

Cross Cultural Conflicts in *Not Without my Daughter*

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Abstract

This study aims to identify and analyze the cultural conflicts between the main characters in the novel *Not Without my Daughter* (NW). The analysis was carried out through the following process. The first procedure related to problems of classification i.e. cross cultural conflicts. The next phase of data analysis related to the collection data of cross cultural conflicts in NW. The last phase is presentation the result of the analysis that had been conducted in this research. Having analyzed the data, the researcher concludes that cultural conflicts occurred in NW because of stereotype, prejudice, and ethnocentrism. Cultural conflicts can be prevented if we increase our awareness of our own attitudes and learn to be sensitive to cross-cultural differences. However, if we develop intercultural sensitivity, it does not mean that we need to lose our cultural identities-but rather that we recognize cultural influences within ourselves and within others.

Keywords : *Culture, Cross-Cultural Conflict, Culture Understanding*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis konflik budaya antara karakter utama dalam novel *Not Without my Daughter* (NW). Analisis ini dilakukan melalui proses berikut. Prosedur pertama terkait dengan masalah klasifikasi yaitu konflik lintas budaya. Tahap berikutnya dari analisis data terkait dengan pengumpulan data tentang konflik lintas budaya pada NW. Tahap terakhir adalah penyajian hasil analisis yang telah dilakukan dalam penelitian ini. Setelah menganalisis data, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa konflik budaya terjadi di NW karena stereotip, prasangka, dan etnosentrisme. Konflik budaya dapat dicegah jika kita meningkatkan kesadaran terhadap sikap kita sendiri dan belajar untuk peka terhadap perbedaan budaya. Namun, jika kita mengembangkan sensitivitas interkultural, itu tidak berarti bahwa kita harus kehilangan identitas - tapi lebih karena budaya kita menyadari pengaruh budaya dalam diri kita sendiri dan pada orang lain.

Kata Kunci : *Budaya , Konflik Lintas Budaya , Pemahaman Budaya*

Introduction

Learning language is considered as learning its culture since language is part of our culture (Nasr 1985:1). In Damen's opinion (1987:211-213), as people learn a target language, their learning activity includes learning the culture of the native speaker. Moreover, he assumes that culture learning and; language learning are inextricably linked so there can be no question as to whether culture should be taught or not. Hence, we may conclude that learning a new culture is an essential part of learning a new language.

Leveridge (2008) stated that teachers must instruct their students on the cultural background of language usage. If one teaches language without teaching about the culture in which it operates, the students are learning empty or meaningless symbols or they may attach the incorrect meaning to what is being taught. The students, she added, when using the learnt language, may use the language inappropriately or within the wrong cultural context, thus defeating the purpose of learning a language.

Because language is so closely entwined with culture, language teachers entering a different culture must respect their cultural values. As Englebert (2004) describes: "...to teach a foreign language is also to teach a foreign culture, and it is important to be sensitive to the fact that our students, our colleges, our administrators, and, if we live abroad, our neighbours, do not share all of our cultural paradigms."

The implications of language being completely entwined in culture, in regards for language teaching and language policy are far reaching. Language teachers must instruct their students on the cultural background of language

usage, choose culturally appropriate teaching styles, and explore culturally based linguistic differences to promote understanding instead of misconceptions or prejudices. Language policy must be used to create awareness and understandings of cultural differences, and written to incorporate the cultural values of those being taught. (Leveridge, 2008)

Recent studies focus on the seamless relationship between L2 teaching and target culture teaching, especially over the last decade with the writings of scholars such as Byram (1989; 1994a; 1994b; 1997a; 1997b) and Kramsch (1988; 1993; 1996; 2001). People involved in language teaching have again begun to understand the intertwined relation between culture and language (Pulverness, 2003). It has been emphasized that without the study of culture, teaching L2 is inaccurate and incomplete. For L2 students, language study seems senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak the target language or the country in which the target language is spoken. Acquiring a new language means a lot more than the manipulation of syntax and lexicon. Bada stated (2000: 101), “the need for cultural literacy in ELT arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to cultural elements of the society in question, seem to encounter significant hardship in communicating meaning to native speakers.” In addition, nowadays the L2 culture is presented as an interdisciplinary core in many L2 curricula designs and textbooks (Sysoyev & Donelson, 2002).

According to Stewart (1972:7), cross-cultural problems occur as there are differences between patterns of thinking, assumptions and values in different cultures. The problems often result in misunderstanding and lead to ineffectual activity in face-to-face communication. By having different cultural background, people sometimes can be in conflict with other people. The conflict happens because there is strong contradiction of norms that belong to

each culture. As a result of strong influence of their culture, people often have ethnocentric, stereotype, prejudice and racist attitudes toward people whose culture is different from theirs.

Considering the above explanation, this paper identifies and analyzes cross cultural conflicts caused by misinterpretation, stereotype, prejudice and ethnocentrism found in a novel *Not Without my Daughter*.

The nature of conflict

According to Avruch, conflict is a feature of all human societies, and potentially an aspect of all social relationships. However, ideas about the root causes of conflict differ widely, and how one conceives of conflict determines to a large degree the sorts of methods we ultimately design to manage or resolve it. He added that the first orientation to conflict (and the world) is sometimes called “realism”. This conception of conflict roots it in the material world, as competition between individuals or groups over incompatible goals or scarce resources, or over the sources of power needed to reach those goals or control these resources, including the denial of control to others. The second one is “constructivism”, a different conception which locates the basic causes of conflict not so much in material scarcity as in divergent perceptions or beliefs about the nature of the situation, the other party, or oneself. But these terms, and the dichotomous way of thinking they enjoin, in actuality mask a great deal of social and behavioral complexity, both about the nature of conflict and about the possibilities for managing or resolving it.

Literature indicates the multi-faceted nature of conflict. Mayer (2000:3) states that conflict may be seen as a feeling or as inconsistent worldviews. Augsburger (1992:25) indicated that “conflict is universal, cultural and

individual.” Some authors indicated that cultural differences and misunderstandings create a major source of conflict (Hermann, et al, 1997:207).

Source of conflict

The sources of conflict play a critical role in determining appropriate ways to manage conflict. Based on the research conducted by Joan C Doerr (2004) in her dissertation, participants of her research referred to six dimensions of conflict and one of them is the communication process. In line with that, Mayer (2000:16) stated: ”Culture affects conflict because it is embedded in individuals’ communication styles, history, way of dealing with emotions, values, and structures. Communication is a complicated process which is affected by different cultural backgrounds. Communication takes places anytime a person receives information and assigns meaning to the words or behaviour (Bergeron, 2000:38). That behaviour may be conscious or unconscious and it may be intentional or unintentional.

Communication is a complex process, which is used to create understanding between people (Rutter, 1996:24). As Hesselgrave (1991:46) remarked:.....effective communication is not easily achieved and miscommunication is not easy to avoid.” The process becomes even more difficult when the source and the participant originate from different cultures. The degree of difficulty is due to dissimilarity between the two original cultures (Myers, et al, 2001:98). The greater the variation between cultural backgrounds, the more obstacles there are to communication.

Culture

Levine and Baxter (1987) state that culture has been described as the system of knowledge, beliefs, and behaviour shared by a group of people. Moreover, people use cultural knowledge and beliefs to understand their world (what exists), their own experience (what happens to them) and to guide their own actions and behaviour (what they do). Therefore, when people share a culture, this means that they also have a shared language and communication style as well as shared customs, beliefs, attitudes and values. This shared knowledge is learned and is passed on from generation to generation.

In addition, culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts (Brislin 1981:5). Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Sherman 1980:77). In short, culture is the system of knowledge, belief, and behaviour, which are shared by and transmitted among members of a society.

In conclusion, then, culture can be defined in terms of the continually changing patterns of learned behaviour, which are shared by and transmitted among members of a society.

Culture and language

Damen (1987:120-124) views that language and culture have strong connection in which language serves to facilitate classification and order. Language reflects cultural emphases and language is related to the worldviews of the speaker. Moreover, he explains that language learning implies and

embraces culture learning. Indeed, success in learning a second or even third language is partially related to the acquisition of the cultural baggage that is carried along with any linguistic system. In line with this, Frederick (1989:89) quoting Lado and Rivers, states that learning a language should not be separated from learning the pattern and values of the culture of which it is a part.

In addition, Leveridge (2008) states the relationship between language and culture is deeply rooted. Language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. Different ideas stem from differing language use within one's culture and the whole intertwining of these relationships start at one's birth.

The dialectical connection between language and culture has always been a concern of L2 teachers and educators. Whether culture of the target language is to be incorporated into L2 teaching has been a subject of rapid change throughout language teaching history. In the course of time, the pendulum of ELT practitioners' opinion has swung against or for teaching culture in context of language teaching. For example, during the first decades of the 20th century researchers discussed the *importance* and *possibilities* of including cultural components into L2 curriculum (Sysoyev & Donelson, 2002).

Kitao (1991) giving reference to several authors lists some of the benefits of teaching culture as follows:

First, studying culture gives students a reason to study the target language as well as rendering the study of L2 meaningful (Stainer, 1971). *Second*, studying culture makes studying foreign language real. From the perspective of learners, one of the major problems in language teaching is to conceive of the native speakers of target language as real person. Although grammar books gives so called genuine examples from real life, without background knowledge those real situations may be considered fictive by the learners. (Genc & Bada, 2005). In addition

providing access into cultural aspect of language, learning culture would help learners relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and places (Chastain, 1971). *Third*, studying culture increases studying students' interest. The affect of motivation in the study of L2 has been proved by experts like Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1965, 1972). In achieving high motivation, culture classes does have a great role because learners like culturally based activities such as singing, dancing, role playing, doing research on countries and peoples, etc. *Fourth*, studying culture motivates students to study foreign languages. The study of culture increases learners' not only curiosity about and interest in target countries but also their motivation. For example, when some professors introduced the cultures of the L2s they taught, the learners' interests in those classes increased a lot and the classes based on culture became to be preferred more highly than traditional classes. (Genc & Bada, 2005). *Fifth*, studying culture is useful not only for understanding people of other cultures but to help students understand themselves and their own culture. In an age of post-modernism, in an age of tolerance towards different ideologies, religions, sub-cultures, we need to understand not only the other culture but also our own culture. Most people espouse ethnocentric views due to being culture bound, which leads to major problems when they confront a different culture. Being culture bound, they just try to reject or ignore the new culture. As if it is possible to make a hierarchy of cultures they begin to talk about the supremacy of their culture. This is because they have difficulty understanding or accepting people with points of view based on other views of the world. (Genc & Bada, 2005). Besides these benefits, studying culture gives learners a liking for the native speakers of the target language. Studying culture also plays a useful role in general education; studying culture, we could also learn about the geography, history, etc. of the target culture (Cooke, 1970).

McKay (2003), furthermore, contends that culture influences language teaching in two ways: linguistic and pedagogical. Linguistically, it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of the language materials because cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials. For

example, while some textbooks provide examples from the target culture, some others use source culture materials.

Cultural Conflict

According to Avruch, by definition, conflict occurring between individuals or social groups that are separated by cultural boundaries can be considered “cross-cultural conflict.” But individuals, even in the same society, are potentially members of many different groups, organized in different ways by different criteria: for example, by kinship into families or clans; by language, religion, ethnicity, or nationality; by socioeconomic characteristics into social classes; by geographical region into political interest groups; and by education, occupation, or institutional memberships into professions, trade unions, organizations, industries, bureaucracies, political parties, or militaries. Avruch added that the more complex and differentiated the society the more numerous are potential groupings. Each of these groups is a potential “container” for culture, and thus any complex society is likely to be made up of various “subcultures,” that is of individuals who, by virtue of overlapping and multiple group memberships, are themselves “multicultural.” This means that conflict across cultural boundaries may occur simultaneously at many different levels, not just at the higher levels of social grouping.

Second language learning is characterized by miscommunication, failure to communicate clearly, however, is not merely a linguistic problem; linguistic “conflict” has the potential to turn into cross-cultural conflicts. (McAllister 1995:13). Miscommunication can happen in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is communication between members of different cultures. This definition is simple, but the process is complex. Intercultural communication involves differing perceptions, attitudes, and interpretations. We know that even two people from the same culture can

have communication problems. People can unintentionally hurt each other by something they say or do. Isn't it logical, then, that communication problems can be compounded among people who do not have the benefit of shared experiences (i. e., language and culture)? In short, intracultural communication is communication between two persons or groups not sharing similar cultural pattern. It is common that even two people in the same culture can have cultural conflicts that we called intracultural communication. Cultural conflict is a conflict that occurs as a friction of different cultures. In addition, cultural conflicts occur as a result of misinterpretation, ethnocentrism, stereotype and prejudice.

Misinterpretation

Misinterpretation happens between people from different cultures. Communication between members of different cultures can arouse misunderstanding which causes misinterpretation. This problem happens because people interpret something according to their own culture and it is possible for members of different cultures to have different interpretation on the same thing. He should not assume that if someone says or does, the listeners always interpret one's message according to their cultural meaning.

Stereotype

The identification of stereotypes is an important key to cross-cultural communication. Stereotypes are standardized and oversimplified descriptions applied to groups or people; teenagers are irresponsible, Jews are greedy. Occasionally they are classified based on limited experience, as when a person knows one Armenian and decides that all Armenians are just like the one he or she knows.

Stereotype is sometimes distorted description of group of people whether negative or positive which prevents us from viewing people as

individual with distinct and unique characteristic. Often stereotypes are based on indirect experience contradictory information or no information at all. Blacks were once stereotyped simultaneously good-natured people and savages. Stereotypes are imbedded in cultures. Old folktales create and keep stereotypes alive (Stewart, 1981:202)

People who are limited in personal experiences become easy to have their own interpretations that make stereotype or overgeneralization. Stereotype is to decide that something is common to all members of culture. People who have stereotype about a group of people fail to understand the variety that exists in the culture. They ascribe to the whole what is observed merely of a part. (McAllister 1995:16)

Stereotypical beliefs prevent us from seeing people as individuals with unique characteristics. Negative stereotypes lead to prejudice: suspicion, intolerance, or hatred of other cultural groups.

One of the best way to avoid problem of stereotyping and unintentional slights is to make an aeffort at approaching all people as human beings (Arai, et al, 2001:447; Hiebert, 1985:98; Samovar, et al, 1981:87). This mental choice helps one to be more aware of the similarities among people, irregardless of race of skin colour. It also helps to build a positive attitude toward people of other cultures.

Prejudice

Prejudice is the negative judgement of entire group usually a racial or ethnic groups they have ever seen-Chinese children learned about the aggressive, “big nosed” “round eyes” before the diplomatic thaw between East and West in the 1970s and many Americans knew that Vietnamese were sneaky, cunning, untrustworthy, and dirty.

Prejudiced attitudes may also grow from direct interaction between members of different groups. If all the interaction is between one group in a superior position and another group in an inferior position, then it is sure to become stereotyped. It makes prejudice stronger, and a vicious circle is begun (Stewart, 1981:203).

Prejudice is a judgment that a particular ethnic group is inherently inferior to others. If anyone who judges another culture and not his/her own, he/she is guilty of racial prejudice (McAllister 1995:17)

Brislin (1981:41-42) states that prejudice refers to a person's emotional reactions and, thus, represents the affective component. Moreover, he says that usually people react negatively to others on an emotional basis, with an absence of direct contact or factual material about the others.

Furthermore, Brislin (1981:69) comments that prejudice can be expressed in a variety of forms, from vicious racism, to deeply felt disapproval of behaviours of other group. Prejudice is commonly viewed as hostile, rigid, and overt which could be changed if people would come into contact and learn more about each other. It is very necessary to have an understanding to reduce prejudice.

Ethnocentrism

The emotional response which people often have when first faced with another culture is known as ethnocentrism. Difficulties in intercultural communication arise when there is little or no awareness of divergent cultural values and beliefs. In cross-cultural interaction, speakers sometimes assume that what they believe is right, because they have grown up thinking their way is the best. This ethnocentric assumption can result in negative judgments about other cultures. Another manifestation of ethnocentric attitudes is that people become critical of individuals from different cultures. (Doerr, 2004)

According to McAllister (1995:14), ethnocentrism is believing that ‘culturally different’ means bad or wrong. As being different means bad or wrong, then an ethnocentric person thinks that anyone who is different from him/her is either bad or wrong. This problem begins with the perception of members of a certain culture that ‘their own culture is the best and other cultures are the worst’. This bad attitude involves treatment toward another culture’s belief, actions, speech attitude and perceptions. Ethnocentrism blinds us so that we cannot see the good in others. Thus, as cultural identity, ethnocentrism represents the bright side of ethnocentrism, but when such cultural bias is used to support negative evaluation of the new and strange culture, it is the dark side of ethnocentrism.

In the following example, Rosamine and Merita demonstrate that they cannot understand each other's points of view. Rosamine and Merita are talking to each other about relationships between children and parents. In Rosamine’s culture children live with their parents until marriage because dependence on parents is considered positive. In Merita's culture children leave home when they are eighteen because independence and self-reliance are considered positive.

Rosamine: “I think it’s terrible that in your country children leave their parents when they’re so young. Something that shocks me even more is that many parents want their children to leave home. I can’t understand why children and parents don’t like each other in your country.”

Merita: “ In your country parents don’t allow their children to become independent. Parents keep their children protected until the children get married. How are young people in your country supposed to learn about life that way?”

Both women are insensitive to each other's values concerning family life. They have been raised and conditioned according to cultural norms. Therefore, each has a different view of what is right.

There are two dimensions which assist a person in overcoming this propensity toward ethnocentrism (Haris & Kumra, 2000: 610): (1) An increased awareness of one's culture and (2) An awareness of the differences in work values and cultural values of other cultures.

Lingenfelter and Mayers (2001:23) add one further step to successful cross-cultural interaction, which is the desire to become a 'learner' in the new culture. Becoming a 'learner' implies the concept of discovery, as new ideas are shared and explored. It also requires people to be open and teachable in the face of new ideas.

Negotiation of cross-cultural conflict

People will never understand someone from another culture without understanding what she or he assumes about the world and worlds. In other words, we can say that people need to know cross-cultural understanding. One of the main reasons cultures are so different is that they have different values. This is because, human nature usually interprets 'different' as 'bad' or 'wrong'. A fundamental principle of cross cultural understanding is that only someone who is culturally literate in his/her own culture can truly understand why she/he believes and behaves as she/he does. We can say that by looking into the heart of our own culture, we will be much prepared to understand other cultures. Actually, most people do not know their own core values. People who are ignorant of their values, beliefs and assumptions are culturally illiterate. They cannot 'read and write' their values.

Most of us are too close to our own cultures to be able to see its details, to notice anything usual, to identify what lies behind the surface. Within our own cultures, everything seems perfectly normal; we are like someone who is standing with his face pressed light up against a mirror, we cannot see very much about ourselves from that position. In order to become culturally literate,

we have to step back away from the mirror in order to see things about ourselves. And when we understand ourselves and our own culture we can understand people from other cultures.

From the definition above, we can see that misinterpretation, ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudices have negative meaning. The attitudes can cause the appearance of conflict with other culture. Actually, we can reduce and eliminate negative stereotypes, ethnocentrism, prejudice by increasing awareness of our own attitudes to cross-cultural differences or ethnic and racial diversities as well as establishing personal or direct relationships with individuals from different religions, races or cultures.

Research Methodology

Novel as one kind of literary text is interesting to be analysed since novel is a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity (Rees 1973:106). That is why people seem to be interested in reading novels rather than poetry or play.

Collie and Slater (1987:4) explain, the ‘world’ of a novel offers a full and vivid context since it is a created one. A reader can find an author’s thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions, belief, fear, and joy, and how they speak which are reflected through the characters. They added that this vivid imagined world could quickly give the foreign reader a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real society. Furthermore, Koesnosobroto (1988:20) says that the novel, more than any other genre, can give form to a set of attitudes regarding society, history and the general culture of which the novel is a part. In short, it is possible for students to learn a nation’s culture through a novel.

The object of the study is a novel *Not Without my Daughter* (NW for short) by William Hoffer and Betty Mahmoody. NW is a 'non-fiction novel' in which the author presents actual people and events in story form (Koesnosoebroto 1988:26). The researcher has chosen this novel because it reflects the social condition and the culture of people, which comes into contact with another culture. By reading this novel, the readers can learn cross-cultural conflict revealed in the novel so it will increase their cultural awareness.

The novel talks about an American woman who was trapped in Iran society, which has different culture from hers. The story is based on the true story of Betty Mahmoody, an American woman who was trapped in Iran society with her daughter. It happened in 1984-1986. It started on 3rd august 1984 when Moody, Betty and their daughter went to Tehran, Iran. They planned to stay there for two weeks to see Moody's family. At first, his family welcomed them happily. However, they changed their attitude slowly since they were upset why Moody took an American woman as a wife. At that time, Iran was embroiled in a bitter war with Iraq. They assumed that America supported Iraq. That was the reason why they hated American. Cultural conflicts often occurred when Betty was staying there as she had different culture from that of Iranian such as belief, custom, and value. After experiencing difficult times, she and her daughter, Mahtob finally arrived safely home in Michigan on 7th February 1986, for an ecstatic but bittersweet reunion with their family. She was helped by William Hoffer and his wife, Marilyn, in writing her story. Hoffer is the co-author of *midnight express*, another story of an American held captive in the Middle East. This material is chosen because it contains cultural conflicts between the main character, i.e. Moody, an Iranian and her American wife, Betty Mahmoody.

The research is a qualitative descriptive research. The primary data were cross cultural conflicts caused by ethnocentrism, stereotype and prejudice obtained

from the novel NW through frequent reading and analysis. This study employed the researcher as the instrument to find adequate and profound data and analyze them. The procedures that had been used in this research were (1) provision of data; (2) classification and data analysis; (3) presentation of data analysis. The first procedure related to problems of classification i.e. cross cultural conflicts. The phase of data analysis related to the collection data of cross cultural conflicts in NW. They were classified into misinterpretation, ethnocentrism, stereotype and prejudice. The last phase is presentation the result of the analysis that had been conducted in this research.

Discussion

Characters

Two kinds of characters that are discussed are major and minor characters. Main characters are the most important characters in a story. Minor characters are characters of less important than those of the main (Koesnosoebroto 1988:67)

Main characters

There are two main characters: Betty Mahmoody and Sayyed Bozorg Mahmoody or Moody. Betty was optimistic in facing difficulty. She always tried to find chances or way out of her problems. She was also a brave and desperate woman. When a chance to run away came, she determined to make a desperate run for freedom. She was honest too. Unless she liked something, she would say it directly although some people would get angry to her. Moreover, she was a good and loving mother.

Moody was illustrious lineage in his homeland, Iran. He was a brilliant man who could master any subject. He was a physician trained in America.

Culturally he was a mixture of east and west as he had lived in the United States for two decades. He was already beginning to bald and not particularly handsome, but his strong stocky build was appealing. He had paradoxical personality as he was a loving husband and father but he was also short-tempered and belligerent. Sometimes he was kind. On other occasion, he turned into an evil man.

Minor characters

Five minor characters in the novel are Sara Mahmoody Ghodsi or Ameh Bozorg, Helen Balassanian, Hamid, Judy, and Amahl. Ameh Bozorg was Moody's sister. She was a large-boned, broad-shouldered woman quite a bit older than Moody who was forty-seven years old. She had greenish brown eyes. She married Sayyed Salam Ghodzi or Baba Hajji and had six sons and three daughters. Helen worked in the Swiss embassy in Tehran. She was austere but friendly. She was tall and thin. She was about forties. She was also helpful.

Hamid was a menswear-shop owner. He was tall and dark-haired. He was an ex-officer in the shah's army. He was also trying to find a way out for himself and his family. He helped Betty by letting her use his phone.

Judy was a young and blond-haired American woman. Her Iranian-born husband was a contractor in New York city. She introduced Betty to Rasheed, someone who knew people who could take people out of Iran through turkey.

Amahl was a short, thin man. He hoped someday he could get himself and his family out of Iran, but the circumstances of his life were extraordinary intricate. By day he was a successful businessman, outwardly supportive of the Ayatollah's government. By night his life was a web of intrigue.

Setting

Setting in the story was divided into place and time where and when the story occurred. The places were in America, Iran and Turkey. The time in which the story occurred was from 1974 to 1986.

Mood or atmosphere

The atmosphere of NW was the Iranian culture. It concerned with the way of dressing and the celebration. In dressing Iranian women were required to keep their arms, legs and foreheads covered. They were wrapped almost completely in chadors. A chador was a large half-moon-shaped cloth entwined around the shoulders, foreheads and chin to reveal only eyes, nose and mouth. They wore montoes, which were large coats that reach down nearly to ankles and rosaries, long and heavy scarves when they went outside. However, if there were guests came, they still had to wear the chadors.

Meanwhile for celebration, there were some mentioned in the story. The first was the Muslim Sabbath. On that day, Friday, families gathered in the home of the eldest relative to spend extra time in prayer. The second celebration was war week. It was an annual celebration of the glories of Islamic combat, occasioned by the ongoing war with Iraq and, by extension with America, since Iraq was simply a puppet of the United States. There was a demonstration of ominous roar of jet aircraft that flew low. Bright flashes of anti-aircraft fire lit up the sky, followed by sharp, booming airborne explosions. The third one was No-ruz day- the Persian New Year. It was a two-week holiday during which all the women scrub their houses clean in preparation for rounds of celebration. Families whiled away their time at dinner parties, teas, and receptions in the homes of relatives. It was on 21st march.

Plot

Incentive moment

The story began when Betty Mahmoody went to Iran with moody, her Iranian-born husband and her daughter, Mahtob to visit her husband's family. He swore that they would stay in Tehran for only two weeks. However, he lied and said they would stay in Tehran forever. Although she did not agree the idea, he was adamant.

Complication

Moody asked her to go to see her dad alone, without her daughter as her dad was sick. She was surprised with his change at first, but then she knew the mad reasoning behind his sudden decision to let her return to America. He wanted her to sell everything they owned in America and he would not allow her coming back before she brought the money. He held Mahtob as a hostage.

Climax

Moody imprisoned her for three days until she got onto the airplane so that she could not make a contact with Amahl, someone who could help her getting out of Iran. Finally, she had a chance when an ambulance came to pick moody up. She decided to do something to get out of moody's house and run her plan. Finally, she succeeded and then made a difficult journey to Turkey.

Resolution

The resolution started when Betty arrived at the border between Iran and Turkey. Although they were still far from free, at least, they were out of Iran. However, it was not the end of the story. It was just the beginning of the resolution. The next story was how they journeyed to Ankara, Turkey, where they could fly safely to America.

Theme

Themes that can be formulated from the novel are: (1) A mother who loves her daughter so much that she dares to face any danger for her daughter's sake and (2) there must be a way out of any problems as long as you try hard.

Point of view

This story uses the first point of view as the author tells the story in the first person. She appears as one of the main characters. Therefore, she occupies the position of "I".

Analysis of cultural conflicts in NW which were caused by ethnocentrism, stereotype and prejudice

Ethnocentrism

After being stayed in Ameh Bozorg's house for a couple of months, Betty and Moody moved to Reza's house. Reza was the fifth son of Ameh Bozorg. She admitted that his house was cleaner than Ameh Bozorg's, but she thought that it was still filthy

In many respects Essey was a far better housekeeper than Ameh Bozorg, but the house was still filthy by American standard. (p.456)

She judged hygiene based on American not Iranian standard. She considered Ameh Bozorg as a bad housekeeper. She knew little about the basic hygiene. On the contrary, she was a paragon of cleanliness to Iranian people.

"Even Ameh Bozorg was a paragon of wisdom and cleanliness next to the people on the street of Tehran. (p.431)

It can be said that Betty considered American standard of hygiene was higher than Iranian. In this case, Betty included ethnocentric people who tended to see her own group, country, culture as something that was the best.

Stereotype

One evening after having dinner in one of Moody's cousins' house, Betty was involved in a conversation with them. They talked about how women were oppressed in Iran which was not true according to Iranian.

“Well, the son said, “I'm sure before you came you heard a lot of things about how women are oppressed in Iran. Now that you have been here, you understand that those are all lies?” (p.434)

By reading the quotation above, we can see that Americans considered that women were oppressed in Iran.

“That's not what I see at all,” I said (p.434)

Betty as an American still considered that this was true. Even when she and Moody were back in home, they still argued about it.

“You should agree with him.”

“But it's not true.”

“Well, it's true,” he said. (p.434)

She believed that men oppressed women in Iran. However, Moody, as an Iranian thought in the opposite way. So, in conclusion, American had an opinion about the stereotype of Iranian men that they oppressed women.

There is another example of stereotype of Iranian people according to Betty. **She regarded that Iranian people hated American**, although they venerated American education. The example of this was Moody who had studied in America to be a physician.

“What was an American woman doing flying into a country that had the most openly hostile attitude toward Americans of any nation in the world? (p:417)

However, not all of them hated American. Some of them like Americans such as Chamsey and Zaree who were neighbors' of Moody's family in Shustar, even considered themselves as American.

Both women considered themselves American (p:522)

There were also some people who wanted to go out of Iran to America. They preferred living in America to Iran. They were Hamid who was an ex-officer in the shah's army and was a menswear-shop owner and Amahl. Actually, Iranian people were divided into two groups. The first group was very fanatic to the Ayatollah Khomeini's Shiite sect of Islam such as Ameh Bozorg, Baba Hajji, Reza, Mammal. The other one seemed a bit more westernized. The other one seemed a bit more westernized. They were more likely to speak English such as Chamsey, Zaree, Hamid, and Amahl.

Prejudice

Prejudice is a judgment that a particular ethnic group is inherently inferior to others. In NW, we can also find Betty's prejudice toward Iran country which can be seen in the citation below,

“Surely, I thought, in time Moody would be sickened by the filth around him. He would realize that his professional future was in America, not in a backward nation that had yet to learn the basic of hygiene and social justice (p:444)

Here, Betty considered that Iran was a filthy country because Iranian did not know the basics of hygiene. She thought that Moody, his husband was not proper staying in Iran since a doctor, he must know the value of hygiene. She also regarded Iran as a backward nation that indirectly means that she was of the opinion that Iran was inferior to her country. In short, Betty has negative judgment toward Iran country.

Conclusions

Cultural conflicts occurred because of friction of different cultures between Betty's culture, in this case America, and Iran culture. The cultural aspects causing conflicts found in NW were misinterpretation, prejudice, stereotype and ethnocentrism. It is necessary for English learners to know about the English culture so that they may have a better cross culturally understanding. Further they will be more tolerant and wiser in order to reduce cultural conflicts that may occur in intercultural communication.

Cultural conflicts can be prevented if we increase our awareness of our own attitudes and learn to be sensitive to cross-cultural differences. However, if we develop intercultural sensitivity, it does not mean that we need to lose our cultural identities-but rather that we recognize cultural influences within ourselves and within others. By understanding other cultures well, we could respect other cultures and reduce cultural conflicts that might occur in intercultural communication.

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