# Analyzing the Portrayal of Immigration, Emigration, and Migration in Selected Picture Books: A Content Analysis

This article shares findings from a study that used content analysis to investigate one question: How are immigration, emigration, and migration (IEM) portrayed in selected picture books? It includes a statement of the problem, followed by a review of literature describing research on portrayals of immigration in picture books. Next, it describes data sources, analytical categories, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. Findings include: 1) the majority of picture books portrayed stories of immigration, followed by emigration and migration, 2) portrayed children as immigrants, emigrants, or migrants, and to a lesser extent, adolescents, young adults, and adults (22%), and only 3% of books portrayed families, 3) portrayed a variety of races, ethnicities, and continents, with the majority of races and ethnicities portrayed as Asian, followed by a relative balance between Caucasian and Hispanic, 4) picture books portrayed movement in terms of reasons, duration, and means, 5) primary reason for movement was the need for work, followed by war and poverty, and the interrelationship between the three, and 6) the majority of picture books (80%) portrayed consequences in positive ways, and 4% in negative ways. Discussion of findings and limitations of the study are included.

# **A Content Analysis**

Recently, I read aloud a picture book titled *Ziba Came on a Boat* (Lofthouse, 2007) to a graduate class of students taking a literacy course at a large midwestern university. The book is about a young Afghan girl named Ziba and her mother fleeing their home country due to war. After reading, I invited students to verbally share their reactions to the book. One international student stated:

I was born in Iran. As an immigrant who came here looking for a better education, I had to leave my family, home, friends, language, and culture. This story was tragic, but it did not reflect the way I, indeed, most people in our region of the world, live back home. Unlike Ziba, I have never lived in a shelter, hunted for food, or baked bread myself. All immigrants are not poor or uneducated. Many, like me, come from highly educated families and beautiful countries. At best, it was hard for me to relate to the story. At worst, it gives an inaccurate portrayal of immigrants and immigration. I don't understand why immigrants always seem to be portrayed like Ziba. These portrayals make immigrants feel very uncomfortable.

 This response is a good example of what Green (in Comber & Green, 1998) calls instrumental literacy. Instrumental literacy is not only when a reader understands what a text means, but also what a text is doing to the reader. In this instance, the student not only understood that the text described

immigration due to war, but also what it did to her as a reader. It presented a stereotypical portrayal of immigrants, a portrayal that makes her and her immigrant friends feel uncomfortable, confused, and resentful.

This response illustrates the need for teachers "to be alive to how texts position readers, what ideologies they advocate, and the worlds they imagine" (Bradford, 2016, p. 26). It sparked new conversations, problematized old assumptions, and generated interesting research questions about the portrayal of immigration, emigration, and migration (IEM) in picture books. One question became the focus for this research study.

This article shares findings from a qualitative study that used content analysis as a research methodology to investigate the question: How are immigration, emigration, and migration (IEM) portrayed in selected picture books? It begins with a statement of the problem, followed by a review of literature on portrayals of immigration in picture books and a description of the theoretical framework of the study. Next, it presents operational definitions and describes the research methodology including data sources, analytical categories, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. Finally, major findings are described, implications are discussed, and limitations of the study are identified.

# **Statement of the Problem**

Historically, vast numbers of people around the world have immigrated to the United States. In 2001, there were approximately 14.2 million immigrant children in the United States, representing about 5% of all Americans and 20% of all children (Camarota, 2012). In 2002, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated an increase to 32.5 million immigrants, representing approximately 11.5% of the general population. From 2000-2007, 10.3 million immigrants arrived in the United States, the highest seven-year period of immigration in U.S. history (Camarota, 2012). Recently, a Pew Research Center study (2016) investigated trends in global immigration from 1990-2017 and reported that in 1990 over 23 million people living in the U.S. were born in other countries, more than 34 million in 2000, more than 44 million in 2010, and almost 50 million in 2017. This recent estimate accounts for more immigrants coming from diverse backgrounds than any other country (Radford & Noe-Bustamante, 2019).

Concomitantly, increasing numbers of immigrant children are being enrolled every year in American public schools. In 2012, 1 out of every 5 children in K-12 public schools were immigrant children or live with an immigrant parent and are English Language Learners (ELLs) (Camarota, 2012). It is estimated that by 2040 "1 in 3 children entering a classroom in the United States will be an immigrant or the child of an immigrant (Suarez-

Orozco, Qin & Amthor, 2008, p. 51).

Increasing numbers of immigrant children enrolled in U.S. schools raise important curricular and instructional issues for teachers. One issue involves the availability of curricular resources, like literature, that deals with

immigration. This issue is not new. Nearly 20 years ago, Lamme, Fu, and Lowery (2004) stated that the increasing number of students who are immigrants in U.S. schools presents an urgent need for teachers to include literature about immigrants into the curriculum. This need also comes with a caveat. The caveat deals less with the availability of, and access to literature, and more with the portrayal or representation of immigrants in available literature. The portrayal of immigrants in literature, particularly in picture books, has been, and continues to be, controversial (Bickford & Rich, 2015).

Portrayals of virtually anything are inherently subjective and therefore potentially controversial. This is true with portrayals of cultures, topics, and historical characters in picture books. Historically, misrepresentations, albeit unintentionally by authors and illustrators, have been found in picture books and are quite common even today (Morgan, 2009). The misrepresentations have included slurs, stereotypes, and negative assumptions based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Au, Brown & Calderon, 2016). Unfortunately, these misrepresentations have been portrayed in overly simplistic and stereotypical ways, and perpetuated one-dimensional, inauthentic, and inaccurate depictions of people, events, and cultures.

For example, many picture books contain misrepresentations of culture. According to Bruchac (2003) "few peoples have been as appreciated and misrepresented as the many different cultures today called American Indian or Native American" (p. 22). Picture books have also misrepresented important cultures like Pueblo (Mendoza & Reese, 2001), Chinese (Chen, 2006), and Korean cultures (Yoo Kyung, 2009), important topics like slavery (Frank, 2019) and African Diaspora (Moyo, 2017), and historical figures like Christopher Columbus (Bickford, 2013). Ultimately, misrepresentation can be damaging and dangerous because they perpetuate stereotypes (Scroggins & Gangi, 2004).

Stereotypes negatively affect how readers perceive themselves and how they perceive others around them. Derman-Sparks and Olsen-Edwards (2010) state that "when stereotypes are seen over and over again, children eventually accept these perceptions as reality (p.12). Valadex, Sutterby & Donaldson (2013) argue that all children deserve picture books that authentically, not stereotypically, portray their own culture and other cultures different from their own.

In sum, stereotypical portrayals are problematic and controversial. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many teachers feel uncomfortable, unprepared, and even intimidated to address controversial topics like misrepresentations of immigration (Leland, et al. 2003). Galda, Ash, and Cullinan (2006), however, argue that it is more important now more than ever to help teachers develop curriculum resources that can appropriately address the variety of needs of children who are foreign born. Picture books are one curriculum resource that can benefit both students and teachers.

Picture books can enable teachers to include immigration in their curriculum, support student understanding of immigrants, and allow immigrant students to validate their own experiences of being an immigrant (Bersh,

2013). Picture books can also enable teachers to learn more about the complexities of the immigrant experience so that they can better teach students who have immigrated to the US, as well as native US residents (Gregor & Green, 2011). Lastly, picture books can assist students, especially young children, in breaking and questioning stereotypes and help broaden their cultural perspectives (Thein, Beach, & Parks, 2007).

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# Research on Portrayals of Immigration, Emigration, and Migration in Picture Books

Limited research has been conducted using content analysis to analyze portrayals of immigration, emigration, and migration (IEM) in picture books. Lamme, Fu, and Lowery (2004) used three major themes to analyze portrayals of immigrants in selected picture books: making connections, making transitions, and becoming Americans. Making connections portrayed immigrants as continuing traditions, keeping memories, and revisiting home countries. Making transitions portrayed immigrants as first feeling lost and home sick, then adjusting to the American experience, and finally working diligently to fulfill personal needs and dreams. Becoming Americans portrayed immigrants as struggling to bridge two cultures, one old and one new, and developing a new identity.

Bickford and Meier (2017) used content analysis to investigate how immigration is historically represented in picture books and how patterns of representations change based on the intended age of the reader. Findings indicated that immigration was represented in positive ways with positive outcomes, but few books explicitly described any negative consequences. Findings also indicated that picture books misrepresented historical content, representing the location for immigrant arrival only as Ellis Island, rather than other locations like Angel Island and focusing less on the complexities and difficulties of life after arrival.

Kimmel, Garrison, and Forest (2015) conducted a content analysis of twelve picture books dealing with immigration. Findings indicated that books focused on three kinds of immigrant movement: voluntarily, forced, and restricted. Son and Sung (2015) analyzed 31 picture books and found the portrayal of relationships between immigrants and parents, grandparents, peers, and teachers helped create positive bicultural identities of Korean American children. Lastly, Wee, Park, and Choi (2015) analyzed 33 picture books dealing with Korean immigration stories and found that portrayals provided inadequate representations and mostly surface-level understandings of contemporary Korean culture.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was informed by an important interrelationship between the theory of content analysis, literary text analysis, and critical literacy. This interrelationship posits that texts are, and should be, "objects of contemplation" (Serafini & Tompkins, 2015, p. 344). Contemplation means to problematize public texts and analyze them to question the everyday world to uncover accepted and often unquestioned perspectives (Enriquez, 2014, p. 27)

Content analysis has been used as a research methodology in and across many professional fields of study. In literacy, content analysis has been used to "examine children's and young adult literature as texts, particularly within the field of literary studies" (Short, 2016, p. 1). According to Galda, Ash and Cullinan (2000) "literary text analyses examine individual texts or genres to describe what the authors do, looking, for example, at narrative patterns, character development, symbolism, intertextuality, or the function of the setting....Content analyses examine what texts are about, considering the content from a particular perspective such as sociohistorical, gender, culture, or thematic studies (p. 362).

Critical literacy is a way of thinking that "interrogates the relationship between language and power, analyzes popular culture and media, understands how power relationships are socially constructed, and considers actions that can be taken to promote social justice" (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2008, p. 3). A fundamental tenet of critical literacy is that literacy can never be "politically neutral" (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2008, p. 133), and literary texts can never be "politically innocent."

Different theoretical frameworks underpin critical literacy (Pandya & Avila, 2013). These include Shannon's (1995) critical literacy framework, Jank's (2002) synthesis model, and the four dimensions of critical literacy (Lewison, Flint & Van Sluys, 2002). This study was informed by Luke and Freebody's four-resource model (1997). This model posits that texts need to be read with a critical lens, one that e explicit and implicit messages about power, positioning, and perspective in all texts, especially texts that raise important social issues (Jones, 2006).

#### Significance of Study

This research study recognizes the increasing need for immigrant children and teachers of immigrant children to read picture books that portray immigration in authentic, not stereotypical, ways, given that not all immigrant experiences are the same (Rutter, 2006). It also recognizes that immigrant children need to be aware of how their unique experiences are portrayed in picture books, and non-immigrant children need to better understand the immigrant experience (Sung, Fahrenbruck & Lopez-Robertson, 2016).

Given this recognition, this study is significant for three reasons. One, it builds on and broadens previous research on analyzing portrayals of

immigration in picture books. Previous research focused primarily on portrayals of immigration. This study broadens understanding of people who move, voluntarily or involuntarily, from their homeland, as well as the reasons and consequences of movement by analyzing portrayals not only of immigration but also emigration and migration (IEM). Two, it builds on and broadens previous research that focused primarily on analytical categories of movement, connections to homeland, and transitions to the new land. This study broadens understanding of IEM by focusing on a wider set of analytical categories. For each picture book, these categories included copyright date, language of picture book, and movement (continent of origin, duration, challenges, route, means of transportation, reasons, and cultural consequences). Three, it provides an analysis of portrayals that can help teachers make informed decisions about authenticity when selecting picture books to teach IEM.

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# **Operational Definitions**

Different conceptual definitions of immigrant, emigrant, and migrant exist in the professional literature. In this study immigrant, emigrant, and migrant were operationally defined using definitions from the United States Library of Congress (LOC). Immigrant was defined as a foreign-born person who enters a country intending to become a permanent resident or citizen. Emigrant was defined as an entire family or families in which one or more members emigrated while others remained in the home country. Migrant was defined as a person who changed their place of residence from one locality to another within the borders of a single country.

These definitions were used for two reasons. First, the United States Library of Congress (LOC) is the largest library in the world and main research arm of the United States Congress. It is a highly reputable, national professional organization with an extensive and impressive source of knowledge available to a wide range of individuals, including researchers. Second, it provides one of the most recent, updated, and comprehensive definitions of IEM.

#### **Research Methodology**

The qualitative research methodology used in this study was content analysis, focusing on describing and interpreting written artifacts (Krippendorff, 2018). It "involves the inspection of patterns in written texts, often drawing on combinations of inductive, deductive, and abductive analytical techniques" (Hoffman, Wilson, Martinez, & Sailors, 2011, p. 29). The goal of content analysis is to generate "knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Here, the unit of study was the picture book, each treated as "objects of contemplation" (Serafini &

Tompkins, 2015, p. 344) and subjected to content analysis in order to analyze how IEM were portrayed in these picture books. This study followed eight recommended steps for conducting content analysis (Wildemuth, 2009): 1) prepare the data set; 2) define the unit of analysis; 3) develop analytical categories and the coding scheme; 4) test the coding scheme on sample of text; 5) code all texts; 6) assess coding consistency; 7) draw conclusions from coded data; 8) report methods and findings. **Data Sources** Data sources were picture books (Hunter, 2017; Ewing, 2017; McHone-Chase, 2017; Gregor & Green, 2012; Anderson, 2011; Balantic, Kipling, & Libresco, 2009; Kim, 2007; Schon, 2002). For purposes of manageability and convenience, all picture books used in this study focused on immigration, emigration, or migration, represented a sample of convenience (see Appendix A), and selected based on specific criteria (see Table 1). *Table 1*.Criteria for Selection Picture book Fiction or nonfiction, not informational Narrative Word immigration, emigration, or migration included in the title Word immigration, emigration, or migration appear in synopsis Word immigration, emigration, or migration are not in title or synopsis but addresses one or more in the narrative Book intended/appropriate for K-8 Book discusses before movement, during movement and/or after movement (must have 1; can have all 3) Book accessible and available to teachers No digital books; Trade Book (no narratives from basal programs or anthologies); No self-published books 

Based on these criteria, a total of 172 picture books were selected for content analysis.

# **Analytical Categories**

Three sources were used to develop analytical categories. One source was professional literature that identified categories used to analyze picture books. The second source was research literature on portrayals of IEM in picture books. This literature was used to develop a set of a-priori categories to enable a focused content analysis of picture books. The rationale for a-priori categories was that "adopting coding schemes developed in previous studies has the advantage of supporting the accumulation and comparison of research findings across multiple studies" (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 311). The third source were personal interests and curiosities of the researcher about IEM. These interests and curiosities were included to broaden and extend the a-priori categories found in the professional literature. A total of 12 analytical categories were used in this study (see Table 2).

- 19 Table 2. Analytical Categories
- 20 Focus of Picture Book
- 21 Realistic or Unrealistic Portrayal
- 22 Age Level of Immigrant, Emigrant, and Migrant
- 23 Race or Ethnicity
- 24 Movement Continent of Origin
- 25 Movement Duration
- 26 Movement Challenges
- 27 Movement Route
- Movement Means
- 29 Movement Reasons
- 30 Movement Consequences
- 31 Movement Cultural Consequences

#### **Data Collection**

Data collection involved a four step, multi-stage process: meeting criteria, creating a spredsheet, and coding and recording.

Meeting Criteria. The researchers spent time informally browsing all picture books in the total data set. In this study, browsing meant looking for any text and/or illustration evidence that indicated the book met all criteria for inclusion in the study. Books that did not meet criteria were withdrawn.

Creating A Spreadsheet. The researchers created an Excel spreadsheet that identified and organized all analytical categories. This spreadsheet functioned as a shared organizational device to code and record data collected on each picture book.

Coding and Recording. The researchers read all picture books in the data set, and collaboratively coded and recorded data on the Excel spreadsheet based on all analytical categories for each book.

#### **Data Analysis**

The unit of analysis was a picture book and the focus was on how IEM were portrayed across books in the data set. Data analysis was qualitative and focused on using a-priori and researcher interest categories to create descriptive and interpretive findings. It involved a multi-stage process:

1) Categorizing books. The total data set was divided into three sets of books based on topic: immigration, emigration, and migration;

 2) Creating initial impressions. A small sample of picture books (n = 25) from each set (immigration, emigration, migration) to gain some initial familiarity with and preliminary impressions about the topic;

3) Coding books. All books in the data set were read and coded;

 4) Recording codes. Coded data for each analytical category were recorded on a master Excel sheet;

 5) Converting data. The Excel sheet was converted to SPSS format;

 6) Analyzing data. Descriptive and interpretive analyses of the data were conducted.

#### **Findings**

Findings are presented in the following categories: focus of book, age and gender, race or ethnicity, and movement (continent of origin, duration, challenges, route, modes of transportation, reasons, cultural consequences).

Focus of Picture Book

The purpose of analyzing focus of picture book was to determine whether picture books focused on IEM. Table 3 illustrates findings from analysis of focus of picture book.

Table 3. Focus of Picture Book

rocus	Frequency	%0
Immigration Emigration Migration	103 42 27	60% 24% 16%

Picture books focused on immigration were significantly more frequent, followed by emigration and migration. A total of 103 picture books (60%) focused on immigration, 42 picture books (24%) on emigration, and 27 picture books (16%) on migration.

### Age Level

The purpose of analyzing age was to determine to what extent picture books portrayed IEM as children, adolescents, adults, grandparents, or families. Table 4 illustrates findings from analysis of age level of immigrant, emigrant, and migrant.

Table 4. Age Level of Immigrant, Emigrant, and Migrant

9	Age Level	Frequency	%
10	_		
11	Child	103	60%
12	Adolescent	14	08%
13	Young Adult	11	06%
14	Adult	13	07%
15	Grandparent	06	04%
16	Family	06	04%
17	Other	19	11%

A total of 103 picture books (60%) portrayed children (aged 0 to 9 years of age), 14 (8%) portrayed adolescents (aged 10 to 19 years of age), 24 (13%) portrayed young adults and adults, 6 (4%) portrayed grandparents (20 years of age and beyond) (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2018), and 6 (4%) portrayed families.

#### Gender

The purpose of analyzing gender was to determine whether picture books focused on males or females, or on a balance between the two. Table 5 illustrates findings from analysis of gender. Picture books portrayed a relative balance between male and female characters.

Table 5. Gender
Gender of Immigrant, Emigrant, and Migrant

34			
34 35	Gender	Frequency	%
36			
37	Male	83	48%
38			
39	Female	76	44%
40			
41	Other	13	08%
42			

#### **Race or Ethnicity**

The purpose of analyzing race or ethnicity was to determine to what extent picture books portrayed single or multiple races or ethnicities. Table 6 illustrates findings from the analysis of race or ethnicity.

Table	6.	Race	or	Ethnic	itv
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8	Race or Ethnicity	Frequency	%
9	-		
10	Asian	45	26%
11	Caucasian	31	18%
12	Hispanic	30	17%
13	African American	08	05%
14	African	03	02%
15	Other	19	11%
16	Unknown	36	21%

Picture books portrayed a variety of races or ethnicities. A total of 45 picture books (26%) portrayed Asian immigrants, emigrants, and migrants, 31 (18%) Caucasian, 30 (17%) Hispanic, 8 (5%) African American, and 3 (2%) African. A total of 55 books (32%) did not identify a race or ethnicity.

#### **Movement**

The purpose of analyzing multiple aspects of movement was to broaden understandings of movement beyond an unknown or not specified departure and arrival location, and include more specific information about continent of origin, duration, challenges, and route of movement, modes of transportation, reasons for movement, and cultural consequences of movement.

Continent of Origin. Table 7 illustrates findings from analysis of continent of origin. Picture books portrayed a variety of continents of origin. A total of 50 picture books (29%) portrayed Asia, 48 (28%) North America, 28 (16%) Europe, 5 (16%) South America, and 4 (2%) Africa. A total of 37 picture books (22%) did not identify a continent of origin.

Table 7. Movement - Continent of Origin

37	Continent	Frequency	%
38			
39	Asia	50	29%
40	North America	48	28%
41	Europe	28	16%
42	South America	05	03%
43	Africa	04	02%
44	Unknown	37	22%

<u>Duration</u>. Duration was defined in terms of time, specifically the amount of time required for movement. Table 8 illustrates findings from analysis of duration of movement. Picture books portrayed the duration of movement mostly as long-term (many years) with a total of 72 picture books (42%), then short-term (temporary, less than a year) picture books (17%), and finally midterm (more than a year but not many years) with 13 picture books (8%).

Table 8. Movement - Duration

9	Duration	Frequency	%
10			
11	Long-term	72	42%
12	Short-term	30	17%
13	Mid-term	13	08%
14	Other	03	02%
15	Unknown	54	31%

<u>Challenges</u>. Challenges were defined as obstacles, short or long term, that interfered with movement. Table 9 illustrates findings from analysis of challenges of movement. Picture books portrayed a variety of challenges. A total of 25 picture books (15%) portrayed weather as a challenge, 23 (13%) lack of money, 17 (10%) legalities, 13 (8%) secrecy, 12 (7%) mistreatment, and 4 (2%) drought. A total of 78 picture books (45%) did not portray any challenges.

Table 9. Movement – Challenges

26	Challenges	Frequency	%
27		2	
28	Weather	25	15%
29	Lack of money	23	13%
30	Legalities	17	10%
31	Secrecy	13	08%
32	Mistreatment	12	07%
33			
34	Drought	04	02%
35	Other	22	13%
36	Unknown	56	32%

Route. Route was defined as the way of travel from one place to another and portrayed as either cyclical (arrive in new land and return to homeland) or linear (arrive in new land and no return to homeland. Table 10 illustrates findings from analysis of route of movement. A total of 147 picture books (85%) portrayed route of movement as linear.

1	Table 10. Move	ement - Route		
2	Route	Yes	No	%
3				
4	Cyclical	25	147	15%
5	Linear	147	25	85%
6				

Means. Means were defined as the ways used to move from one location to another. Table 11 illustrates findings from analysis of means of movement. A total of 53 picture books (31%) portrayed boats as the means of movement, 18 (11%) airplanes, 16 (9%) automobiles, and 15 (8%) trains. A total of 71 books (41%) did not portray any means of movement.

#### Table 11. Movement - Means

15	Means of Movement	Frequency		%
16				
17	Boat	53	_ \	31%
18	Airplane	18		11%
19	Automobile	16		09%
20	Train	14		08%
21	Other	43	$\Delta$	25%
22	Unknown	28		16%

<u>Reasons</u>. Reasons were defined as the causes or justification for movement. Table 12 illustrates findings from analysis of reasons for movement. Picture books portrayed a variety of reasons for movement.

Table 12. Movement - Reasons

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Reasons	Frequency	%
Work	41	24%
War	36	21%
Other	29	17%
Poverty	22	13%
Racism	07	04%
Unemployment	06	03%
Government Corruption	04	02%
Xenophobia	02	01%
Nationalism	02	01%
Unknown	23	13%
	Work War Other Poverty Racism Unemployment Government Corruption Xenophobia Nationalism	Work War 36 Other 29 Poverty 22 Racism 07 Unemployment 06 Government Corruption Xenophobia 02 Nationalism 00

#### Consequences

Consequences were defined as the result of an action. Table 13 illustrates findings from analysis of consequences of movement. Picture books portrayed a range of consequences of movement. A total of 115 picture books (67%) portrayed consequences of movement in positive ways 39 (23%) as feeling grateful, 28 (16%) as feeling fulfilled, 27 (16%) as feeling relieved, 17 (10%) as feeling successful, and 4 (2%) as starting a new career. A total of 12 picture books (7%) portrayed consequences as fluctuating and 12 (7%) as remembering traditions. A total of 12 picture books portrayed consequences in negative ways (6 (3%) as feeling homesick, 4 (2%) as feeling lonely, and 2 (1%) as feeling regretful).

#### *Table 13.* Movement - Consequences

		1	
15	Consequences	Frequency	%
16	Feeling Grateful	39	23%
17	Feeling Fulfilled	28	16%
18	Feeling Relieved	27	16%
19	Feeling Successful	17	10%
20	Fluctuating	12	07%
21	Remembering Traditions	12	07%
22	Feeling Homesick	06	03%
23	Feeling Lonely	04	02%
24	Feeling Regretful	02	01%
25	Starting New Career	04	02%
26	Other	04	02%
27	Unknown	17	10%

# **Cultural Consequences**

Cultural consequences were defined as the result of an action dealing with an aspect of culture. Table 14 illustrates findings from analysis of cultural consequences of movement. A total 56 picture books (34%) portrayed the cultural consequences of movement as integrated, 4 (2%) as abandoned, and 4 (2%) as disrupted. A total of 100 picture books (58%) did not portray any cultural consequences of movement.

#### Table 14. Movement - Cultural Consequences

40	Cultural Consequences	Frequency	%
41	Integrated	56	34%
42	Abandoned	04	02%
43	Disrupted	04	02%
44	Other	08	04%
45	Unknown	100	58%

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#### Discussion

 Major findings are discussed in four categories: 1) portrayal of immigration, emigration, and migration, 2) race, ethnicity, and continent of origin, 3) movement, and 4) consequences of movement.

#### Portrayal of Immigration, Emigration, and Migration

Sixty percent of picture books portrayed children as immigrants, emigrants, or migrants, twenty-two percent portrayed adolescents, young adults, and adults, and only three percent of portrayed immigrant families on the move. These portrayals are inconsistent with recent research on immigration. Most immigrants are not children, but adults who move during their prime working years (Denhart, 2017). In 2015, only 5.7 percent of U.S. immigrants were under the age of eighteen. These statistics raise questions about the extent to which portrayals of immigrants, emigrants, and migrants as children is accurate and realistic.

#### Race, Ethnicity, and Continent of Origin

Picture books portrayed a variety of races and ethnicities. The majority of races and ethnicities were portrayed as Asian, followed by a relative balance between Caucasian and Hispanic. They also portrayed a variety of continents of origin. These continents were mostly Asia and North America, followed by Europe. These portrayals are somewhat inconsistent with recent research. Denhart (2017) notes that in 2015 the majority, in fact, more than half of all immigrants living in the United States, were born in Latin America.

#### Movement

 Picture books portrayed movement in terms of reasons, duration, and means. The reasons for movement were portrayed mostly as the need for work, followed by war and poverty, and the interrelationship between the three. Approximately 50% of the picture books portrayed war as a major cause of financial hardships and poverty. These factors, in turn, required a need to find work elsewhere and subsequently an involuntary decision to move.

In addition, most books portrayed actual movement as long-term, and characterized it as a one-way, not a cyclical, journey. Movement was portrayed as a journey to another location, hopefully a new home, and with no intention of returning to homelands. Fewer books portrayed movement as an arduous experience with multiple challenges. These challenges included successfully dealing with inclement weather, finding sufficient resources, e.g. money and transportation, overcoming legal issues, maintaining secrecy, and experiencing mistreatment and abuse. Means of movement was portrayed mostly with boats, followed by airplanes, automobiles, and trains. A total of 43 books did not specify any means of movement.

The construct of movement is often viewed in terms of push and pull

factors (Migration: Types and Reasons, 2019). Push factors are typically negative and function as reasons to move, such as unemployment, lack of services or amenities, poor safety and security, high crime rates, crop failure, drought, flooding, poverty, and war. Pull factors are typically positive and function as incentives or expectations to move and include potential for employment, better service provisions, safer conditions, low crime rates, fertile land, good food suppliers, less risk of natural hazards, greater wealth, political security, and attractive climate.

Findings from this study are consistent with previous research on reasons for movement, although the range of push factors (war, poverty, unemployment, etc.) and the range of pull factors (potential for employment, safer conditions, etc.) was small. War, poverty, and unemployment were the dominant push factors. Findings are not consistent with previous research on the portrayal of movement as a one-way, not a cyclical, journey. A cyclical journey is often referred to as *return migration* and a large part of total migration. In fact, it is estimated that 1 out of four migration journeys or experiences involves a return to an individual's country of birth (Azose & Raftery, 2019).

In terms of means of movement, historically, boats, and more specifically ships and large merchant vessels, were the most popular means of movement by immigrants (Jacobsen, 2018). Over time, other means have included trains, especially immigrants riding in boxcars and riding on top of freight cars, small boats, trucks, automobiles, and walking, particularly in human caravans (Corchado, 2014). Findings from this study were mostly consistent with previous research on means of movement. A total of 53 picture books (31%) portrayed boats as the means of movement, 18 (11%) airplanes, 16 (9%) automobiles, and 15 (8%) trains. One finding was surprising, namely, a total of 71 books (41%) did not portray any means of movement. It was surprising because means of movement is a critical component of the whole experience and has effects on other components like duration, distance, and danger, as well as to what extent movement is voluntary or involuntary and, ultimately, successful or not successful. By not including this detail, the reader may have a difficult time drawing realistic conclusions.

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#### **Consequences of Movement**

One possible consequence of immigration, during and after the experience, is that it can "destabilize family life" (Wee, Park & Choi, 2015, p. 71). During movement, immigrants experience, among other things, family and personal struggles, hardships, and obstacles, as well as language, ethnic, and cultural differences as they travel across friendly and unfriendly borders. After movement, immigrants experience cultural and psychological changes that result from contact with a new culture, such as a motivation to quickly conform to customs, appearances, and names. In particular, children experience dilemmas like being different, coping with great and small changes, responding to one's name, learning a new language, relating to previous generations and

traditions, maintaining ties with distant relatives, and visiting their homelands. Simply stated, immigration is one of the most stressful events a family can experience. People of all ages need examples of other people who have successfully and unsuccessfully navigated such issues. Specifically, many students of all ages need picture books that provide accurate portrayals of IEM.

At the same time, many children's books do not portray immigration as a negative and destabilizing experience; rather, they provide positive and superficial portrayals of immigration (Lamme et al., 2004). For example, in terms of tone of story, approximately 80% of picture books in this study portrayed immigration in positive ways, whereas only 4% of picture books portrayed a negative tone. To some extent, portrayals that included or excluded descriptions and/or illustrations of the challenges of movement might account for the disparity between positive and negative tone. In this study approximately 52% of picture books did not explicitly specify any challenges of movement.

Similarly, the consequences of movement were portrayed in a variety of ways. Like tone, picture books portrayed consequences of movement in positive ways. Approximately 67% of books portrayed immigrants as grateful, fulfilled, relieved, successful, and starting new careers., whereas only 7% of picture books portrayed consequences of immigrants as fluctuating or in transition, and 6.4% portrayed consequences in negative ways. Cultural consequences were also portrayed in a variety of ways. Again, portrayals of cultural consequences were portrayed in more positive than negative ways. Approximately, 35% of picture books were positive and portrayed immigrants successfully making integrative adjustments to a new culture, whereas only 2.3% of picture books were negative and portrayed immigrants in making disruptive adjustments to a new culture. Approximately 58% of picture books did not portray any cultural consequences.

Finally, while the majority of books provided reasonably realistic portrayals, they did not provide complex portrayals. Realistic portrayals are understandable and believable, but not necessarily fully authentic. Complex portrayals extend beyond realistic portrayals. They go beyond simple and positive portrayals of IEM by including both the simple and the complex, the positive and the negative, and the celebrations and the challenges that are involved when people make decisions they know will destabilize their lives.

#### **Implications**

Findings from this study raise important implications for future research and instruction on IEM. In terms of future research, additional studies need to be conducted based on different conceptual definitions of immigration, emigration, and migration. United States Library of Congress definitions, used here, are nation-specific and are not consistent with other international definitions found in the professional literature. Content analysis of portrayals of IEM need to be conducted using other definitions, especially international.

For example, studies need to be conducted that use the data set in this study but based on different operational definitions.

Moreover, additional studies need to be conducted that investigate portrayals of IEM in picture books. This study found that the majority of picture books portrayed children as main characters in the stories. This finding might be the result of the fact that children are the target audience for picture books. However, since recent research indicates that immigrants, emigrants, and migrants are typically not children, but young adults of working age, studies also need to be conducted that investigate portrayals in other types of narrative and informational texts, e.g. novels, chapter books, poetry, graphic novels, essays, etc.

Lastly, additional studies need to be conducted on data sets of picture books beyond a sample of convenience. For example, data sets could include picture books published within a specific range of time, a random sample of picture books found in the Library of Congress and similar national data bases in other countries, and a systematic search to identify picture books that are consistent with specific criteria, e.g. books recommended by professional organizations.

In terms of instruction, more studies need to be conducted on portrayals of immigrants, emigrants, and migrants in picture books to inform and guide teacher selection. More guidance and informed selection by teachers will significantly help avoid literature that portrays and perpetuates damaging misrepresentations and stereotypes of immigrants, emigrants, and migrants. Table 15 illustrates guidelines for teachers to select picture books and examples of picture books that meet these guidelines. These guidelines are based on findings from this study and are consistent with findings from previous research.

#### Table 15. Guidelines for Teacher Selection

#### Guideline

# Many picturebooks focus on immigration. Select books that also address emigration and migration.

Example

Emigration: Bunting, E. (2001). *Gleam and glow*. New York, NY: Harcourt. Inc.

Migration: Pérez, L.K. (2002). *First day in grapes*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

Picturebooks often portray cultural insensitivity. Select books that are culturally sensitive, ones that accurately portrayal a specific cultural group.

Say, A. (1993). *Grandfather's journey*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Picturebooks often reflect author background. Select books by authors who come from the culture portrayed in the book, or who are well-versed in the culture they attempt to depict. Mobin-Uddin, A. (2005). *My name is Bilal*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.

Picturebooks integrate words and illustrations. Select books with illustrations that accurately and artfully depict the culture portrayed in the book.

Uegaki, C. (2003). *Suki's kimono*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press.

Picturebooks provide cultural and intercultural knowledge and promote intercultural understanding. Select books that instill intercultural communication in children.

Kobald, I, & Blackwood, F. (2014). *My two blankets*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Picturebooks describe important historical events. Select books that portray these events accurately, without bias or political agenda.

Warren, S. (2012). *Dolores Huerta: A hero to migrant workers*. London, UK: Marshall Cavendish.

Picturebooks should not sugar-coat or protect students from controversial issues. Select books that portray movement as physically difficult, psychologically challenging, and emotionally disruptive.

Marsden, J. (2008). *Home and Away*. Sydney, AU: Hachette.

Picturebooks help readers cross boundaries. Select books that depict cultures and traditions students might not be familiar with. Danticat, E. (2015). *Mama's* nightingale: A story of immigration and separation. New York, NY: Dial Books.

Picturebooks are published in multiple languages. Select books that are bilingual.

Argueta, J. (2003). *Xochtl and the flowers/xochitl, la nina de las flores*. New York, NY: Children's Book Press.

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#### Limitations

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Findings from this study raise several implications for future research. One limitation is that the data set of picture books was a sample of convenience, and not a representative sample of picture books on IEM. Another limitation

are the operational definitions of immigration, emigration, migration used in this study.

The majority of picture books portrayed stories of immigration, followed by emigration and migration. This finding, however, comes with a caveat, namely, definitions matter but are messy. For example, the operational definitions of IEM used in this study were based on definitions from the United States Library of Congress. However, according to the United Nations (2018), there is not one, but multiple, definitions of these terms, and most experts agree that an international migrant is someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status.

The United States Department of Homeland Security (2020) defines migrant as a person who leaves his/her country of origin to seek residence in another country, and the United States Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) broadly defines an immigrant as any alien in the United States, except one legally admitted under specific nonimmigrant categories. Simply put, an immigrant enters a country, whereas an emigrant leaves a country. These definitions are broader than those of the Library of Congress, and view migrant and migration as umbrella terms. Consequently, findings from this study would likely be different if these broader definitions were used rather than ones by the Library of Congress.

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