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Focus and Scope

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12. Interdisciplinary Translation
13. Post-colonial Literature
14. Modern Literature
15. Film Studies
16. Children's Literature
17. Cultural Studies
18. Modern Culture
19. Popular Culture
20. Folk Culture.

Table of Contents

Escaping to Nature: Ecofeminism in the Children's Book *Bridge to Terabithia*

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Abstract. Similar minor positions between women and nature inspired the emergence of ecofeminism theory, which is suitable for analyzing literary works, including children's literature. This research investigates the issue of how women and nature spiritually empower one another in a children's book entitled *Bridge to Terabithia*. This paper aims to analyze the harmony of the female figure with the surrounding nature and its impact on gender and class equality. The result of re-reading and analyzing the novel from the perspective of ecofeminism shows that the characters' struggle against social class oppression and gender stereotypes manifested through their escapism to nature. The main female character's courage in rejecting gender stereotypes made the relationship between humans and nature egalitarian. This novel presents nature as the *Terabithia* Kingdom. The *Terabithia* Kingdom is where the main characters can escape from all oppressions they experienced in social life.

Keywords: *children's book, ecofeminism, stereotype, gender, nature*

http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes

INTRODUCTION

It is not new that patriarchy has grown a common understanding that women are considered minor compared with men. Men are usually associated with public affairs, while women are with domestic affairs, such as: giving birth, taking care of children, or being responsible for household needs. Women's position is closely related to nature's position, which is on the lower level of the hierarchy system (Campbell, 2008). Women are often associated with nature; it has lived for years. Campbell (2008) states that many metaphoric terms related to nature describe women, such as flowers, honey, or the ocean; it leads to the creation of global terms about ecological phenomena, for instance, "raping the land," "virgin forest," and "motherland." The words "raping" or "rape," "virgin," and "mother" are always associated with women. This understanding reinforces the emergence of a

feminist theory called ecofeminism. Wiyatmi et al. (2019) argued that people's responsibility, including scholars, is to end the long domination of the patriarchy system on nature, the environment, and women. Ecofeminism focuses on the interrelation between nature and women and supports a social and intellectual movement correlating women and ecology.

This theory starts from the idea that both subordination of women and the environmental crisis indicates the same illness (Sydee & Beder, 2001). They refer to the destructive patriarchal domination symptoms. Mother Earth symbolizes nature; however, the basic principle of the patriarchal system overshadows this symbol through its archetype: 'natural, limitless and exploitable' (Stearney, 1994). Warren (in Phillips, 2016) makes an analogy that ecofeminism is similar to a patchwork quilt as it stitches various issues and perspectives into one entity. What unifies all the patches is the mutual idea that kinds of injustice are cross-cutting and intertwined (Cudworth 2005; Glazebrook 2005; Plumwood 1993; Warren 2000).

The principle of ecofeminism is that nature is supposed to be the central consideration for protection and preservation. It requires the efficient use of natural resources (Yudina & Grimwood, 2016). Ecofeminism also proposes nurturing, community growth, and development, as its basic principle is to protect and preserve. Ecofeminists believe that social domination extends beyond sex domination because sex, race, class, and nature domination are mutually reinforcing (Jabeen, 2019). The term 'ecofeminism may seem to imply that ecofeminists are concerned only about the oppression of women and the oppression of the earth. But, as Warren (1997) argues that since all feminists are against the principle of thought domination, which creates and preserves oppressive conceptual frameworks, all feminists must oppose any ideologies that are maintained and justified by that logic. Many ecofeminists argue that there is no primary form of oppression, as all oppressions are related and reinforce each other. The differences in social positions result in different social oppressions. King (in Warren, 1997) states that the original domination in human society was the domination of women, as it supports other hierarchies: rank, political, and class hierarchy.

Historically, ecofeminism was first born from cultural feminism or sometimes referred to as radical feminism (Raju, 1997). It first appeared in the early 1970s. Cultural feminism believes the connection between women and nature is liberating and empowering; women are responsible for natural things. Furthermore, some cultural ecofeminists argue that women's reproductive capacity strengthens the bond between women and nature, which makes women closer to nature than men. Others believe in a strong bond between women and nature in social and psychological structures (Warren, 1997). It creates knowledge and reasoning of women as more suitable to solve environmental problems. However, there is one thing that every cultural feminist agrees on. Women have a particular and beneficial relationship with nature which can help to fight for the unfair domination of both nature and women.

Social feminists challenged cultural feminism. Social feminists believe that women's identities are socially constructed, historically fashioned, and materially reinforced through the diversity of race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age,

ability, marital status, and geographic factors. Social feminist argues that the connection between women and nature is socially constructed (Warren, 1997). Women's bodies and reproductive capacities have become the central part of the oppression of women and the thing that bounds women with nature. The social, material, and political relationship between women and nature are matters (Gough & Whitehouse, 2020).

Then, in the 1980s, the concerns over ecofeminism focused on nuclear warfare and militarism, toxic waste pollution, and deforestation. As a result of this concern, ecofeminists believe that women are biologically and socially associated with nature. There is a link between women's subordination and environmental degradation (Vijayaraj, 2017). Further, women are commonly, but not necessarily, associated with nature. Women were associated with the fertility of the earth and the passivity. Linked to the ecofeminist movement, by the early 1980s there were more animal advocacy groups emerged. Ecofeminists believe that concerns for nature and the environment include animal welfare. Ecofeminists started to argue that animals are individuals with needs, feelings, and the capacity to love and suffer. However, animals are often mistreated or exploited by humans. Ecofeminists believe in human perception and animal treatment based on a patriarchal system. Patriarchy sees and treats animals with the perception and treatment they use toward women. In other words, women's treatment in patriarchy has been similar to the perception and treatment of animals (Adam & Gruen, 1993).

As for its applicability, ecofeminism examines both universal issues and literary works (Campbell, 2008). In literary works, the study of ecofeminism is often associated with the issue of racism and classism or with the issue of gender itself. The purpose of applying ecofeminism in this study is to find the balance of female characters with the natural surroundings and the impact of that balance on racial and class equality. Ecofeminism in literary studies is significant. It considers literature as an aesthetic portrait of life. Many literary works reflect or criticize the impact of environmental crises as an effect of the marginal position of nature in the hierarchical system. Chandra et al. (2019) analyzed an Indonesian novel entitled *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* and discovered three types of ecofeminism portrayed in the book, namely natural, spiritual, and socialist ecofeminism. Kaur (2013) combined the perspective of ecofeminism and post-colonialism to analyze Indian novels in English. In her study, Kaur argued that there is ambivalence in the relationship between women and nature. She mentioned that nature and the environment have a duality that affects gender. Another study of ecofeminism in literary works by Joseph et al. (2014) examined the textual and conceptual foundation of ecofeminism in Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair's novels.

However, studies of ecofeminism focusing on children's literature are still barely known. McCallum and Stephens (2010) stated that no text is innocent from hidden ideologies, no matter how simple the text is. It includes children's literature. Several literatures deal with the relationship between the female characters and nature. One of the most classic is *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. It tells about the journey of a young girl named Alice who fell down a rabbit hole and entered a peculiar place called 'Wonderland.' Through her journey, several events highlight her connections with nature. Another famous

novel is *The Chronicles of Narnia*, written by C. S. Lewis. It is a series of fantasy novels. It consists of seven books that narrate the adventure of several children. They have their journey to Narnia. Like 'Wonderland,' Narnia is a magical world occupied by talking animals, mythical creatures, and be-witched lands.

Another worthy piece of literature to review with ecofeminism theory is *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson; the story narrates two classmates: Jesse Aarons and Leslie Burke built an imaginary kingdom near their homes and called it "the *Terabithia* kingdom." They used a rope hanging from a tree to cross the dry creek as the border to reach the kingdom. Lewis Caroll's *Chronicles of Narnia* inspires Paterson's work. Leslie, the female central character in the story, owns the collection of novels and urges Jesse to read them. The name of the imaginary kingdom, *Terabithia*, is similar to a *Narnian* island, *Terabinthia*. Since they are the rulers of their kingdom, they are free to fantasize, behave, and act as they wish without following any social expectations. The novel exposes nature as a significant place to escape from all gender stereotypes and the demands of life under capitalist pressure. The female central character in this story is the key to the ecofeminism movement in *Bridge to Terabithia*.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses content analysis as its research design. Content analysis is a branch of qualitative methods to analyze textbooks or literary work. The primary data of this research are from Bridge to Terabithia by Paterson. The data are related to the issue discussed in this research. The secondary data are any information from books concerning ecofeminism, gender, and children's literature. The data were collected by reading and categorizing sentences and paragraphs in the novel. After classifying the data, it identifies two big themes: gender stereotypes and interaction between the protagonist and nature as escapism. Elaborating the data from the perspective of ecofeminism is to examine the relationship between the characters: women and nature. The argument was elaborated based on the data quoted from the novel. The following sub-chapters present the results of the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

By applying ecofeminism, this section covers two sub-sections. The first section discusses gender stereotypes and the dynamic relationship between the two main characters in the novel, Jesse and Leslie, with society's expectations. After that, the second section discusses the interaction between the characters and nature as a form of escapism.

Gender Stereotypes in *Bridge to Terabithia*

Bridge to Terabithia is a children's novel that revolves around the friendship of a boy and a girl named Jesse Aarons and Leslie Burke. Both live next to each other in a village in Washington, United States. Jesse is the main character who is at the center of the story's perspective. Yet, Leslie's position in the story is equally important. Thomas (2011) even stated that Leslie is the center of the narrative because of her intelligence and highly enthusiastic characterization. Her friendship

with Jess creates unconventional bonds that provide them space to act and express their feelings without being concerned with social expectations.

This novel uses simple language typical of children's reading. The theme discussed was also simple, such as family, school, and friendship. However, despite its simplicity, this novel contains criticisms of important issues regarding gender. As discussed throughout the world, gender is a complex and universal issue. Equality and gender differences are issues in adult and children's environments (James, 2009). James (2009) also added that social construction is formed in certain groups of people to create associations with certain gender groups. For example, women are always associated with tenderness and flowers, while men are always associated with strength and agility. Eventually, this association ended in the formation of stereotypes in society.

Bridge to Terabithia implicitly shows some gender stereotypes through the relationships and dialogues among the characters, especially between Jesse and Leslie. Jesse is the portrayal of a boy who bears society's expectation to have masculine characteristics attached to common gender stereotypes. Society's expectation is in Jesse's father, who expects him to become a real man and the backbone of the family. According to Jesse's father, men should bear a burden by becoming the head of the family. Gently treating men will only make them weak. In the novel, Jesse is the portrayal of a man not having a good and close relationship with his father, as evident in the following:

> Durn lucky kid. She could run after him and grab him and kiss him. It made Jess ache inside to watch his dad grab the little ones to his shoulder, or lean down and hug them. It seemed to him that he had been thought too big for that since the day he was born. (Patterson, 2004: 10)

Unlike his younger sister, May Belle, Jesse has never had a close relationship with his father. As the only boy in the family, Jesse was raised not to be a spoiled child. Moreover, male children often train to fulfill masculinity characteristics in society, such as being tough, strong, and brave. They cannot freely express their emotions. Thus, they are emotionally distant and sometimes neglected by their parents compared to girls (Thomassin, Bucsea, Chan, & Carter, 2019). However, regardless of his gender, Jesse is only a young child who should not have borne such expectations from society.

Jesse is aware that the expectation he bears is becoming a strong and macho boy, and it makes him do various things to prove himself to his father. He has an obsession with becoming the fastest runner in his school.

> Even his dad would be proud. Jess rounded the corner. He couldn't keep going quite so fast, but he continued running for a while it would build him up. May Belle would tell Daddy, so it wouldn't look as though he, Jess, was a bragger. (Patterson, 2004: 5)

Running is considered a masculine activity. Jesse assumes that he can satisfy his father's expectations by winning a running competition at his school. Moreover, it also shows his endurance and struggles to win the race. He hopes his father will

know about his struggle in the race to prove that he is a strong boy, just like his father always wanted him to be.

Jesse is in a period of searching for his identity. At this time, the role of parents and family is significant. In Jesse's case, his parents expected him to be a masculine man, so he tried to make it happen even though sometimes that effort meant hiding his interest and passion. The following quote shows it:

> He would like to show his drawings to his dad, but he didn't dare. When he was in first grade, he told his dad that he wanted to be an artist when he grew up. He'd thought his dad would be pleased. He wasn't. "What are they teaching in that damn school?" he had asked. "Bunch of old ladies turning my only son into some kind of a..." He had stopped on the word, but Jess had gotten the message. It was one you didn't forget, even after four years (Patterson, 2004: 6)

Jesse's real passion is drawing, but he has to hide it from his family because it does not meet the standard of masculinity created by his father. Painting is a woman's job, while men should prefer masculine things, such as sports and farming.

In addition, Jesse does not only hide his passion from his father but also from his friends, teachers, and family.

> Jess had written about football, which he hated, but he had enough brains to know that if he said drawing, everyone would laugh at him. Most of the boys swore that watching the Washington Redskins on TV was their favorite hobby. (Paterson, 2004: 8)

Football is known to be more popular among men because it is considered masculine and follows male gender stereotypes. This assumption influences Jesse. He is willing to lie when writing his assignments regarding hobbies and activities.

On the other hand, gender stereotypes that oppress Jesse's real passion as a developing child do not affect Leslie. Leslie is Jesse's new best friend who has just moved from the city to live next to the Aarons family ranch. Leslie is the most influential figure because her character is the rejection symbol of gender stereotypes. Leslie deconstructs the structure of gender opposition embedded in society and the surrounding environment.

Unlike the introverted Jesse, Leslie is braver and more spontaneous. She is the portrayal of a girl who rarely wears skirts - clothes identical to the image of women - and always wears trousers and sneakers. Leslie also defeated all the boys in a running race at school. The race was not for girls, but Leslie joined it and eventually won it.

> Gary lowered his head like a bull. "Girls aren't supposed to play on the lower field. Better get up there before one of the teachers sees you."
> "I want to run," she said quietly.
> "You already did."
> "Whatsa matter, Fulcher?" All Jess's anger was bubbling out. He couldn't seem to stop the flow. "Whatsa matter? Scared to race her?"

Fulcher's fist went up. But Jess walked away from it. Fulcher would have to let her run now, he knew. And Fulcher did, angrily and grudgingly.
She beat him. She came in first and turned her large shining eyes on a bunch of dumb sweating-mad faces. (Patterson, 2004: 21)

Leslie's presence influences Jesse until the end of the story. Leslie's breakthrough as the fastest girl in fifth grade changed Jesse's perspective on gender and the stereotypes in his understanding. Leslie is the portrayal of a girl from a family who has unusual habits. While most people in the city work as factory workers and farmers, Leslie's parents work as writers. The profession encourages Leslie's parents to shape their family to be free and democratic so that Leslie grows up to be a brave and imaginative child.

It was this background that led Leslie to become the most influential character in the story. Leslie is a symbol of gender stereotypical resistance in a suburb of Washington. She is intelligent, imaginative, strong, and agile. She has a unique relationship with nature, especially around where they live. As a newcomer in the suburbs, Leslie is more passionate about exploring nature when compared to Jesse, who grows up in that area. This different perspective in seeing and treating the environment is because of the parenting differences between Jesse's and Leslie's parents. Unlike Leslie's parents, Jesse's family thinks earning money is more important than exploring and appreciating nature. Nature is not to be loved nor guarded. It is a source of food and household needs. It is appreciated as long as it can provide what they need. Jesse's family's view of nature is almost similar to how they view women: weak and functional. The relationship between the family members and Miss Bessie, their dairy cow, symbolizes The relationship between nature and the Aarons family. Miss Bessie is by no means a particular creature except that it can produce milk to consume every day. Although the family gave a name to the cow, the way they treated it was nothing more than a means of supplying family needs.

On the contrary, Leslie's experience is very different. She and her family decided to move to a village so they live in a more natural environment, as they were too tired of the crowd and busyness of the city. This different perspective creates curiosity in Jesse's mind, as shown in the following quote: "Jess followed, still trying to figure out why two grown people and a smart girl like Leslie wanted to leave a comfortable life in the suburbs for a place like this."(Patterson, 2004: 24)

Furthermore, as a spontaneous girl, Leslie also likes to break boundaries. The boundaries are in the form of rules. Leslie has a close relationship with nature. She believes in the forest and animals as if they cannot hurt her. On the other hand, Jess thinks of nature as something that exists, not as something special. He has a common belief that the forest and the animals are dangerous. Jesse's doubts and fears are in the following quote: "There were parts of the woods that Jess did not like. Dark places where it was almost like being underwater, but he didn't say so." (Patterson, 2004: 57)

Leslie's closeness to nature was also apparent when Jesse gave her a puppy as a gift. Leslie names him Prince Terrien and treats him as their best friend and colleague on an adventure into the forest instead of treating him as only a pet.

> There was no mistaking the delight in Leslie's eyes. She dropped to her knees on the cold ground, picked the puppy up, and held it close to her face. "Then we'll name him Prince Terrien and make him the guardian of Terabithia." (Patterson, 2004: 137)

A democratic family background shapes Leslie into a more open-minded person. She broke the boundaries of gender stereotypes by defeating all boys in a running competition. It is because she thinks men and women have no differences. The perspective does not only apply to gender differences but also to nature and the environment. She positioned herself as equal to the natural environment around her neighborhood. She treats nature and animals like friends rather than as inanimate objects or functional facilities. The attitude and spontaneity of this character in treating nature and the environment show a significant little movement toward ecofeminism.

Interaction between Protagonists and Nature as a Form of Escapism

Leslie's unique relationship with the surrounding environment affects her personality and Jesse in the same direction. The spirit and spontaneity of Leslie's character are very influential on the development of Jesse's character and his relationship with other figures and the natural surroundings. Leslie's perspective of nature makes Jesse finally realize the beauty of nature around them for the first time. It is because Jesse and his family used to only focus on making money to keep the family surviving. The following quote show where Jesse saw Leslie running across a large yard around their house.

> She just took off running to the old Perkins place. He couldn't help turning to watch. She ran as though it was her nature. It reminded him of the flight of wild ducks in the autumn. So smooth. The word "beautiful" came to his mind, but he shook it away and hurried up toward the house (Patterson, 2004: 30)

As the relationship between Jesse and Leslie gets closer, their natural exploration deepens. It is led by Leslie because, from the beginning, she has more trust in nature. Jesse's attitude shows her doubt, but for fear of being seen as a coward, he follows Leslie.

> "We need a place," she said, "just for us. It would be so secret that we would never tell anyone in the whole world about it." Jess came swinging back and dragged his feet to stop.
> She lowered her voice almost to a whisper. "It might be a whole secret country," she continued, "and you and I would be the rulers of it."
> Her words stirred inside of him. He'd like to be a ruler of something. Even something that wasn't real. "OK," he said. "Where could we have it?"
> "Over there in the woods where nobody would come and mess it up." (Patterson, 2004: 78)

From the quote above, it is clear that besides being afraid to be seen as a coward, Jesse wants some form of validation to make himself known. It is probably also because he often feels unrecognized by his father and overshadowed by his sisters. By being a ruler, he will gain power and be free to do anything he wishes.

The adventure that began with their curiosity brought them deeper into the forest, where the effects of social construction do not exist. Jesse was a child who used to be oppressed by gender stereotypes, and Leslie was a child who broke down all stereotypes, joined together, and built their imagination. Leslie names the forest a kingdom called *Terabithia*. Jesse and Leslie created *Terabithia* as a place that only the two of them knew.

> Leslie named their secret land "Terabithia," and she loaned Jess all of her books about Narnia, so he would know how things went in a magic kingdom-how the animals and the trees must be protected and how a ruler must behave. That was the hard part. When Leslie spoke, the words rolling out so regally, you knew she was a proper queen. He could hardly manage English, much less the poetic language of a king. (Patterson, 2004: 82)

Terabithia is a copy of Land that Leslie read in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and Jesse tags along with her imagination. It also represents that Jesse is fascinated by Leslie's persona. He puts Leslie on a pedestal and positions himself as less than her. Jesse's lack of confidence is the result of his father's upbringing. Although *Terabithia* merely looks like a child's imagination, its existence has a deeper meaning. This secret imaginary kingdom is a form of liberation from all social demands and oppression in their life. *Terabithia* is where nature is significant. Animals are protected and made friends, and all constructions that produce hierarchy do not exist.

In short, *Terabithia* is a form of escapism for the two figures from the cultural world. Escapism can offer a temporary haven for individuals through participating in ecofeminist activities since nature provides places for exploration, self-care, and creative imagination. Therefore, Jesse and Leslie leave "real" life for several hours to explore the natural world. This regular movement from the cultural to the natural environment shows an escape or escapism.

> He believed her because there in the shadowy light of the stronghold, everything seemed possible. Between the two of them. They owned the world and no enemy, Gary Fulcher, Wanda Kay Moore, Janice Avery, Jess's fears and insufficiencies, nor any of the foes whom Leslie imagined attacking Terabithia, could ever really defeat them. (Patterson, 2004: 108)

The quote above shows that Leslie is the beacon for Jessee. He trusts her because she makes everything looks possible. They imagine that bad kids in school will be able to find them in Terabithia. From children's perspective, it may appear that they only avoid bullying from their schoolmates. They avoid something more abstract than that, namely the social construction and community expectations that make Jess and Leslie oppressed.

Later in the story, readers can see a slight paradox. One day, Miss Edmunds invites Jesse to Washington to visit the Smithsonian. Jesse faces options between going to Washington with Miss Edmunds or staying in Terabithia with Leslie. Jesse, who is a child from a lower-middle-class family, is in a situation where he has to choose between the glorious city and the modesty of nature. It is a metaphor for modernity in a city and the primitive environment in Terabithia. He chooses modernity without inviting Leslie because Leslie is the key to his relationship with primitive life in *Terabithia*.

> It didn't occur to him until the car was past Millsburg that he might have asked Miss Edmunds if Leslie could have come, too. When he thought about it, he couldn't suppress a secret pleasure at being alone in this small cozy car with Miss Edmunds. (Patterson, 2004: 173)

From the narration above, Jesse feels guilty because he did not invite Leslie to the trip and left her without notice. Jesse never regrets his decision to go to the city. What he regrets later is his decision to create a gap between himself and his best friend and his relationship with nature. Leslie is found dead later on that day in the forest where they used to play together.

> Finally, his father spoke, his big rough hand stroking his wife's hair and his eyes downcast watching the motion. "They found the Burke girl this morning down in the creek."
> "No," he said, finding his voice. Leslie wouldn't drown. She could swim real good." "That old rope you kids been swinging on broke." His father went quietly and relentlessly on. "They think she musta hit her head on something when she fell." (Patterson, 2004: 183)

Leslie's death on the trench denotes a failure towards escapism. The furrow symbolizes the border of their imaginary life in *Terabithia*, where they used to escape from reality in their everyday life. Leslie's death seems to break Jess's relationship with *Terabithia* because Leslie is the one who creates egalitarianism between nature and humans, both male (represented by Jesse) and female (Leslie).

At the end of the story, Jesse realizes that the relationship developed between himself, Leslie, and *Terabithia* is a significant connection because that is where he can be himself. He can draw without having to cover his drawing paper and run as if he is the fastest runner in the world. He does not have to pretend to like football or try his best to please his father with some masculine activity. Because of this, Jesse decides to build a wooden bridge to reconnect his world and *Terabithia*.

> The next day after school, Jess went down and got the lumber he needed, carrying it a couple of boards at a time to the creek bank. He put the two longest pieces across at the narrow place upstream from the crab apple tree, and when he was sure they were as firm and even as he could make them, he began to nail on the crosspieces. (Patterson, 2004: 206)

The bridge Jesse built is a way of making peace with nature. It is his place of escapism. The bridge replaces the spirit of Leslie, who had been connecting Jesse with the surrounding forest and natural things. In addition, he possibly builds the bridge so that the accident with Leslie will not happen again. He may also want people to discover and use the forest as their safe space.

CONCLUSION

Gender stereotypes and the dominance of certain social classes affect adults and children. The influence can be in the form of oppression and marginalization because, at a certain point, children are involuntarily part of social construction. Leslie is an individual who has freedom from all these stereotypical gender oppressions. It is due to the background of Leslie's democratic family.

Jesse and Leslie reflect resistance to social class inequality and gender stereotype through the manifestation of escapism. The escape is carried out in the wild, led by a female figure. It proves the basic concept of ecofeminism which states that women have a unique relationship with nature. It departs from the status of being initially undermined by the patriarchal system.

Leslie's courage to reject gender stereotypes led to a friendship with nature and animals. She made the relationship between man and nature egalitarian. Nature, which used to be marginal, has become a place to escape from any oppression that Jesse and Leslie may experience in social life. Various analyzes bring us to the conclusion that *Bridge to Terabithia* is a novel that has its uniqueness because it brings the issue of ecofeminism to it.

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Revealing Diasporic Characters through Setting in Elaine Chew's "The Heartsick Diaspora" (2019)

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Abstract. Elaine Chew exposes the impact of diaspora, dimensions of human mobility, and connectivity, in "The Heartsick Diaspora" (2019). It is about an ethnic writing group of mixed-Asian blood in London. The striking cultural differences between their native culture (Eastern) and foreign culture (Western) significantly affect the characters in the story. This study belongs to literary criticism using a formalism approach to analyze the diasporic phenomenon in the literary work. It explores the connection between the settings and qualities of the two characters in the story, namely Chandra and Wei. Chandra's personality is different from the typical Asian woman because she is cynical, often dresses androgynous, and upholds individual freedom. On the other hand, Wei, a new member of the ethnic group, seems to hide his sexual orientation from the group because it considers immoral in Eastern culture. Eventually, Elaine Chew portrays the influence of the diaspora which affects the characterization of someone because they have to adapt to their new environment but also cannot be completely separated from their roots.

Keywords: *characters, diaspora, setting*

http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes

INTRODUCTION

The issue of diaspora is always an interesting topic to discuss. The term diaspora is derived from the Greek words *dia* (over) and *speiro* (to sow) which means dispersion. In the Hebrew language, the term referred to "the setting of

colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile and has assumed a more general connotation of people settled away from their ancestral homelands" (Shuval, 2003). At that moment, Jews people who left their homeland and fled to neighboring countries used the term diaspora to convey feelings of connectedness. However, the term expanded and was not only addressed to Jews. It is even stated that "Since the 1960s, with increasing transnational and global migrant movements, 'diaspora' was employed to denote a national, cultural or religious group living in a foreign land" (Knott and McLoughlin, 2010). This is the most known concept that most of us understand nowadays: a person/group performs mobility from one place to another or migrates socially and culturally.

The Heartsick Diaspora (2019) by Elaine Chew, a collection of fourteen short stories, is one of the books that raise the issue of diaspora. Each story is written in ten years, mainly covering the lives of the Singaporean diaspora who have migrated across the world and are set in Singapore, London, and New York. The stories in the book also touch on many aspects of Singaporean cultures, such as the relationship between parents and children, the importance of being filial, love, migration and its complexities, and friendships across ethnic lines. During an interview, Chew admitted to the long process of making *The Heartsick Diaspora* (2019). She claimed that the earliest story was written ten years ago and it won 1ˢᵗ Prize in the Bridport Short Story Competition. Chew stated that "I wanted to flush out the psyche that attends this phenomenon of the diaspora in my short stories," as a reason why she chose *The Heartsick Diaspora* as the main title of the story (Tay, 2020). Due to her value in writing that often shows how geography and culture infiltrate voice and story building, she is often told by the readers that her stories are all incredibly varied in style, tone, setting, subject matter, and protagonist.

This paper discusses a short story that has the same title as the book "The Heartsick Diaspora". The story revolves around a group of Asian writers domiciled in England or outside their home country. These Asian writers form a group because they have the same background as a minority amid the majority. With the entrance of an additional member who is gorgeous, Wei, the group flipped upside down. They have to adapt and deal with Western culture but they also cannot disregard their native culture as Chinese descendant. When the group gathered, it was clear that they were still very much influenced by their native culture as Asians. In addition, they find some legal and normal things in Western culture but are considered bad and taboo in Eastern culture. So, it feels like there is a conflict that flared up within them about which culture they should hold. Keeping our native culture wherever we go is good, but being different from the majority in another region we do not belong to is hard. This kind of conflict experienced by these diasporic characters is relevant to many of us who moved to another region or even country and are trying to adapt and fit in their culture but we have a hard time because we are not used to it.

The researchers concentrate on the setting and its impact on the characters' qualities, in which the characters that will be the main focus to analyze are Chandra and Wei. The setting that will be discussed in this paper is not only limited to place and time but also includes the cultural and historical background of the diasporic characters. The encounter of two different cultures that arose because of

the diaspora phenomenon had a big role in shaping the diaspora character in the story. We examine specifically how the settings, cultural and historical included, interact and shape the characters in the story.

There are a couple of existing studies that tackle the issue of diaspora identity as well. Those existing studies are being used as a benchmark for this current study to be able to, hopefully, offer more insights into the discourse of diaspora studies. The first study is *British by Right, Punjabi by Heart' Diaspora portrayals in Punjabi films* (2011) by Ranjanpreet Kaur Nagra. This study discusses the representation of the Punjabi diaspora in Punjabi films concerning gender aspects, and the intersection between male and female. The study also explores how respective gender roles are portrayed in the media, both in the Western setting and homeland setting, providing how stark of a difference it is. Thus, we found this previous study to be knowledgeable and useful for us to gain more perspectives to conduct the research for the current study. Moreover, one of the characters that we are discussing from *The Heartsick Diaspora* (Chiew, 2019) is also an Indian descent. The second previous study is *Religion, Partition, Identity, and Diaspora: A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy-Man* (2011) by Paromita Deb. This previous study discusses the relationship between diaspora identity and setting due to the partition of the Indian sub-continent. This previous study differs from the current study in a way that it discussed the issues from the historical aspect as well. Nonetheless, we still found this previous study to be relevant because it also discusses how the setting, a different place from the homeland, is affecting how the diaspora characters mold their identities.

RESEARCH METHOD

The current study belongs to literary criticism using a formalism approach. It is emphasizing the practice of close reading of the literary text and looking at it as an object that is worth to be studied (Dobie, 2011). It means that the researchers focused on the literary work as the object of the study to gather data and information related to the topic of discussion. The object of the current study is a short story by Elaine Chew entitled "The Heartsick Diaspora" (2019). It is one of the stories in the book entitle *The Heartsick Diaspora and Other Stories* (2019). As its title implies, it tells about the diasporic phenomenon of Asians in Western countries. The primary data used in this study were taken from conversations and narrations contained in the short story. Thus, these data were used to analyze the influence of setting, cultural, and historical background shaping the diasporic characters in the short story.

Furthermore, several steps were taken to complete this study. First, the researchers did a close reading to gain a deeper understanding of the events and storyline of the short story. The next step was taken by collecting data that was under the diaspora theme to narrow down the scope of analysis. In this step, the researchers only focused on the influence of the setting on two characters in the story, namely Chandra and Wei. Then, the researchers grouped and eliminated data that were considered not related to the topic of analysis. After that, the researcher began to carry out the analysis along with reading secondary readings

to support the data. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the results of the analysis that has been done.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researchers discuss the diaspora phenomenon, particularly the relationship between the setting and the diasporic characters. The two characters that will be discussed are the characters named Chandra and Wei.

The setting has a significant effect on the diasporic characters. Diaspora is a dispersed people with origins in a different geographical location. It was originally used to describe the extensive dispersion of a population from its native lands, notably the dispersion of Jews (Pokharel, 2020). In the story, Chandra is the only character who is biracial, and she is the narrator of this short story. She describes herself as the "different" one; she is a girl who dresses androgynous, is ambidextrous and is ambiguous. She exudes a more dominating aura and confidence than the rest of the females in the writing group; she also labeled herself as cynical; "I'm too cynical." (Chew, 2019, p. 128). Cynicism is an attitude characterized by a general distrust of the motives of "others", mainly driven by prudence (Navia, 1996). It is often associated with modern society as the word's meaning is straying further away from its Greek origin. A cynic is what we describe as people who distrust others' apparent motives and ambitions; they also have pessimistic approaches to life, are sarcastic, and display offensive behaviors. In modern society, it is entirely used to describe a hypocritical and negative person (Papadopoulos, 2021). Furthermore, as much as cynicism is associated with modernity, modernity is also associated with the Western world. Modernity does not by any means, only belongs to the Western world but it is possible for many observers to unconsciously refer to the Western world when they discuss modernity (Dinc, 2007).

Chandra's characteristic of being quirky, judgmental, or liberated is an influence of her biracial background plus her experience living in a European country amongst the majority of white people. Chandra might have picked some habits and principles of the Westerner for the sake of blending in and changed her personality trait, hence, her contradicting behaviors to the values of her Southeast Asian blood. What Chandra experiences is becoming the uncanny imitation of the real thing that is doomed to inauthenticity (Bhabha, 1984). She adopts the Western world's androgynous, more liberating dressing codes and cynic attitudes which is one of the traits of a member of modern society. Furthermore, emancipation from tradition has been named to be one of the checkpoints to categorize what a modern society is (Dinc, 2007). Chandra discards parts of herself that are not modern to become one of the Westerners; to be in the progress of inclusion in the majority by achieving the Western self and conforming to its norms, while on the other hand, neglecting and hiding the excluded and marginalized other of the identity (Yegenoglu, 1998).

The reason that Chandra was made the narrator of this story could be because of her strong and opinionated way of describing. In Scene One Act One, Chandra was not shy to admit her crush on Wei, the newcomer, at first sight. "Instant, crushing, an overpowering jolt of emotion, straight to the solar plexus." (Chew, 2019, p. 129). In another paragraph, Chandra called Phoebe a "pretentious git"

(Chew, 2019, p. 129) while also posing a statement that seems to call out some stereotypes or discriminations towards Asian living in Western countries. She stated that "...in this world of ours, Asian people can't cook French gourmet but they can surely write sci-fi." (Chew, 2019, p. 129). This statement could be recognized as a 'cynical' remark. One active aspect of cynicism involves the desire to expose hypocrisy and point out gaps between ideals and practices (Midgley, 1998). Chandra does not think that Phoebe's story is realistic, seen from the perspective of her ideals. Furthermore, Asia in its culture is rich in literary tradition, especially folklore, and myths, hence the sci-fi (Laranjo, Martinez-Erbite, and Santos, 2013). White people have also done several trials to replicate Asian cuisines, but the fact that the character in Miranda's story has to hire a French native as a fake head chef in their restaurant is a piece of evidence that Asians who immigrated to Western countries still experience small oppression and discrimination as such.

Chandra's cynical trait is more clearly shown in Act One Scene Two. She got jealous because Phoebe seems effortlessly making progress in her story, unlike her, "As Phoebe relates the plot of her new story... I begin to feel jealousy, sharp and acrid, worm its way through my innards." (Chew, 2019, p. 130). The way Chandra compares her story with Phoebe's is showing Chandra's suspicion toward Phoebe's "borrowing" which adds to her rage, "Her story involves three Singaporean Chinese sisters residing in New York (mine reside in London)." (Chew, 2019, p. 131). In addition, Chandra thinks Phoebe's story, which includes food, is cliché. She said, "It is such a cliché too—Malaysians and Singaporeans obsessed with food; it is practically our national culture to polemicize food." (Chew, 2019, p. 131). It is clear that Chandra's jealousy is growing as she witnesses and doubts their 'lack of originality idea. While both Wei and Phoebe were excited about it, Chandra replied, "Isn't that a little gimmicky? And trite?" (Chew, 2019, p. 132). She seems not truly proud even of her roots. It shows that she is not just judgmental but also xenocentric. Xenocentric is someone who despises their own culture and preferred another group's culture as a reference for anything. It is influenced by three possible reasons: second or third-generation immigrants who have familial connections with foreign countries, opposite political choices of their own country, and also exposure to other cultures coupled with dissatisfaction with their own culture (Kent and Burnight, 1951). Since Chandra lives in Britain, it is most likely she grows accustomed to its culture thus she views her own culture as lame.

Another side of Chandra's personality is also shown in Act One, Scene Three. Wei contemplated whether to use Singaporean English (Singlish) in his short story or not. Miranda and Phoebe rejected the idea completely; they said "It makes Western readers laugh at us." (Chew, 2019, p. 133). It is because Singapore English has significant differences from American and British English in the writing, the way of speaking, and especially, the pronunciation. After all, it expands its lexicon by "borrowing" words from the many languages spoken in Singapore: Malay, Hokkien, Teochew, and Mandarin (Goh, 2016). Thus, non-Singaporeans will need a sufficient shared experience to truly comprehend it. Those who do not familiar with Singlish may think that the writer makes mistakes or could not use proper English. However, Chandra surprised us with a different piece of opinion and went out of her way to put Wei's incertitude at ease. "Write what you want, Wei. Don't

sweat it. Existential creative anxiety does not lead to the yellow-brick lane, only inertia and crippling self-doubt." (Chew, 2019, p. 133). In this scene, we can see that Chandra who seemed to be the one with the least Southeast Asian quality is also the one who was not ashamed of 'Singlish'. She even encouraged Wei to use it in his short story. It was able to prove that the mixture of her adoptive Western behavior and her initial respect for her Southeast Asian blood exist. At the end of the paragraph, Chandra, with her narration, is also shown using "liddat lor" which is a Singlish version of "like that". It made Wei look grateful. This is indicated by Chandra's narration that said "Wei looks at me gratefully" (Chew, 2019, p. 134). The gratefulness Wei felt towards Chandra's input that day is what initially leads their relationship to happen.

Following the Singlish discussion, later that day Wei had joined Chandra's smoking break in between the meeting. Wei then said, "You know, I can't make you out.' His look is contemplative." (Chew, 2019, p. 134) to Chandra. It might seem like a casual conversation pick-up but if examined deeper, what Wei had said could mean that he seldom meets someone with a personality like Chandra, who came from the same background as a diasporic Asian living far away abroad. The contradiction between the two main characters that we examine is once again shown; how Wei is always unsure and mysterious and how Chandra is always unwavering and straightforward.

Moreover, Chandra's distinctive personality oftentimes makes her excluded from the group. In Act Two, Scene Two, Chandra knew that Wei seemed to be avoiding her and that he had been hanging out with Miranda and Phoebe as of late. Feeling left out, Chandra said, "I would've liked to come but no one thought to invite me," (Chew, 2019, p. 140/141), yet the others appeared to be reluctant to respond to her. Chandra is then further confronted about the news of Phoebe and her husband's separation. "You know what, I'm just going to come out with it. Phoebe, I feel hijacked by this news of yours. How could you not tell us you got separated?" (Chew, 2019, p. 140/141). In this sentence, Chandra used "us" instead of "me" although it was obvious that the others already knew about the separation news; being unable to accept that she was the only one who did not know, once again, she was left out.

In Act Two, Scene One, the setting where the ethnic writer club gathered is a warm place of trees shedding blossom. Miranda has brought a large thermos of hot chocolate to share. "She has done it before, and no one in the group thought her hot chocolate is any good—it is thick and sludgy, but we don't have the heart to tell her. Phoebe brought a pandan cake" (Chew, 2019, p. 134). In Japanese philosophy, gathering at that place with your family or close ones means enjoying our own passing time on earth with the same joy and passion (Helen, 2017, para 8). It is precisely what Chandra and her friends do; they enjoy their time together, discussing their progress in writing. This warm setting also appears when Chandra and Kevan talk about their problems, especially about Chandra's relationship with Wei. They talk underneath a blossoming tree. "We stand away from the group, underneath a tree shedding blossoms. Some land in Kevan's hair" (Chew, 2019, p. 138). A blossom tree in Japanese philosophy means a new beginning; it depicts a new relationship between Chandra and Wei. Another meaning of it is the end, and it depicts the end of Chandra and Kevan's relationship in a bitter way, "We slept

together months ago, once. I thought we had worked it out, clarified like oil and vinegar." (Chew, 2019, p. 139). Chandra's behavior, once again, contradicts her South-East Asian values to respect a partner by the way she settles things with Kevan. After having a one-night stand with him, she runs away, leaving Kevan as if there was nothing between them, and starts pursuing another man to sleep with.

In addition, several scenes indicate the ambiguity of Wei's sexual orientation. The story is based in Britain. However, all members of the writer group are Asian. Asian people are mostly oriented towards Eastern culture which is known for its conservatism. Thus, those who identify themselves as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender (LGBT) often encounter obstacles that non-LGBT people do not; even if the relationship is consensual and takes place in private. In the short story, Wei seems trying to hide his sexuality from the group. Contradicting Chandra's constant, unwavering bringing, Wei's mysteriousness continues in one of the plots of his accused metafiction that he's working on. "His protagonist is a young man who gets haunted by a hungry ghost with a confused identity, so he has to keep feeding it joss paper products that the Chinese burn for their dead," (Chew, 2019, p. 130). Authors oftentimes unconsciously use literary works as a form of self-reflection and portray themselves as one of the characters (Nurhamidah, Purwanto, and Ekaningsih, 2019). Putting an emphasis on the "confused identity" part, the ghost character in Wei's short story could very well mirror his conflicting sexuality, and as we later know that the protagonist in his story is portrayed to be gay. The part where the protagonist in Wei's story "has to keep feeding the ghost joss paper products that the Chinese burn for their dead," is likely to have a meaning that Wei planned to keep his sexual orientation in the closet and continue to act like a straight man in front of others as a result of his confusion and deniability. He might be afraid that his new friends figure out about his sexuality. It makes him feel compelled to hide his true identity so that others do not know.

Moreover, it is also supported by Miranda and Phoebe's supposition of Wei's ambiguous sexuality. Phoebe implies that Wei is a closeted homosexual man because she commented that it was inappropriate to write about a homosexual character when the writer is not even homosexual. "I think it is a problem writing about a gay protagonist if you are not gay. Isn't that appropriation?" (Chew, 2019, p. 133). However, Wei immediately changed the subject by asking them, "More to the point, can short stories have footnotes?" (Chew, 2019, p. 133). It might be revealed that he is reluctant to declare his sexuality because he is the only newcomer there. The formation of male sexualities and sexual identities is also influenced by men's public and private lives (Seidler, 1992). In other words, men can maintain a masculine persona in public while identifying as homosexual in private. Men experience and identify with their sexualities concerning class, age, ethnicity, peers, and personalities, as well as social and cultural beliefs (Ellis and Mitchell, 2000). For instance, most people who still have not come out are afraid of a response from someone they trust, and Wei is no exception. Wei does not want his sexual identity known for fear of being ridiculed as LGBTQ+ is often considered taboo and immoral in East culture. The fact that he is an LGBTQ+ member within a minority makes him have to be careful in everything from his actions to his words.

The way characters respond and adjust to the setting can reveal their emotion. During their break, Wei approached Chandra outside and asked her to drink just

the two of them. "You wanna grab a drink sometime? Not with the group, I mean..." (Chew, 2019, p. 134). It might be revealed that Wei is trying to cover up their thoughts about himself as a homosexual man, so he asked Chandra out so that they all did not suspect him as gay. However, Miranda and Phoebe are pissed with Wei and Chandra in this scene, which causes them to tap the glass behind Wei and Chandra. "I hear a tap on the glass behind me. It is Miranda and Phoebe." (Chew, 2019, p. 134). While they are frowning and motioning for them to return inside, they demonstrate their displeasure with Chandra and Wei, who both seemed to be having a little fun time outside the Mexican eatery during the break. The reason why they are pissed might be revealed in "It's not sexual, per se, because Phoebe is married and Miranda has a bloke. We just can't help ourselves. It's liddat lor" (Chew, 2019, p. 134). It indicates that they are always envious of each other, whether one of them is happy or not.

The new relationship between Chandra and Wei continues when they decide to have a drinking date in a bar, "Wei and I started laughing. For a moment, there was a rhythm, a beat, and that was our hidden transcript." (Chew, 2019, p. 135). As the same diasporic characters in the United Kingdom, they feel connected after talking about their experience living in a foreign country. However, when the bartender gives Wei a gay signal with a drawing in the paycheck and a wink, the moment becomes awkward. The bartender is sure that Wei is gay. Surprisingly, Wei admits that he is straight and willing to have a passionate night with Chandra. Unlike Kevan, Wei does not finish his night with Chandra, "A tent had been set up between our bodies, and he said he was not ready." (Chew, 2019, p. 137). The reason Wei is not ready probably because he is still uncertain about his sexual orientation after the uncertain flirt with the bartender. Wei wants to confirm it by doing an intimate session with Chandra; however, his heart denies it. He chooses to hide it again, refusing to unveil his sexuality to anyone because being a minority as an Asian in a foreign country is already enough for him. Europeans or Westerners often see Asian as one whole race and culture and it is East Asian, also it can be more specified as Chinese. It happens because there is a lack of Asian representation in the West, thus it developed to stereotyping Asians as 'they are all alike outgroup (Weiss, 1970). Most Westerners close their eyes regarding the fact that Asians exist in four other regions; East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia. The Chinese Civil Rights in the United Kingdom, Min Quan (2009), did their research on discrimination and racism against Chinese people in the United Kingdom and they reported that Chinese-origin people in the United Kingdom experience substantial racism, perhaps as much as or more than any other minority ethnic group. According to their research, it is also possible for migrants to get discriminated against for their race. This is exactly what happened to Chandra and Wei; they call themselves "The Heartsick Diaspora" in the bar (Chew, 2019, p. 135).

The discrimination may be the root of Wei's decision to stay in the closet. He cannot imagine the discrimination he would get if he comes out as a part of the LGBT community seeing the reaction he got when he told his plan to make a gay character. Phoebe and Miranda's reactions were not welcoming, except for Chandra's who told him, "Write what you want, Wei. Don't sweat it" (Chew, 2019, p. 133). Wei may think that Chandra is also part of the LGBT community and tries to be open about his sexuality to her, but he is just imagining it in his head. "I said

we should go halfsie; Wei said, the bill or the bartender;" (Chew, 2019, p. 136). When Wei told that joke he wanted to test if Chandra was a part of the LGBT community as him or not, Chandra did not catch that joke and moved forward for Wei instead for an intimate intercourse. It is the moment where Wei closes his closet tightly again by playing along with Chandra's flow even though he cannot endure it in the end. He is afraid of the discrimination he would get from his new small group. LGBT in the United Kingdom is not safe from hate crime and discrimination. According to the research on LGBT in Britain by Bachmann and Gooch (2017), their report shows that two in five trans people (41 percent) have experienced a hate speech and incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months, and one in six LGBT people, who are not trans (16 percent), have experienced a hate crime or incident due to their sexual orientation in the same period. Then, there is no wonder why Wei does not want to be open about his sexuality to others as he feels they will not accept him by attacking him with hate speech or discrimination acts, for he is the minority among the minorities.

The setting also clarifies the ambiguity of the relationship between Chandra and Wei. In Act 2, Scene 2, Chandra and Wei have not been in contact for a week. So, Chandra decided to send a photo of a poster ad for rescreening a movie entitled *Eat Drink Man Woman*. Based on Noel Murray's review, the movie revolves around Chu's family, an aging master chef, to show many foods. Chandra sent the message hoping that Wei will be interested and reply because he is also working on a story related to food. "Wei nods. Like Phoebe, he's also working on a story that incorporates food" (Chew, 2019, 130). Chandra attempted to communicate with Wei again. After all, she fell in love at first sight with Wei and she thought he had the same feeling, especially after the incident in Wei's apartment. However, Wei has turned off his WhatsApp read reports as if he wanted to avoid Chandra completely. Chandra felt more uncomfortable when Wei came with Phoebe because she felt familiar with the vibe "There's a familiarity in their body dynamics-the laughter," (Chew, 2019, 140). The closeness between Phoebe and Wei is just like how close they were a few days ago. On the other hand, Wei acted as if nothing had happened. When Chandra confronted Wei about the text, he replied quickly that he was busy working on the play with Phoebe. We can notice it was just a lame excuse that he used as a way to ignore Chandra. Wei's playboy-like actions can also be intended to make the group believe that he is normal, just like most men who like to play with women since being a playboy is one of the conformity to masculine norms in society (Mahalik et al., 2003). We can also consider that action as a sign that he was not interested in Chandra and everything that happened before was a mistake but he didn't dare to say it directly to her.

Wei also was able to subtly convey the closure between him and Chandra, which he had started and initiated one-sidedly. When Chandra asked about the progress of his short story, he said, "My story? The teenage boy and the ghost are friends. The story is about friendship. I'm really tired of the conventional love story, aren't you?" (Chew, 2019, p. 140). Looking at this sentence, Wei seemed to be emphasizing the part where he admitted to being "tired of the conventional love story," which is what happened between him and Chandra. This statement could also be driven by the situation of his conflicting sexuality, when one is unsure of their sexuality; it is hard to engage in a relationship that is other than platonic and

non-physical. Wei is likely being watchful of not wanting his sexuality to be discussed out in the open by other people and not repeating the same mistake he made by forcing himself onto Chandra, which often results in an awkward situation if things did not go well.

Moreover, during their meeting at the borrowed theatre in Chiswick, they got in a circle on the stage. Chew gave us a description of their sitting position, "...we all take a seat in a circle, Wei to my right, Miranda to my left, Phoebe to her left, then Kevan." (Chew, 2019, p. 140). At one moment, their discussion leads to a fight between Phoebe and Chandra. Miranda shouted the word "MARLIN", a code word that she made for them to end Phoebe's nonstop talking. After that, those who were already sitting in a circle did a kind of staring game. "Wei is not looking at me. Kevan is. Phoebe is looking at Wei. Miranda is looking at Kevan. We're all not allowed to look at the person outright." (Chew, 2019, p. 142). Despite knowing the rule that they cannot look at the person to their right, Chandra still looks at Wei, who is clearly on her right. It strengthens Chandra's character who is not afraid to go against the rules and dares to be different from most people. It is just like what she said before in the introductory paragraph that she was a unique person with a different view and personality, "Everything about me is ambiguous." (Chew, 2019, p. 128). Miranda and Phoebe even said that she was filled with extreme emotion and personality "Miranda and Phoebe think I vacillate between extremes of emotion and personality" (Chew, 2019, p. 128). We can get the idea that she has strong feelings for Wei and couldn't take her eyes off him.

Furthermore, we can dive further to analyze the character by noticing how each character looks at the other characters. "Wei is not looking at me. Kevan is. Phoebe is looking at Wei. Miranda is looking at Kevan." (Chew, 2019, p. 142). So, Chandra and Phoebe were looking at Wei, Kevan was looking at Chandra, and Miranda was looking at Kevan. This can be seen as indicating who they are interested in or who's the person that they like. In other words, through this description, we can know their sexuality. They each stared at the opposite sex, except Wei. We do not know whom he is looking at. Chew even ends Scene 2 Act 2 with a question "So, who is Wei looking at?" (Chew, 2019, p. 142). She gave us no certainty about Wei's sexuality. We never know whether he is attracted to females or males, both, or not at all. Thus, this situation stated and clarifies indirectly about Wei's sexuality that he is a closeted LGBTQ+ member who is afraid to admit it, especially with his fellow minorities. In the end, Wei's sexuality was never fully disclosed.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explained the relationship between the settings and their roles in accentuating the qualities of the diasporic characters, Chandra and Wei, in "The Heartsick Diaspora" (2019). This diaspora phenomenon affects the characters in the story who try to blend into their current circumstances in the Western country. This situation eventually made them change their personality; both adopted certain Western practices and values. Therefore, some of their actions and behavior contradict the ideals standard as Asians.

Chandra is biracial as she is half-Indian and half-Malaysian Chinese. However, she is already accustomed to Western culture that upholds individual freedom and

liberation. Sometimes, she also seems not proud of her own culture and refers to it as lame or boring. It influences Chandra's choice of outfits in which she chooses to dress androgynously. In addition, she also considers sex, not a sacred thing anymore since she has done it before marrying. Chandra slowly turns her lifestyle into what she thinks she fits into without considering her native background as an Asian woman. Nevertheless, she still not completely forgets or despises her native culture.

On the other hand, Wei is still confused about his sexuality and tries to hide it from his Asian friends in the group for fear of being ridiculed. It is because Asians considered homosexuality as a deviant act in their culture even though they are in a place whose people saw it as common and legal. As an immigrant, Wei tries so hard to fit in since he belongs to a minority group. Thus, even though Wei lives in a Western country, he cannot be honest about his sexual orientation among his Asian friends. It shows that both the current place and the hometown of the diasporic characters have huge influences on their personality, ways of thinking, and actions. In short, through this short story, Chew carries the idea that even when we are far from our hometown, especially if it is for a long time, we cannot separate our native culture and tradition since we always carry it within ourselves.

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Symbols for Hijabs in *The Proudest Blue The Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali

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Abstract. This study aimed at analyzing symbols that represent hijab as depicted in *The Proudest Blue The Story of Hijab and Family* written by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali and illustrated by Hatem Aly. This study was a qualitative study that analyze a text, so that the data were in the form of sentences and illustrations taken from the book. The data were collected by reading the book, identifying the data, and classifying the data. Then, the collected data were analyzed using the semiotic theory from Peirce. Based on the findings, there were five symbols representing hijab. The first two symbols are related to the authors' choice of color. The author uses the pink to illustrate that hijabs are related to love and the blue color that is related to religious symbol of piety and chastity or sincerity. The blue color was the most dominant symbol in the book. In addition, the authors recommend that hijab is not a whisper, a laugh, and a tablecloth. These three symbols represent hijabs as something strong, not a joke to be laughed at and not only a thing to cover. All symbols used by the author are positive ones which challenge the negative stereotypes about hijab in which it is associated with radicalism and terrorism.

Keywords: *hijab stereotype, symbols, symbolism*

http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes

INTRODUCTION

Symbolism is not a novel issue in literature as it is popular since the nineteenth century. There are a number of definitions of symbolism from many theorists.

Symbolism commonly found in literary works is defined as using objects to represent an abstract idea so they have other meanings besides their literal meanings (Fadaee, 2011 in Yunita, 2012). In other words, writers use material things to represent immaterial things (Wulandari, 2016). Based on these two definitions, it can be said that the authors use the power of words or images to express their idea so that the words or images have different meanings besides their literal or natural meanings.

There are a number of reasons of using symbolism in literary works. First, symbolism is regarded as an interesting method to express something (Mohammed & Yahya, 2017). For example, 'her face in red' is more interesting and aesthetic than 'she is so angry'. The red color in this context has a meaning to point out an anger felt by someone. The red color stands for another meaning besides its literal meaning as one of the colors. Second, symbolism gives more highlights to the meanings that the authors want to convey (Yunita, 2017). For example, Wulandari (2016) found that Elie Wiesel in her work entitled *Night* used the word 'night' to highlight and give a deeper meaning of misery that is usually represented by darkness. Third, symbolism can share the authors' philosophy embedded in their works (Yunita, 2017). As generally understood that authors will always have an underlying philosophy expressed in their works; using symbolism can be one of ways in expressing their philosophy that they want to instill in their works. Because of the reasons above, it is understandable that many writers employ symbolism in their works because it can function as a way to express their idea more interestingly, highlight the meanings in their work and share their philosophy indirectly; these three functions can add values and aestheticism in their works.

There are three types of symbols including universal symbols, conventional symbols, and private symbols. Based on Wulandari (2016), universal symbols are symbols recognized and accepted by various cultures and societies naturally and universally. It means that those symbols are close to many cultures and daily life. For example, light is regarded as a symbol of knowledge and crossbones on a medicine bottle is as a symbol of poison in various cultures and societies. Furthermore, she explained conventional symbols or cultural symbols are words that people learn to represent something built by a certain time and place. It means that conventional and cultural symbol may have a specific meaning depending on where the symbols used. For example, in western culture, a dog is a symbol of friendship, loyalty and championship. Finally, she asserted that private symbols are symbols depending on the author's choice in which the author chooses the symbol and meaning (Wulandari, 2016). It means that the author has an authority of choosing the symbol for their story based on his/her own reasons. The symbols that the authors chose will have different meaning besides their literal meaning depending on the context of the story. Thus, it will be possible that an object used by a certain writers may have different meaning in another story written by another writers because the contexts are different.

The next question raised is 'how we can differentiate which one is a symbol or just an ordinary word'. Perrine (1994 in Yunita, 2017) explained some indicators for symbols: (1) they are frequently repeated and emphasized throughout the story, (2) their meanings are supported by the context of the story, and (3) they give different meanings from their literal meanings, or (4) they have more than one meaning. By

looking at these four indicators, it is crystal clear that symbols will always be pinned points in a story that have other meanings beyond their literal meanings. In order to understand the other meanings, the readers should look at the context of the story. Thus, a context is an important aspect in uncovering the meaning of the symbol itself.

Analyzing symbols cannot be separated from a linguistics branch called semiotics. The most basic definition of semiotics is the study of sign (Chandler, 2007). Furthermore, Chandler (2007) explains that in semiotics, it is not only about the study of what people refer as 'signs' in everyday speech, but also about anything that 'stands for' something else. This assertion highlights that anything can be symbols or signs as long as they stand for something else or have different meaning from their literal meanings.

Semiotics and the theory of signs or symbols have been developed throughout the history. Among semioticians in the history, two primary theorists are the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce. Saussure's model of the sign is in the dyadic tradition consisting of a sign vehicle and its meaning (Chandler, 2007). In this model, a sign is the result of relationship between the signifier and the signified or called as signification (Chandler, 2007). In contrast, Peirce develop a triadic model about signs called as Peirce's semiotic triangle consisting of object, representamen, and interpretant (Chandler, 2007). Moreover, Chandler (2007) explains that an object is "something beyond the sign to which it refers (referent)" (2007: 29), an interpretant is "not interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign" (2007: 29), and the representamen is the form which the signs takes (not necessarily material, though usually interpreted as such) – called as by some theorists the 'sign vehicle' (2007:29). The sign itself is "the whole meaningful ensemble" (Chandler, 2007: 30). The interaction of these three components creates a semiosis process that can cover meanings carried by symbols. Therefore, this study takes the semiotics theory of Peirce for the analysis as the researchers believes in Peirce's assertion in Chandler (2007:29) that "the sign is a unity or what is represented (the object), how it is represented (representamen) and how it is interpreted (the interpretant)".
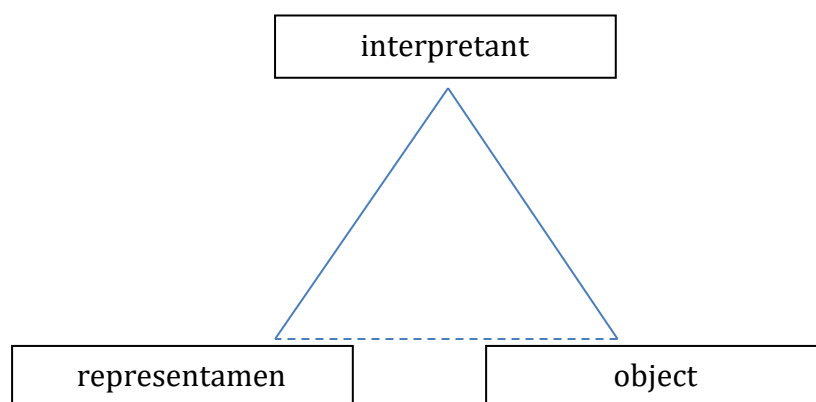

Figure 1. Peirce's Semiotic Triangle (Chandler, 2007: 30)

Peirce defined a symbol as "a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the

Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object," (Peirce, 1998: 292, in Thornbury, 2011: 50). Further, he divided signs into three categories including (1) an icon defined as "a sign to be used as such because it possesses the quality signified", (2) an index defined as "a sign fit to be used as such because it is in real reaction with the object denoted", and (3) a symbol is "a sign fit to be used as such because it determines the interpretant sign," (Peirce, 1998: 307, in Thornbury, 20 11: 50). Example of an icon is a map and a territory of its map, a photograph of Churchill is an icon of the original item, whereas the example of an index is a weathervane obediently moves around to point and smoke for the Ranger as an index of fire (Wulandari, 2016). Symbols can be abstract or not sch as idea, object, conventional or non-conventional to represent something else (Hermawan, 2010, in Wulandari 2016).

There a number of studies using the Peirce's semiotic theory for analyzing literary works. However, among those studies, symbolism in children's literature especially in picture books has not been excessively studied. It is deplorable because picture books have a prominent role to children. One of the reasons why picture books are prominent is because they have visual and written features that help children to think critically (Law, 2012). Similarly, Guijarro and Sanz (2008) also asserts that picture books have visual that can add to the verbal or they can correlate to each other to make meanings in a text. Children should read and connect the text they are reading with the pictures to understand the story. Besides, picture books are indeed regarded to be important to develop children's metacognitive skills (Sundmark, 2018). More specifically, the symbolism for hijab in a children's picture book has not been taken sufficiently into account. In fact, a hijab is stereotyped as a negative symbol related to terrorism and intolerance (Weigchelbaumer, 2016). On the other hand, Ridouani (2011) asserted that hijab is related to a symbol of religion and chastity in general. In other words, hijabs are associated with radical actions leading to discrimination towards Muslim in general, and Muslim women more specifically. Thus, from the initial data above, analyzing symbols for hijab in children literature will shed a light and enrich studies about symbolism. It is compelling to see how authors use symbolism to depict hijab as well as counter negative stereotypes of hijab that exist in the society.

Based on the explanation above, this study took a picture book entitled *The Proudest Blue The Story of Hijab and Family* written by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali and illustrated by Hatem Aly as the object of the study because it takes the United States of America (USA) as the setting. The USA itself is known for the growing stereotypes towards Muslims and hijabs. This study aimed at analyzing symbols for hijab depicted in the object of the study as a counter stereotype towards hijab. By doing so, this study was expected to contribute to fill the missing puzzle in the research area of symbolism related to hijab in children's literature.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative method in order to answer the research questions. The qualitative method used descriptions and sentences in order to analyze and understand human experiences (Mohajan, 2018). The data of this study were not in the form of numbers so that quantitative method was not an option. There were two types of data in this study. The first was the primary data in which the data were in

the form of sentences and illustrations taken from the picture book entitled *The Proudest Blue The Story of Hijab and Family* written by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali and illustrated by Hatem Aly. The next was the secondary data taken from books or articles discussing related theory in this study. By looking at the nature of descriptive study, it is no doubt that qualitative method was suitable to help the researchers answer the research questions in this study.

There were four steps taken to collect the data. The first step was reading the picture book several times to understand and recognize the symbols in the story. The second step was identifying the data. The third step was classifying the data. The researchers classified the data based on the category of symbols found in the story. The fourth, after collecting the data, the data were analyzed using the semiotic theory by Peirce. Semiotic approach explains that codes are communicated in verbal and non-verbal forms as stated by Chandler (2007). By analyzing the verbal codes in the form of sentences and the non-verbal forms in the form of pictures, the analysis tried to capture the symbols for hijab and their relations as the counter stereotype for hijab comprehensively.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, there are some symbols to represent hijab in the object of the study. The first is 'pink' color. In the story, it was narrated that the narrator's mom loves pink hijab as stated in the following sentences, "Mama holds out the pink. Mama loves pink," (Muhammad, Ali & Aly, 2019:1).

Figure 2. Asiah, the Narrator, and Mom were choosing hijab for Asiah.

In Figure 2, it can be seen that it was Asiah's first day of wearing hijab. Asiah is the narrator's sister. Her mom is holding a pink hijab as she loves pink and suggests Asiah for wearing it. The pink color here does not solely mean a color, but it has another meaning as indicated. Figure 2 shows the interaction of object, representamen and interpretant.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ A positive color that symbolizes         │
│ compassion, and love                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

            ╱╲
           ╱  ╲
          ╱    ╲
         ╱      ╲
┌──────┐╱        ╲┌──────┐
│ Love │──────────│ Pink │
└──────┘          └──────┘
```
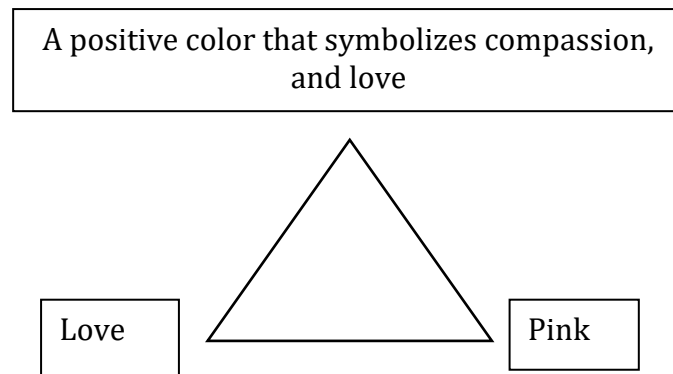
Figure 3. Pink as a Symbol

Pink color in the story stands as a symbol of a positive color that gives warm and comfortable feeling such as love and compassion. It is aligned with the meaning of pink color based on Olesen (2023) that it symbolizes compassion, love and playfulness. The author chose this color as mom's favorite color because the authors want to show that hijab is a symbol of love and positive color to give comfortable feelings. This depiction is on the contrary of hijab as a symbol of radicalism and intolerance (Weigchelbaumer, 2016). The authors demonstrate that hijab is not a dark symbol by correlating it with pink color.

The next symbol is still related to the color choice from the authors. The blue color is the most dominant symbol in the story because of three reasons: (1) it appears in the title, *The Proudest Blue The Story of Hijab and Family*, (2) the illustration is dominated with blue color, and (3) the word 'blue' is the most frequent used word in the story. In Figure 2, when the mother suggests Asiah to wear pink color, she rejects and chooses a blue hijab for her first day if wearing hijab. First day if wearing hijab is an important occasion for a girl and the authors choose blue color. It is stated that, "Behind the counter is the brightest blue. The color of ocean, if you squint your eyes and pretend there's no line between the water and the sky. It's the first-day hijab. Asiya knows it. I know it. We're sister," (Muhammad, Ali & Aly, 2019:1). The blue color is closely related to ocean that gives calmness. In addition, the sentence, "The color of ocean, if you squint your eyes and pretend there's no line between the water and the sky", points out an interesting meaning that a hijab does not differentiate someone and it is not a reason to discriminate someone because she wears a hijab.

Moreover, based on Monica and Luzar (2011), blue is also closely related to faithfulness, peace, and justice. In addition, Cerrato explains in his book entitled T*he Meaning of Colors* that blue is used to symbolize piety and sincerity (11). This is aligned with what Ridouni (2011) asserts that a hijab is a symbol related to religious values and chastity. Choosing the blue color has a message that the authors want to represent hijab as a religion symbol related to faithfulness, piety, and sincerity or chastity. The blue color also gives a meaning of calmness instead of fear. The following figure explains the color blue as a symbol in the book.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Calmness and religious symbol of piety │
│            and sincerity             │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  △
      ┌───────────────┐   ┌───────────────┐
      │   Calmness    │   │     Blue      │
      └───────────────┘   └───────────────┘
```
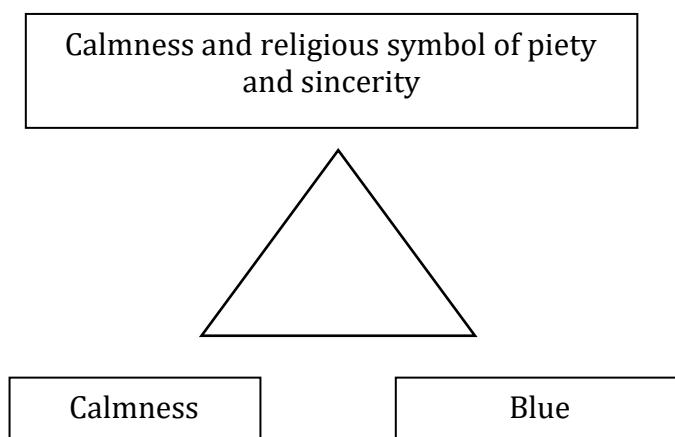
Figure 4. Blue as a Symbol

Another symbol to represent a hijab is 'not a whisper' as stated in the quotation, "Asiya's hijab isn't a whisper. Asiya's hijab is like the sky on a sunny day. The sky isn't whisper. It's always there, special, and regular. The first day of wearing hijab is important. It means being strong," (Muhammad, Ali & Aly, 2019: 9-10). Based on *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary*, whisper means to speak very quietly to somebody so that other people cannot hear what you are saying. By saying that Asiya's hijab is not a whisper, the authors want to convey that wearing hijab means being strong and stating their identity as a brave Muslim. The first day of wearing hijab is important because it means that Asiya is ready to face any challenges of being a Muslim girl in the US where a lot of discriminations addressed towards Muslim people. Wearing hijab makes her noticeable as a Muslim girl and she is ready for that and not hesitant in stating her identity. The Figure 5 shows the 'not a whisper' as a symbol for hijab.

```
        ┌───────────────────────────────┐
        │  Being strong and not hesitant │
        └───────────────────────────────┘
                        △
  ┌───────────────────┐     ┌───────────────────┐
  │    Not quietly    │     │   Not a Whisper   │
  └───────────────────┘     └───────────────────┘
```
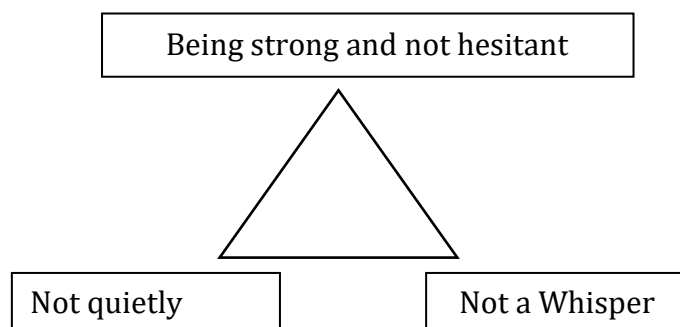
Figure 5. Not a Whisper as a Symbol

The fifth symbol found in the book is a hijab is stated as 'not a laugh'. In the book it is narrated that some boys were laughing at Asiya who was wearing the hijab because they thought it was strange and funny. The narrator said, "Asiya's hijab isn't a laugh. Asiya's hijab is like the ocean waving to the sky. It's always there, strong, and friendly. Some people won't understand your hijab, Mama had said. But you understand who you are, one day they will too," (Muhammad, Ali & Aly, 2019: 15-16). From that narration, it can be inferred that some people will not understand the meaning of wearing hijab. However, as far as Asiya knows the reasons of wearing

hijab and her identity as a Muslim, it does not matter, one day people will understand and not laugh at her hijab. The following is the triadic model of 'not laugh' as a symbol of hijab as not something funny or a joke to be laugh at.

Not something funny or a joke to be laugh at

Not funny

Not a Laugh
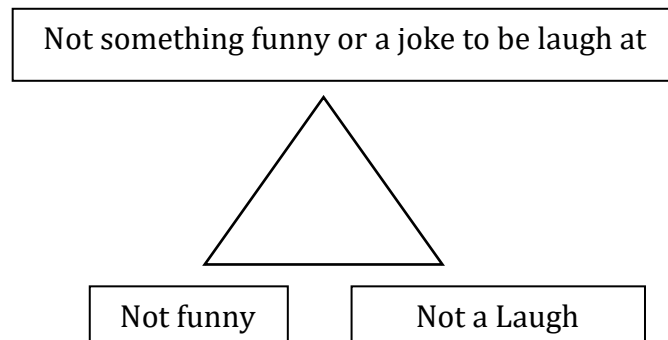
Figure 6. Laugh as a Symbol

The last symbol is hijabs are stated as 'not a tablecloth'. "Recess time is for five cartwheels in a row. I land the last one near the sixth graders. Near a boy yelling, "I'm going to pull that tablecloth off your head. Asiya's hijab isn't tablecloth. Asiya's hijab is blue. Only blue," (Muhammad, Ali & Aly, 2019: 19:21). In this data, the authors highlight that wearing hijab is not about covering or hiding Asiya's hairs, but it means more than that. In order to give the deeper meaning, the author once again pointed out the blue color which has an intention for highlighting that Asiya's hijab is not a cover like a tablecloth, but it is a symbol of religion related to piety and chastity.

Not a cover to hide something

Not a cover
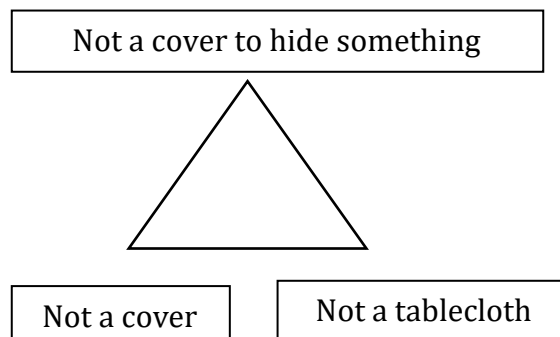
Not a tablecloth

Figure 7. Tablecloth as a symbol

The data above clearly show that throughout the story, the author has an intention to represent hijabs to be something positive using positive colors, objects and dictions. The positive symbols for hijabs are on the contrary with how hijabs are usually picturized as something negative such as the symbol of radicalism and terrorism.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings explained in the previous section, it can be concluded that the authors represent hijab using positive symbols such as the pink and blue color. The pink color symbolizes love and compassion whereas the blue color represents

calmness and religious symbol related piety and sincerity or chastity. These colors counter the notion of hijab is associated with radicalism and terrorism which is far from love and calmness. In addition, the authors also suggest that hijab is not a whisper, not a laugh and not a tablecloth. The authors want to covey that a hijab is not a cover to hide something or a joke that people can laugh at. It is about giving statement of being brave and strong Muslim girls or women. These all symbols give a solid message that the authors want to counter the negative stereotypes about hijabs by symbolizing hijabs with positive ones.

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Raising Bilingual Children in Home Environment of Brunei: A Study on Vocabulary Acquisition

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Abstract. This study aims to contribute to current research on bilingual children's vocabulary studies and the home environment. It explored how home environments affected children's L1 and L2 vocabulary acquisition. The children in this small-scale study (n=40) were exposed to Brunei Malay (L1) alongside English (L2) from a young age, classifying the children as bilingual first-language learners (BFL). This study examines the children's L1 and L2 language development and it used vocabulary knowledge as a measuring tool for data analysis. It also considers the home environment and parental role as factors contributing to the children's language progress. As a result, this study found positive correlations between children's L1 and L2 receptive and active vocabulary knowledge. It also found the children's L1 and L2 interaction at home with family members. Conversely, the findings shown that there was no significant difference between the responses of 5 and 6 year old children in their L1 and L2 comprehension as well as production tests. This study also found that children who performed well in L1 and L2 vocabulary tests come from households that were open to bilingualism. In addition, parents were open to bilingualism for their children with the condition that the children prioritised their L1 more than L2. The main motive for bilingualism for their children was to enhance their communication skills and increase their chances of future employment. Hence, parents' perception of L1 and L2 is crucial because it shapes the language usages that were exposed to the children at home.

Keywords: *Brunei; bilingualism; Bilingual First Language Acquisition; vocabulary acquisition; parental role; language use at home.*

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INTRODUCTION

A bilingual household is relatively typical today. Such household is the place where children are exposed to more than just one language at home. While L1 indicates one's first language, L2 or a second language is defined as any language besides L1, usually used for academics, business, or administration (Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, E., 2013; Crystal, 1997). However, in the present day, L2 carries a much more straightforward reason for its acquisition to begin at an early age. Research shows the importance of home environment and parental involvement in children's language development, as interacting with family members can improve their vocabulary (Beals and Tabors, 1995). Often home environment and family members are the children's first language exposure, making home "a safe and stimulating environment that promotes interaction and communication" (Bower, 2014, p.104) to optimise their overall development in their early years.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's (1978) Social Cultural Theory emphasises socialising within the environment and the individuals' role in stimulating interactions. These two components contribute to the children's language acquisition, providing the space for language progress. The learner can enhance their language skills by learning from others who have more knowledge than them (also known as More Knowledgeable Other or MKO). In return, MKO can guide and correct the learners if needed. Parents and older siblings hold the role of MKO to the children at home because they learn from interacting with their family members. Households welcoming L1 and L2 interaction at home are more likely to produce bilingual children. Thus, the children are more likely to be fluent in both languages faster when exposed to L1 and L2 as they have more time to practice them.

In the case of bilingual children in Brunei, most children are exposed to both Brunei Malay (L1) and English (L2) from a young age, and some are even introduced to them before their formal education begins. This type of language acquisition is also defined as bilingual first language acquisition or BFLA, which is described as acquiring L1 and L2 simultaneously when children are exposed to both languages at a young age (Genesee and Nicoladis, 2006). In some cases, the children have already learned L1 and, later on, L2, all before age three. Other studies have also referred to them as dual-language learners (e.g., Rivera Pérez, Hart, and Lund, 2021).

In a nutshell, Malay and English are highly regarded in Brunei. This is especially evident in the nation's education system, where the Ministry of Education has implemented a bilingual education system. Aside from language subjects, other subjects are to be taught in English, such as Mathematics, Science, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) from Primary Level onwards (Ministry of Education, 2013). By doing so, an emphasis on bilingualism at a young age is set in which it is almost inevitable for a child to remain monolingual as both Malay and English are used in school. However, it is essential to distinguish that *Bahasa Melayu* or Standard Malay is the variation of Malay that is taught in school. Standard Malay is also commonly used for administration and media purposes (see Martin, 1992 & McLellan et al., 2016). In contrast, Brunei Malay is widely used in casual interactions among Bruneians.

An example of the language situation in Brunei can be extracted from Salbrina & Zayani's (2021) description of an interaction between a mother and her child, which was dominantly English. In this interaction, it is noted that the child spoke almost English monolingually, whereas the mother had instances of Malay. They also stated that English-only interaction is uncommon amongst Bruneians, while bilingual use of Brunei Malay and English is more common in most conversations. The previous description of the interaction between mother and daughter highlighted the early introduction of English from home and parents providing an encouraging space for their children to develop their L2.

To date, a study has not investigated bilingual children's vocabulary development and its link to the home environment in Brunei. However, it is emphasised numerously by previous research that the home environment is an influential space to develop one's language skills. This is because the children are surrounded by people they are familiar with and are more likely to interact with them. Baharuddin (2017) has found that children's vocabulary acquisition occurs incidentally when they are more exposed to a language. Providing a supportive environment for bilingual language use is also essential. Another study has noted that it is due to the informal and casual setting the home environment offers, which encourages children to acquire vocabulary much easier than in formal places such as schools (Al-Zoubi, 2018). He further stated that incidentally acquiring vocabulary is the most effective method for children to build their vocabulary knowledge; hence, he suggests that home is an ideal environment.

Thordardottir's (2011) study confirms a strong correlation between language exposure and vocabulary performance when investigating receptive and productive vocabulary of 5-year-old monolingual and bilingual children of French and English. In contrast, she also compared bilingual children with early- and late-onset and found no significant difference in their vocabulary skills despite having equal language exposure to both languages. These findings further emphasised that exposure to language, instead of age, is a key factor in vocabulary acquisition for bilingual children.

Parents' attitudes towards L1 and L2 affect their children's language rules at home, as noted by Lee et al. (2015). Their research of parental attitudes, beliefs and intended behaviours from Mexican mothers in the United States of America with Spanish (L1) and English (L2) found that parents support bilingualism for their children. They believed that being fluent in English widens their children's employment options while simultaneously being fluent in Spanish preserves their culture. The researchers also noted that besides home and school environment, the parents' past experiences with bilingualism affected their choice to encourage their children to be proficient in Spanish and English. As such, parents' attitudes towards bilingualism can impact children's home exposure to L1 and L2.

Besides parental influence, other family members can also contribute to the children's vocabulary development. Salbrina and Noor Hasharina (2021) have found that grandparents carry the role of L1 maintenance, indirectly encouraging their bilingual children to practice L1 when conversing with them. In addition, the significance of older siblings to their younger siblings' language development is impactful. Tsinivits and Unsworth (2021) investigated the influence of older siblings on their younger siblings in Greek-Dutch families, whereby Greek (L1) is the minority language of the community while Dutch (L2) is the official language.

Their study highlights that children with older siblings have higher comprehension and production vocabulary skills and morphosyntactic complexity in their L2 than first-born children. With that, older siblings could promote the use of L2 with their younger siblings.

Interestingly, some studies have raised concerns about whether introducing two languages from a young age can result in L1 neglect. A study has found that L2 language preference, especially among the younger generation, could lead to Monolingual English in Brunei if the trend continues (Salbrina, 2020). This is fascinating, considering that despite having English as their L2, they also prefer using it in conversations with their L1. Previous studies have clarified that second language acquisition does not replace L1 knowledge; rather, L2 knowledge builds on top of L1 knowledge (Cummins, 2001). Nevertheless, relating this statement to the concern of L1 neglect due to L2 preference, it is plausible that this concern stems from either the lack of L1 practice or more L2 exposure than L1 that is evident in the younger generation's daily interaction. Uncertainty about children's use of language is a common trait that parents face when raising bilingual children (see de Houwer, 2007), because they fear the lack of effort for L1 maintenance that they witness in their children. Furthermore, these claims highlight the impact of language exposure and how it affects one's language use and preference.

The abovementioned studies show the overall image of how children's language fluency may depend on their environment and the individuals they often communicate with. The studies also underscore the possibility of L2 dominance amongst Bruneians in the future and provide a glimpse of parents' attitudes toward their children's language use. The present study contributes to the current literature by investigating Bruneian children's vocabulary knowledge to measure their L1 and L2 skills, and find its correlation to the home environment.

Therefore, this article compares L1 and L2 vocabulary and the use of L1 and L2 in social interactions between family members and children. The reason behind this comparison is to explore how the home environment contributes to the children's L1 and L2 vocabulary acquisition among Bruneian Malay families. In addition, this article considers how parents' attitudes towards bilingualism for their children shape vocabulary skills based on the languages they use at home. As inspired by Thordardottir's (2011) study which investigated children's language exposure as well as age as factors to their vocabulary development, this study also includes examining age by comparing the vocabulary progress of children aged 5 and 6.

RESEARCH METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The participants in this study were bilingual children (n=40) of Brunei Malay (L1) and English (L2) in the age range of 5:4 to 6:4. As part of the study's prerequisite, the participants could understand both Brunei Malay and English. In addition, according to parents' responses in the questionnaire, all participants use both languages to a certain degree at home.

All participants were exposed to L2 at an early age, classifying them as bilingual first-language learners. Data collection for this study consisted of a questionnaire

on language use at home which parents were tasked to complete and an experiment that examined the children's L1 and L2 vocabulary knowledge in comprehension and production skills.

The study has been challenged with an obstacle throughout data collection, mainly following the strict Covid-19 standard operating procedure set by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. Hence, this study underwent two phases. The first phase occurred during the online learning period, whereby data was collected via an online platform for both the experiment and questionnaire. Meanwhile, the data collected during the second phasewas done when the school reopens to the public, allowing the experiment to be completed with face-to-face interaction and online and printed questionnaires.

Questionnaire for Parents

The questionnaire aims to extract information on direct language use at home. Parents were asked to rate their children's use and understanding of L1 and L2 using a Likert scale for the first two sections. Parents were also asked questions concerning the individuals the children interact with, the language used during interactions, and how often they spend time with these individuals. The final section also asked parents to rate the importance of being fluent in Brunei Malay and English for the children and to justify their reasoning.

The parents needed to complete the questionnaire because it consisted of participation consent approval, stating that parents were aware of and agreed to their children's involvement in the experiment, which was also recorded for reviewing purposes. Initially, the questionnaire was done in English; however, due to a lack of responses from parents, it was translated into Standard Malay. By doing so, parents had the option to choose whichever languages they were more comfortable with.

Vocabulary Experiment

Children's receptive and active vocabulary knowledge were tested in comprehension and production skills. The experiment was done in two sessions: in Brunei Malay and English. These two sessions must be done consecutively to ensure the reliability of the data collected from the students from the same day's vocabulary knowledge. Before beginning the experiment, the instructor gave explicit instructions to the students to follow the language. If the instructor used Brunei Malay, the students were expected to follow, and the same instruction applied to the English session of the experiment. The instructor needed to be mindful of her language in the experiment because it could encourage the children to code-switch and to mimic the instructor. By instructing the children to follow the language set, the instructor had to be aware of any code-switching instances the children made on their own, as it reflected a preference for either language.

For the online interview and for the vocabulary experiment, parents were asked to select a time and date that were convenient for the parents and their children via a Zoom meeting. The experiment began with Brunei Malay, and then English as the language of instruction. Parents were allowed to stay throughout the interview, but they were reminded to let their children answering the questions themselves. As for face-to-face interviews, the schools provided quiet rooms to ensure the

children were able to focus on the vocabulary tests. Before conducting the online and face-to-face interviews, parents were asked for their consent to record the interview session for reviewing purposes.

All of the materials for the vocabulary tests were made into a PowerPoint form, with each slide showcased each category, and each item was visually presented. This PowerPoint was screen-shared with the children for the online interview, while the slides were displayed using the instructor's iPad for the face-to-face interview.

Comprehension Test

The comprehension test consists of five categories: fruits, vegetables, household items, kitchen items, and places in Brunei. Each category has a total of five items: 1) two target items; 2) three distractors. This can be seen in the following table: -

Table 1. Materials Used in Comprehension Test

Categories	Target Items	Distractors
Fruits	pineapple/*nanas* and watermelon/*sikui*	Banana/*pisang,* grapes/*anggur,* and coconut/*kelapa*
Vegetables	Carrots/*lobak* and cucumber/*timun*	Corn/*jagung*, onion/*bawang*, and pumpkin/*labu*
Household Items	Umbrella/*payung* and blanket/*selimut*	Toothbrush/*berus gigi*, pillow/*bantal*, and hairbrush/*sisir*,
Kitchen Items	Plates/*piring* and knife/*pisau*	Fork/*garfu*, cup/*cawan*, and spoon/*sudu*,
Places in Brunei	Bridge/*jembatan* and mosque/*masjid*	Market/*pasar*, beach/*pantai*, and hospital/*hospital*

Production Test

The production test consists of four categories: stationery, household items, parts of the body, and animals. Two words were selected for stationery and household items, whereas four target items were chosen for parts of the body and animals. The production test can be seen as elaborated below:

Table 2. Materials Used in Production Test

Categories	Target Items
Stationery	Peraut/*sharpener* and scissors/*gunting*
Household Items	Clock/*jam* and kasut/*shoes*
Parts of the body	Ear/*telinga*, elbow/*siku*, and hand/*tangan*, chin/*dagu.*
Animals	Elephant/*gajah*, duck/*itik*, tiger/*harimau* and bear/*beruang*

Analysing Data

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used in this test to see the correlation between parents' responses from the questionnaire with the children's vocabulary performance from the experiment. A closer investigation of the children's responses was also used for analysis. In addition, parents' attitudes toward L1 and L2 were also compared with their children's vocabulary responses. By doing so, it examines whether parents' language attitudes can influence their children's bilingual language fluency. This study also takes into consideration that age is a factor in the children's L1 and L2 vocabulary development. Therefore, a t-test analysis was used to compare the responses of 5- and 6-year-old children for their comprehension and production tests.

RESULT

Bruneian Children's Vocabulary Performance

Comprehension Test

Children's responses for the comprehension test were recorded and grouped into three categories: 1) correct on the first attempt; 2) correct after the interviewer has given hints; 3) incorrect responses. *Table 1* compares the children's scores on vocabulary comprehension tests in Brunei Malay and English. The children could answer most of the target words effortlessly in both languages. For the L1 test, places in Brunei are ranked the easiest category to respond to out of the five categories; household and kitchen items come in second and third places, whereas fruits and vegetables as the two categories children found as the most challenging category.

Table 1 also shows the children's English comprehension test scores, in which, according to their responses, fruits and vegetables' target words are ranked as the easiest categories to answer. This is evident in the highest score for the target words "carrots" and "watermelon". Household and kitchen items categories come next in line; whereby in these categories, the children were able to answer target words such as "umbrella" and "knife" with ease, but in others, they required guidance from the instructor, such as "blanket" and "plate". Furthermore, the children found that Places in Brunei is the most challenging to answer in English, as evidenced by the least correct answers, most guidance, and incorrect responses.

In addition, when comparing children's comprehension scores in Malay and English, it is evident that the categories ranked the easiest to most difficult to answer in Malay are inverted in English. This suggests that so long as the children know the vocabulary for a particular item in either their L1 or L2.

Table 3. Children's responses for L1 and L2 comprehension test

Target Words	Correct 1st Attempt		Correct after Guidance		Incorrect	
	L1	**L2**	**L1**	**L2**	**L1**	**L2**
Sikui/ Watermelon	77.5%	97.5%	17.5%	2.5%	5.0%	0.0%
Nanas/Pineapple	80.0%	82.5%	12.5%	10.0%	7.5%	7.5%
Timun/Cucumber	80.0%	77.5%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Lobak/Carrot	57.5%	100.0%	32.5%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Payung/Umbrella	92.5%	92.5%	7.5%	2.5%	0.0%	5.0%
Selimut/Blanket	95.0%	62.5%	5.0%	30.0%	0.0%	7.5%
Pisau/Knife	90.0%	77.5%	7.5%	22.5%	2.5%	0.0%
Piring/Plate	90.0%	67.5%	5.0%	20.0%	5.0%	12.5%
Jembatan/Bridge	80.0%	67.5%	15.0%	22.5%	5.0%	10.0%
Masjid/Mosque	100.0%	47.5%	0.0%	32.5%	0.0%	20.0%

Using t-test analysis, the findings suggest that there was no significant difference in the children's responses for L1 and L2 comprehension tests between the 5- and 6-year-old age groups, as evident in *Tables 4* and *5*.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of Age Factor in Malay Comprehension Test

Malay	N-Value	Mean – 5 Years Old	Mean – 6 Years Old	SD – 5 Years Old	SD – 6 Years Old	T-Test (p-value <0.05)
Correct 1st Attempt	40	8.2	8.7	2.28	1.78	0.40
Correct After Guidance	40	1.0	1.0	1.79	1.39	0.29
Wrong	40	0.4	0.4	1.14	0.67	1.00

Table 5 Mean and Standard Deviation of Age Factor in English Comprehension Test

English	N-Value	Mean - 5 Years Old	Mean - 6 Years Old	Sd - 5 Years Old	Sd - 6 Years Old	T-Test (P-Value <0.05)
Correct 1st Attempt	40	7.6	7.9	2.35	2.25	0.73
Correct After Guidance	40	1.8	1.5	1.86	1.82	0.67
Wrong	40	0.7	0.7	1.04	0.88	1.00

Production Test

The children's responses were grouped into four categories for the production test, similar to those used for the comprehension test with an additional category: correct in a different language. This other category is added to investigate the children's language preference and whether they switch languages apart from the language of instruction.

Table 2 showcases the children's responses when testing their L1 and L2 vocabulary production skills in the experiment. Among the twelve target words,

target words "*telinga*" (ear), "*tangan*" (hand), "*kasut*" (shoes), "*gunting*" (scissors), and "*jam*" (clock) have the most correct responses. In contrast, "*peraut*" (sharpener), "*siku*" (elbow), "*dagu*" (chin), and "*beruang*" (bear) have the most incorrect responses. As for the L2 test, it is evident in the table below that target words "shoes", "hand", "elephant", "bear", and "ear" have the most correct responses, while "elbow", "chin", "sharpener", and "scissors" have the most incorrect responses.

Additionally, their responses show that while they show excellent vocabulary production skills for animals, there were also instances where their first responses were incorrect due to overextension. For example, children mistakenly answered "*singa*" (lion) instead of "tiger". However, after the interviewer pointed out the striped fur in the picture and the absence of a lion's mane, some children could answer the target word correctly afterward. Similar to the L1 response for the target word "tiger", some children showed overextension between tiger and lion, despite being corrected in the L1 production session.

Table 6. Children's Responses for L1 and L2 Production Tests

Target Words	Correct 1st Attempt		Correct in Different Languages		Correct after Guidance		Incorrect	
	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2
Peraut/Sharpener	52.5%	25.0%	0.0%	7.5%	12.5%	20.0%	35.0%	47.5%
Gunting/Scissors	82.5%	55.0%	10.0%	2.5%	7.5%	12.5%	0.0%	30.%
Jam/Clock	75.5%	55.0%	12.5%	5.0%	5.0%	17.5%	7.5%	22.5%
Kasut/Shoes	82.5%	85.0%	15.0%	2.5%	0.0%	7.5%	2.5%	5.0%
Telinga/Ear	95.0%	72.5%	5.0%	12.5%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Siku/Elbow	15.0%	20.0%	7.5%	5.0%	35.0%	17.5%	42.5%	57.5%
Tangan/Hand	85.0%	80.0%	10.0%	2.5%	5.0%	7.5%	0.0%	10.0%
Dagu/Chin	27.5%	27.5%	5.0%	0.0%	15.0%	12.5%	52.5%	60.0%
Gajah/Elephant	67.5%	75.0%	17.5%	17.5%	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%	2.5%
Itik/Duck	62.5%	62.5%	5.0%	5.0%	15.0%	20.0%	17.5%	12.5%
Harimau/Tiger	50%	40.0%	12.5%	5.0%	27.5%	37.5%	10.0%	17.5%
Beruang/Bear	30.0%	75.0%	17.5%	2.5%	15.0%	12.5%	37.5%	10.0%

Similar to the comprehension tests, comparisons between the 5- and 6-year-old children were analysed. The findings indicate no significant difference between 5- and 6-year-olds in their L1 and L2 production tests, as seen in *Tables 7* and *8*.

Table 7. Mean and Standard Deviation of Age Factor in Malay Production Test

Malay	N-Value	Mean - 5 Years Old	Mean - 6 Years Old	SD - 5 Years Old	SD - 6 Years Old	T-Test (p-value <0.05)
Correct 1st Attempt	40	6.5	8.0	3.03	2.38	0.090
Correct After Guidance	40	1.3	1.6	1.13	1.10	0.399
Correct In Different Languages	40	1.7	0.7	2.20	1.50	0.086
Wrong	40	2.5	1.8	1.93	1.71	0.202

Table 8. Mean and Standard Deviation of Age Factor in English Production Test

English	N-Value	Mean - 5 Years Old	Mean - 6 Years Old	SD - 5 Years Old	SD - 6 Years Old	T-Test (p-value <0.05)
Correct 1st Attempt	40	6.0	7.4	2.99	1.93	0.098
Correct After Guidance	40	1.9	1.7	1.74	1.49	0.699
Correct In Different Languages	40	0.8	0.5	1.44	0.89	0.360
Wrong	40	3.2	2.5	3.00	1.57	0.361

In brief, the children performed better in L1 and L2 comprehension tests than in production tests, which indicates that while their production skills need more practice, they can still grasp both L1 and L2 and understand the two languages. Furthermore, in comparison between L1 and L2 tests, the children performed better in L1 for both comprehension and production tests than in L2, demonstrating L1 is more dominant than L2. However, code-switching in the experiment shows they are comfortable using their L1 and L2 at a young age. It also shows that they can use both languages at their disposal.

Dominance in L1 does not necessarily mean that they acquire the vocabulary in Malay and do not know the English equivalent. As evident in the figures above, there are cases in which they were more familiar with English words than Malay. An example of this case would be the fruits and vegetables categories in L1 and L2 comprehension tests in which the children could identify the fruits and vegetables correctly in L2 than in L1. And again, in production tests with "*beruang*" and its English translation, "bear", the children found the former target word to be one of the most challenging while the latter target word to be one of the easiest to answer.

In contrast, there are cases whereby the children were more familiar with the Malay words but struggled in English, such as "*masjid*", which scored all correct responses from the children, and "mosque", which scored much lower correct answers from the children in the comprehension tests. Another example is "scissors" and "*gunting*"; the children found the latter target word easier to answer than the former.

Language Use at Home

The second half of the data collection was the questionnaire for parents, which consisted of language use at home. *Table 9* displays parents' responses to how often L1 and L2 are used at home. Based on the responses, it is evident that Malay is more likely than English, as 85% selected "always" for L1 to be used at home, while 35% chose "sometimes" for L2. Meanwhile, *Table 10* shows parents' rates of how often their children speak L1 and L2 at home. This table shows more use of L1 than L2, with 80% selecting "always" or L1 and 12.5% for L2. However, compared to Table 3, Table 4 has more responses for L2 "often", which indicates that while

the children use more L1 at home, they also use L2 more in their speech when interacting with others.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate further the relationship between language used at home and children's vocabulary development. Positive correlations were found in children's L1 comprehension test, and L1 used at home, r(38) = 0.4, p=0.011 (p>0.05), and with children's L2 comprehension test and use of L2 at home, r(38) = 0.5, p>0.001. Positive correlations were also found in L1 and L2 production tests and use of L1 and L2 at home, with the scores of r(38) = 0.40, p=0.012 (p>0.05) for L1, and r(38) = 0.60, p>0.001 for L2.

Table 9. How often are L1 and L2 used at home

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Malay	85.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
English	17.0%	17.5%	35%	0.0%	10.0%

Table 10. Parents Rate How Often Children Speak Languages at Home

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Malay	80.0%	15.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
English	12.5%	32.5%	45.0%	10.0%	0.0%

Table 11 showcases the use of language when family members interact with the children. This section pays close attention to the individuals and their language use to determine whether they play a factor in the difference in language use. As evident from *Table 11*, immediate family members such as parents and siblings use Malay and English to interact with the children. Bilingual use of language also extends to same-age peers like the children's friends and cousins. However, interaction with grandparents is monolingually Malay, with the highest responses of 82.5%, except for 15% of mixing the two languages.

Table 11. Languages people use with the children at home

	Parents	Older Siblings	Younger Siblings	Grandparents	Friends	Cousins	Domestic Helper
Malay	32.5%	32.5%	40.0%	82.5%	40.0%	50.0%	30.0%
English	0.0%	5.0%	2.5%	0.0%	2.5%	7.5%	0.0%
Malay and English	67.5%	42.5%	32.5%	15.0%	57.5%	42.5%	12.5%
Others	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not Applicable	0.0%	20.0%	25.0%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	57.5%

Table 12, on the other hand, shows the children's use of language when interacting with other individuals at home. There is little difference from the findings in *Table 11*, except for the slight increase in responses for bilingual use of

L1 and L2 for friends and cousins. Nevertheless, *Tables 11* and *12* indicate that not only are children exposed to L1 and L2 when socialising with family and friends, but such interactions also encourage them to respond bilingually.

Table 12. Children's language use with other individuals

	Parents	Older Siblings	Younger Siblings	Grandparents	Friends	Cousins	Domestic Helper
Malay	35.0%	35.0%	40.0%	80.0%	37.5%	50.0%	32.5%
English	0.0%	5.0%	2.5%	0.0%	2.5%	7.5%	0.0%
Malay and English	65.0%	45.0%	35.0%	20.0%	60.0%	40.0%	12.5%
Others	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not Applicable	0.0%	15.0%	22.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	55.0%

Lastly, *Table 13* presents parents' ratings on the importance of being fluent in Malay and English for their children. While parents recognise the value of being fluent in both languages, as evident in the exceedingly high responses for "very important" of 90% (L1) and 75% (L2), parents also prioritise Malay over English. For this section, parents were also asked to explain their choice. Parents emphasise that being fluent is very important as it represents their Malay identity. Besides their Malay identity, some parents even associate L1 with Islam and culture. In addition, parents also expressed the importance of Malay for future employment as it is used in the government sector. Even so, parents also acknowledge the advantages of solid English proficiency. Given that the education system in Brunei is dominantly English, parents feel assured that their children will perform academically well if they are proficient in English.

Table 13. Important to be fluent in Malay and English

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Malay	90.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
English	75.0%	10.0%	12.5%	2.5%	0.0%

The Impact of Interaction at Home on Children's L1 and L2 Vocabulary Skills

While vocabulary is not a new area of study in developmental linguistics, the lack of previous studies on vocabulary in Brunei is one of the challenges of this discussion. It is also a driving factor in contributing to the current body of knowledge. The primary goal this study is to investigate the relationship between children's vocabulary acquisition and home environment.

The findings have found that the importance of the home environment is due to the individuals the children frequently socialise with and the languages they use at home. The use of Brunei Malay and English evident in children's speech results from bilingual language use with family members. According to Vygotsky's theory, family members are the MKO for the children at home. A similar statement stated that Bruneians commonly use Malay and English bilingualism (Salbrina and Zayani, 2021). For this study specifically, as a result of the bilingual use of L1 and L2 at home, the children are raised as bilingual first language learners, which affects their L1 and L2 vocabulary size. This is apparent in the positive correlations between L1 and L2 receptive and active vocabulary knowledge and L1 and L2 use at home. This is mainly because they are exposed to the languages at a young age. Hence, they are more likely to learn more words and spend more time using them. Positive correlations found in this study are also the result of parents providing a stimulating environment to practice bilingualism for their children (Bower, 2014). By practising from an earlier age, they have an earlier start in developing their vocabulary knowledge from comprehension to production skills.

Furthermore, a trend is also found that bilingual use is common in interaction with the younger generation and between children and parents. As supported by Tsinivits and Unsworth (2021), whereby the older siblings promote L2 with their younger siblings, this study has found a similar finding which is more bilingual and L2 use among siblings and same-age peers, which shows that children tend to use more L2 with individuals of the same generation. Furthermore, monolingual L1 is more common when socialising with the elderly. Similarly, previous studies have noted that grandparents play an essential role in L1 maintenance (Salbrina and Noor Hasharina, 2021). Regarding the quality of their speech, one cannot rule out that language progress depends on the individual. Even though this study has found that the children's vocabulary knowledge indicates L1 dominance in general, language preference, and use variations on the individual. A few children show great L2 fluency and mediocre L1 vocabulary performance due to more L2 use at home. These children often have parents who regard English highly and prioritise excellent academic performance for them in the future.

As mentioned previously, this study has found no significant difference in age as a factor in the children's L1 and L2 comprehension and production vocabulary skills. In this case, Thordardottir (2011) also found a similar result in her study. One way to interpret this is that it is plausible to know that the absence of significant difference was due to the study's small sample and perhaps a larger sample would provide a different result. From a different perpective, as emphasised in Vygotsky's (1978) Social Cultural theory on the impact of the environment on one's learning quality, the kind of communication encouragement at home can influence a child's language skills. Therefore, it is important to consider how language skills may vary according to the individual's language exposure at home, which may differ from other households. Nevertheless, this study suggests that age is still a considerable factor in terms of examining children's vocabulary acquisition.

Bruneian Parents' Intake on Practicing Bilingualism for Their Children

Bruneians are generally encouraging and supportive of L1 and L2 fluency for their children, similar to the study by Lee et al. (2015). They acknowledge that being fluent in Malay and English at a young age will benefit the children in communication skills, academic performance, and future employment. This would explain why bilingual use of both languages is already introduced at home with immediate family members and before the children start their formal education in school. While parents in Lee et al. (2015) associate their L1 with culture, in this study, parents associate L1 with Malay identity, culture and Islam. It is believable that it is due to *ugama* (religious) schools in Brunei using Standard Malay written in Arabic script because it is the language of instruction.

On the other hand, some parents also voiced their concern that their children's L2 outperformed their L1. Parents' concern for children's L1 is also evident in Salbrina (2020), which predicted L2 dominance among Bruneians in the future. Nevertheless, these parents still desire their children to be proficient in English, but simultaneously, they cannot deny that their children's L1 quality is dissatisfactory. Besides, most parents in this study prioritise fluency in L1 over L2, as they believe their children need to improve their L1 knowledge. Parents have expressed concern that the decreased use of L1 in their children's speech affects their L1 fluency, and parents felt the children's use of L2 was the cause. Even so, parents admit the inevitability of using English when communicating with their children. This, however, contradicts the children's performance in their vocabulary tests; while in general, children performed better in L1 than in L2 tests. The current study also found that while the children show L1 dominance, they rely on L2 vocabularies in some word categories. Possibly, parents' perception of their children's lack of L1 knowledge stems from this finding.

CONCLUSION

In general, it is undeniable that Brunei Malay dominates children's language use in comparison to English in Brunei. Although no significant difference in vocabulary development between children aged 5 and 6, this study concludes that exposure to language plays an impactful role in advancing children's vocabulary skills. This study concludes that children who are bilingual L1 learners show interdependency for both Malay and English in their everyday speech. It is possible because they rely on their English vocabulary if they do not know its Malay equivalent and vice versa. Furthermore, the children's L1 dominance and the habit of L2 use in everyday speech are by-products of more L1 exposure and encouragement from bilingual interaction with family members at home. Monolingual use of L1 is strongly evident when they interacted with the elderly, whereas bilingual tendencies in speech often occur with parents, siblings and same-age peers. In addition, parents' attitude towards L1 and L2 fluency for their children indicates that they acknowledge the value of being fluent in both languages; they also prioritise L1 fluency over L2 as a reflection of their Malay identity.

The author acknowledges the limitation of this study as it is a small-scale study of 40 participants. It does not represent the whole of Brunei, as the sample was only collected from one out of four districts. The author recommends a much

larger sample for future study and perhaps a closer look into family language rules and their impact on children's vocabulary size. However, despite the small-scale sample, this study can present its fascinating findings of the correlation between children's L1 and L2 vocabulary knowledge and language use at home, resulting in bilingual first language learners of Malay and English. The author also recommends future studies to investigate how further to improve children's language acquisition progress at home. Thus, this study concludes that the parental role and other family members at home as MKOs for the children can improve their children's L1 and L2 vocabulary skills.

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Tense Error Analysis of Secondary Students in Brunei

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Abstract. This study examines the errors in tenses made by 34 secondary students in Brunei who were asked to write a short story based on a picture composition, with the focus on testing Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis (NOH) in L2 acquisition. The objective of the study is to test the theory in NOH that irregular past tense is acquired before regular past tense through the analysis of the errors made in the verbs. The collected data were analyzed based on the four steps of error analysis: identification, description, explanation, and evaluation. The findings suggest that irregular past tense for verbs such as "go," "is," "eat," and "buy" were the most commonly found errors, mainly due to inappropriate or incorrect tense markings. Contrary to the hypothesis, the study suggests that irregular verbs are not necessarily acquired before regular past tense, possibly due to the large number of irregular verbs that learners need to know. Thus, the article concludes that the study provides useful information for language pedagogy and emphasizes the importance of considering the learners' L1 and individual differences in language acquisition.

Keywords: *Tense markings, Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, Irregular verbs, Error analysis, Second language acquisition*

INTRODUCTION

Learning a new language can be a challenging task, and making errors is an inevitable part of the process. Errors in language are defined as deviations from the norms of the native form (James, 2013). Similarly, Richards (1985) defines errors as language usage that a native speaker would consider faulty. However, using native speakers as the benchmark for language learning can be disadvantageous for second language (L2) learners. Errors made by L2 learners should not be accepted too easily

as a sign of failure in language acquisition. As a result, error analysis (EA) has become an important field of research, and many scholars believe that learners' errors can provide valuable insights into pedagogy (Ting et al., 2010).

L2 learners are known to have a different acquisition process compared to those learning their first language (L1), which is why errors are more prominent among them (Putri & Dewanti, 2014). L1 is typically learned from birth, making it easier to acquire than L2. However, for L2 learners, language is mostly introduced in their later years, making the acquisition process more difficult. It has been shown that the brain will lose "its elasticity and reorganisational capacities" that are necessary in learning new language (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015). Therefore, L2 learners are at a disadvantage when compared to L1 learners.

According to Krashen's (1982) Natural Order Hypothesis (NOH), it is said that acquisition of English follows a specific sequence seen in Figure 1, regardless of the learners' status as L1 or L2. The first stage is comprised of -ing participle, plural -s and copula verbs, which are deemed as the simplest concepts of the language and are therefore the first to be acquired. The last stage comprised of regular past, third person singular, and possessive -s.

Figure 1. The Sequence of L2 Acquisition According to the Natural Order Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982, p. 13)
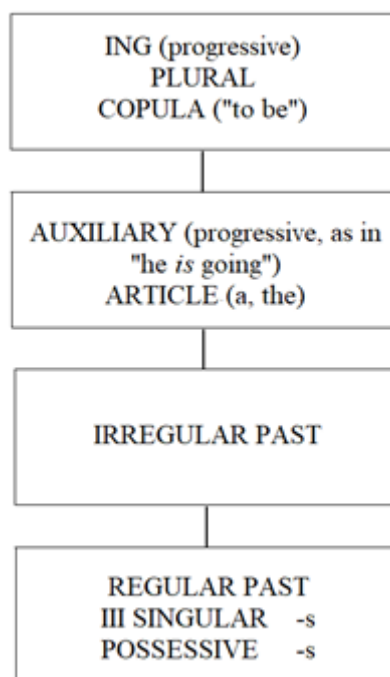
To investigate the acquisition of past tense forms among L2 learners, this EA study will test the hypothesis that irregular past tense is acquired before regular past tense, as proposed by NOH. Specifically, the study aims to compare the frequency of errors between irregular and regular verbs in past tense in written language among L2 learners. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study is that L2 learners will make fewer errors in the use of irregular past tense compared to regular past tense.

Most of previous EA studies found some evidence that give an initial insight to this hypothesis. Gök and Çetin (2018) analyzed 60 written texts made by Turkish English learners and found that there were more errors in irregular verbs compared to the regular ones. Another study was conducted with the aim to compare the use of regular and irregular verbs between 40 native and 40 non-native speakers of English where they had to complete tasks involving verb tense (Kim et al., 2014). They found that both native and non-native speakers of English tend to make more errors with irregular verbs than with regular ones, particularly with the past simple tense and the past participle form. Furthermore, non-native speakers demonstrated a higher frequency of errors compared to native speakers, which was to be expected since the former are considered L2 learners who tend to make errors due to the differing language acquisition process. It is also worth noting that other studies such as Hussein (2018) and Chen and Jin (2018) shared similar results to that of Kim et al. (2014) where, aside from the errors in irregular verbs are more frequent than regular ones, the common errors found were past simple and past participle forms as well among 60 Kurdish English learners and 60 advanced-level Chinese EFL learners respectively. Lastly, the study investigated by Izadi and Sadighi (2012) also found more errors with irregular verbs than regular verbs. However, the most common ones that they found turned out to be past simple and present perfect tenses. Nonetheless, this study along with all the aforementioned ones found that the use of irregular verbs tends to appear with more errors compared to their regular counterparts.

As such, this study aims to see if this also applies to Bruneian L2 learners of English. The main objective of the study is to test the hypothesis if the irregular past tense is acquired before regular past tense through the analysis of the errors made in the verbs.

RESEARCH METHOD

To test the hypothesis of the study, a total of 34 compositions were analyzed, all of which were written by secondary students in Year 7 and Year 10 from a public school in Brunei Darussalam. This level was chosen because they are still in their developmental stage of learning English. A public school was chosen over a private school because the former is known to have students with Malay as their L1.

The students were asked to write a short story between 250 and 300 words based on a picture composition designed for the research (see Appendix A). This task was chosen because it was believed to be doable within the allotted time of 20-30 minutes by students at any level of secondary education. Furthermore, the format of the composition's instruction was similar to that of the English composition paper of the primary education's major graduation exam called *Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (PSR), which most of the students would be familiar with. The composition also included a specific instruction that told the students to start their story with the word "Yesterday,...", which aimed to direct the students in using past tense in their main verbs.

After the compositions were collected, the errors were identified and described first according to the parameters set for the research. After they were described, they were then explained and evaluated further. These steps are commonly used in

EA studies, as identified by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), based on the list initially provided by Corder (1974).

For this study, the following parameters, based on the categories compiled by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p. 61), were used to describe the errors found: omission, addition, misinformation, misordering, and blend. In the context of verb tense markings, omission is when the marking is not used as expected, addition is when markings are added unnecessarily, misinformation is when an incorrect one is used, misordering is when it is in the wrong position, and blend is when two different forms of tenses are merged. These parameters are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the parameters used to describe the errors found for verb tense marking (adapted from Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 61)

No	Types of Error	Description of error for verb tense marking
1	Omission	Supposed marking for the tense is not used
2	Addition	Unnecessary marking for the tense is added
3	Misinformation	An incorrect marking for the tense is used
4	Misordering	Markings are in the wrong location within the verb
5	Blend	Different forms of tense markings are merged

Additionally, misspelled words were considered as errors and were classified to the categories. Incomprehensible sentences were considered as unintelligible and hence excluded from the analysis. Once the errors are described according to these categories, they are then explained and evaluated. The hypothesis was tested by analyzing the type of verb i.e., regular or irregular that were found to be the highest in frequency.

In this study, the reliability of the material used was assessed using a test-retest device. Before the actual study, a pilot study was conducted with six randomly selected students who were not included in the final study. They completed the same picture composition task mentioned earlier. The initial results obtained from the pilot study showed consistency with findings from previous error analysis studies, thus confirming the reliability of the material used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Once the identified errors were categorized accordingly, the total amount of errors for each category was noted. They were then divided by the total number of errors found before the values were changed into percentages and rounded off to one decimal place, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Tabulation of Errors Found in Each Category

No	Types of Error	Errors Found	%
1	Omission	442	78.9
2	Addition	2	0.4
3	Misinformation	110	19.6
4	Misordering	2	0.4

5	Blend	4	0.7
	TOTAL	560	100.0

Majority of the errors found were omission and misinformation, whereas addition, misordering and blend were the least. A possible explanation for the latter is that the students are able to spot such errors since they are in secondary school where they should have a good foundation in their English Language. As for the former, a possible explanation could be related to the influence of their L1.

One possible explanation for omission being the most common error found could be due to the fact that Malay does not conjugate their verbs according to time whereas English does (Liaw, 2005, p. 84). This is also an observation made by Scott (2013). Malay shares the same feature as Chinese in that they both do not express tenses in their verbs. This does not mean that Malay does not have a tense system. The tense is simply not necessary to be incorporated into every sentence in Malay. How time is usually referred to in this language is by stating the specific time itself in the sentence rather than by changing the forms of the verbs. Therefore, this phenomenon can be considered as interlingual errors due to the students' habit of using the base forms of the verbs because of their L1 influence. The argument is further strengthened by the second highest errors found, i.e., misinformation.

As misinformation occurs when an incorrect marking for the tense is used, this finding is significant as it shows how tenses were still being used incorrectly. When the misinformation errors were further analysed, 86 of the supposedly past-tense-inflected verbs were found to be in present tense form instead, which accounts to more than 70% of the 110 errors found. It is worth considering alternative strategies when teaching this aspect of the language to L2 learners since the findings support the possibility of the existence of L1 influence in their errors.

The data were further expanded to show which verbs were frequently found as errors in an effort to test the main hypothesis of the research: L2 learners will make fewer errors in the use of irregular past tense compared to regular past tense. These can be seen with some examples shown below in Table 3 and 4. Considering that there more than 500 errors found in the data, the tables provided include only a limited number of selected errors to compare the ones involving irregular and regular verbs. The suggested corrections were determined based on the contextual information surrounding the sentences or sentence fragments.

Table 3. Examples of Data from the Compositions Collected Showing Errors Involving Irregular Verb

No	Example of errors	Correction of errors	Type of error
1	*...i go to mall and i go to ete in rastoren...	…I went to the mall and I went to eat at the restaurant…	Omission
2	*...then my mother buy a ticket to go in...	…then, my mother bought a ticket to go in…	Omission
3	* ...shasha and classmates got to foodcourt to buys deserts…	…Shasha and her classmates went to the food court to buy desserts…	Addition

| 4 | * ...the total <u>is</u> $10.90. | ...the total was $10.90. | Omission |

Table 4. Examples of Data from the Compositions Collected Showing Errors involving Regular Verb

No	Example of errors	Correction of errors	Type of error
1	*...because she <u>wants</u> to see a movie......	...because she <u>wanted</u> to see a movie…	Misinformation
2	*...my friend <u>want</u> a chicken...	...my friend <u>wanted</u> chicken…	Omission
3	* Me and my friends <u>decide</u> to spend…	My friends and I <u>decided</u> to spend…	Omission
4	* ... and mimi <u>wait</u> for bus.	...and Mimi <u>waited</u> for the bus.	Omission

Based on the results shown in Table 5, the top three verbs were 'go', 'is', and a tie between 'eat' and 'buy', all of which are verbs with irregular past ('went', 'was', 'ate', 'bought' respectively). This debunks the hypothesis of this research.

*Table 5. Tabulation of the Top Five Verbs Found as Errors*

No	Verbs	Errors Found
1	Go	81
2	Is	32
3	Eat	27
4	Buy	27
5	Want	19
	TOTAL	186

A possible explanation behind this could be that these students are still in the phase of learning the concept of tenses, so they tend to mix them around. It could also be due to the sheer number of irregular verbs themselves that overwhelm the student. According to Wall Street English (2017), there are over 200 irregular verbs in English. However, not all of these 200 verbs are commonly used. Even so, the number is still overwhelming for learners to understand and remember since there is more than one way to inflect them: same base form, past simple and past participle; same past simple and past participle; same base form and past participle; different base form, past simple, and past participle.

According to Bishop (2014), there are two distinct systems used in past tense formation: one involves applying a rule to generate past tense from a base form, the other involves looking up an inflected form in the mental lexicon. A reason why tense is complex is due to the difficulty in deducing the tense inflection in the verb compared to others such as -s inflection in nouns for plural. Sometimes, the verbs do not need the inflection of past tense depending on the construction of the sentence we say such as 'I went there yesterday' instead of '*I go there yesterday.' Another example would be 'I made him go there yesterday' instead of '*I made him

went there yesterday.' Thus, mastering tenses require an understanding of the establishment of the relationship between "clauses in a multi-clause utterance and then relate these to small sub lexical units (inflections)" (p. 3). Bishop (2014) outlines the stages in producing a tense-inflected verb as shown in the following Figure 2.

Figure 2. Stages in Production of Tense-Inflected Verbs
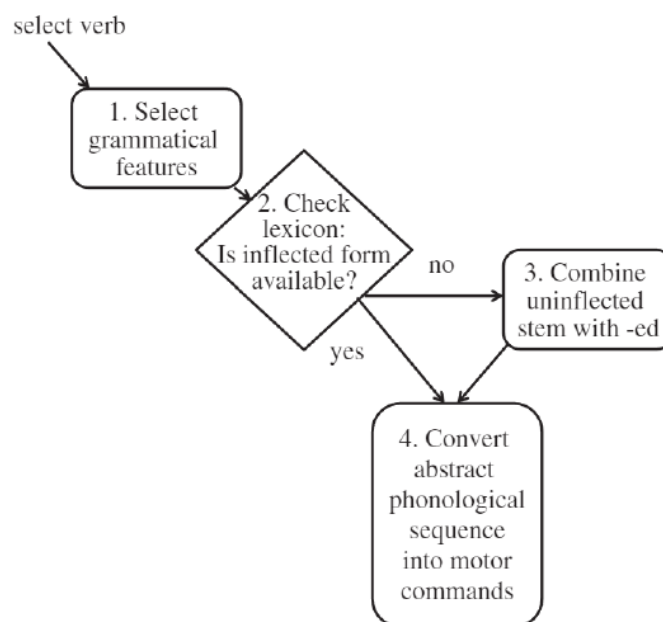
Note. Reprinted from "Problems with tense marking in children with specific language impairment: not how but when", by Bishop, D. V. M., 2014, Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B 369, p. 3.

Grammatical errors need not be a sign of poor learning but rather an error was made in "computing a linguistic representation" (Bishop, 2014, p. 3) during one of these stages. The frequency of bare stem errors on irregular verbs could suggest that the issue lies in knowing when to apply tense marking rather than with how to apply them. Albeit Bishop's research was focused on SLI (specific language impairment) children, it could give some ideas as to the possible reasoning behind the bare stem errors found in this study among the secondary students in Brunei. This then ties back with how tenses are considered a complex feature of grammar. Failure to use the correct inflections involves problems in understanding the syntactic context that obligates tense marking, rather than knowing how to mark tenses (Bishop, 2014, p. 7). With this, along with the previously mentioned fact on how errors in verb tenses are due to the influence of their L1, they can strongly endorse the possibility to reassess and re-strategize the method used to teach tenses in verbs where L1 is utilized rather than ignoring them altogether in the learning of the English language.

IMPLICATIONS ON PEDAGOGY

From the findings of this research, it seems worthwhile to change the strategy in teaching English as significant errors in tenses have been identified. One common

method used to teach English is the error correction technique, where teachers highlight students' errors and provide correct forms of lexis and grammar. However, studies such as Hendrickson's (1978, as cited in Oladejo, 1993, p. 72) have shown that this method does not significantly improve students' writing proficiency. Furthermore, based on current observations, it can be seen that English, particularly the concept of tenses, is taught in most schools using methods that Ellis (2015, p. 22) describes as "intensive drilling to ensure correct L2 habits". These methods primarily involve penalizing students when they speak Malay through various punishments, which, in turn, cause a sense of restriction and rigidity among students.

Scholars such as Bitchener and Knoch (2010), Ferris (2006), and Lyster and Ranta (1997) do provide evidence for the effectiveness of corrective feedback and error correction in improving the writing skills of L2 learners. However, it is important to highlight that they specifically suggest giving specific, focused, and understandable feedback, targeted towards the specific needs and goals of the students because these can be useful in promoting learner uptake and improving their writing skills. Hence, it is equally important to ensure that the feedback provided is clear and understandable to the students, rather than just providing correct answers or punishing them for giving the wrong ones.

An alternative method to consider is using students' L1 to assist their learning of English, including comparing the L1 and L2 or giving allowance to the class in using their L1, especially if they need to understand what they learned in the early stages. Some scholars even agree that the use of L1 can help with a learner's learning. Napitupulu (2017) states that errors are made because learners lean on their mother tongue to express their thoughts. Murtiana (2019) mentions how using their L1 becomes a habit for learners when they are processing their thoughts; Derakhshan and Karimi (2015) argue that learners can write in English better when they have made initial discussions using their L1, and Widdowson (2003) claims that L2 learning is optimized when the use of other languages is acknowledged and welcomed in ESL classrooms.

In the context of teaching the past tense, Tickoo (2005) outlines an effective instructional approach for the learners' proper mastery of this concept using some aspects of the aforementioned suggestions. Firstly, teachers guide students by comparing "narratives by skilled writers and those written by students who adopt the pattern of selective past tense marking that the learners themselves are using" (p. 375). This can help students recognize how the tenses should be correctly used. Then, students can correct a sample text to "help them practice putting into place a categorical marking of past tense" (p. 376). As a result of these initial preparation steps, when they write a narrative, students can strengthen and properly adopt the concept of past tense inflections. Putting these suggested methods to the test makes for an interesting topic to research further, where their effectiveness can be verified.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study's findings challenge NOH's theory of L2 acquisition, which suggests that irregular past tense is learned before regular past tense. The results indicate that students encounter difficulties in mastering the concept of verb tenses, likely influenced by their L1. Hence, it is vital to explore alternative teaching methods to address this issue. Further research can investigate the effectiveness of different techniques and their potential impact on learners' proficiency in English tenses. Overall, the study highlights the need for a more subtle and adaptable approach to teaching English that considers learners' distinct linguistic backgrounds and challenges.

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APPENDIX A

Write a story based on the sequence of pictures below in the space provided. Describe as many details as possible. Your story should be between 250 to 300 words only. Start your story with the following sentence: Yesterday was the last day of school holiday…
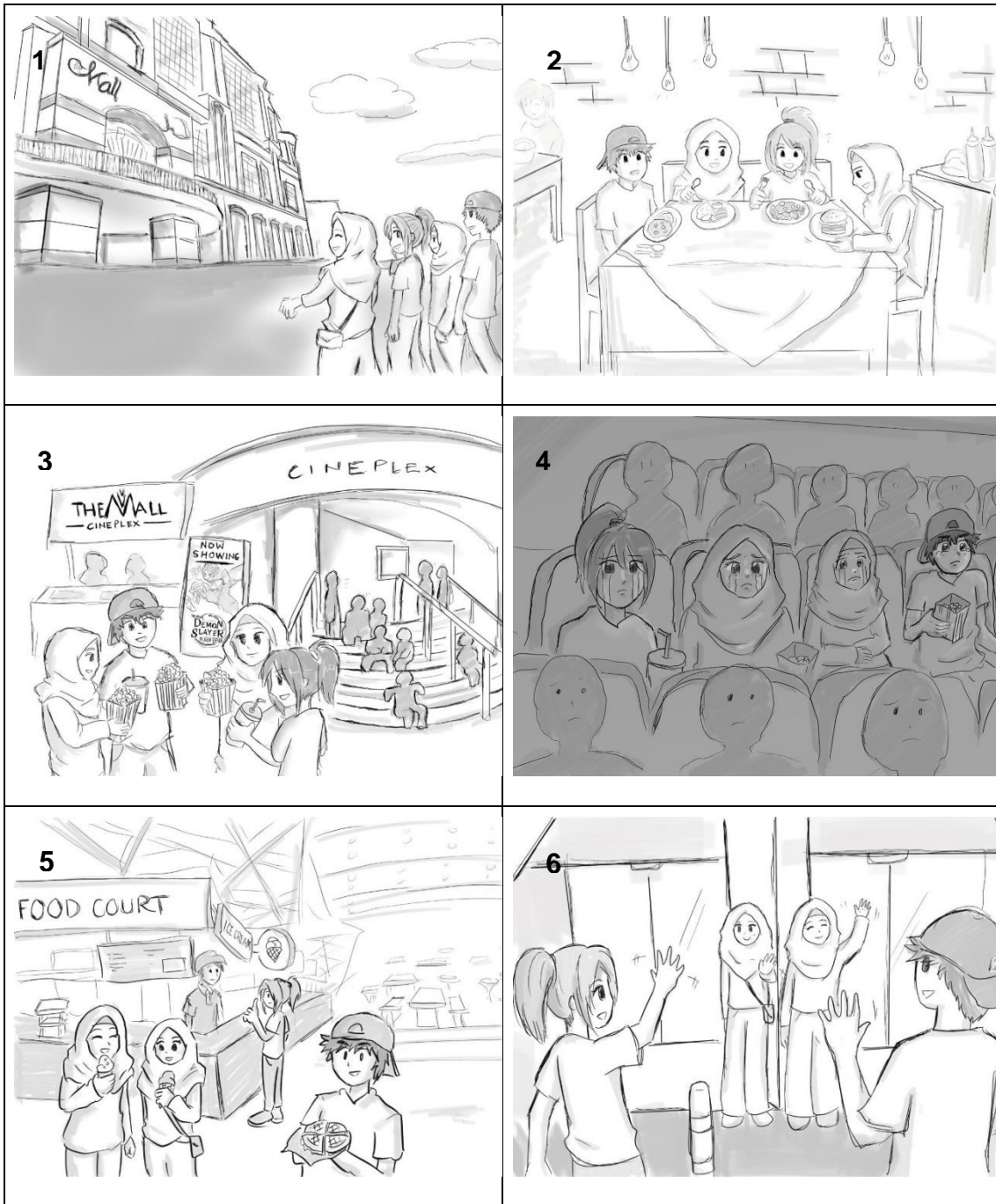
Willy Loman's Superiority Complex Reflected in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*

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Abstract. The focus of the study is to describe the characteristics of the superiority complex and explain the causes of the superiority complex reflected by Willy Loman in *Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman* using the superiority complex theory proposed by Adler. This study used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the problems. It employs qualitative research to categorize the evidence in a frequency table. The study shows that Willy exhibits all of the characteristics of aggressiveness expected of the self-accusative type. The most dominant traits Willy suffers from are exaggerated claims about himself and hostility toward the depreciation type. He also undergoes all of the causes of the superiority complex, such as Pampered Lifestyle and Feeling Neglected. So, from the social perspective, The death of Willy Loman reflects the heavy burden of his life in achieving his dream to be a successful parent who educates his sons. His obsession causes him to commit suicide, and he develops a superiority complex to sacrifice for his family.

Keywords: *Superiority Complex, Inferiority Complex*

http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes

INTRODUCTION

Art is one way humans comprehend life(Dissanayake, 2002). Through art, artists try to reflect life and send a message to the audiences. In this case, art refers to literature which is one form of media artists use to channel human character metaphorically and aesthetically. Both literature and psychoanalysis are text-based methods that share the same theories of poiesis, image, symbolism, and

interpretation (Jacobi, 2013). It is possible for the author who consciously or unconsciously expresses an unintended message behind the code and symbolism he uses in making art literature. In such a way, art reflects life, and life reflects art. Individuals relate to art because it consists of human experiences. They connect through experiences and learn from those experiences by studying art.

Jung proposes the term *complex* refers to the feeling-toned groups of representation in the unconscious mind. It refers to a group of memories with a similar tone of feeling (anger, irritation, etc.) (Jacobi, 2013). The unconscious realm has organized mass memories consisting of these complexes. This complex refers to collecting an individual's memories and experiences. Individuals are often unaware of their complexes or how they affect them. It can lead to issues such as not understanding oneself, leaving the matter unresolved, engaging in uncomfortable behavior, making poor decisions, and frequently leading to mental health issues(Singer & Kimbles, 2004). One of them is a superiority complex.

A superiority complex is a condition in which people think they are better than others. Superiority is an exaggerated condition because of the sense of inferiority and the desire to look better. According to (Adler, 2013), Social interests and a striving for success or superiority drive people. Moreover, the nature of humans is moving toward "security" and "social solidarity"(Esteves et al., 2021)because humans are afraid to be dissociated from their social sphere. However, Adler (2013) adds that each individual may feel inferior because of past childhood traumas. Therefore, dependency and acceptance by society play an important role in child development. The lack of acceptance and the fear of rejection trigger inferiority feelings in the child's unconscious mind(Allan N. Schore, 2019). Later, those individuals experience an inferiority complex having low self-esteem; they feel weak, insecure, and helpless(Fennell, 2016).

Moreover, superiority is one way an individual feels more powerful than they think inside (Joseph, 2016). This behavior appears to compensate for the inner weakness that the individual has. Exaggerated facts are the basis for most superiority complexes. This way makes them more prominent than they are. They also tend to have high and unachievable goals because inferiority and irrational thinking drive their goal.

Some characteristics of superiority refer to an inferiority complex, having exaggerated claims about themselves, developing high and unrealistic goals, striving for success, seeing other people as opponents, and having safeguard tendencies (Adler, 2014). (Feist et al., 2018) states that there are two safeguard tendencies. They are unlikely to admit their flaws, mistakes, and aggressiveness. They see themselves as the best version. Their imperfection will damage their image. Thus, they choose to ignore it. They do not want to admit that they have spots. Defects trigger inferiority feelings, and with the inferiority comes vulnerability (feeling weak and unworthy). They do not want to appear vulnerable or weak. Their low self-esteem is rooted in the inferiority feelings that make them feel unwanted or unworthy. Also, individuals with this complex tend to be more aggressive. Adler describes it as *a masculine protest.* It is a term for aggressiveness that demands the power or domination of others (Feist et al., 2018). This aggressive behavior is triggered more easily. It is because their claims and perceptions usually do not have any factual basis. Thus, this condition begins

aggressive behavior because they always need to protect themselves. There are three kinds of aggression: (1) Depreciation, a tendency to underrate or underestimate other people's efforts and boast about theirs. The purpose of this action is to depreciate the other person so that they look superior to the victim. This power exhibition is in the form of bullying. The bully bullies their victims to gain power from the victim. (2) Accusative, a tendency to blame their failure on another person. According to(Adler. Alfred, 2014), these individuals act to hurt others. They also have a dysfunctional mentality and desire for their surroundings to suffer. (3) Self-accusation, a tendency to blame themselves, shown by self-torture and guilt. The purpose of these tendencies is to hurt themselves to hurt people who care for them.

Furthermore, the leading causes of the superiority complex are maladjustments of social interest, external factors, and internal factors. A comfortable lifestyle and the feeling of being neglected are external factors. Spoiled people demand too much love from their surroundings; they only accept the kind of love they want. They get constant exposure given by the caregiver. Hence, when the extreme given love previously given is gone, they might feel neglected, unloved, and mistreated. They desire to satisfy their needs or feel entitled to their surroundings. They always demand more, even though they already receive enough love. Feelings of being neglected also have something to do with the perception of love. As for pampered children, they can also feel neglected even though they receive enough love. They feel unaccepted, left alone, and discarded from their crowd. The feelings left them thinking that there was something wrong with them. It leads to insecurity, or, in other words, inferiority. They find it hard to connect with other people, and with the inferiority, they have less confidence. As they grow up, they separate themselves from their society. They become more apathetic toward other people and more sympathetic toward themselves.

The next is internal factors, low social interest, and physical deficiencies. "Social interest" is an individual's relationship with their society. It is not always synonymous with charity or altruistic behavior but with the act of philanthropy and kindness (Feist et al., 2018). Social interest is also motivated by a sense of community. The lack of understanding can make the individual more self-centered and strive for personal power. Everyone has their deficiencies. As humans, flaws and imperfections are in our nature. However, people are more aware of their weaknesses than others. It refers to what people think about themselves (Cussons, 2014). They become more apathetic toward other people and more sympathetic toward themselves.

This study uses *Death of a Salesman* in the 1998 version, published by Penguin Books. It is a play written by Arthur Miller in 1940. *Death of a Salesman won* the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Play and is considered the most incredible play of the 20th century. The drama is selected because it portrays damaging unrealistic societal standards and the rising phenomenon of mental health issues. Moreover, this drama is very relatable to this era because social media development, the standard of living, and life goals trend are becoming toxic and unachievable for the younger generation. It also focuses on the influence of capitalist society on someone's mental state.

This study uses several previous studies based on the theory of Complex

Superiority Behavior and the drama itself. The first study is a study of the superiority complex in Chris Gardner's T*he Pursuit of Happiness* (Zarkasy, 2020). The difference between this study and the previous one is the impact of complex superiority behavior. Those studies also use different sources of data. The previous one uses a novel, *The Pursuit of Happiness,* and this current study uses *Death of a Salesman.* The similarities of both studies are employing *Individual Psychology* by Alfred Adler to analyze the causes and the characteristics of complex superiority behavior. The second study is the analysis of *Death of a Salesman*, Life of a Jew: Ethnicity, Business, and the Character of Willy Loman (Cardullo, 2007) emphasizes the characterization of Willy Loman as an American Jewish person, but he is vaguely known as he is (a Jew). The third previous research is *An Anti-social Socialist: A Critical Reading of Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman (*Emami, 2011)*.* It criticizes Marxist socialism applied in analyzing the drama.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method of the study is descriptive analysis and employs qualitative research that focuses on the interpretations of the meaning of the data. According to John and Creswell, qualitative research is an approach to understanding and exploring meaning (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research explores a new concept or current phenomenon. This type of research focuses on exploring the sensation that the study discusses. This type of research allows the researchers to explore the phenomenon's depth, richness, and complexity.

Descriptive analysis is a method that focuses on describing, defining, or categorizing phenomena (Loeb et al., 2017). Descriptive research makes it possible to describe the data related to the superiority complex performed by Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman.* This method allows the researcher to explain the data and recognize the pattern of the phenomenon that they are analyzing. By recognizing the methodology, they can construct informative studies and hopefully improve their knowledge of this topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part describes the result of the study from the data analysis. The data only focuses on the characteristics and the causes of the superiority complex undergone by Willy Loman. The frequency result of the investigation of the play *Death of a Salesman* is in the form of the table below:

Table1. The Characteristics of Superiority Complex

No	Characteristics of Superiority Complex	Frequency	
1	Inferiority Complex	2	4%
2	Exaggerated Claims about Themselves	9	22%
3	Develops High and Unrealistic Goals	5	12%
4	Striving for Success and See Other People as Opponents	7	17%
	Safe Guarding Tendencies		
5	He is unlikely to Admit his Flaws and Mistakes,	6	14%

	Aggressiveness		
6	Depreciation	9	21%
7	Accusative	5	12%
8	Self-Accusation	0	0%

The findings show that Willy Loman's superiority complex is exaggerated claims about himself and aggressiveness of the depreciation type. Willy exaggerates claims about himself to boast about his confidence. He shows off because he wants to be respected and accepted in his surroundings. Contrary to the inferiority complex, he only shows this characteristic to the people he trusts the most. Therefore, the inferiority complex becomes the least dominant characteristic. He does not want to appear vulnerable in front of everybody.

The presence of the inferiority complex shows that, in his unconscious mind, he has low and even fragile self-esteem. The basis of his claims is fantasies. These claims compensate for his inferiority complex. It causes the safeguard tendencies to appear in the form of aggressiveness of the depreciation type. He depreciates others to protect himself from a potential threat and boasts and gains other people's domination. Consequently, the depreciation type is the most dominant of the different aggressive types to appear.

The other safeguard tendencies are: being unlikely to admit his flaws and mistakes and aggressiveness of the accusative type. These characteristics appear when he gets called out for his behavior. In the play, his behavior does not call it out that often, but when it does, either he shifts the blame on someone else or he blatantly refuses to admit it. He wants his image to be perfect and flawless. Therefore, the characteristic of self-accusative does not appear in the play.

He thinks highly of himself. The basis of this view is facts. It makes him set his goals too high for him to achieve. He wants to be respected and trusted. Thus, he strives for success because he wants to be accepted. In striving for success, his goal is only personal credit, not growth. It leads to a sense of competition, despite no competition. He wants to be the best. It leads to him thinking that other people are his opponents. This part shows that Willy exhibits the characteristics of a superiority complex. The evidence is as follows:

> LINDA [trying to bring him out of it]: Willy, dear, I got a new kind of
> American-type cheese today. It's whipped.
> WILLY: Why do you get American when I like Swiss?
> LINDA: I just thought you'd like a change—
> WILLY: I don't want a change! I want Swiss cheese. *Why am I always being contradicted?*
> LINDA [with a covered laugh]: I thought it would be a surprise.
>
> (Miller, 1998: 6)

After arguing about Biff, Willy will make a sandwich when Linda tells him that she is buying a new type of cheese. He responds quickly with anger. They argue a little more because Willy likes Swiss cheese, and Linda wants to surprise him. He does not want it to change. The external conflict of this evidence is that Linda changes the type of cheese they usually have.

The argument shows aggressiveness that quickly rises again from insignificant details such as cheese. People with a superiority complex tend to be more aggressive because aggressiveness is a form of domination over others. This fragile self-esteem makes him feel vulnerable all the time. Thus, this led to the emergence of aggressiveness as a form of an unconscious defensive system. The aggressiveness type that demonstrates in this evidence is accusative. He has accused her of his sensitivity. The cheese is unimportant, but he makes it as if it were a big mistake and blames her despite her intention. Then, they discuss future business plans. Willy is very optimistic about the future business. He feels excited and has high hope for it. Then Linda wants to join the conversation, but he yells at her, saying she interrupts his talk. Biff tries to defend his mother, and it triggers his aggressiveness.

> LINDA: Oliver always thought the highest of him—
> WILLY: *Will you let me talk?*
> BIFF: Don't yell at her, Pop, will ya?
> WILLY [angrily]: I was talking, wasn't I?
> BIFF: I don't like you yelling at her all the time, and I'm tellin' you, that's all.
> WILLY: *What're you, takin' over this house?*
> LINDA: Willy—
> WILLY [turning on her]: Don't take his side all the time, goddammit!
> BIFF [furiously]: Stop yelling at her!
> WILLY [suddenly pulling on his cheek, beaten down, guilt-ridden]: Give my best to Bill Oliver—he may remember me. [He exits through the living room doorway.]

(Miller, 1998: 48)

It shows external conflict involves Biff and Willy. This condition can be categorized as safeguard tendencies, namely, the aggressiveness of depreciation type. He depreciates Linda by underrating her opinion. When Biff defends his mother, Willy devalues him as well. He says, *"What're you, takin' over this house."* It proves the aggressiveness of depreciation type. He tries to undervalue Biff because the house that Biff lives in is his house. It shows that he wants to be respected. Willy wants to make Biff feels slight against him. Thus, he wants to dominate and gain power from his aggressiveness.

There are two factors of the causes behind Willy's superiority complex. They are external and internal factors. The apparent frequency is as follows:

Table 2. The Causes of Superiority Complex

No	Causes of Superiority Complex		Frequency	
1	External Factors			
	1	Pampered Lifestyle	2	13%
	2	Feeling Neglected	3	20%
2	Internal Factors			
	1	Low Social Interest	5	33%
	2	Physical Deficiencies	5	33%

The most dominant factors in his superiority complex are his low social interest and physical deficiencies (internal factor). He has common social interests and only cares about his well-being. He constantly shows no empathy toward the other people around him. Linda always pampers him. It leads to his high ego and self-importance. It explains his low social interest.

He feels neglected and abandoned by his father figure. His brother and father left him. It scars his unconscious and leads to the longing for acceptance. This longing leads to him wanting to prove himself to be accepted. He thinks something is wrong with himself, which is why his father and brother left him. He blames himself for it. Therefore, he develops some inferiority feelings based on his physical deficiencies or the reason for being neglected.

The internal factor is the dominant factor in the play because it focuses on Willy's psychological journey into madness. It focuses on the effects of his society and high expectations. The space does not focus on his background. So, the dominant cause that appears to be in play is the internal factor.

This part shows that Willy gets the causes of a superiority complex. The causes of the condition are as follows:

> BERNARD: What's Biff doing?
> WILLY: Well, *he's been doing tremendous things in the West. But he decided to establish himself here. Very big. We're having dinner.* Did I hear your wife had a boy?
> BERNARD: That's right. Our second.
> WILLY: Two boys! What do you know?
> BERNARD: What kind of a deal has Biff got?
> WILLY: Well, Bill Oliver—massive sporting goods man —*he wants Biff very badly. Called him in from the West. Long distance, carte blanche, special deliveries.* Do your friends have a private tennis court?
> BERNARD: You still with the old firm, Willy?
> WILLY [*after a pause*]: I'm—*I'm overjoyed* to see how you made the grade, Bernard, *overjoyed*. It's an encouraging thing to see a young man really— really —Looks very good for Biff—very—[*He breaks off, then*] Bernard—[*He is so full of emotion, he breaks off again.*]
>
> (Miller, 1998: 70)

After arguing with his boss, he starts reminiscing about his brother Ben. He talks to him in his head. Then he meets Jenny and Bernard. Bernard greets him and asks him about what he is up to. They are talking about Biff and his job, about his life. But the conversation overwhelms him, and he breaks off in front of Bernard.

The conversation refers to a safeguarding tendency: being unlikely to admit their flaws and mistakes. In this situation, Willy seems to be ashamed of his boy. Bernard is now a successful lawyer, but Biff is unemployed. It makes him lie to Bernard, saying that Biff is working something big in the West, and Bill Oliver calls him to give him some business offers. This action shows that he sees Biff as a flaw in his image; thus**,** he lies and tries to cover his weaknesses.

The following conflicts reflect the other cause of Willy's superiority complex. The evidence shows the role model of Willy's character.

BEN [*glancing at his watch*]: I have an appointment in Ketchikan Tuesday week.
WILLY: No, Ben! *Please tell me about Dad*. I want my boys to hear. I want them to know the kind of stock they spring from. All I remember is a man with a big beard, and *I was in Mamma's lap*, sitting around a fire, and some kind of high music.
BEN: His flute. He played the flute.
WILLY: Sure, the flute, that's right!
[*New music is heard a high, rollicking tune.*]
BEN: Father was a very great and very wild-hearted man. We would start in Boston, and he'd toss the whole family into the wagon, and then he'd drive the team right across the country; through Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and all the Western states. And we'd stop in the towns and sell the flutes that he'd made on the way. A great inventor, Father. With one gadget he made more in a week than a man like you could make in a lifetime.
WILLY: *That's just the way I'm bringing them up, Ben*—rugged, well-liked, all-around.

<div align="right">(Miller, 1998: 33-34)</div>

Willy finally meets Ben after a long time. He cannot wait for Ben to tell the story of his journey, how he finds a diamond mine, and about his dad. Even so, Ben gives an unsatisfactory answer saying their father well-liked man with a wild heart. He always looks up to these two characters (Ben and his father) as a daddy figure and role model. Willy desperately wants a connection to these two characters because Willy sees them as successful and perfect men. He wants to become like them.

The conversation shows that Willy looks up to Ben and his father. He idolizes them. Even though his father is absent, he respects and can only fantasize about him. This and Ben's absence make him feel neglected in his childhood. He says, "Please tell about Dad" This shows that he is desperate for a connection to his role models. The absence of these characters (his big brother and father as a daddy figure) makes him feel neglected as a child in his mother's lap.

The next cause is Willy's disappointment. The reflection of this conflict is in the following situation:

LINDA: But you're doing fantastic, dear. You're making seventy to a hundred dollars a week.
WILLY: But I gotta be at it ten, twelve hours a day. Other men—*I don't know—they do it easier.* I don't know why —I can't stop myself—*I talk too much.* A man ought to *come in with a few words.* One thing about Charley. *He's a man of few words, and they respect him.*
LINDA: You don't talk too much, you're just lively.
WILLY [*smiling*]: Well, I figure, what the hell, life is short, a couple of jokes. [*To himself*] *I joke too much*! [*The smile goes.*]
LINDA: Why? You're—
WILLY: *I'm fat. I'm very—foolish to look at,* Linda. I didn't tell you, but

Christmas time I happened to be calling on F. H. Stewarts, and a salesman I know, as I was going in to see the buyer *I heard him say something about— walrus.* And I—*I cracked him right across the face. I won't take that. I simply will not take that. But they do laugh at me. I know that.*
LINDA: Darling . . .
WILLY: I gotta overcome it. I know I gotta overcome it. *I'm not dressing to advantage*, maybe.

(Miller, 1998: 23-24)

This situation shows Willy's disappointment with himself. He thinks that people are making fun of him. He thinks no one takes him seriously. No one respects him or notices him. He expresses his vulnerability to Linda. He tries to comprehend what is wrong with him. Is it his clothes? Or the way he talks? Then Linda tries to assure him that he is a good person. He is the most handsome to her.

The conversation shows that Willy's character always thinks he is on the enemy line. He has low self-esteem and fragile confidence. It makes him believe that people always see him differently. He feels unaccepted and ignored. He feels eliminated from his surroundings. His physical deficiencies are the cause. He says, *"I'm fat. I'm very—foolish to look at."* And *"I talk too much."* Whether based on fact or not, these deficiencies influence his behavior to exhibit a superiority complex.

The last piece of evidence is the external cause of Willy's superiority complex. The conflicts are as follows.

THE WOMAN: *Whyn't you have another drink, honey, and stop being so damn self-centered?*
WILLY: *I'm so lonely.*
THE WOMAN: You know you ruined me, Willy? From now on, whenever you come to the office, I'll see you go right through to the buyers. No *waiting at my desk anymore,* Willy. *You ruined me.*
WILLY: *That's nice of you to say that.*
THE WOMAN: Gee, *you are self-centered*! Why so sad? You are *the saddest, most self-centered soul* I ever did see-saw. [*She laughs. He kisses her.*] Come on inside, drummer boy. It's silly to be dressing in the middle of the night. [*As knocking is heard*] Aren't you going to answer the door?

(Miller, 1998: 91-92)

Willy is having an affair with a woman. He sleeps with her in the hotel room when somebody knocks on the door. She tries to make him open the door, but he does not want to. Biff is knocking impatiently on the other side of the door, searching for his father. He goes to Boston to see him because he does not answer his calls. The woman tells him to open the door; he refuses, but then he opens the door.

It shows that the woman repetitively says that Willy is a self-centered man. He is the saddest, most self-centered man that she has ever known. It proves the pampered lifestyle that Willy has. He only thinks about himself and always pities himself. He feels neglected and mistreated if he does not receive the love he

deserves. It proves the pampered lifestyle that always wanted to be cared for and loved. Pampered lifestyle is one of the external causes of the superiority complex.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Willy exhibits seven characteristics of a superiority complex. The most frequent characteristics he undergoes are exaggerating claims about himself and the aggressiveness of the depreciation type. Willy exaggerates claims about himself to be accepted by his surroundings. His claims are not fact-based. Instead, it is because of his fragile self-esteem. He feels like he is constantly being judged and attacked. It triggers the safeguarding tendency to appear. His aggressiveness is in the form of safeguarding proneness. To protect himself, he depreciates other people.

It is also clear that Willy exhibits all of the causes of the superiority complex. The most reasons are internal factors, physical deficiencies, and low social interest. He performs superiority to compensate for the inferiority feeling inside him. Therefore, the most frequent causes he shows are physical deficiencies, as the root of his inferiority feeling and low social interest. These flaws lead to inferiority feelings. He feels like he is less than other people. He feels neglected, unwanted, and unaccepted. Thus, it makes him more sympathetic toward himself and apathetic toward his surroundings. It indicates low social interest.

Thus, the overwhelming need to succeed led to depression. Then Willyt has left with mental sickness that leads to his tragic suicide. In contrast to the projection of his funeral, no one comes to his funeral. In the time that they are free of their debt, he is gone. Biff still thinks he is wrong and that what he dreams of is just a dream and fiction.

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Loss, Desire, and Wisdom in Nostalgia Narrative of Willa Cather's *The Professor's House*

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Abstract. Scholarship fields, especially in history and memory studies, have broadly utilized the notion of nostalgia. It has also become an essential part of understanding the narrative in literature. Some studies have used nostalgia and memory to analyze novels. From a qualitative approach, this study analyzes two intrinsic elements (settings and characters) in *The Professor's House, written by* Willa Cather*.* It applies the nostalgia concept as the main framework. Here, it provides a narrative discussion about people and nostalgia that symbolize loss, desire, materialism, and wisdom.
Keywords: *desire, life wisdom, loss, nostalgia, settings*

http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes

INTRODUCTION

Nostalgia and memory have been incorporated into human lives that can shape and define our perspectives on some matters. As a human being, nostalgia has become an essential part of remembering, reflecting, and longing for something that happened in the past. Nostalgia derived from the Latin word, *"the word home (*nostos*) and longing (*algia*) mean longing for a home that is no longer exists"* (Legg 2004, p. 100). Nostalgia is also commonly defined as *"the painful longing for a lost home, a yearning to return"* (Bradbury, 2012, p. 3) or *"understood as a hazy perception of the past that glorifies what was and is no more while downplaying all the shortcomings of the past"* (Palmberger, 2008, p. 358). Academic fields, for instance, history, memory, and literary studies, apply the notion of nostalgia. In historical context, the study of nostalgia has been famous in connection with colonialization study (Sugg, 2002) and the history of post-war (Palmberger, 2008). Although there is a connection between nostalgia and trauma derived from the discussion of memory and nation, for instance, the nostalgia of

remembrance of a *used-to-be-existed but not anymore* country like Yugoslavia, it functions as a reflection and becomes part of its nation's cultural memory (Lindstorm, 2005 and Volčič, 2007). In a sense, nostalgia can be distinguished from its difference from trauma, although there is a chance for both to intertwine.

Moreover, Sandberg (2018) indicates the relationship between literature and nostalgia. Sandberg states, "Literature is an inherently nostalgic art form, frequently if not exclusively retrospective frequently if not always imbued with the particular emotional intensity of nostalgia" (p. 116). Wagner (2004) states nostalgia had become the framework of British novels in the 18th to 19th centuries to show retrospection and individuality; it also functions to change the characters. Wagner maintains, *"Nostalgia has shaped the novel genre and how its literary history not only reflects but forms, an important part in the formation of Western modernity"* (p.13). Baldwin et al. (2014) also add that nostalgia has become a common theme in modern classic novels such as *Robinson Crusoe* by Defoe and *Remembrance of Things Past by* Proust. Unlike male writers, contemporary classic female writers offered different nuances in portraying the nostalgic moment, as in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, written by* Rebecca West; their readers were lured and *"*confronted with a series of nostalgic rhetorical moves that work to construct West's argument about nationalism and imperialism, and that constitutes her demand for fixed gender roles*"* (Stec, 1997, p. 140). Yukman (1988) states that Cather applied subjectivity implicitly, referring to *longing* for mother and child relationship and detachment in *My Antonia.* Nealon (1997) maintains that Willa Cather appeared to use *nostalgia as a vehicle* in *The Song of Lark* (p. 18). It questions how far nostalgia supports the literary world, especially well-known American classic writers like Willa Cather. Kress (2009) also gives special attention to the work of Willa Cather, as she considered her one of the iconic American writers and compared to Hemingway, whom both had produced much meaningful nuance and aesthetic narrative in their works.

Willa Cather was a prominent example of an American female writer who received her canonical status in the 1920s (O'Brien, 1988). Her novels are mostly embellished with historical contexts, plot lines of memories, religious allegories, gentle but complex characters, and the selection of plot settings meticulously illustrated both in America and Europe (Yukman, 1988; Kirkland, 2010; Shively, 2017).Some of the prolific works from Cather are *My Antonia* (1918), *One of Ours* (1922), *The Professor's House* (1925), *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), and some short stories collections like *The Troll Garden* (1905).Moreover, as a phenomenal American writer, her novels have been analyzed and debunked in many theoretical frameworks. Many scholars studied her protuberant works and analyzed them from gender and queer perspectives; for instance, the analysis of Paul's *Case* shows that redefining the function of masculinity was the answer to Oscar Wilde's refusal to become the victim of homophobic society (Summers, 1990 as cited in Nardin, 2008). Furthermore, one of the ultimate works from Cather is a novel titled *The Professor's House* (1925); it portrays the life of Godfrey St. Peter, a fifty-two years old man who works as a Professor of Spanish History at a university in a small town of Hamilton. The story also depicts the privileged life of Godfrey St. Peter, being a successful professor in his middle-aged year and comfortable living with a beautiful wife and two daughters. It consists of three chapters: The Family,

Tom Outland's Story, and The Professor, which makes it more fascinating for Tom Outland himself to narrate the chapter of Tom Outland's Story from the first point of view.

Furthermore, *The Professor's House* is fascinating to discuss and study from different frameworks, for instance, the history of the First World War and the rise of bourgeoisie life in American society in the 1920s (Wilson, 2005; Dyck, 2015). Previous scholars have studied the novel from many frameworks; the analysis concerns gender and sexuality (Bell, 1994; Nagy, 2007; Badenhop, 2015). A study from Nagy (2007) analyzes the maternity and homosexuality relationship between the main characters: The Professor (Godfrey St. Peter) and his protégé Tom Outland, which he describes as a failure in settling down the *mother-son* connection and queer romance. Reynolds (2003) compared the iconic duo between Outland and St. Peter to Nick Carraway and Jay Gatsby in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, which is also a sheer reminder of how peculiar and bizarre relation between these two men, of how obsessed Nick Carraway described Gatsby showed a latent homoeroticism (Fruscione, 2010). In addition, DeBiase (2013) analyzes the liminality of St. Peter and Outland as transcended concerning the world, which contains the memories of places like Blue Mesa, the Lake, and even France. Badenhop (2015) focuses on the female characters in *The Professor's House*. She emphasizes that previous studies only focused on the Professor and Tom Outland; female characters here are pivotal as they play dominant roles in influencing the development of the portrayal of the Professor himself.

This current study analyzes settings, main characters, and supporting characters. The analysis focuses on how nostalgia operates and the symbols of nostalgia in the story. Although the previous studies have discussed *The Professor's House*, this current study intends to provide a further discussion by examining the plot, which contains many flashbacks and ruminations from the past. This study emphasizes implementing the concept of nostalgia as the main framework to analyze the narrative through intrinsic elements: the settings and characters. In addition, the significance of this paper is to discuss the relationship between nostalgia and places, desire and eroticism, materialism, and life wisdom.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper uses a qualitative approach. The object of this study is the novel *The Professor's House* by Willa Cather, using the novel as the primary data source and nostalgia as the framework. This study applies the concept of nostalgia to understand a narrative discussion in literary work since literature can represent and narrate the life situation and conditions in a certain period. Reading literature as an object of remembrance connects and understands through generations (Erll and Rigney, 2006). Moreover, by doing library research, this study looks into secondary sources such as the internet, books, and articles to support the analysis. The aim is to describe and analyze first how settings symbolize nostalgia, the relations between nostalgia and desire in the characters, and the materialism and life wisdom in the nostalgia of Tom Outland in the story. It also explains the protagonist and analyzes the depiction of nostalgia by paying close attention to the various characters and settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Settings as the Epitome of Nostalgia of Sentimental Memories and Loss

Many fields and literary genres have utilized nostalgia concepts to develop the characterization. Wagner states, *"Nostalgia for an ideal space increasingly gave rise to fantasies of particularly eccentric homes, as many of Dickens' fictional home show"* (2004, p. 13). Since settings as an intrinsic element refer to places and time-space, reminiscing the past time and place is also an act of nostalgia with or without the people. For example, Nagy (2007) mentioned that the attic room, the lake, and the garden of St. Peter are described in a womb-like form that implied the longing for a mother figure, a repressed desire for the past. Furthermore, the title, *The Professor's House*, represents the house as the central place where the center of the events and the characters develop. All the characters in the story have spent time in the Professor's house temporarily or permanently. It shows the space for creating and sharing happy and sad memories. The strength of this story relies on picturesque nostalgia, poetic, slow-pace plot, and flashback stories which make the readers feel an unfathomable connection through dialogues between characters and detailed descriptions of time and place.

The time-setting also appeared when St. Peter remembered the flashback of his time in France with its detailed description of memories in Paris. Cather writes, *"He was thinking of certain holidays he had spent alone in Paris"* (p.39). It had become the epitome of his sentimental memories as it might be seen as a youthful and freedom era before St. Peter decided to confine his marriage and needed to share his life with someone else, a part of nostalgia St. Peter wished to retrieve. He also regretted why he did not take Outland to Paris to commemorate his best years and now could only imagine it in a nostalgic frame of imagination (Cather, pp. 99-100). It illustrates the significant connection between place and person that refers to the best things that matter in the nostalgic moments of St. Peter. Time flies, and he already reached his old years.

A garden symbolizes the next level of the life of St. Peter. First, when St. Peter spent his *golden period* in France, it seemed pretty sentimental when he spent time in Luxembourg Garden (Cather, p.39). Also, a garden is one of the main places mentioned in the novel. St. Peter worked in the garden when he first saw Tom Outland (Cather, p.42). Also, St. Peter has a sentimental nostalgia for Kathleen (Kitty). When Kathleen was a kid, she was to play in the garden every morning; his youngest daughter he developed a special kind of affection for (Cather, p.33). In addition, even Tom Outland himself mentioned in his nostalgia narrative when he referred to the garden as a brand new door of life, *"In the spring, just a year after I quarreled with Roddy (Outland's best friend), I landed here and walked into your garden, and the rest you know"* (Cather, p.97), illustrated the starting and a breakthrough of a new kind of life.

When St. Peter entered his elderly age, his life splendor faded away; he had become discouraged due to his loss of Tom Outland, the new attitude of his family, and the arrival of Louie Marsellus to the family. After the demise of Tom Outland, he was disgusted by the hypocrites and haughty personalities of the member of his family they became. Cather thoroughly describes St. Peter's house and location,

symbolizing the traits and persona of his character. St. Peter's house represents the naivety and the years of a happy childhood. From the window of his house, he could see Lake Michigan; this reminded St. Peter of his childhood years (Cather, p.10). The story describes Godfrey St. Peter as the protagonist; he had a seemingly ideal and happy existence until he had to deal with the loss of his favorite student Tom Outland and the behavior changes of his family. His family turned out to be different after receiving Outland's inheritance. When Marsellus, the son-in-law who annoyed St. Peter the most, named the new place of his and Rosamond, St. Peter's oldest daughter, with "Outland" to pay tribute to Tom Outland who invented the Outland engine and gave the patent to Rosamond when they were still together (Cather, p.14). Marsellus disrupted short remembrances and deep connection with Outland when he chose the name "Outland" for his new place. It shows a separation of St. Peter's deep sentimental connection with Outland. It symbolizes the self-loss of St. Peter; it is the loss of his sentimental memories.

Nostalgia and Desire

The Professor's House represents the detailed appearance description of each character. The novel is more than just showing off their identity and class. Cather was very subtle in conveying desire and eroticism of the characters. Cather's distinctive writing creates a story enriched with exquisite phrases and metaphors to forming a sentimental nuance. Her ability to use intricate tensions to thrilling effect is one of her excellent accomplishments as a writer that not only made the readers deeply connected with the characters and the plot but also could feel the hidden allusion and sensuality within the narrative (Wasserman, 1982; Rosowski, 1982; Murphy, 2014). Several Cather's works present the repressed sexual desire to pose a notion of nostalgic-romantic discourse; it also shows her distinction compared to the rest conventional female writers at that time (Yukman, 1988). By showing off the physical features of the character, the meticulous details of St. Peter refers to the portrayal of a handsome and charismatic man whom subtlety brings out the notion of eroticism, "The Professor in pajamas was not an unpleasant sight; for looks, the fewer clothes he had on, the better" (Cather, p.4).

Moreover, the characterization of St. Peter and Outland describes the vagueness of sexual desire; they are both involved in close relationships between man and woman. Outland was in a close relationship with his best friend, Rodney Blake, before he met the Professor; he needed to let go and become a mere memory after Outland ended his engagement with the professor's daughter. On the other hand, From St. Peter's remembrance of Tom Outland, it seems that he always connects it with his deep desire, which is very elusive described. The confusion of desire and affection are mingled in his pensive nostalgia, "[…] the Professor would hear them in the garden: the laughter and exclamations of the little girls, and that singularity individual voice of Tom's—mature, confident, seldom varying in pitch, but full of slight, very moving modulations" (Cather, p.48). Meanwhile, the Professor also consciously admitted his wife's appearance, "he was conscious of pretty little girls in fresh dresses. [..] of his wife's good looks and good taste" (Cather, p.38), but at the same time, the first explanation of the novel hides the other desire. It gives some clue that nostalgia and desire combined into one about his beloved student, "Desire is creation, is the magical element in that

process. If there were an instrument by which to measure desire, one could foretell achievement. He had been able to measure it roughly, just once, in his student Tom Outland, and he had foretold" (Cather, pp. 9-10). Thus, by bringing up the nostalgia of two people that he loves, it seems to offer the context of affection and desire that were once reciprocated but seems to disappear in the elderly years of the Professor: the changing attitude of Lillian and the decease of Outland.

Likewise, an earlier study also identifies Tom Outland as the *surrogate love and male homosexual lover* of St. Peter as he reminded The Professor of his young life (Nagy, 2007, p.4). Nagy (2007) also added that the central spaces in St. Peter's house, like the garden, lake, and attics, also might illustrate the metaphors of same-sex paramours, "While evoking maternal origins, they also suggest homosexuality through erotic symbols, homoerotic fantasies, and subtexts of male-male romance" (p.7). It resonates with The Professor's wife herself is full of jealousy towards his protégé, "St. Peter had no friend in Hamilton of whom Lillian could be possibly jealous until Tom Outland came along" (Cather, p.18). Additionally, Tom Outland was not only described in the nostalgia of the Professor about his masculine features of a manly, mature voice, sandy-haired, and fine-looking boy (Cather, p.43) but also how vividly he remembers about him, "[..] and the Professor thought this was the hottest boy he had ever seen" (Cather, p.45).

Not only had the nostalgia involving Tom Outland but also his past with the Thieraults in Paris been an essential nostalgia for St. Peter. The Thierault boys were very close to St. Peter, "They (Thireault brothers) were much closer to him (St. Peter) than his brothers" (Cather, p. 40). St. Peter had managed years to live with two lives, both of them very intense" (Cather, p.9); it shows that the Professor had divided his life between his private life and university work. It may also give a clue about the secret identity of St. Peter for having a closeted affection and kept his desire towards other men. Nostalgia hides desire and eroticism; father-and-son connection portrays man-to-man relationship. For Outland he lost a father figure as he kept searching and finally found a mentor and guardian from St. Peter's persona. On the other hand, the Professor has been missing the favorite child he desired but no longer had when he realized that both daughters had disappointed him and had become *distant children* and different from his nostalgia when they were young.

The Nostalgia of Tom Outland: A Memento of Materialism and Wisdom

As nostalgia has been expanded into a more abstractive and broad context to encompass *loss* of, including the longing for a *lost childhood*, for *irretrievable youth*, for a vanished *world of yesterday* (Hirsch and Spitzer, 2002, p. 258), nostalgia can also reflect the memento of searching for the things (material) and value of life wisdom. Characters are the intrinsic elements that influence the plot. Monfared and Sadeghzadegan (2022) explore the interpretation of childhood trauma and self-expression of the main character in Cather's *Paul's Case.* Lawton (2015) affirms that *The Professor's House* is about the solastalgia of longing for the culturally and physically destructed land. In this novel, Tom Outland is the second main chapter, narrating his story from his point of view from his early age, telling about his ups and downs journey with his best friend, Blake, in between the dispute over prehistoric Indian remains discovery and excavation surrounds Blue

Mesa and the moment when he came to St. Peter's house. The point of view was told in a flashback, as the character was still *alive,* and his nostalgic perspective of searching for materials ended up in gaining and acknowledging life wisdom, *"For me, the Mesa was no longer an adventure, but a religious emotion"* (Cather, p. 96). St. Peter's life friction started from his denial of the loss of the pivotal figure in his life and his growing awareness that the affection of his family is ebbing away to be replaced by material wealth.

The name of Outland means the *outsider land,* referred to the boy who came from *the outside world* of St. Peter's life and influence in his elderly time. Years after Outland's demise, his surname still used to imply a *space to inhabit* and changed its concept into the materialistic world, *"At home, Dearest, with me, at our own dinner-table at Outland!"* Marcellus said to his new place (Cather, p.25). Although, it seems that using his name as a metaphor for nostalgic materialism might have two meanings of commemoration and mockery to different characters. Agreeing with the explanation from Hilgart (1998, p.397), *"He (St. Peter) used Tom as a resource of energy, then retrospectively drained him to emptiness, unwittingly cooperating with the others in their reductive translations."* Moreover, Tom Outland was always associated with his discovery, a legacy that made Rosamund and Louie inherit money. However, when Rosamund offers the 'compensation' to her father, St. Peter refuses it, *"I couldn't possibly take any of Outland's money,"* and explains to her that the material clause is not the basis of his bond with Tom Outland (pp. 22-23). Tom Outland is also *utilized* as a material for mirroring reflection because he saw the genius boy who reminded him of himself (Laoera, 2012). Therefore, Outland has also become a token material of self and wealth in the timeline of nostalgia.

From all disputes the wealth inheritance, St. Peter believed that money and wealth were not determinants of happiness. The longing for *pure love* from his family, the nature splendor, and integrity had become the sources of his greatest joy. Even though St. Peter had a perfect life and a great mind, he found joy in the simplest things and wanted peace and happiness. His name tells the audience about the character that would preach wisdom. Johnson states, *"When God-free, a reference to the Professor's secular humanism, is paired with St. Peter, the father of the Christian church, we find the first hint of the role St. Peter will play as a secular priest of art within the text"* (2010, p. 115). The leaving of Outland from his place of youth in Mesa implied how much he developed and learned about the happiness, even though it sounds so obscure, *"Happiness is something one can't explain. You must take my word for it. Troubles enough came afterward, but there was that summer, high, and blue, a life in itself"* (Cather, p. 97). Moreover, St. Peter shows that the meaning of happiness seems to be similarly vague as Outland's view, which in the end showed that only relying on wisdom (of art and religion) can bring happiness to people.

> "[...] and that's what makes men happy, believing in the mystery
> and importance of their own little individual lives. It makes us
> happy to surround our creature needs and bodily instincts with
> as much pomp and circumstances as possible. Art and religion

(they are the same thing, in the end, of course) have given man
the only happiness he has ever had*"* (Cather, p.25)

In addition, Cain (2016) explains the connection between life and suffering in *The Professor's House* when St. Peter fell into depression and decided to 'end his life' by staying in a room full of gas (Cather, p.105), however, I presume, it also gives some wisdom about materials, money, and possession which in the end will not define someone's life and characters.

CONCLUSION

Nostalgia is the central concept to understanding the meanings of the novel by looking through the lenses of intrinsic elements: settings and characters. *The Professor's House* offers a narrative about loss, desire, and wisdom through nostalgic places and memories. St. Peter yearns for a functioning family, love, and wisdom; he yearns for the essential worth of life in a world full of longing for material things. *The Professor's House* emphasizes the lost characters and lack of affection and desire; it portrays a living by embracing or rejecting nostalgia. Cather's novels are classics and prolific works. *The Professor's House* is worthy of further analysis from many perspectives.

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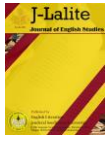
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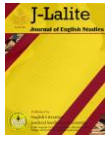
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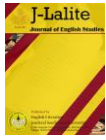
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