

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in examining the representation of women in literature, shedding light on the ways in which gender roles, stereotypes, and societal expectations are depicted. As a form of artistic expression, *Kim Ji-young, Born in 1982* (Cho, 2016) has garnered attention for its exploration of gender issues and has become a cultural phenomenon in South Korea and beyond, sparking debates about the realities of women's lives and the barriers they face.

The researcher is particularly drawn to *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* because of its unfiltered depiction of gendered experiences that mirror the realities many women face worldwide. Unlike other novels in the genre, which may only hint at these themes, Cho's narrative is direct and unapologetic, allowing readers to see the cumulative impact of gender bias on Kim Jiyoung's life. Personally, the researcher finds the novel's portrayal of these everyday injustices to be both relatable and illuminating, evoking a sense of solidarity with countless women who navigate similar challenges. This personal connection underscores my commitment to examining the novel's representation of women through an academic lens, as the researcher believes it has the potential to inspire greater

awareness and understanding of gender issues.

What further distinguishes *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* from other works is its profound cultural impact. Upon its release, the novel sparked considerable discussion in South Korea and beyond, prompting debates about gender roles, feminism, and women's rights. Its success extended beyond literature, becoming a bestseller in South Korea and numerous countries, where it inspired translations in over a dozen languages. It became a bestseller and was even adapted into a successful film in 2019, amplifying its reach and influence, reaching a broader audience and reigniting conversations about women's rights in both professional and personal spheres.

A key aspect of this research is the decision to analyze the English translation of *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, translated by Jamie Chang. The choice of translation is critical as it broadens the novel's reach, making its themes accessible to a global audience. The English version allows readers outside of South Korea to engage with its messages, reflecting the universality of the gender issues depicted. Chang's translation, in particular, is noted for maintaining the novel's critical tone and capturing the nuances of Cho's writing, thus preserving the novel's integrity for non-Korean readers. By focusing on the English version, this research not only engages with a wider audience but also explores how translation can impact the representation and reception of gender issues in literature.

Despite its cultural and social significance, there is still limited scholarly

research on the novel's detailed representation of women. Existing studies, such as those by Triarisanti and Purnaman (2024), Baruna and Lestari (2022), and Kim (2020), have largely focused on the novel's themes or its impact on South Korean society rather than exploring the specific language techniques Cho uses to depict female experiences and societal norms. This gap may be due to the novel's immediate cultural relevance, which led researchers to prioritize its role in public discourse over in-depth language analysis. As a result, although the readers of the novel understand the novel's themes, there has been little focus on how the author's specific word choices and narrative techniques shape readers' perceptions of women. To address this gap, this study uses Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how Cho Nam-joo's linguistic decisions convey, reinforce, or challenge societal expectations of women, providing new insights into the novel's representation of gender.

CDA is a powerful analytical framework that enables researchers to examine the language, discourse, and social power dynamics within texts. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional of CDA provides a useful framework for examining the complex interplay between language, discourse, and social power relations. The choice of this framework is particularly relevant in the context of exploring the representation of women, as it enables an investigation into the linguistic features, power dynamics, and societal implications embedded in the discourse surrounding female characters in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*.

By critically analyzing the novel through the lens of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Frameworks, the study seeks to enhance understanding of how women are portrayed in contemporary literature and the implications of these representations on societal perceptions and expectations. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting this research entitled, **"A Critical Discourse Analysis of Women Representation in the Novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* Based on Fairclough's Three Dimensional Frameworks"**.

1.2 Research Question

How are women represented in the novel "*Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

To analyze how are women represented in the novel "*Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*."

1.4 Limitation of the Research

The analysis focused on the representation of female characters throughout the novel, *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. Specifically, the study examined the specific words, phrases, clauses, or dialogues that indicate how the selected characters—Oh Misook, Kim Eunyoung, Seungyeon, A Female Student, Kim Eunsil, and Kim Jiyoung—represented by the novelist in the novel *Kim Jiyoung*. The analysis focuses on those characters because each of them represents different aspects of women's experiences in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. These characters

were selected for their diverse roles, which highlight various generational, social, and professional issues that women face within a patriarchal society. By examining the specific characters, the study can effectively illustrate how cultural expectations and gender inequality affect women's lives.

Moreover, one of the limitations of this study is the selection of only 16 data points to represent women's representation in the novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. This decision was made in order to provide a focused and manageable analysis within the constraints of time and resources. The analysis was limited to the stage of Text (Description) within Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Frameworks, without extending beyond the description stage.

1.5 Significances of the Research

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding of women's representation in the novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. This study is relevant to several key audiences:

1. Academics and Researchers

this study provides a detailed exploration of how female characters are depicted in contemporary literature, revealing how gender dynamics operate within the text. By utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) frameworks, this research offers a methodological approach that can be applied to similar studies in gender representation. This practical aspect enables future researchers to adopt or adapt these frameworks to

examine literary texts, broadening the scope of gender studies and literary analysis.

2. Educators and Students

It serves as a resource for classroom discussions on gender representation and societal norms, especially in subjects such as gender studies, literature, and cultural studies. Teachers can use the examples and analytical approaches from this study to engage students in critically analyzing texts, fostering a deeper understanding of how literature influences and reflects cultural perceptions of women. This research, therefore, supports the practical application of critical thinking and discourse analysis in educational settings.

3. General Readers

By highlighting the societal narratives and stereotypes embedded in literature, this research promotes awareness of gender inequality and inspires readers to challenge these stereotypes in their daily lives. In doing so, it bridges the gap between academic analysis and real-world advocacy for gender equality, emphasizing the importance of literature in shaping cultural attitudes and social change.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines written and spoken texts to uncover how power, dominance, and inequality are expressed, maintained, and reproduced within social, political, and historical contexts. It is a method used to describe, interpret, analyze, and critique the ways language reflects and influences social structures and practices (Fairclough, 1989).

2. Three Dimensional Frameworks

Fairclough (1989; 1992; 2003) defines the three-dimensional framework as an approach to analyzing communication that consists of three interconnected dimensions. These are: (1) Text, which refers to the actual written, spoken, or visual content; (2) Discursive Practice, which focuses on how texts are created, distributed, and interpreted; and (3) Social Practice, which examines how these texts relate to broader societal structures and cultural norms.

4. Representation of Women in Literature

Representation of women in literature refers to how women are depicted through signs and symbols, influenced by societal norms and authorial biases. This portrayal reflects cultural paradigms of women's vulnerability within patriarchal structures, often marginalizing them and perpetuating gender inequality in societal narratives (Piliang, 2003).