of children's films which are emphasizing family, kinship, friendship and community, highlighting children's figure and their experiences, introducing justice and order, reducing "adults" representational elements, and providing upbeat and emotionally uplifting endings. Those are the features that are commonly found in good children's films.

In relation to children's literature, children's film should help children to develop their potentials and their sense of selves (Naidoo & Dahlen, 2014). Just like children's literature, children's films also provide many purposes besides as an amusement. Mallan (2017) mentions that children's literature could be used to help children to have unexpected feelings such as anger and joy, to introduce how the world works, to describe families and communities, and many more. Therefore, children's films should also be able to relay emotions and sense of self as part of communities.

As stated in the previous paragraph, children's films should help children to develop their sense of selves. Sense of self is a concept of recognizing who one is. According to Oyserman, Elmore, and Smith (2012), self and identity are considered to be able to affect what people are willing to do, how they see things and make sense of themselves and others, why they do such actions, and their feeling and capacity to control themselves. The concept of self is often connected with identity. Burke and Stets (2009) explain that identity is defined as a fluid entity since it can change according to a person's environment, context, and expectations from the society or a group. This is because an individual will have interactions with a society or a group; therefore his or her identity will adjust to the environment and the situation. It can be inferred that environment and expectations from the society contribute towards the construction and the presentation of someone's identities.

There are some previous studies on identity that have been conducted. Raburu (2015) conducted a study on children's identity and development. The data were taken from children's expressions. Based on children's expressions, Raburu (2015) found that children pose different identities and selves according to their

interactions to other people and their environments. Different from Raburu (2015), Jerome, Hashim, and Ting (2016) have conducted study on multiple identities. Jerome, Hashim, and Ting (2016) did research on the multiple identities in *Heroes* by Karim Raslan and how they affect readers' understanding regarding the identities of the characters and themselves. They found that the characters' multiple identities are constructed by words and phrases. The character's ethnicity, religion, gender, and nationality are portrayed through characterization, dialogue, and settings.

While these studies examine children's identities from social interaction and fictional identities in a novel, the present study examines a child character's identities portrayed in a children's film named *Matilda* (1996). The film was chosen because it presents the main child character named Matilda as a unique and different child character compared to other children characters in general. In addition, in the film, Matilda is presented as an independent child with a brilliant mind. She can take care of herself without helps from other people. Moreover, *Matilda* (1996) was chosen because the film depicts how the main child is able to cope with her problems in which one of them is the absence of parent-figure. The ending of the film relays a hopeful and uplifting message that the absence of real parent-figure can be replaced by other parent-figures such as teachers.

To be more specific, this study attempts to reveal identities for the main child character which are constructed in *Matilda* (1996) and to derive meanings behind the construction of her identities. This study focuses on Matilda Wormwood as the main child character from *Matilda* (1996). In analyzing her identities, the writer employs Burke and Stets's (2009) theory regarding bases of identities which are based on role, group, and person. Since the film is treated as a text, the study also considers to analyze one of its narrative aspect namely characterizations. The concept of characterizations in film by Boggs and Petrie (2008) is used to analyze Matilda's identities. The analysis of Matilda's characterization is based on her actions, her dialogues, reactions of other characters towards her character, and foil characters. Since a film analysis must take visual and audio aspects into consideration, this study also refers to Bordwell and Thompson's (2008) film style theory to support the analysis. Film style analysis is focused on sound, shot, angle, and *mise-en-scene* elements which are setting, lighting, and color.

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1.2 Statement of Problems

This study was conducted to reveal identities for Matilda Wormwood as the main child character which are constructed in *Matilda* (1996) and to derive meanings from the construction of her identities. To be more precise, this study has been formulated into two research questions:

1. What identities for the main child character are constructed in *Matilda* (1996)?
2. What meanings can be derived from the construction of her identities?

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study aims to explore the issue regarding the construction of Matilda's identities in the film. To be more specific, the purposes of the present study are to reveal the main child character Matilda Wormwood's identities are constructed in the film and to derive meanings behind the construction of her identities.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the analysis of the main child character's identities in *Matilda* (1996). The analysis is limited focusing on analyzing the main child character Matilda Wormwood. The analysis of other characters in *Matilda* (1996) which are Harry Wormwood, Zinnia Wormwood, and Michael Wormwood are also required to support the findings of Matilda's identities. However, it should be highlighted that the analysis of supporting characters are explained briefly.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to afford new insights into the study of children's identity and children literature especially children's films. Although this study is limited focusing on *Matilda* (1996) which is a children's film based on a children's novel with the same title, hopefully it gives new insights regarding a good example of film for children. To be more specific, this study explores more that a child character's identities can be constructed other than being innocent and helpless.

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1.6 Research Methodology

Since this study analyzes a film as a text, this study uses textual analysis as a method. McKee (2003) explains that textual analysis is used to understand how the audience interprets a text by looking through its important parts. This study aims to reveal the construction of the main child character's identities. Therefore, the main focus of this study should be on the main child character Matilda. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2008), in order to understand a whole meaning of a film, a researcher should have knowledge both in narrative and cinematic aspects. Thus, this study analyzes Matilda's identities with consideration of narrative and cinematic aspects. The narrative analysis is focused on characterization which is based on actions, dialogues, dramatic foils, and reaction of other characters in reference to Boggs and Petrie's (2008) concept. In terms of cinematic analysis, the analysis is focused on analyzing sounds, shot, and *mise-en-scene* in reference to Bordwell and Thompson's (2008) theory regarding film style.

1.6.1 Data Collection

The data were obtained from the screenshots of the scenes and the transcript of sounds related to Matilda's identities from *Matilda* (1996). In collecting the data, there are several steps included. First, the sounds in the film related to Matilda's identities were transcribed with notes. After the sounds related to Matilda's identities were transcribed, the second step is to take screenshots of the scenes related to Matilda's identities. Then, the screenshot of the scenes related with Matilda's identities were analyzed based on the concept of characterization by Boggs and Petrie (2008) and film style theory by Bordwell and Thompson (2008). Last but not least, the screenshots related with Matilda's identities were grouped based on Matilda's bases of identities which are person and role identities, and a group identity.

1.6.2 Data Analysis

The data that have been analyzed are presented in the following table. The following data consist of the screenshots of the bases of Matilda's identities. Then the data were analyzed by relying on Boggs and Petrie's (2008) concept of characterization, Bordwell and Thompson's (2008) film style theory, and Burke and Stets's (2009) concept of three bases identities. The table of analysis is as shown as in the following:

Matilda's Bases of Identities	
Description:	
Characterization:	Analysis
Shot:	
Angle:	
Mise-en-Scene:	

1.7 Clarification of the Key Terms

There are several terms which are used in this research. The terms are **children's films**, **film style**, and **identity**.

Children's films are defined as objects of pleasure and fascination for audiences especially children which come in the form of feature films, short films, silent films and sounds films, and live-action and animated films (Brown, 2017).

Film style is defined as the meaningful use of film technique in the film media such as *mise-en-scene*, sound, color, lighting, and editing (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012).

Identity is defined as a fluid entity since it can change according to a person's environment, context, and expectation from the society or a group (Burke & Stets, 2009).

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into several chapters:

ABSTRACT

This section is a summary of the paper that presents brief information about what the content is.

CHAPTER I

This chapter deals with the background of the study that explains why the writer chooses to analyze the topic, the research question, the aim of analyzing the topic, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and research method.

CHAPTER II

This part explains theoretical frameworks that are used as the basic foundation of the study, previous studies from what other researchers have found, and the synopsis of *Matilda* (1996).

CHAPTER III

This section presents the methods that are used in the study. This section also explains where the data are obtained, and how the data are collected.

CHAPTER IV

This chapter presents the findings when the study or the analysis has done.

CHAPTER V

This section summarizes all of the information from the chapters. This section is also provided with suggestion for further research.