

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the approach used in the present study to collect and analyze the data in order to answer the research questions. It begins with the description of the research design, followed by the research questions, data source, data collection, data analysis, data presentation, and finally the summary of the novel.

3.1. Research Design

Since this research aims to find out how the characters understand their cultural identities as well as the factors that shape their cultural identities, a qualitative design is employed due to the fact that qualitative research deals with uncovering underlying ideologies and meanings that are embedded in discourses (Bernard, 2002). In particular, this research employs textual analysis since it is a method “to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world” (McKee, 2003, p. 3). This method is particularly suitable for research that tries to find out how human beings identify their selves as an individual and as a member of a group with respect to the culture or the world around them, by interpreting the text which can either be “a book, television program, film, magazine, T-shirt or kilt, piece of furniture or ornament” (McKee, 2003, p. 4). This research is also descriptive in nature as descriptions of the phenomenon or issues concerning the characters’ cultural identity crisis will be presented in helping to reach the conclusion.

3.2. Research Questions

This research is conducted to seek the answers of the following questions:

1. How do the main characters of *The Sun is Also a Star* understand their cultural identities?
2. What factors shape the characters’ cultural identities?

3.3. Data Source

The data for the present study is taken from Nicola Yoon's (2016) *The Sun Is Also A Star*. This novel is her second publication which was first published on the 2nd of November, 2016, by Delacorte Press. It is a contemporary young adult literature that consists of 344 pages and made up of 131 chapters. Uniquely, unlike the conventional novels where each chapter is usually more than one page long, the length of this book's chapters varies from being only one page long until several pages long. The chapters are also told in a unique way as it is told in multiple perspectives. Although the story is mainly presented in the point of view of the protagonists, Natasha Kingsley and Daniel Bae, there are occasional glimpses of the stories of the minor characters that complement the story.

The reason for choosing this novel as the data source for this research is due to its content that presents cultural identity issues as one of its prominent themes which is relevant in today's era. While most literary works discuss the cultural identities of characters with the same cultural background, this novel presents two characters with different cultural heritages at once. This novel has also received numerous praises that it was even adapted into a Hollywood movie.

3.4. Data Collection

The data were taken from the chapters of *The Sun Is Also a Star* novel written by Nicola Yoon (2016). Out of 131 chapters, the data were collected only from 59 chapters since these particular chapters discuss the theme of cultural identities of the characters which are relevant to the theme of study. The collected data are in the form of the characters' characterization, either direct or indirect, such as their utterances, thoughts, and attitudes as textual evidence that were gathered through close-reading the novel. All of the characters' utterances, thoughts, or actions that indicate their understandings of their cultural identities were selected by referring to Ferdman and Horenczyk's (2000) theory on cultural identity (see Chapter 2 Section 4).

3.5. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data is divided into four steps. The collected data were first grouped into several categories that ground the formation of one's cultural identity adapted from Petkova's (2005) theory, which are association with place, language use, and shared culture (see Chapter 2 Section 4). After the data have been categorized, the characters' cultural identities were analysed following Bhabha's (1994) framework on hybridity, mimicry, and third space (see Chapter 2 Section 4 and 5). The data were then analyzed to reveal the factors that shape the characters' cultural identities using Ferdman and Horenczyk's (2000) framework of cultural identity construction. Finally, the underlying meanings or significance of all the data collected from both characters were investigated and described.

3.6. Data Presentation

The data of the characters' understanding of their cultural identities are presented in two different tables according to each character. The table is made up of three columns: (1) the indicator of the character's cultural identities consisting of association with place, language use, and shared culture, adapted from Petkova's (2005) theory (2) the textual evidence and (3) discussion that provides the context of the textual evidence and analysis of the data. The tables are presented as follows:

Table 1. *Example of Natasha Kingsley's Cultural Identity*

Cultural Identity Indicator	Textual Evidence	Discussion
Association with place	“I don't know that place. I've been here since I was eight years old. I don't know anyone in Jamaica.” (p. 22)	Although Natasha Kingsley was born in Jamaica and had only moved to The United States of America at the age of 8, she does not associate herself as Jamaican. She also distances herself with her country of origin, refusing to believe that she is born Jamaican. This demonstrates how she associates her identity with the concept of physical place, or nation in this case.

Language use	<p>“I don’t have an accent.” (p. 22)</p>	<p>This utterance indicates that Natasha believes accent or language plays a role in defining her cultural identity. This is in line with Hall’s (1996) theory on how cultural identity is identified by “sameness” in several facets of culture, which in this case is in terms of language use, specifically accent. This also demonstrates how she experiences cultural identity crisis as she refuses to be identified as Jamaican since she has lost her accent.</p>
Association with shared culture	<p>“What about prom and graduation and my friends? “</p> <p>“What about college? Do you have any idea what it’s like to not fit in anywhere? (p. 22)</p>	<p>She refuses to leave The United States of America since she believes that this place is her home and that she is an American based on the activities that she does which describes American culture, particularly the culture of the teenagers.</p> <p>The first utterance illustrates the life of an American teenager who is in their senior year, who is about to face prom, graduation and college. However, the second utterance indicates that although at first, she may seem to identify herself as a true American, she actually feels that she does not belong anywhere, displaying cultural identity crisis. Thus, it also indicates a phenomenon of mimicry where she copies the customs of the dominant culture in order to become part of that cultural group.</p>

Table 2. Example of Daniel Bae’s Cultural Identity

Cultural Identity Indicator	Textual Evidence	Discussion
Association with place	<p>“How come you call yourself Korean?” she asks after a few more sips. “Weren’t you born here?”</p> <p>“Doesn’t matter. People always ask where I’m from. I used to say here, but then they ask where are you really from, and then I say Korea. Sometimes I say north Korea and that my parents and I escaped from a water dungeon filled with piranhas where Kim Jong-un was holding us prisoner.”</p> <p>She doesn’t smile like I expect her to. She just asks me why I do that.</p> <p>“Because it doesn’t matter what I say. People take one look at me and believe what they want.” (p. 157)</p>	<p>Although Daniel was born in The United States of America, he considers himself as a Korean. His view is very much shaped by the third person perspective that sees him as an Asian, pushing him to accept that he is Korean. Daniel’s utterance also display how place or nation plays an important role in identifying one’s cultural identity.</p> <p>Daniel’s understanding of his identity is evident in this excerpt. Although at first, he identifies himself as an American, now he chooses to call himself Korean. This is all due to the force of the third person party that questions his identity based from his origin and the concept of place.</p>
Language Use	<p>My mom interrupts my eating and writing for a variation on our usual conversation. I’m cruising through it, adding my “yup’s” through mouthfuls of cereal, when she changes up the script. Instead of the usual “You not little boy anymore,” she says:</p> <p>“Don’t be like your brother.”</p> <p>She says it in Korean. For emphasis. (p. 28)</p>	<p>This excerpt shows Dnaiel’s attitude towards the Korean Language. It indicates that he still values his native culture since he still understands his mother when she speaks Korean, in spite of being born and growing up in America.</p>
Shared culture	<p>My mom and I are in the kitchen. Because of my</p>	<p>This excerpt shows that Daniel incorporates two</p>

	<p>interview, she's steaming frozen mandu (dumplings) for me as a treat. I'm having a pre-mandu appetizer of Cap'n Crunch (the best cereal known to mankind) and writing in my Moleskine notebook. (p. 28)</p>	<p>cultures in his everyday life that makes him manifest a hybrid identity. He eats two different dishes from different cultures at once. However, he seems to have a more positive attitude towards the dominant American culture since he praises the cereal as the best cereal while he did not give any remarks to the Korean food.</p>
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All of these data above indicate how the characters struggle to be identified as an American since they manifest hybrid identities which they tend to struggle to acknowledge. Natasha Kingsley wants to be identified as only American even though she was born in Jamaica and moved to the United States of America at the age of 8, while Daniel Bae calls himself a South Korean, not American, despite being born in The United States of America. Therefore, both of them can be considered experiencing cultural identity crisis.

3.7. Summary of the Novel

Nicola Yoon's (2016) *The Sun is Also a Star* revolves around two teenagers in The United States of America, Natasha Kingsley and Daniel Bae. Natasha is a seventeen-year-old girl who is about to be deported with her family since they are illegal immigrants from Jamaica. On her last day in the US, she still tries to go to the immigration office to convince the officers so she and her family can stay. Daniel, who is also a seventeen-year-old boy, on the other hand, is a Korean-American who is about to get his hair cut before going to an interview for Yale's medical school because he is pressured by his parents. Natasha and Daniel meet as Daniel tries to save Natasha's live from being hit by a car. Daniel falls in love at first sight with Natasha and asks her for a chance. They spend the rest of the day together while answering questions that slowly reveal their true selves. Natasha is a logical person who likes reason and scientific matters, while Daniel is driven by passion and love. Although at the end of the day Natasha still has to be deported and fails to keep her family in the US, she is grateful for her one day encounter with

Daniel. They eventually lose contact due to the distance but the memories that they share together is still there. Ten years later, Natasha is on the plane back to America and Daniel, who is on the same plane notices her.

3.8. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the methodology applied in this research. It has elaborated the research design employed as well as the data collection and data analysis to answer the research questions of this study. Description on the data, such as the data source and summary of the novel used in this study has also been presented. The findings from the data analysis and its discussion will be presented in the next chapter.