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Finding Third Culture Kids in Children's Literature

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FINDING THIRD CULTURE KIDS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Abstract

Children's literature, such as picture books, chapter books, and graphic novels, has been utilized by educators in the classroom all around the world. It is well-established that children's literature help guide students in understanding themselves and the world they live in. This literature review aims to determine whether children's literature incorporates book characters who are third culture kids and whether third culture kid themes are adequately represented. Third culture kid (TCK) is defined as a child who has lived outside his/her passport country (home country) with his/her parents during childhood; as a result, this child has blended elements from his/her home country and the foreign culture (host country) into a third culture.

To determine whether TCKs and TCK themes are sufficiently represented in children's literature, a review of existing research about multicultural children's books and culturally authentic texts was conducted. The literature review showed that there is hardly any children's literature today that specifically includes TCK characters and TCK themes. These results suggest that educators must carefully select texts that accurately reflect their students' diverse backgrounds, while also providing culturally authentic insights into other cultures. On this basis, referring to approved book lists by national organizations and seeking out book awards that celebrate international people and cultures should be taken into account when selecting children's literature.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I was born in Osaka, Japan to a Japanese family. When I was two months old, my family immigrated to Hong Kong due to my father's business. I learned to speak Japanese at home and observed all the cultural norms; it felt like I never left Japan. Outside my home, I was taught in English at the international school I attended, where the school followed the American curriculum. I learned to socialize with classmates and friends in English, similar to what children in the United States experienced. Outside of school, I was exposed to a community where English was hardly spoken and everybody around me spoke Cantonese – a Chinese language that was difficult to learn but a necessity in order to survive in Hong Kong. During my childhood, as I was trying to learn three languages simultaneously, I remember reading mostly English children's books. What I remember vividly about these English books was that it primarily took place in a country other than my home country, Japan, or my host country, Hong Kong. I recall my reading experience as one that I could personally never relate to, especially when book characters differed from my cultural background and lived in neighborhoods that did not resemble my own experiences. None of these books addressed the challenges I faced of growing up with a lingering sense of not belonging to a particular cultural group – the feeling of being stuck between two cultures.

History of Third Culture Kids

With the ease of travel around the world, families are no longer tied down to one location but are free to move and immigrate to other countries. This means that children may be uprooted from their home country or passport country and may spend the majority of their childhood in another country, often known as their host country. These

children are often referred to as third culture kids (TCKs), a concept that was originally developed by sociologist and anthropologist Ruth Hill Useem over 40 years ago. Sheard (2008) refers to Useem's definition of TCKs, where TCKs are children who have left their passport country with their parents during childhood and have lived in a foreign country; these children have blended elements from their passport culture and foreign culture into a third culture. This third culture can be visualized as an overlap between two cultures, similar to the overlapping section in a Venn diagram.

In 1998, there were more than 4 million TCKs worldwide (Eakin, 1998). There are certainly many more TCKs in the world today, considering the growth of global businesses and the emergence of new international schools. This means that there are several million TCKs today who are unable to find characters in children's literature with similar life experiences: adjusting to life in a host country, accepting and understanding their third culture, and building their own cultural identity.

Children's Literature

Children's literature is "the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language" (Kiefer & Tyson, 2010, p. 3). Before the nineteenth century, only a few books were written with the enjoyment of children in mind, as books were primarily written for adults. Therefore, children read books intended for adults with the hope of gleaning some understanding.

Contemporary children's literature focuses on reflecting on the problems of today, such as current events, social trends, and experiences at home. Children today are able to read texts that include themes such as poverty and death, which was once rejected by book publishers in the past as it was considered publishing taboos (Kiefer and Tyson,

2010). Even so, certain emotional and psychological responses are still unlikely to be found in children's literature because of the limits of children's experiences and understanding. For example, emotions such as nostalgia are seldom seen in these texts. Cynicism and despair are considered adult emotions and therefore, they are also not prominent in children's literature. In essence, children's books are texts that honor children's perspectives.

Value of Children's Literature

Kiefer and Tyson (2010) explain that children's literature has the potential to instill values and qualities that result in important educational understandings. First of all, children's books provide entertainment. The art of reading, coupled with exciting storylines, makes children's literature enticing to most children. Children's literature also helps students to develop their imagination as they consider people, experiences, and ideas in new ways. Well-written books have the ability to transport readers to other places and other times to give children new perspectives on the world. In addition, literature can provide coherence to human experience by enabling children to see and understand relationships that they had never considered. Finally, literature continues to ask readers to consider the meaning of life, to reevaluate relationships with nature and other people. Children's literature allows children to view the good, bad, and ugly aspects of life in a way that helps them to begin seeing the universality of human experience.

Children's Literature and Third Culture Kids

The positive values of children's literature can certainly help TCKs adjust to life in a host country, accept and understand their home, host, and third culture, and build their own cultural identity. There have been numerous studies conducted by researchers

to analyze the validity and authenticity of multicultural children's literature in the United States. However, these studies have focused on prominent cultural groups that exist in the United States, which does not include TCKs.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

There have been several case studies that focused on different aspects of the TCK experience, such as transition and repatriation back to their home country and perceptions of cultural identity. None of these studies have looked into whether children's literature can positively impact TCKs as they navigate and make sense of their cultural experiences. Therefore, this study aims to uncover any research conducted that relates to TCKs and children's literature. The following questions guide my research on this topic:

1. Who are TCKs?
2. What are some challenges that TCKs face?
3. What is the impact of children's books on early childhood and primary students?
4. Are there adequate children's books with third culture kid themes addressed?

Significance of the Study

The rationale for this study includes several factors. First and foremost, it extends from my own childhood as a TCK and my experiences with reading English children's literature. Creating a better understanding of the relationship between TCKs and children's literature is a key factor in its significance.

Throughout my years as an educator at multiple international schools around the world, I have come across many students who are TCKs. During recess and lunchtime, I found them casually chatting about the struggles to understand cultural references and

jokes from popular U.S. television programs. In my current teaching position in an international primary school in the Netherlands, almost every student is a TCK, and there are no services provided for them as they adjust to life in their host country. Through my research, I hope to better inform my school about this population and find ways to reach out to them using children's literature.

My own personal experience in primary education leads me to conclude that TCKs are not widely understood and they face challenges with cultural identity when topics and discussions about home and belonging emerge in the classroom. Previous research examines multicultural book characters and the messages that they convey through their experiences (Aronson, Callahan, & O'Brien, 2018; Keller & Franzak, 2015; Martinez, Koss, & Johnson, 2016). This study examines the impact children's literature has on early childhood and primary students and whether children's books today are relatable to TCKs.

First, I explore the idea of children's literature as mirrors and windows and the significance of categorizing children's literature as such (Aronson et al., 2018). Second, I examine the characteristics and challenges of TCKs and how children's literature can assist them in understanding self and the world. Refugee children's literature was also taken into consideration, as refugee children, by definition, are also TCKs. And finally, I consider existing research on multicultural children's literature and the implications for TCKs. Only through a greater understanding of children's literature can educators provide assistance and their services to recommend TCKs with mirror books.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Search Procedures

The literature for this thesis was procured through searches using Academic Search Premier, ProQuest Education Journals, ERIC, and EBSCO. The search parameters were set to locate peer-reviewed journals published between 1990 and 2019 that focused on multicultural children's literature, multicultural children, refugees, and third culture kids (TCKs). Keywords that were used in these searches included "multicultural picture books," "third culture kids," "refugee children's literature," and "multicultural children's literature." This chapter reviews the literature concerning children's literature in the following order: Mirror and Window Books; Third Culture Kids; Refugees; and Multicultural Literature.

Mirror and Window Books

Even though TCKs may switch schools and countries and education systems may change, one constant they can rely on is the availability and use of children's books in the classroom in picture books, graphic novels, and chapter books. Rudine Sims Bishop introduced the idea of metaphorically categorizing children's books as mirrors and windows in a 1990 article (Aronson et al., 2018). Mirror books are children's books where children can relate and recognize characters like themselves, building an understanding of self. Window books introduce children to characters that lead different lives from their own and provide opportunities for children to build understanding and empathy for others. Aronson et al. focused on looking more deeply into mirror books by examining the messages portrayed through various themes.

Although their research does not explicitly look into characters who are TCKs, their study focused on themes and messages conveyed in picture books that featured underrepresented racial and cultural texts. Since their research focused on a representative sample of fiction and narrative nonfiction picture books (K-3) published between 2008 to 2015, their study's results can be used to determine the necessity of children's books that include characters who are also TCKs. Their study looked into book characters who were Asian/Pacific Islander/Asian American, Black/African/African American, Central/South American/Hispanic/Latinx, Middle Eastern/North African/Arab American, First/Native Nations, and bi-/multiracial and the dominant messages that these books portrayed.

Based on their study, Aronson et al. (2018) concluded that in addition to the need for more book titles portraying underrepresented groups, there needs to be various types of portrayals, each with different messages and impact. Black characters were most broadly represented across a range of themes that they identified out of all the groups in their sample. These findings reflect different aspects of how blacks are viewed and seem to be a part of the American culture through various stories, while characters from other groups are most likely represented as distinct and separate foreign cultures, not belonging to the American culture. For example, themes that include Native characters seem to reinforce stereotypes of cultural differences, and with Folklore books, they are reflected as people from a long time ago. They are seldom portrayed as members of a broader contemporary American society, which is also evident with books with Middle Eastern/Arab characters.

Name Negotiation

Keller and Franzak (2015) conducted a study exploring the idea of names as identity in picture books depicting minority children.

> We believe that names symbolically represent a child's cultural identity and that the denial or change of a child's given name is an attempt to force assimilation, even when the child seemingly chooses this new name. In contrast, the support and acceptance of a child's name in a school context speaks to an environment that welcomes diversity and validates the child. (Keller & Franzak, 2015, p. 178)

Although this study does not explicitly explore TCK themes, there may be shared experiences surrounding the complex issues with the name, identity, and culture of TCKs as they assimilate into a new host country and school environment. Keller and Franzak analyzed ten best selling picture books that were published since 2000, where minority character's name negotiation featured as a central theme: eight books featured immigrant children's experiences when first joining U.S. schools, and two books described non-immigrant children's experiences of conflict at school based on their names. Name negotiation refers to the process in which a character faces challenges and problems due to his/her name, which is evident from their interaction with other characters or social institutions. The character then chooses to negotiate or compromise his/her name through reflection or action. The themes in these children's books illustrate how name negotiation has been normalized as an acceptable social practice, common when entering a U.S. school, and a way for many children from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds to be accepted by their peers and teachers.

Based on their analysis, Keller and Franzak (2015) revealed that name negotiation is not merely a personal choice to fit in on the characters' parts, but also exhibits the presence of a pervasive assimilationist paradigm that values dominant culture; in these books, name negotiation became the key for the characters to become Americanized. The general implied message from these texts was that any bullying that the characters experienced would cease so long as they decided to assimilate to the dominant culture by changing or hiding their given names. Name negotiation was seen as an uncomfortable experience for child characters as they faced identity issues. This analysis can be transferred to the TCK experience, as they often assimilate into international school environments where English is typically the dominant language spoken. Just as the characters in these children's books faced the question, "What is your name?" TCKs and many new students initially experience answering this question numerous times. The mispronunciation or mockery of a child's name can often lead to name negotiation on the child's part, where one would hope that the adults involved can relieve their discomfort - which was often not the case in these stories.

To help TCKs navigate and strengthen their identity and culture, the availability of children's books representing the diversity and complexity of name negotiation can help build their understanding and renew their appreciation for their given names. Keller and Franzak acknowledge that children's books that are bilingual, where a page or section is written in English and in this case Spanish, honors the child's first language while creating opportunities for English monolinguals to appreciate diversity. Although not all TCKs will experience name negotiation, this research highlights the importance of the availability of various books that showcase the diversity and complexity of cultures

and individuals - specifically their names and navigating the constructs of name negotiation.

Caldecott Medal Books

Martinez, Koss, and Johnson (2016) analyzed human main characters from children's books that have won the Caldecott Medal over the last 25 years. The Caldecott Medal, awarded annually in the United States by the American Library Association (ALA), recognizes "artists of the most distinguished American picture book for children published by an American publisher in the United States in English during the preceding year (ALA, 2020)." Although this award only recognizes children's books illustrated by a U.S. citizen or resident with an American publisher, these book titles will often be found in classrooms and libraries worldwide. By acknowledging this trend, Martinez, Koss, and Johnson's rationale for their research was based on the prevalence of these book titles in today's classrooms and the likelihood of being used by educators. Their study included 68 books with a total of 83 human main characters, as some titles had more than one main character. They presented their results primarily by decade: the 1990s, the 2000s, and 2010-2015.

When they analyzed the 68 books for culture, ethnicity, and language use, they discovered that 55% of the books published in the 1990s had main characters who were white. This number increased to 76% in the 2000s and rose to 90% during 2010-2015. None of the main characters were portrayed as speaking more than one language in any of these books, even though classrooms and schools are becoming more diverse with children from various cultures and ethnicities. Also, only 51% of Caldecott books' main characters in the past 25 years were children. This finding is significant as studies,

including Martinez, Koss, and Johnson's research has shown that child readers particularly enjoy reading books about other children.

Through their experiences working with young readers, the researchers discovered that children tended to select books that were written in a lighthearted tone, addressing characters similar to their age and coming from similar backgrounds. This was evident when the few Caldecott books from the 1990s that are still widely read today were the ones that met these criteria. It is critical to note that a group of authors launched an online grassroots campaign in 2014, addressing the necessity to diversify children's book publishing to an all-white, all-male children's book author panel at a large publishing convention. Their campaign, We Need Diverse Books, was formed to tackle the absence of diverse, non-majority narratives in children's literature.

Based on their study, Martinez et al. (2016) are concerned that there are not enough Caldecott books that function as mirror books, especially considering the other factors that were examined in their study: the ages of characters, the places where characters lived, representation of English learners, disability, religious, and different socioeconomic status. "We live in an increasingly global society; yet this is not reflected in the Caldecott books our children are reading. In these instances, no windows exist (Martinez et al., 2016)." They suggest that educators familiarize themselves with other literary awards through the ALA that recognizes diversity in children's books. It is worthy to note that although there are awards that acknowledge books that include main characters from specific cultures, there is only one award that specifically recognizes and seeks out children's books about international people and cultures: Notable Books for a Global Society (Martinez et al., 2016).

Imported Children's Picture Books

Huang (2018) also recognized that children's picture books that are commonly available in the Taiwanese book market are imported from foreign cultures - that is, books that typically feature main characters from Western cultures. Huang's study investigated the challenges and strategies of book publishers by taking a closer look into the Taiwanese children's book publishing industry, the successful introduction of books to international markets, and by conducting a case study of a successful Taiwanese children's book publisher.

The imbalance of Taiwanese children reading picture books from foreign countries has existed since the 1980s, even after the restrictions on publishing was lifted in 1987. It is worth noting that even after 30 years, imported and translated picture books still hold nearly 80% of the yearly publication market (Huang, 2018). Researchers, educators, and parents have raised concerns about whether children can develop their cultural identity due to the influence of foreign books that are available to them. In the early 1990s, Taiwanese publishers started to produce their picture books amidst rising social and political movements. With the end of the 38-year standoff with China after martial law was lifted, multiculturalism had begun to influence Taiwan's socio-political landscape. This change brought to the forefront of cultural diversity and identity being featured in their books, although these books were initially not planned to be marketed globally. One of the most successful children's book publishing companies, Heryin Books, uncovered the potential and opportunity to sell these picture books internationally. Huang's case study featured the founder, editor-in-chief, and author of Heryin Books.

With 20 years of experience in publishing children's picture books in Taiwan, Ms. Chou Yi Fen noticed that books that were being published should not be limited to what she preferred as the editor, but it must appeal to the needs and tastes of children. This realization prompted her to write her own children's picture books - a book series called *Mimi.* From her experience working with translations of Western picture books, Chou was adamant that when *Mimi* was translated into other languages, the translated language must demonstrate the same literary merit as the original work. Not only should the translation be linguistically accurate, but it should also be idiomatically authentic. When Chou's book was initially translated by a translator with no parenting experience, the dialogue between Mimi and her mother was stunted and awkward. However, when another translator who had experience raising children edited and revised the translation, the dialogues became natural and authentic. This proved to Chou the significance and potential risks of children reading translated picture books; Taiwanese children may be at a disadvantage if they read translated books that are not as idiomatically authentic as the author intended it to be.

Along with publishing her own children's books, Chou attended various international book fairs and exchanged experiences with publishers from multiple cultures and countries. She observed that some of the well-known Taiwanese illustrators were struggling for their work to be accepted outside of Taiwan, especially in Western cultures. These illustrators were only able to find their way into other Asian countries. This confirms what other researchers have noted: a lack of mirror books available to children. And this trend can also be seen in Taiwan, with the majority of children's books available in Taiwan coming from other countries. This trend will most likely not change

in Taiwan's immediate future, as imported picture books are still favored among the public.

Graphic Novels

Growing up as a third-culture kid himself, Helsel (2017) delved into graphic novels to examine the process of acculturation for immigrant teenagers, specifically using immigration-themed graphic novels. Graphic novels have evolved from their initial inception of portraying one-dimensional heroes who are busy saving the world from evil while failing to address their fears or deep insecurities. From Helsel's experience of reading more recent graphic novels since 2015, a notable shift has been seen where "characters were exploring their complex identities and dealing with fragility, vulnerability, and the fractures of history" (Helsel, 2017, p.126).

According to Birman and Addae (2015), acculturation refers to how immigrants' lives are altered as a result of contact with a new culture. This is vastly different from assimilation, where one's language and identity were left behind to embrace the new culture. Acculturation focuses more on the integration aspect, where one continues to value their home language, culture, and practices while accepting elements of the new culture. It is worthy to note that some immigrant families have more resources available to help their children adjust to life in a new country. However, this does not guarantee that relatively privileged families avoid facing prejudice. Acculturation involves navigating between several worlds; when parents and children negotiate the new culture at a similar pace, this process is consonant. However, when the process is dissonant, children are not in sync with their parents and may reject their home culture to embrace the new culture. This rejection of their home culture can affect their own cultural identity,

including language and family kinship. When this process is selective, adolescents choose to identify with their former language and family networks.

Helsel examined Hernandez's graphic novel, *Marble Season*, which was written in part so that Hernandez's teenage daughter could read his work and understand his childhood. The purpose of creating this work was to share the Latino stories that have never been shared and to showcase that racism can limit the potential for cultural identification. The main character in this novel, Huey, was not allowed to portray and act as Captain America in a play, even though he was a third- or fourth-generation American. As expected, Huey was told by a White girl that he could not play the part of Captain America because he was not American, according to this girl.

This graphic novel exhibits a form of bullying that is distinctively different from general bullying. Bullying is defined as a power imbalance between two or more people, whereas ethnic bullying is based on a power imbalance due to ethnicity. A subcategory of ethnic bullying, immigrant bullying, refers to a power imbalance due to a person's status as an immigrant. As with all bullying, this can be in the form of taunts, slurs, aggressive physical behavior, manipulation, or exclusion (Scherr & Larson, 2010, p. 225). Young people who are in the process of acculturation may reject others who may remind them of their home culture or those experiencing the same means of acculturation if they face ethnic bullying early on.

Gene Luen Yang's Printz Award-winning graphic novel, *American Born Chinese*, tells the story of a second-generation Chinese American boy who desperately wants to fit in with his peers, even as he faces prejudicial attitudes. This teenage boy, Jin Wang's integration into a new school when he was in third grade, was already off to a rocky start

when his teacher introduced him to the whole class that he was from China, despite his protests that he was born in San Francisco. Other students in his class begin to ethnic bully him, and Jin faces humiliation as he is mistreated for months. This graphic novel takes a twist when a new student named Wei faces the same misunderstanding, as he is from Taiwan. Because of the trauma of bullying that Jin faces early on in his process to acculturate, he identifies with the school's dominant Anglo-Saxon culture and rejects Wei. Jin's response could be a sign of dissonant acculturation, where he rejects his home culture to be accepted by the host culture. Graphic novels like these with immigration-themes often portray White students conducting ethnic bullying. However, students who have experienced this bullying and are slightly more assimilated may also choose to taunt others and participate in this bullying culture.

Graphic novels can be considered picture books for young people. Just as children reading picture books should be able to identify themselves in these books, adolescents need to see their multiple identities as a sign of strength and resilience. The unique situation of third culture kids, who are often living a life bridged between two or more cultures, need to be shown through picture books and graphic novels that assimilation has its own psychological and social costs. When one chooses to move away from the social networks of family, friends, culture, and tradition, the farther they move from an essential network of support. This loss can be symbolized as a loss of language, denial of their home culture, and desperation to be accepted into the host culture. Integration should be the focus for third culture kids, where they experience smooth sociocultural adaptation based on the positive attitudes they hold of their home culture and host culture. When children's picture books and graphic novels portray integration that is relatable to

immigrant children and third culture kids, this will be when they will appreciate their diversity and accept their circumstances.

Third Culture Kids

As a former international school teacher in Hangzhou, China, and as a mother of three gifted children, Sheard (2008) identified similarities between gifted children and TCKs: both groups experience aloneness caused by their knowledge that extends beyond that of their classmates. For TCKs, this gap between them and their classmates is due in part to their heightened global awareness, while gifted children experience a similar gap due to their academic intelligence. A significant proponent of increased global awareness amongst TCKs is due to the fact that children are more impressionable than adults; children accept foreign cultures as part of their own emerging third culture, whereas adults who live overseas stand back and view foreign cultures as an observer. Eakin (1998) estimated that there were over 4 million TCKs worldwide from 1998, and this estimation certainly has increased with the trend and growth of global businesses and the need for international schools.

Challenges of Third Culture Kids

One of the challenges that TCKs experience when they return to their home country is that they look similar to their peers, yet they do not share a common worldview. This experience is similar for gifted children, although their feelings stem from intellectual uniqueness rather than from the uniqueness of the overseas experience. Another challenge that TCKs face is the accusation that they are bragging about their overseas experience and realities, which can be ignored or resented by their peers. This accusation can be extended to families talking honestly about their realities, which can be

perceived by others as bragging. Another similar characteristic shared by gifted children and TCKs is asynchronous development. Children are often complimented for their maturity around adults but criticized for the lack of culturally specific social skills necessary to make friends when they return to their home country. Sheard (2008) describes this asynchronous development amongst gifted children and the social discrepancies in TCKs as kissing cousins - children who may possess difficulties meeting society's definitions of appropriate progress toward maturity.

Characteristics of Third Culture Kids

Based on Eakin's (1998) research, TCKs prefer socializing with other TCKs, regardless of whether they come from the same home countries because they have both acquired similar global-awareness levels compared to monocultural children from their home country. This demonstrates that there may be a lack of global awareness amongst monocultural children, which can hinder and negatively impact TCKs who return to their home country. Sheard (2008) conducted an informal survey amongst her TCK students, most of whom were fluent in two or more languages but had limited English proficiency to better understand their global awareness compared to their monocultural classmates. All the TCK students surveyed expressed that they enjoyed benefits from their overseas experiences, which included a greater level of toleration, an ability to differentiate their behavior with different people, recognizing that negotiation is a necessary part of navigating the world, and a heightened awareness of different people, ideas, and cultures. One particular student from the United States noted in the survey that they were able to accept things that others may consider alien and foreign as relatively usual or slightly out of the ordinary. Another student from India also commented that their experiences living

in various parts of the world have allowed them to view the world and its people with more flexibility and understanding.

These TCK children, at young ages, have learned that familiarity leads to tolerance and understanding in a global sense - something that many adults have yet to learn. They have learned through their experiences to be flexible in their thinking, that people tend to fear the alien and unknown, and that the majority prefer to accommodate the comfortable. Most importantly, these children have learned the importance of understanding other people's actions, cultures, religions, and beliefs. However, these children also need to learn strategies to cope with their heightened global awareness, just as they need to appreciate the advantages of their experiences.

The National Association of Independent Schools recognized that "raising global awareness of students is primarily a matter of heart, mind, and attitude, not primarily a matter of curriculum-based academics" (Sheard, 2008, p.35). Although reading literature and discussing books about people from other countries are sound pedagogical methods, Sheard (2008) comments that TCK community experiences suggest that global awareness may be more impactful when students are placed in intercultural settings or when foreigners are brought into typical American school settings. Therefore, schools should examine the availability of intercultural resources in their community in various forms: classroom visitors, assembly speakers, interviews with immigrants, mentorships, and study abroad. Nevertheless, when these intercultural resources are not readily available to schools and their communities, the accessibility of multicultural literature addressing TCK children and their experiences can still raise global awareness.

Refugees

In contrast, Monobe and Son (2014) paid particular attention to children's literature that portrayed characters who experienced political conflicts, relocated as refugees and settled in different countries. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) in the United States defines a refugee as "a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or of last habitual residence if stateless, and who is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion" (Mossaad, 2019, p. 1). Monobe and Son's research addressed the impact that these books could have in a school setting when accompanied by drama inspired activities to build awareness and empathetic attitudes towards others in a global community. This is especially important when the mentality between "us" versus "them" exists - even amongst children as young as 6-years old. Through Monobe's own experience visiting a first-grade classroom and based on the interactions and questions she asked them, it was clear that children as young as 6-years old already developed a distinction between "us" and "them." This mindset can become an interference when students are being prepared for global citizenship in a culturally diverse world. To address this mindset, introducing global literature to children not only exposes them to other perspectives and viewpoints but also helps them develop global awareness.

There are benefits to using global literature in the classroom: the opportunity for students to learn the impact that global events could have on children and people's lives and the various interpretation and viewpoints of events by different countries and

individuals. According to Monobe and Son (2014), using this rich literature and dramatizing the characters' perspectives can become a springboard to help children develop awareness and empathy towards others. However, the current availability of global literature fails to address contemporary lives and experiences of children and people; instead, it mainly focuses on traditional aspects of culture and lifestyles. Students run the risk of creating stereotypes and misconceptions about other countries when multicultural children's books only emphasize traditional culture. The other danger this poses is the likelihood that children view these books as 'exotic,' further distancing themselves from different cultures and failing to form connections with people around the world - again, reinforcing the "us" and "them" mindset.

Stages in Political Conflicts

The two researchers identified twelve books that contained stories that confronted political conflicts outside of the United States after World War II; the focus was on more current global conflicts that students and teachers may have encountered or could relate to. These books were selected based on the following criteria: they did not include stereotypes of characters and communities based on race and gender or romanticized the experiences of minorities (Kiefer, 2010). They encompassed the perspectives of children who were immersed in political conflicts and war. The authors of these books also met the following criteria to ensure that the books accurately reflected the experiences of people in the context of political conflicts: "(1) committed to writing about children or people who are underrepresented in the United States or globally, (2) were originally from the country, or (3) were inhabitants of the country for a significant length of time" (Monobe & Son, 2014, p.70). After careful examination of this literature, Monobe and

Son recognized three typical stages in political conflicts: the presence of war or political conflict, relocation, and settlement in a different country from the character's home country.

Stage one. Five books were chosen that addressed the first stage for second- to sixth-grade students: political conflicts and wars. It involved main characters who were faced with the challenges of finding effective ways to live their personal and social lives in an environment influenced by political conflicts. These books portrayed characters who survived political disputes beyond their control through the strategies they used. The central theme of these books conveyed that empowerment among ordinary children as possible, and they can positively impact others around them.

Stage two. Four books were selected that addressed the second stage for kindergarten to fifth-grade students: relocation. These books featured a range of values that children experience in refugee camps. They must first escape from situations that can be life-threatening and relocate to refugee camps and orphanages, which eventually enables them to gain some stability. Some semblance of normalcy ensues, including going to school, making new friends, offering practical advice and assistance to each other, and sympathizing with each other. They face challenges such as homesickness, fear, and uncertainty about the future. All of these books convey similar themes and messages: children undergo taxing journeys to move to unfamiliar places and adjust to a new life.

Stage three. According to the Office of Immigration Statistics (Mossaad, 2019), 22,405 refugees, primarily from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burma, and Ukraine, were accepted into the United States during 2018. Three books for kindergarten

through third-grade students were identified with stories that described the process refugees experience to relocate and adjust to a new host country. The main theme of these books was how refugees settled and adapted to their new life in new environments and cultures while handling the emotional burden from the aftermath of political conflicts, feelings of alienation, and loneliness from being an outsider in their host country.

To promote children's understanding of political conflicts, Monobe and Son (2014) suggest that children talk, draw, and write about these experiences in their own words, which are all dependent on the children's age and abilities. Visualizing and expressing the characters' thoughts and circumstances through role-play can also deepen children's understanding of the emotions, conflicts, and contexts of these stories. Activities such as these can help children understand the emotional aspects of the characters' experiences in stressful situations and help them grasp the complex meaning of living through armed conflict. Children are encouraged to put themselves in the character's shoes and use their five senses and describe the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feel of living through political conflicts, in a refugee camp, or a new host country. During these reflective activities, teachers must create an emotionally safe environment for children to express the many emotions, thoughts, and challenges they may experience as they dig deeper into their feelings of war and refugee camps. By incorporating carefully selected children's literature that addresses current global issues such as political conflicts, relocation, and settlement, a deepened and broadened understanding can arise through meaningful activities to help students deconstruct the boundaries of "us" versus "them" and instead create a "we" perspective.

Portrayal of Refugees in Children's Literature

According to the UNHCR (2020), there were nearly 26,000,000 refugees worldwide at the end of 2019 - half of whom were under 18. The rising number of refugees has prompted a newly emergent genre in children's literature to reflect this trend. Hope (2008) recognized the increase of refugees in British schools and the number of books published that addressed contemporary conflicts - a significant change in the refugee "story." From the 1950s to 1990s, books published about refugees primarily focused on the historical context and the flight of refugees, rather than the present realities of refugee children. Focusing on the experience of flight in a historical context may have been with the aim to distance readers from the experience. With the shift from a historical to a more contemporary view of refugees, recent literature provides an opportunity for refugees to be viewed as ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.

The themes of various children's literature that Hope uncovered aligned with the three stages in the refugee experience that Monobe and Son (2014) identified. There are now published books that construct a more contemporary picture of children as refugees: The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis (2001) describes the flight of children from the Taliban in Afghanistan; The Girl in Red by Gaye Hiçyilmaz (2000) recounts what happens when refugee children relocate to a new country; The Other Side of Truth (2000) by Beverley Naidoo details the shift from the refugees' relocation from their home country to their host country and settling into a new life. Books such as these are being introduced into the classroom, and the contents of these stories must be delivered in a meaningful and relevant manner.

Students may find it difficult initially to empathize with literature involving characters going through the refugee experience or even directly interacting with refugee children. Often, refugees have left their home at short notice and have relocated to a host country - one where the culture and language may vary drastically from their own. This may cause refugees to interact unsatisfactorily with others and may come across as isolated and friendless. This "traumatization" of the refugee experience has influenced research to the point where assumptions have been made regarding all refugee children's experiences. Refugee children need to be affirmed that their struggles to make friends and integrate into a sometimes challenging school environment is not due to their uniqueness. Tolerance and understanding can be built when students are exposed to literature where they can gain insights into their own lives and the lives of others. Refugee children in their new classroom of their host country also need to see their own lives reflected in these books, clarifying their own cultural identity.

Hope (2008) conducted a small study with five children, ages 10 to 16, with two refugee students from Afghanistan and Angola. Each student read a range of texts that dealt with different aspects of the refugee experience, along with questions that were to be answered afterward. After the reading in an open conversational setting, interviews were conducted to discuss the importance of autobiography and personal testimony. The usefulness of refugee texts for refugee and non-refugee children were also discussed: as a tool to educate non-refugee children and to validate lived experiences of refugee children. Both refugee students in this study indicated their appreciation for these texts, as they recognized similar refugee experiences as their own. In fact, for the Angolan student, the

literature prompted him to remember forgotten details of his personal experience, which resulted in him sharing his story more openly than before.

Children's literature, whether it addresses TCK themes or refugee experiences, is ideal for sharing stories that can dispel stereotypes and media myths. However, many of the titles of books that have been mentioned in Hope's (2008) research have not all managed to break through into the mainstream of children's literature. Schools have the power to welcome and normalize the refugee situation as more and more refugee children enroll in schools worldwide. Through a variety of children's literature, educators and schools can teach students that not all refugee and TCK experiences are the same.

Critical Literacy

Similarly, Callow (2017) also examined picture books that addressed the plight of refugee children but focused on how these books can aid children in critical literacy so that they can better understand global literature. So (2016) defines critical literacy as "questioning textbook ideologies and connections among words, social practices, representations and power" (So, 2016, p. 177). Critical literacy and engagement do not need to be exclusively available to older children; children from the early years can begin developing these critical literacy skills. Callow demonstrates this by analyzing the picture book, *My Two Blankets*, written by Irena Kobald and illustrated by Freya Blackwood (2014).

My Two Blankets

The picture book opens with a young girl cartwheeling across the first page. However, the accompanying text reveals that war has come to her home, and she must flee to a new country. The illustrations on the following pages reveal to the reader that

this young girl is no longer the carefree child that enjoys cartwheels - the words disclose that she feels loneliness and a loss of her identity. In this particular scene, Blackwood (2014) uses small images and arrows coming out of people's mouths to demonstrate to readers how the young girl, Cartwheel might be feeling as she stands with Auntie in the background, drawn much smaller and blurred. Readers are provided with metaphors in the text and an opportunity to critically analyze the illustrations in this book to reflect and understand the underlying cultural messages that Kobald and Blackwood are trying to convey.

Method. Callow (2017) conducted a research project with research student Alicia Rankine to collect data from 40 students from kindergarten to grade 6 to examine how students deciphered text and illustrations, specifically how picture books conveyed underlying messages visually. This project was part of a larger pilot project in an Australian city to examine methods of assessing students' understanding and comprehension of picture books. The data reported in this particular article focuses on 11 students who read *My Two Blankets*: a brief discussion was held before reading the story out loud to 5-, 6-, and 7-year old children, followed by a structured interview that focused on a single two-page spread and concluded with a drawing activity. Discussion amongst children was encouraged during the read-aloud portion of this study.

Results. During the structured individual interviews, children were asked some questions focusing on author and illustrator choices and power dynamics present in the story. Labadie, Wetzel, and Rogers (2012) suggest that students' critical literacy begins with the understanding and realization that a conscious and creative choice was made by an author or illustrator, which helps readers address more complex issues about power

and social justice. In this case of examining *My Two Blankets*, the main characters were drawn smaller and long shot from the reader, combined with the arrowlike lines and pictures coming out of the other characters who were drawn much larger and close up. Most of the 11 children noticed that Cartwheel and Auntie were drawn more distant than the people at the front of the crowd. This suggests that children's perception and understanding of the scene is influenced based on visual elements. Based on students' comments on why Blackwood (2014) may have made these particular illustration choices suggests the different levels of understanding and logic from each child. Some children's explanations were based on the literal understanding of text and image, while others responded with the author's purpose and intent in mind. Children were also asked about which characters felt the least powerful, which opened up the possibility for them to use their understanding of the story, text, and pictures to explain power dynamics that were represented. All 11 students identified Cartwheel as being the least powerful, with reasons ranging from Cartwheel's differing cultural background, age, and lack of understanding of the new host language to the unfamiliar territory of a new host country and the feeling of not being understood in the face of danger.

Discussion. Callow's (2017) research on *My Two Blankets* begins to provide insight into the significance of offering an authentic narrative that blends carefully chosen literary words and illustrations to help children recognize the refugee experience. This insight can be applied to literature pertaining to TCKs, where non-TCK children can begin to recognize and understand the TCK experience. Callow provides a table of books for developing critical literacy and diversity themes, which is a fantastic start to understanding the plight of refugees. Yet, none of these books delve deeper into the

issues of a third culture being created and the challenges of identity experienced by these main characters.

Multicultural Literature

In her article, *Picture Book Biographies for Young Children: A Way to Teach Multiple Perspectives*, Morgan (2009) offers strategies and insight into teaching multicultural perspectives to young children through picture books - specifically picture book biographies. She highlights the necessity and importance of teaching children at a young age about global connectivity and cultural diversity. One way to develop this understanding is for teachers to use well-written children's picture book biographies that represent people from diverse backgrounds accurately.

Picture Book Biographies

Morgan (2009) explains that developing multiple perspectives in children involves understanding inequalities and conflicts concerning race, class, ethnicity, and gender. Using picture book biographies effectively can help teachers instill the values of empathy, respect, and cooperation, but only if these books accurately depict the views, values, and perspectives of people of color. National organizations in the United States, such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), provide approved lists containing multicultural literature that include biographies for children representing the perspectives of diverse groups of people. Utilizing these approved lists ensures that culturally authentic biographies that teachers and schools are implementing are an accurate representation of the perspectives of various cultures that are less likely to contain racial bias.

Checklist for Cultural Authenticity

To establish the cultural authenticity of a children's book that is devoid of bias, Higgins (2002) devised a checklist that contains a list of characteristics to look for when checking children's books. Some of the listed characteristics were ones that have been mentioned by other researchers: authors that write about their group are much more knowledgeable about the topic and are more likely to publish an authentic book, and writing that is made to look exotic when expressing the language of a culture should be avoided, as the actual writing of the group should be applied. Higgins also mentions avoiding literature that includes "savage" or "backward" to describe a particular minority group. These instill stereotypes and indicate bias - a common reflection of people of color in books that were published before the 1970s.

Along with the nationally recognized organizations that support multicultural literature, Morgan (2009) provides additional online resources that educators can rely on to select culturally authentic literature for children, such as the Anti Defamation League (ADL) website and Joy Shioshita's article entitled *Beyond Good Intentions: Selecting Multicultural Literature*, which was originally published in the September-October 1997 issue of *Children's Advocate*, a news magazine by Action Alliance for Children. Also, Morgan provides a list of biographical picture books that promote children's development of multiple perspectives. Among the book titles in this list, *Tea with Milk* (1999) by Allen Say is the only picture book that captures TCK themes.

Tea with Milk (1999) describes Say's mother (Masako) and her childhood experiences in the United States and her reluctance to move back to her home country of Japan after graduating from high school. Upon her return, Masako finds herself having to

repeat high school, as her mother insisted that she familiarize herself with her native language. Her classmates belittle her and refer to her as a foreigner, even though racially she was Japanese - a sentiment that many TCKs may understand. One thing leads to another, where Masako moves to a different city in Japan away from her family and finds a job, which eventually leads to her meeting her husband, Joseph - who also happens to be a TCK. Say's picture book is beautifully written and illustrated to portray the TCK experience when repatriating to their home country - struggles of identity, lack of acceptance, and adapting to their new living circumstances.

Morgan (2009) stresses the significance of relying on children's books that authentically and accurately portray cultural minority groups. In doing so, she has also identified that not all cultural groups are represented equally. Braden and Rodriguez (2016) recognized that children's books with Latinx characters are underrepresented, and research on books with Latinx themes are limited. The researchers conducted a study to examine 15 children's story picture books with notable Latinx themes and content published in 2013 and submitted to the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC). The CCBC is a research library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that collects data about multicultural children and young adult literature.

Latinx Representation

Braden and Rodriguez (2016) agree that multicultural literature can become a window for children to understand other cultures and backgrounds, while also mirroring or reflecting positive perspectives of one's own culture. However, "when young children are presented with literature that only reflects their background, cultural heritage, and experiences, they may believe that their experience dominates all others" (Braden &

Rodriguez, 2016, p. 58). Children's literature needs to be a safe place where children can ponder, discuss, and address social problems that affect their lives both in and out of the classrooms. Therefore, the researchers focused their study by examining the experiences portrayed with Latinx content in picture books and the cultural narratives implicitly and explicitly suggested by these picture books.

English is privileged. Braden and Rodriguez (2016) highlighted four insights that they gained from the 15 children's books in their research: how English is privileged, how the books neglect significant cultural context, how traditional gender roles are enforced, and the setting is shaped as a utopian society. Although most of the texts that they analyzed were written solely in English, they considered how language was privileged in the books by identifying the typography, production, and language of these books. The researchers concluded that the use of Spanish words or phrases in most books was superficial and was simply included for cultural flair. In bilingual books, the layout of the text and the order of the language - whether the English or Spanish text came first - determined whether English was privileged and favored.

Cultural authenticity. As a member of the Latinx culture, Rodriguez (2016) discovered that many of the characteristics of the Latinx culture embedded in the picture books lacked depth, which resulted in superficial cultural nuances. For example, in *What a Party* by Machado and Moreau (2013), food is used to represent the different cultures represented in the book. The neighborhood children are invited to a party, where they are encouraged to bring whatever they like to eat to share. The children's diversity is represented through the foods that they bring and the illustration that shows the different hair types, skin colors, and clothing without explicitly mentioning their cultural

backgrounds. Rather than portraying the values of family and community engrained in Latinx culture, the book focuses instead on the different stereotypical foods that people bring to a party instead.

Traditional gender roles. Traditional gender roles were present in 5 of the 15 picture books, where mothers were portrayed as the *ada de casa* (homemaker). There has been a shift of gender roles not just in Latinx families but in families across all cultures, including women working and gaining financial independence and men also participating in the role of homemaker. Books that fail to recognize this shift and the multifaceted experiences of current Latinxs may impede children from accessing these books as mirrors and windows.

Assumption of utopian society. Finally, 8 out of the 15 books representing a variety of Latinx culture and community themes portrayed a utopian society. Normalized family practices were depicted to symbolize a community with near-perfect qualities, which fails to address the complexity in Latinx households. Social justice issues such as race, gender, same-sex families, immigrant life, and poverty were seldom discussed in these books. Such stories encourage readers to make false assumptions that there will always be a happy ending where everything always works out. Picture books that depict a utopian society fail to acknowledge acculturation experiences when children are not given the opportunity to grapple with complex issues that showcase their realities.

Braden and Rodriguez's (2016) study reveals that misrepresentation of Latinx culture and other cultures is present in children's literature. As children seek out books to familiarize and understand their own culture and glimpse into others, this misrepresentation becomes problematic. The researchers argue that children's books

should not only be windows and mirrors; rather, “going beyond windows and mirrors means recognizing that culture is not static and that no ethnic group is monolithic in nature” (Braden & Rodriguez, 2016, p. 70). Similarly, the TCK experience varies drastically, and there are not enough books currently that have been published that honors and portrays their authentic and diverse backgrounds. This study justifies the necessity of TCK representation in children’s books, if not to act as windows and mirrors, but to recognize their evolving cultural experiences.

Response of Preschool Children

Chen and Browne (2015) also acknowledged the influence of multicultural literature on how preschool children responded to multicultural picture books. Echoing Morgan’s (2009) viewpoint on the accuracy and authenticity of cultural minority groups being represented in children’s books, Chen and Browne also recognized that the books used with young children could influence and shape their understanding of the world and people around them. By exposing young children from various backgrounds to quality multicultural literature, this provides opportunities for children to view themselves in these ‘mirror’ books while also developing their interpretation of other’s cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values - promoting a “balanced, well-informed student able to successfully navigate in today’s global society” (Chen & Browne, 2015, p. 17).

Method. Chen and Browne’s (2015) research examined the responses from pre-school children to understand how they respond to multicultural picture books with themes related to diversity and how children recognize diversity represented in the picture books. A group of fourteen pre-school children between the ages of three and five participated in this study: two Black, one Asian, and eleven White children. These

children attended a university pre-school in the northeast of the United States; most of them were children of employees or students attending the university. The researchers selected five culturally authentic picture books to read aloud to the children in their classroom once a week to read and discuss themes about families, friendships, and cultural diversity. These particular books were chosen as they represented the children's ethnic backgrounds in the form of mirror books, hoping that they would identify and understand themselves better while appreciating and understanding cultural backgrounds and differences.

Results. The findings from this study demonstrated that young children enjoyed listening to books being read aloud and were willing to engage with multicultural literature with big ideas, especially when these ideas were relatable to their personal lives. Their responses reflected a more in-depth understanding of the books and cultures introduced as they were read aloud to more regularly. Some children were also able to respond and deepen their understanding based on their peer's comments and behaviors. The students' responses to the books were personal, and they reflected on their own experiences, which they conveyed through writing, drawing, and oral responses. They were able to connect to cultural similarities and differences illustrated in the texts with teacher guidance.

Discussion. Chen and Browne's (2015) study concludes that quality multicultural picture books can provide young children the opportunity to explore similarities and differences in experiences across cultures and build a better understanding of self. Imagine how empowering this can be for young TCKs who are trying to navigate this global and diverse world, to be able to understand their home and host country's culture

better and be able to appreciate and build awareness of people's diverse backgrounds. Equally, how comforting and reassuring would it be if these young, impressionable TCKs were able to read books about children who experience similar life journeys as themselves?

Young Children's Book Preferences

In contrast, Mohr's (2003) research focused on book preferences among first-grade students through self-selection. There is a strong correlation between the ability and opportunity of selecting a book independently and the motivation to read a book. There has been a general assumption amongst researchers that students want to see themselves portrayed in books or read about experiences that help them understand the diverse world that they live in – "window" and "mirror" books. However, according to Mohr, research to support this idea has been quite sparse. Therefore, her study pursued the notion of whether young children prefer books that mirror them when provided with a selection of high-quality picture books of various genres, including multicultural books. Her four guiding questions for her research were:

1. Given a wide variety of high-quality picture books, which book (type) would first-graders select to keep as their own?
2. Would first-graders show a preference for a book that mirrored their gender, first language, or racial identity?
3. Given a wide variety of books from which choose one, would first graders evidence a preference for particular genres?

4. Would there be any differences among the selection preferences of Hispanic and non-Hispanic first graders and between boys and girls (within and across these categories)? (Mohr, 2003, p. 165)

Method. The nine selected picture books for this research were published between 2000 and 2001. High-quality illustrations, appropriate content for the age group, price point, and quality were similar, and the books represented a range of genres, genders, ethnicities, and languages - Spanish and English. Of the nine books, four were nonfiction texts which featured: a collection of poems about classroom pets, an informational text of dangerous animals, a biography of Abraham Lincoln's early life, and a story illustrated with dinosaur characters to depict a witty account of mothers. The remaining five were a mix of fantastic and realistic narrative books with both male and female characters represented from Asian, Hispanic, Black, or Caucasian backgrounds.

One hundred ninety first graders spanning ten first grade classes from a semi-rural, economically diverse school district in the southeastern area of the United States participated in this study near the end of the school year. Individual students selected the book of their choice by going into the hallway outside their classrooms, where the researcher set a table with the nine selected books. In addition, two of the ten first-grade classrooms were selected to hear the books read during their regular class read-aloud time, providing them with an opportunity to understand each story's plot before selecting their book choice. After the children chose their free, hard-back picture book that they would be able to keep as their own, most of the students agreed to a brief interview to explain their book choice and their reasoning for choosing their favorite one out of the nine choices.

Results. One hundred fifty-nine students (84%) out of the 190 first graders chose nonfiction texts with one particular title - *Animals Nobody Loves* (Simon, 2001) - accounting for nearly half (46%) of the children's choices. This informational book featured photographs and short descriptions of dangerous animals. Among the children who had all nine books read aloud to them, 90% of those children selected nonfiction texts; similarly, almost half (49%) of those students preferred to own a copy of *Animals Nobody Loves*. Regardless of the text features of the individual books that the rest of the children from the eight classrooms depended on, the percentage of those who preferred this book was higher. Both girls and boys showed a preference for nonfiction texts, although the data collected indicates that 96% of boys (100 out of the 104) and 69% of girls (59 out of the 86) preferred nonfiction books. After further analysis, when comparing Hispanic and non-Hispanic students' book choices, only 5% of Hispanic students and 10% of non-Hispanic students selected the Spanish-language texts. This indicates that there was no distinctive preference amongst Spanish-speaking students to choose books with Hispanic characters or Spanish-language texts. However, it was evident that out of the three most commonly accepted texts, all three books featured animals as subjects, topics, or illustrations.

Discussion. The interview results revealed that first graders selected their book based on the visible features such as the illustrations, the content of the book, or whether someone in their family would enjoy the book with them. Contrary to what many believed, when given the opportunity to self-select their book, these first graders demonstrated that they wanted informational texts rather than well-written storybooks. Mohr's (2003) research indicates that perhaps young children prefer informational books

to help build their concrete understanding of their world rather than multicultural books that can address more profound issues. This study challenges the idea that multicultural picture books are well-liked and received by students of all ages; perhaps young children, at least the majority of first graders, are more interested in the wonders of nature or books that incorporate animals.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Literature

All children's books have the potential to act as mirrors and windows for children, where they can recognize characters that are similar and different to themselves. Based on Aronson, Callahan, and O'Brien's research (2018) on themes and messages conveyed in picture books featuring underrepresented groups, there need to be more texts that accurately portray different cultural and racial aspects of characters. Stereotypes and representation of characters can positively and negatively affect how children understand and interpret the world. Martinez, Koss, and Johnson's (2016) study on Caldecott books also reveals that there are not enough books with human main characters that function as mirror and window books. In spite of the rise of globalization, consideration for the age of the characters, where the characters lived, English learners, disability, religion, and socioeconomic status were not reflected in Caldecott books that were published between 1990 and 2015.

Keller and Franzak's (2015) study on name negotiation cast a light on the impact that names have on children's identity and culture. Their analysis of picture books where minority character's name negotiation was a central theme reveals that changing one's name has become a socially accepted practice when entering a school in the United States. Children from both immigrant and non-immigrant families can face hardships based on his/her name, which can affect their interaction with other children and adults. Name negotiation can also be a challenge for some TCKs, and their overseas experiences can strain relationships with monocultural children. Sheard (2008) focused on characteristics and challenges of TCKs and the similarities with gifted children. Her

study concludes that TCKs have to learn to handle their heightened global awareness while schools need to create more opportunities to use intercultural resources in their community to raise global awareness.

Helsel (2017) focused on analyzing immigration-themed graphic novels, where immigrant teenagers experience the process of acculturation. His study uncovers issues such as ethnic bullying, immigrant bullying, and dissonant acculturation amongst immigrant teenagers. Graphic novels and children's picture books have the potential to help children appreciate their diverse backgrounds and embrace their unique circumstances. Chen and Browne (2015) also acknowledged the influence of multicultural literature, especially among preschool children. Their findings demonstrated that young children are capable of engaging with big ideas presented in multicultural picture books, allowing children the opportunity to explore similarities and differences in experiences across cultures.

Similarly, Monobe and Son's (2014) research on refugee book characters reveal that incorporating carefully selected children's literature in the classroom can help students create a "we" perspective and deconstruct the boundaries of "us" versus "them." Their study also recognized the three stages in political conflicts experienced by refugee characters: the presence of war or political conflict, relocation, and settlement in a different country. Hope's (2008) study with five children with two refugee students revealed the usefulness of refuge texts for both refugee and non-refugee children. Using meaningful refugee texts can help all students build appreciation and dispel stereotypes, although many of the book titles mentioned in her research have not appeared in mainstream children's literature yet. Callow (2017) also examined children's literature

with refugee children characters with a focus on building critical literacy. His analysis of the picture book, *My Two Blankets*, written by Irena Kobald and illustrated by Freya Blackwood (2014), provides insight into the significance of authentic narratives when they are paired with carefully selected literary words and illustrations.

Morgan (2009) highlighted the necessity of teaching young children about global connectivity and cultural diversity. In order to do so, cultural authenticity in texts is critical, and Morgan suggests following Higgins' (2002) list of characteristics to look for to check for cultural authenticity in children's books. Morgan concludes that not all cultural groups are represented equally, a sentiment that Braden and Rodriguez (2016) agree with. Their study on 15 children's story picture books with Latinx themes, published in 2013, uncovers misrepresentation of Latinx culture and other cultures in children's literature. Although Latinx children's literature exists, unless they accurately portray Latinx culture authentically, misrepresentation can affect children's understanding of their own culture and how they view others.

Huang (2018) acknowledged the challenges of Taiwanese book publishers and illustrators, as the majority of children's books available in Taiwan come from other countries. The absence of mirror books available to Taiwanese children reaffirms concerns from educators and parents about the lack of cultural identity being developed among children. Yet, Mohr's (2003) research on book preferences among first-grade students reveals that young children may prefer informational books rather than multicultural books. The first graders in her study demonstrated that when given the opportunity to self-select their book, they wanted informational books rather than well-written storybooks.

Limitations of the Research

In order to find existing research concerning the availability of children's books with TCK themes, the original search parameters of "third culture kid" was supplemented with the addition of "third culture kid children's books" and "third culture kid themes." The search results from Academic Search Premier, ProQuest Education Journals, ERIC, and EBSCO revealed that there was no existing research to date that specifically addressed TCK children's books or books with TCK themes. Thus, to uncover research that relates to children's books that identify similar themes to TCK experiences, the search parameters were altered to include "multicultural children," "multicultural picture books," and "multicultural children's literature." Expanding the search parameters resulted in finding many of the research that was used in this literature review.

However, the addition of "refugee children's literature" to the search parameters resulted in finding research that analyzed existing children's literature concerning refugee children and the impact of these texts. Refugee children's experiences differ from TCK's experiences, but their shared experience of moving to a new country and adjusting to their new host country reveals that refugee children are in fact, also TCKs. Therefore, the literature review of studies conducted concerning refugee children's literature was also applicable to analyze the availability and adequacy of existing children's books with TCK characters and themes.

Nearly all of the studies addressed in this literature review were conducted in the United States and, consequently, the data collected concerned children's books, students, and schools in the United States. None of the research addressed children attending international schools or book characters that attended international schools, even though

many TCKs living in non-English speaking countries around the world attend these schools.

Implications for Future Research

There has been extensive research done on critically analyzing the impact of children's literature and the benefits of incorporating a variety of genres in the classroom. Current research has made it clear that children must have access to authentic, relatable, and appropriate literature to help guide them to become responsible global citizens. Researchers have also delved into the impact of multicultural literature on children and whether existing literature acts as window and mirror books. Many researchers have included data to show the rising number of school children in the United States with diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

However, there is very little research on international primary students and the availability of children's literature that can act as mirror books for them. There are no studies that look into children's picture books with TCK characters or the challenges that international students often face when adjusting to life in their host country. Research must be done to look at all the available English children's literature, not just in the United States but from other English-speaking countries, to determine whether there are adequate number of books that address TCK themes - especially as the number of TCKs and refugee children increase.

Based on Mohr's (2003) research that indicated that young children, specifically first graders, found no preference for multicultural books, researchers should determine which age group would benefit the most with multicultural books that include TCK themes. Data needs to be collected from local English-speaking schools and international

schools to determine when teachers and parents should incorporate multicultural texts into children's reading repertoire.

Implications for Professional Application

According to ISC Research's (2020) latest market data, in August 2020, there were 11,662 international schools with 5.99 million international school students. This data indicates that there are many TCKs that do not have access to children's literature that reflects their third culture life experiences. And yet, current children's literature still centers around characters who are typically Anglo Saxon with monocultural backgrounds.

This literature review has demonstrated that even in the United States, where sufficient research has been done on multiculturalism and multicultural children's literature, there are still many books that lack cultural authenticity and accuracy. Researchers who have critically examined children's books with specific cultural themes reiterate the necessity for authentic representation. Many classrooms and libraries in the United States lack book titles on the shelves that accurately represent various cultural groups, with the exception of a very few. This implies that for the time being, educators and parents of children must carefully select literature that provides children with the most accurate depiction of various cultural groups.

When selecting children's literature for primary classrooms, teachers should be mindful to select books that reflect their students' diverse backgrounds. A good understanding of each student's background such as family, socioeconomic status, and culture is necessary before selecting books to be used in the classroom. Teachers can also rely on approved book lists provided by national organizations such as the National

Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) that were mentioned in Morgan's (2009) study. After gathering these books, teachers should refer to Higgins' (2002) checklist to ensure that the books selected are culturally authentic and devoid of bias. Taking a closer look at the publishing date can provide insight to teachers on whether stereotypes and bias was common, such as books published around the 1970s.

Once teachers have identified and selected children's literature that is appropriate and culturally accurate, children should be given the opportunity to talk, draw, and write about their understanding of the book. As Monobe and Son (2014) mentioned in their study, role-play can help children visualize and express characters' thoughts and circumstances to deepen their understanding of emotions, conflicts, and contexts of these stories. Teachers need to ensure that they create an emotionally safe environment for children to put themselves in the character's shoes and rely on their five senses to express the many emotions, thoughts, and challenges they may experience as they dig deeper into themes and issues in the book that may be challenging.

International school teachers should search for books that have won the Notable Books for a Global Society, which recognizes children's books about international people and cultures (Martinez, Koss, & Johnson, 2016). Although there may be more literary awards through the American Library Association that recognizes diversity in children's books, international educators should research and familiarize themselves with book awards from other English-speaking countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the Netherlands. These countries have a rich, diverse population and may

already have a reservoir of English books that incorporates TCK themes and other cultures authentically.

Conclusion

It is apparent that there are not enough children's books that address third culture kid themes, despite the rising number of TCK and refugee children in today's world. The challenges that TCKs face cannot be ignored and their experiences must be honored. Research has shown that children's books can positively impact early childhood and primary students by acting as mirror and window books. Why not use children's literature to instill global citizenship and international mindedness, while reflecting their own life experiences and those of others?

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