

Representation of tiger parenting in the film Turning Red

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ABSTRACT

The issue of differences in parenting styles in each country or culture is especially interesting to discuss. One of them is the parenting style in Chinese culture which is called tiger parenting, it is a parenting style in the form of a strict and demanding mother with high hopes for the academic success of her children. The representation of tiger parenting is found in the Pixar film Turning Red (2022). This research aims to explore how the representation of tiger parenting in the film Turning Red is represented. The data source for this study was the film Turning Red with the observing and noting method of data collection, while the data found was analyzed using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. The results of this research shows that there are three elements of tiger parenting which are represented in the film Turning Red, the first is the strictness of parents towards their children in the academic field, the second is the limitations of Chinese children in doing what they like, and the last is tiger parenting, practiced for generations by Chinese families.

Introduction

Every parent in every country has a different parenting style depending on their cultural background (Martinez, 2020). One of the interesting parenting styles is from China that is called Tiger Parenting. The term tiger parenting was coined by Amy Chua in her book Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother in 2011. This term means a mother who is strict and demanding with high expectations for her children's academic success, sometimes causing negative reactions, this is in line with Chua's statement that Chinese parents, especially mothers, are superior to parents from Western cultures (Xie & Li, 2017). This is reinforced by the results of research conducted by Juan Yang and Xinhui Zhao who said that the parenting style of Chinese parents is predominantly authoritarian and is more helpful for improving children's academic achievement. The study also proves the role of maternal parenting style is more influential on children's academics than paternal parenting style (Yang & Zhao, 2020).

Parenting is something that cannot be avoided in daily life. Even though parenting is a common thing that every parent does, there are differences in parenting styles that are influenced by the culture in which the parents live. Some studies suggest that Chinese parents are much more authoritarian and less authoritative than Western parents, and some studies show that Tianghoa's parenting style is culturally unsuitable to reflect Western parenting and vice versa (Liu, 2000). Chao found that Chinese-



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American parents were rated significantly higher than European-American parents on standard measures of parental control as well as authoritarian parenting style. However, in this study, the parenting studied was influenced by acculturation, so it is necessary to carry out further studies to test the suitability of parenting style training for parents in China (Xie & Li, 2017).

The uniqueness of parenting in China is conveyed through the medium of a movie titled "Turning Red". Turning Red is a film produced by Pixar released in 2022 and directed by Domee Shi, the first female solo director for Pixar Studio. The movie tells the story of a Chinese-Canadian girl living in Toronto named Meilin Lee or Mei-Mei, she is 13 years old. She always tries to make her mother proud by obeying her every command, including helping to maintain the family shrine dedicated to their ancestor Sun Yee. The effort to make her mother proud of her forces Meilin to hide her personal interests. Her mother Ming Lee's strict attitude, which restricts Meilin from doing the things she likes, is exacerbated when Ming learns that her daughter likes a boy group and even goes to their concerts. Ming Lee's parenting style in Turning Red is a form of representation of Tiger Parenting by Chinese parents represented through film media.

Representation according to Stuart Hall is a process of creating meaning derived from concepts in our minds through language (Rahayu, 2017). Furthermore, representation is a picture of something in life that is represented and depicted through certain media such as newspapers, television, music, or movies (Ghassani & Nugroho, 2019). Film media no longer only functions as entertainment for its audience, but also as a representation of social reality in society which is presented through audio and visual and then disseminated to the audience.

This study has the purpose to explore the existence of tiger parenting practices that are represented in the film Turning Red by Domee Shi. Discussions about differences in cross-cultural parenting styles rarely become a topic of research. Even though, this is important because the parenting practiced by parents influences how children's character develops in the middle of the culture they face. This research focuses on the practices of tiger parenting which is the parenting style of Chinese parents in the film Turning Red. Therefore, the formulated question is how is tiger parenting represented in the film Turning Red.

This study uses qualitative methods to understand what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, motivation, perceptions, or actions as a whole through descriptions or in the form of words and language in special natural contexts (Ghassani & Nugroho, 2019). This method is used to assist the research process in understanding the concept of tiger parenting representation depicted in the film Turning Red. There are two kinds of data sources in this study, primary data in the form of the film Turning Red and secondary data in the form of supporting literature such as books, journals, and online media sites. Meanwhile, data collection techniques in this study were carried out using the observing and noting method. Researchers listen to or watch the speeches and actions contained in the dialogues of the characters in the film Turning Red. The author directly observes a series of images and sounds in the shots and scenes that contain elements of tiger parenting in the film. Then the researcher

continued with the note-taking technique, in which the researcher recorded important things and was in accordance with the research data (Widyawati, 2019).

Discussion

The primary data of this study is the dialogue and behavior of the characters in the film *Turning Red*. This study collected as many as 12 data in the form of dialogue and character behavior in the film, but researchers only used six of them for analysis. The data was taken based on the purpose of the research related to tiger parenting.

Datum 1

Ming : “Mei-Mei, there you are.”

Meilin : “Hey, Mom.”

Ming : “You are ten minutes late. What happened? Are u hurt? Are u hungry? How was school today?”

Meilin : “Killed it per usual. Check it out.”

Ming : “Oh. That's my little scholar. Today, honor student. Tomorrow, UN Secretary-General. The ancestors would be so proud.”

The dialogue shows Ming's concern when Meilin comes home late from school. This is marked by successive questions asked to Meilin. The questions are answered with Meilin admitting that she passed her exams well and showed good grades just like what his mother expected. At the end of the dialogue, Ming said “Today, honor student. Tomorrow, UN Secretary-General”. which is a form of hope to Meilin so that she becomes a good student in terms of academics in the present and becomes someone successful in the future.

Datum 2

Picture 1.1 scene or part of film



Picture 1. Ming monitors Meilin who is inside the class.

The picture above shows a scene where Ming suddenly comes to Meilin's school to monitor what activities Meilin is doing at school. This is due to his suspicions arising from Meilin's suspicious activity or trait at home.

In datum 1, there is a representation of tiger parenting in the film *turning red*. Tiger parenting in the same form also exists in datum 4, when Ming makes sure Meilin studies

well at school by visiting the school directly and pretending to give cakes to Meilin and her friends just to monitor Meilin. Tiger parenting which is represented in these scenes is the desire of parents to see their children's success in the academic field and in the future so that parents are more assertive towards children, especially those related to the field of Education, this is in line with the results of the study by (Cheong, 2019).

Datum 3

Ming : "Mei-Mei, what is this?"
 Meilin : "It's nothing, just a boy. He's no one."
 Ming : "A boy? Who is he? Did he do these things to you?"
 Meilin : "No! It is just made up, Mom! It is not real."
 Ming : "That hat. Is that the sketchy clerk from the Daisy Mart?" (went to the Daisy Mart store immediately)
 Meilin : "Mom, no!"

The scene shows Ming finding Meilin's notebook which contains pictures of a boy that Meilin drew herself and there is a picture where a boy and girl are almost kissing. This scene indicates that Meilin is growing up and she has started to have an interest in the opposite sex. But her mother scolded her and humiliated her by going to beat up the man she drew directly where he worked, namely at Daisy Mart.

Datum 4

Ming : "No. Absolutely not."
 Meilin : "What? But this is once in a lifetime."
 Ming : "Mei-Mei. It is one thing to stay calm at home or school, but a concert? You will get whipped up into a frenzy and panda all over the place."
 Meilin : "I won't, I won't! I promise. You saw me keep it in."
 Jin : "Ming, maybe we should trust her."
 Ming : "It is them I don't trust. Look at those glittery delinquents with their... gyrations. Why on earth do you want to go so badly?"
 Meilin : "Like I said. I just want to broaden my musical horizons."
 Ming : "This Isn't music. This is filth. And it is not worth jeopardizing your life over. Right, Jin?"
 Jin : "Uh.."
 Ming : "See? Your father agrees. No concert. And that's final."
 Meilin : "Okay, well, thanks for listening. Good night."

The dialogue contains a debate between Ming as the mother, Jin as the father, and Meilin as the daughter. Meilin asked her parents for permission to see her favorite boy

band's concert, but Ming strictly forbade her by comparing how she would be if she went to school and went to a concert. On the other hand, Jin try to allow Meilin to watch the concert because he thinks that they should believe in Meilin, but Ming still forbade it and instead gave unkind expressions to Meilin.

Datum 3 shows a scene where Ming is angry when she finds out that her daughter has started liking a boy, because of her emotions, she immediately goes to see the boy Meilin likes and scolds him for no apparent reason. Meanwhile, datum 4 shows Ming who cannot accept the fact that Meilin is a fan of a boy group. This was represented in the scene where she did not permit Meilin to watch the boy group's concert. The tiger parenting represented in these scenes shows the firmness of Chinese parents in determining what their children may and may not do, as well as what their children may and may not like so that it limits their children's movements to do their favorite things. This is also proven by the statement in Xie & Li's research (Xie & Li, 2017).

Datum 5

Meilin : "Guys, I can't be like this forever. My whole family would freak. Especially my mom. All her hopes and dreams are pinned on me."

In this dialogue, Meilin confesses to her friend that she cannot do what she wants freely forever because of demands from her family, especially her mother. She also admit that her mother have great hopes for Meilin, she have to fulfill her mother's expectations and dreams that were imposed on her.

Datum 6

Meilin : "All I wanted.. was to go to a concert!"

Ming : "I never went to concerts! I put my family first! I tried to be a good daughter!"

Meilin : "Well, sorry I'm not perfect! Sorry, I'm not good enough! And sorry I'll never be like you!"

This dialogue is when Meilin takes the fight against her mother. Her mother said that she was a good child and devoted to his family, unlike Meilin. But Meilin also said that she is she, she isn't her mother in the past who might be considered perfect. She is who she is with her imperfections.

At datum 5 Meilin realize that she cannot live freely. Her life is limited by the wishes and hopes his mother placed on her. But she cannot do anything because she feels it was an obligation that she has to do so she refused her friends' invitation to continue doing things that break his mother's rules. But in the datum 6, Meilin finally fight against her mother by saying she could not meet all of her mother's expectations and wanted to live more freely to be herself because at that time she knew that what her mother had done to her was what her grandmother had also done to her mother. This shows that there is a practice of tiger parenting that has been passed down from generation to generation in Chinese families to maintain the culture in their families, as explained in Wei Zhang's research (Zhang, 2020).

Conclusion

The purpose of the present study is to find out how tiger parenting is represented in the film *Turning Red*. The results of the study show that tiger parenting is represented in 16 scenes in the film. There are three elements of tiger parenting represented in the film. The elements are, 1) Chinese parents in doing their parenting want their children to be good students at school and achieve success in the future so they treat their children strictly, 2) tiger parenting which is practiced by people Chinese parents makes their children limited in doing something they like because parents have the right to know what their children like and also have the right to forbid their children to like something, 3) the last is tiger parenting which in Chinese culture is done from generation to generation so There are many parenting styles and will continue to be experienced by Chinese children. The representation of tiger parenting in the film *Turning Red* can make the audience aware of the characteristics of Chinese culture in raising children so that they can provide broader insights.

Even so, the researcher realizes that there are deficiencies in this study, so the researcher provides suggestions for further research to research the issue of tiger parenting or intercultural parenting using other theories that can reveal more in-depth the issues to be raised. Further research can also use a wider object so that the data obtained is more convincing.

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