ABSTRACT

Identity is a big issue to be talked about since it denotes one’s existence. It has been suggested that identity is not a matter of being; rather it is a matter of becoming, which means that identity is a social construction. When the term comes out within the case of diaspora, it becomes something negotiable because members of diaspora always experience the perplexity of living between worlds, so-called double consciousness. This study aims to look at how identity is negotiated in Alice Wu’s film entitled Saving Face. This study is significant in increasing people’s awareness of issues of cultural complexity. The methodological approach used in this study was qualitative approach. The main data was collected from several chosen scenes of the film. The analysis conducted using Stella Ting-Toomey’s theory of Face Negotiation and covered both narrative and non-narrative aspects of the film. Within the narrative aspect, it is the second generation of Chinese diaspora in USA whose identity is being negotiated. The negotiation is basically because they have to adjust themselves into the norms and values boundaries of both home and host country. The non-narrative analysis is provided in order to strengthen the narrative. The result of this study shows that the main character of Wu’s Saving Face, Wilhelmina Pang, chooses to perform ‘face-saving’ in the process of negotiation of her Chineseness and sexual identity among her Chinese diaporic community in USA. Close reading on the text also reveals that the film promotes homosexuality and that sexual relationship in Chinese American context is confined by their ethnic boundary.

Keywords: diaspora; face; identity; negotiation; sexuality.