

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Yoon's series consists of three books entitled *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits, 2003), *Yoon and the Christmas Mitten* (Recorvits, 2006) and *Yoon and the Jade Bracelet* (Recorvits, 2008). These books are children picturebooks. Picturebook is colorful books targeted at children. (Dukut, Utami, Nugroho, & Putri, 2014, p.40 ) state that every picture in every story can be interpreted differently by the readers. It can help children who are not proficient enough in reading feel the enjoyment of reading books. As a consequence, a picturebook will encourage children's habit of reading. Thus, it is clear that picturebooks are the right media for children to learn positively about something. Faizah (2009, p. 254). also explains that a picturebook can make children learn more about their society based on a character from the book. They can see how the characters deal with a problem similar to their own that will help children let out of their own problems in the future.

With lots of pictures and minimal words in a picturebook, it becomes a way to easily memorize the wordings used in the story.

These books talk about Yoon, a Korean girl, who moves to America. It depicts Yoon's cultural adjustment and identity as an immigrant child. As an immigrant Yoon has to adjust into her new environment and finds her new identity. This series of Yoon is interesting since we can learn how the author teaches her young readers about cultural adjustment which is a difficult thing for children to learn about.

In his research entitled “Stories of Crossing Borders: Identities, Place and Culture”, Slamet (2013) concludes that cultural adjustment process is a big deal for the immigrants. The biggest problem is that they sometimes have to help their children to adapt. Reading children picturebooks about immigrant story can be a big help because it is a tool for the parents to guide their children in passing through their adjustment stages as stated by Slamet (2013). After passing the adjustment process, immigrants will try to find their new identity. Identity is the feeling of belonging to or as a part of a nationality, ethnicity, religion, and social class that each person has their own distinct culture. As described by Buckingham (2018, p.6), identity is not always consistent or can be shifted from time to time. Identity is important since it will be depicted in our everyday life.

These books are very important as children are the first ones who make the cultural and linguistic adjustments in immigrants’ family. They strive to be accepted by their new environment. Lamme, Fu, and Lowerly (2004, p.124) state that through the picturebooks about immigrants, children can see their own experiences appreciated by another person. These picturebooks are also important for the non-immigrant children. The story will make them learn about immigrant’s experience through immigrants’ point of view and through the story they are exposed to different cultures. That is how the character in these books can relate into the real experience of immigrant children.

There is a research about children picturebooks conducted by Linda Leonard Lamme, Danling Fu, and Ruth Mckoy Lowery titled “Immigrants as Portrayed in Children’s Picturebooks”. They point out that there are three major themes of immigrant’s life depicted in children picturebook, namely, making the transition,

making the connection, and becoming an American (2004, p. 124). They argue that children are the first member of the family who try to adapt to the new environment because they are longing to get accepted by their new environment.

The main character of these Yoon series is a Korean girl named Yoon who lives in America with her parents. The honeymoon phase happened in the second book titled *Yoon and the Christmas Mitten* (2006). It is the story of Yoon's excitement on Christmas celebration. That shows Yoon's Honeymoon phase. All of her friends celebrate it and she wants to join them, but her parents forbid her and say that they are Korean. Santa Claus is not their custom. But after all of the struggles Yoon's parents allow her to celebrate Christmas. The culture shock phase happened in the first book, *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits,2003). It is the story of Yoon's prior days when she moves to America and finds trouble in facing her cultural adjustment stage and defining her present identity. The story of Yoon's struggles and her parents' efforts to make her understand and fit in American culture are the main focus of this first book. The trouble comes when she has to write her name in English, using alphabet. She finds it become meaningless compared to her name in Korean character, *Hangeul*. But, after Yoon's parents efforts Yoon can understand that America is her second home now.

In the *Yoon and the Christmas Mitten* (2006), Yoon's way of adjusting into American culture is also the main problems. This time she tries to define her new identity. This second book tells about the changes of Yoon's and her parent's way of seeing their new world, United States as their home.

In the third book titled *Yoon and The Jade Bracelet* (2008), Yoon's innocence about American culture makes her experience the lessons about friendship in United States and how to cope with her friends. Yoon gets a jade bracelet as a present from her mother. The bracelet is an inheritance from her grandmother. The problem starts when a girl asks her to borrow it for the sake of friendship. Yoon does not allow her to have it because she really loves it. Then her friend tries to take it by force from Yoon.

There are some picturebooks related to Asian American immigrants such as *Grandfather Counts* by Cheng (2000) is a story of Chinese-American grandfather who tries to adapt into American culture. Another book is *Lissy's Friends* by Lin (2007) which tells about Lin, a Chinese-American girl's struggle to fit into her new school and friends. The story is about her crisis stage. There is also *Suki's Kimono* by Uegaki and Jorisch (2003). The story is about a Japanese-American girl who tries to get into her mastery stage of her cultural adjustment phase. These books talk about how immigrant children deal with problems related to their cultural adjustment phase and their new identity. These books show that being an immigrant child is not easy. There are many complex problems that they have to face everyday.

There are many factors that make people migrate to another country. Hagen-Zanker (2011) states that there are "push and pull" factors both from the origin country and destination country, such as, economic, cultural, and environmental factors. Many immigrants from different countries go to United States for better living and education. It makes United States be a multi ethnic country. In Indonesia, the different kind of ethnics that goes into various islands makes idea

of Indonesia is also a country that has multi ethnicity. There are many reasons behind these transmigrations, such as to be a laborer with higher salary, and study with better education. Of course Indonesia is not the only Asian's country with a big number of transmigration.

Asian immigrants' most common destination is United States. This makes Asian-American the fastest-growing racial group in the U.S. Pew Research Center's census in 2011. It indicates that 5,6% of America population are Asian-American. As immigrants, they experience the period of cultural adjustment, which is not an easy period in their life. They are forced to face the whole new different environment with new people and culture that demand them to act differently.

To learn about Asian American Immigrant's life, I make use of 3 picturebooks about Asian American children. A series of Yoon, written by Helen Recorvits entitled *My Name is Yoon* (2003), *Yoon and the Christmas Mitten* (2006) and *Yoon and the Jade Bracelet* (2008) become my main data of research. In my research, I study the cultural adjustment process in children picturebooks as one of the immigrant parents' media in teaching their children. My research analyzes the stages of cultural adjustment experienced by the three picturebooks' Yoon character.

## **1.2. Field of the Study**

The field of this study is literature, especially about identity and multiculturalism problems

### **1.3. Scope of the Study**

In this research the scope is limited to only three picturebooks titled *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits, 2003), *Yoon and the Christmas Mitten* (Recorvits, 2006) and *Yoon and the Jade Bracelet* (Recorvits, 2008).

### **1.4. Problem Formulation**

What stages of cultural adjustment are experienced by the character Yoon, the child immigrant from analyzing the three picturebooks?

### **1.5. Objective of the Study**

To investigate immigrant's stages of cultural adjustment as experienced by Yoon in the three picturebooks.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

This research is significant as it will help other students know how to apply the theories learned in Identity and Multiculturalism course, especially cultural adjustment theory that the researcher uses to analyze Yoon's character.

### **1.7. Definition of Terms**

#### **1. Cultural Adjustment:**

Cultural adjustment refers to the phase or process a person to assimilate to a new culture. (Teasley, 2016)

#### **2. Cultural Shock:**

Cultural shock refers to a discomfort feeling that comes when someone experiences another new culture or place. (Rise, 1993, p.1).

### 3. Identity:

Identity refers to the feeling of belonging to or as a part of a nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class. According to Hill (2012) identity is unique because it is different from one person to another.

### 4. Picturebook:

Picturebook refers to a book that aims the children as their particular reader and it contains pictures that dominantly depict the story (Slamet, 2013, p.53).

### 5. Immigrant:

Immigrants refer to people who come to a foreign country to live permanently. (Berry, 2005, p. 698).

