

IMMIGRANT CULTURAL IDENTITY REPRESENTATION IN *JUST GET MARRIED* FILM PROMOTION BOOKLET

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Abstract

Germany is well known for its welfare and multiculturalism. Just Get Married was produced to capture one's perspective of immigrant life in Germany. This research aims to identify the cultural identity representation of immigrants in the booklet of "Just Get Married". This research employs qualitative research and uses promotion booklet as the primary source of data. Hall's representation theory is used as tool of analysis toward the written and visual text structure. The results of this study found that the representation of immigration status in film promotion can be viewed from both civil (political) and cultural perspectives. The analysis result shows how the two sides are intertwined. In Germany, immigrants with non-European cultural descent find it more difficult to obtain nationality or naturalization.

Keywords: *Just Get Married Film, cultural identity, immigrant identity, promotion booklet, Stuart Hall representation theory, semiotic*

INTRODUCTION

Preference of a person being an immigrant is mostly driven by an assumption that the destination country giving a big chance to increase the person's welfare. Most immigrants go to a certain potential country due to their poverties in their own country. Since the 1950s, Germany promotes their country as the destination for working. Germans are open to anyone who wants to improve their welfare. At present, Germany is the top 2 (two) countries in accepting immigrants for the past 60 years (Harahap, 2021).

The immigrants in Germany applied for a job in several industries provided—textile, automotive, and civil staff administration. Some others opened a numerous shop and restaurants with list of food from their own culture. The restaurants

are built as the immigrants bring their family to stay with them. As the result, the immigrants' activities affect Germany's economic growth. The national economy is increasing as numerous immigrants putting their own investments in the country (Rizki, 2020).

Another perspective of promotion on allowing immigrants is the population in Germany has been increased. However, COVID-19 controls the mobilization of immigrants to Germany. Under the circumstance, the population is decreasing as a number of the mortality is bigger than the natality (Wirawan, 2021).

As a reaction of the immigrant life in Germany, a film created to give a true insight of the immigrants in Germany. The film, *Just Get Married*, was produced in 2003 and

directed by Hussam Chadat. The 22-minute film has been becoming popular as it is awarded as Best European Short Movie in Europe on Screen Film Festival, 2009. The main character, Ramzi, need to extend his permit to live in Germany by marrying a German woman.

The main character of the film shows a phenomenon of a cultural identity as an immigrant. Cultural identity is a construction that affects a person's thoughts and habits. Based on the phenomenon of immigrants in the past 60 (sixty) years, an immigrant becomes a culture identity in Germany.

Identifying the representation of cultural identity can be analyzed through any production related to the film, such as the film itself, the review, and the booklet. Previous studies on the representation of cultural identity analyzed the visual-audio component in sports and artistic events (Mashchenko, 2020), the news in an online journalism (Wardah, 2012), the main character in a film (Gomez, 2015), the main character influenced by living place in a film (Kristianto, 2009), and the visual in ELT coursebook for young learners (Stec, 2019). This research is different from the previous researches in the object used, by analyzing a promotion booklet of a film.

Representation of the cultural identity of the immigrants in Germany is identified by the meaning and the language used in the promotion booklet. The booklet of the film is used to give an overview to viewers about the

film. The booklet consists of texts that represent the language and the image that represent the film. This research aims to identify the representation of immigrant culture identity in a promotion booklet of JUST GET MARRIED. To identify the representation of the culture identity of the immigrants, two following questions arise, those are 1) how to define the culture identity of an immigrant in a promotion booklet of a film, and 2) how to indicate the representation of the culture identity of the immigrants in Germany.

METHODS

This research is about the representation of the immigrant's cultural identity in Germany by analyzing the film promotion booklet, visually and textually. It requires a comprehensive research method related to the quality of the object of this research. Therefore, this study uses qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research that explores and provides an in-depth understanding of real-world problems (Moser & Korstjens, 2017).

The data source of the research is the promotional booklet of the film Just Get Married for the Europe on Screen Festival 2009 in Indonesia. This data source was chosen based on two factors, namely; (1) The coherence of the film's theme (immigrant's identity) with the research topic. (2) The promotional booklet of the film that contains the dimensions of Aakers brand personality (Ajeyalemi & Dixon-Ogbechie, 2020).

The data are obtained by using the documentation techniques. Documentation techniques involve identification, classification and categorization of the data (Ali, 2018). In this process, the significance theory is used to identify and classify the text construction of the object of research, both in visual and textual.

Stuart Hall's theory of representation is the main theory that is used as a reference in the discussion of analysis. Representation acts as the semiotic tools by identifying the text and the visual image as a form to communicate something meaningful (Hall, 2003). This theory explores to what extent the image of the immigrants is constructed in the object of research.

The results of this study found that

representation of immigrants' identity in the film promotion can be seen from two sides, citizenship (politics) and culture. The film's promotion shows how the two sides are intertwined, that in Germany, immigrants without Europe's cultural root are more difficult to gain citizenship or to be naturalized. The film promotion shows an identity as a part of the basic character of individual's cultural root, which is difficult to change even in a multicultural environment. The discussion on the promotion of the film *Just Get Married* also shows that there are differences in perspective between the younger and older generations regarding the meaning of cultural identity in a multicultural society. For further details, see table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 System of Promotion Text of Just Get Married Film

Signifier/Form	Primary system		Secondary system
	Signified/content	Signified/content	Representation
Germany is an immigration country with a multicultural society, but political parties in Germany are late in accepting this fact.	The arrival of immigrants is one of the triggers for the multiculturalism. Immigrants and multiculturalism are difficult to be accepted for some German society.		The multicultural society in Germany is a society with a diversity of immigrant cultures.
A playful way of describing how hard it is to live in Germany for foreigners.	Immigrants are foreigners. Film is a criticism means for the immigrant life in Germany. Germany is a country for immigrants that does not easily grant citizenship to immigrants.		Immigrants do not allow to live in Germany. Many immigrants or foreigners wish to become citizens or naturalized as German.
Ramzi, a Syrian student studying in Germany, feels deeply integrated with Germany after he has lived in Germany for 10 (ten) years.	Many immigrants or foreigners feel integrated with Germany. Feeling integrated is not enough to live in Germany, they want to be part		Political identity is different from cultural identity. Cultural background played a big role in obtaining citizenship in Germany.

But in order for him to live in Germany after finishing college, he had to marry a German woman. Unfortunately, German women are very difficult people.	of the German citizen. Marriage is one of the ways to obtain German citizenship. The naturalization policy in Germany is difficult to obtain for foreigners of different cultural backgrounds	
Ramzi's mother cannot understand why he didn't just go back to Syria and marry a Syrian woman.	The 'tradition' of culture between Syrian and German are different. There is a conflict of perspectives in understanding the Syrian cultural identity between the younger generation (hybrid) and the older generation.	Identity is a part of the cultural root of an individual that is difficult to change, even in a multicultural society.

Aspects of Film Promotion Texts

The stage of analysis begins with the written text as the part of the introduction to the film promotion. The first part of this promotion is about *foreigners* in Germany. Consider the quote below:

The second film, JUST GET MARRIED depicts Germany as an immigration country with a multicultural society yet many political parties accepted this fact only a few years ago. A humoristic film is a good way to reflect on this basic truth.

Film Kedua, JUST GET MARRIED dengan cara yang jenaka menggambarkan betapa susahny tinggal di Jerman untuk orang asing. Film lucu ini merupakan cara yang bagus untuk melihat kebenaran yang terjadi.

The above quotation shows the difference between the introduction in English and the Indonesian. In the Indonesian introduction, two main messages are missing. First, the statement that Germany is a country for immigrants with a multicultural society. Second, is the late political recognition by several parties in Germany of the multicultural society. This difference certainly affects the meaning, because it is related to the target public understanding.

In the English introduction, the initial sentence used is *depicts Germany as an immigration country with a multicultural society*. This sentence connotatively shows the concept of German society becoming multicultural due to the presence of the immigrants. Germany is in the top two for immigrant recipient countries (Harahap, 2021) in world with a high second-third generation growth rate for immigrant families (Hutauruk, 2019).

The next sentence is *yet many political*

parties accepted this fact only a few years ago. The sentence connotatively shows the late recognition or neglect of some policymakers in Germany over the multicultural situation. These two sentences show the message that multiculturalism due to the presence of immigrants in Germany is something that is not accepted by some parts of German society yet cannot be avoided.

Different denotations are found in the introduction in Indonesian. The phrase “JUST GET MARRIED dengan cara yang jenaka menggambarkan betapa susahnyanya tinggal di Jerman untuk orang asing” seems wanting to summarize the effects of immigrants and multiculturalism’s existence. The word *susah* (difficult), is associated with the word *orang asing* (foreigners) that indicatively shows of the impact from the political turmoil described in the English introduction. Regardless of the differences, the final sentence of the two introductions still put the discomfort of an *immigrant* who is a *foreigner* as a *basic truth* or fact in Germany.

The description above shows the functional nature of the introduction part, both in Indonesian and English as the denotation which formed as a single message. The part in Indonesian that should be the translation of the message in English actually has its own message. Thus, the introduction in English and in Indonesian are positioned as two related messages, with the construction of the same message in the final sentences.

This introduction shows how the use of bilingualism in film promotion booklets does not always have the same meaning (in the context of translation), but also its function in conveying the concept of a film promotion message. Hall (1997) calls it a *symbolic function*, which is used to represent a concept. The introduction of the films promotion in English and Indonesian is used to convey the concept of the image of immigrants, foreigners, and multiculturalism existence in Germany is something that has not been fully accepted by German society yet it is unavoidable. This concept of image is the basis for the promotion of the film *Just Get Married*.

The promotion’s concept of this film can be understood in substance through discussion of the analysis of the film synopsis. Note the synopsis of the film as follows:

Synopsis: After living in Germany for ten years, Syrian student Ramzi Sharif feels he is fully integrated-then he finishes his studies and his residence permit expires, if he wants to stay, he will have to marry a German woman are complicated and Sharif's mother cannot comprehend why he does not want to return to Syria.

Ramzi, mahasiswa Siria yang kuliah di Jerman, merasa sangat

terintegrasi dengan Jerman setelah dia tinggal di Jerman selama 10 tahun. Tetapi supaya setelah kuliah dia dapat tinggal di Jerman, dia harus menikah dengan seorang perempuan Jerman. Sayangnya wanita Jerman sangat sulit dan ibu Ramzi tidak dapat mengerti, mengapa dia tidak pulang saja ke Siria dan menikah dengan perempuan Siria.

In the synopsis above, the use of the sentence *feels he is fully integrated* shows the context that built is a situation of experience of the closeness of Syrian immigrant culture to German society. This sentence connotatively shows that migration can bring closer to someone's cultural *space*. This condition can lead to the need for identity recognition (Hall, 2003:235).

The sentence *... then he finishes his studies and his residence permit expires, if he wants to stay, he will have to marry a German woman* in the synopsis shows this feeling of cultural integration calls for German citizen identity. The synopsis shows that the *space* of identity culture is related to citizenship (politics). In addition, the use of this sentence also shows that there is a compromise in the German citizenship identity policy.

It is well known that Germany has a naturalization policy for immigrants to become the German citizens. The policies in

Germany, for example, the Citizenship Law 2000 which regulates: acceptance of the principle of *Jus Soli*/Law of the Soil in granting citizenship—*Jus soli* is one of the principles in determining the citizenship based on the place of birth, citizenship can be granted if it meets the requirements; a shorter time duration (8 years, from the previous 15 years) for foreigners to be naturalized; rules of German language proficiency; and the opportunity to have dual nationality. In addition, in 2005 the German government renewed its Immigration Law, which includes a residence permit for immigrants. These policies lead to many immigrants seeking citizenship.

In the next synopsis paragraph, there is the sentence *German woman are complicated and Sharif's mother cannot comprehend why he does not want to return to Syria*. The sentence connotatively shows the main character's desire to obtain German citizenship, which actually makes his cultural identity more visible. Because the German and Syrian cultural backgrounds are fundamentally different, of course, there are fundamental differences in the traditions related to marriage.

The synopsis shows that the attempt to obtain a German identity through marriage creates a conflict between Ramzi and his mother's perspective. The difference gives two messages; First, the promotion of the film shows that there is a gap between immigrant culture (Syria) and local culture

(Germany). Second, there is a different understanding of identity between Ramzi who is integrated with German culture, and his mother who still holds close to the Syrian culture. These two messages show that feeling integrated is not enough for citizenship identity, but also have the same European cultural roots. The film promotion uses the aspects of cultural identity to again convey the concept that non-European immigrants have not fully accepted in multicultural German society.

Visual Aspect of Film Promotion.

The visual aspect of the film *Just Get Married* uses footage of scenes. At FFEOSI, the promotion featured the main character Ramzi holding a book entitled *Europäische Gemeinschaft Bundesrepublik Deutschland* or *European Society, Federal Republic of Germany*.

The image camera *booklet* focuses to the main character holding and kissing the book *European Community, Federal Republic of Germany* with closed eyes, which reinforces the message *integrated*. The character is connotatively displayed as they hope to be part of European society through German citizenship. Figure one emphasizes the policy opportunity for the immigrants to become German citizens, but with difficult conditions. This clarifies the English introduction message about the conditions of political acceptance in Germany that affects the citizenship policy.

Whereas in figure two, the display used is the character Ramzi on a public street holding a cardboard board with the words *Ich Suche Eine Deutsche Frau ... Bitte Sprich Mit Mir* (I am looking for a German woman ... Please tell me).

In the figure two, it can be seen that Ramzi is holding an announcement, and a lot of people walking around behind him. From the figure 2, the setting is the crowd on the side of the road. The image composition in this scene does not contain the entire street space as a whole. In this composition the character Ramzi is placed at the center, he is in the middle of the screen.

This snippet of scene two emphasizes two things, namely the *difficult* situation that is mentioned in the introduction. The focus on the main character against the backdrop of a busy public roadshows shows the situation, as it is uncommon to look for a future wife by using a notice board in a public place. Through the character of Ramzi, the picture also shows the condition of a person who has learned to negotiate between the two cultures (Fougere, 2008). Ramzi's character is an illustration of most immigrants in Germany trying to leave their original identity.

The two images above are a signifier form of film promotion. Barthes (1977, 2016) explains that marking is formed by a mixture of the same material system into the concept of a particular sign. The snippets of this scene, then, are a continuation of the visual marking used to reinforce the conceptual

construction of the introduction. Therefore, the message that appears is not much

different from what has been conveyed in the previous text.

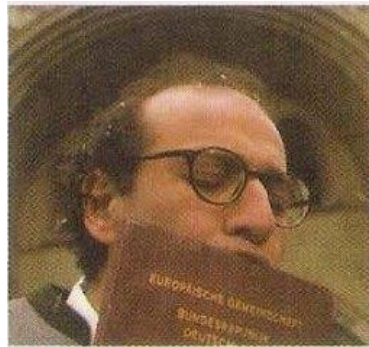


Figure 1. Visual promotion of *Just Get Married* booklet FFEOSI 2009



Figure 2 Visual promotion of the film *Just Get married* (Source: IMDb)

Citizenship, Tradition, and Identity in Film Promotion

Based on the above analysis, it is known that the film promotion puts an understanding of identity from two sides, namely citizenship (politics) and culture (customs and traditions). On the citizenship side (politics), it is necessary to understand Germany policies related to European Union policies. This bound situation places Germany in the context of a multinational and poly-ethnic state. Kymlica (2011) explains that a multinational state is a country where cultural diversity arises with the entry

of one nation into a larger country, so the dominant cultures in the country then become concentrated territorially, while a polyethnic state is a cultural diversity that arises from the migration of individuals and families.

With this understanding, Germany as a member of the EU is a multinational country which makes European culture the dominant one in the EU region. It surely will influence its citizenship policy, so that eventually, the mixed culture as the result of various ethnicities will also be dominated by European culture. Based on this description, an immigrant like Ramzi is politically have

more difficulties than foreigners with European cultural root in obtaining German citizenship.

The next side is the perspective of cultural identity. As stated by Sere on her research finding that visual through its elements can be a medium of perspective (Sere, Muarifuddin, & Amalia, 2020). The film promotion also shows that there are different perspectives on the identity between the older generation (Ramzi's mother) and the younger generation (Ramzi). This perspective is something essential and is formed and embedded by beliefs and the cultural environment. The problem is that the distance from *tradition/custom* has widened in the era of globalization. The *traditional/custom* perspective between Ramzi and her mother shows that the meaning of marriage and the bride-to-be between the two generations from the same culture has changed. Ramzi sees the bride and marriage as tools to gain citizenship. This thought is different from his mother, who made the process of selecting a prospective bride and marriage as something essential in his culture, a sacred process. This finding is relevant with what Kristianto stated in his research finding that living place is affecting and part of characterization of a character in film (Kristianto, 2009).

The situation of Ramzi and his mother above, however, is not a matter of the thickness of Syrian cultural identity between the two generations, but the construction of meaning that change about prospective bride

and the marriage due to the different experiences of Ramzi and his mother. Changes in the meaning of marriage between the two generations, in other words, are more influenced by the environment. In the context of cultural identity, the benchmark for cultural appropriateness is in the legitimacy of the community, in this context Syria is the root of the cultural identity of Ramzi and his mother. Eventually, the meaning of marriage traditions and the criteria for the prospective bride and groom then became a matter of choice between the younger (Ramzi) and the older (his mother) generation groups. The promotion of the film through the story of the Ramzi character's experience shows that being integrated is not enough for the citizenship identity but having the same European cultural root is necessary.

CONCLUSION

As a reaction of the immigrant life in German, a film created to give a true insight of the immigrants in German. Identifying the representation of cultural identity can be analyzed through any part of the film, such as the film itself, the review, and the booklet. However, this research is different from the previous researches by analyzing a promotion booklet of *Just Get Married* film. The representation of cultural identity of the immigrants in Germany is identified by the meaning and the language used in the promotion booklet. By having the textual meaning and the language on the booklet

analyzed, this research is successfully identifying the representation of immigrant culture identity in a promotion booklet of JUST GET MARRIED.

The results of this study found that representation of immigrant identity in film promotion can be seen from two sides, citizenship (politics) and culture. The film's promotion shows how the two sides are intertwined, that in Germany, the immigrants without European cultural roots find it more difficult to gain citizenship or be naturalized. Film is a criticism means for the immigrant life in Germany. For sure, immigrants do not allow to live in Germany.

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