

# **ANALYSIS OF CONNECTION-MAKING PROCESS IN GRANDFATHER COUNTS PICTURE BOOK BY ANDREA CHENG**

Kukuh Dharmawan  
Faculty of Languages and Culture, the University of 17 Agustus 1945  
Semarang

Amerika Serikat sebagai negara maju memiliki banyak imigran, sebagaimana digambarkan pada berbagai karya sastra, salah satunya adalah Grandmother Counts karya Andrea Cheng. Penelitian ini menggunakan objek material karya tersebut dengan fokus kajian pada proses membangun koneksi dengan asal-usul yang dialami oleh para imigran sebagaimana tergambar dalam cerita bergambar berjudul Grandfather counts karya Andrea Cheng (2000). Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa tidak mudah bagi para imigran, terutama anak-anak yang terlahir di tanah asing, untuk mengenal asal-usul mereka. Ditunjukkan pula bahwa kunjungan keluarga dari tanah asal menjadi faktor penting dalam proses pembangunan koneksi tersebut.

## **I.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

At present, America is one of the countries which has so many immigrants. They came from various countries around the world. There are some reasons why people decide to leave their homeland and move to America or the other countries. As we know that it is not easy for immigrants especially for immigrant children to adapt to new homeland. Most adults tend to do not care because they think that they have grown up enough and can take care themselves, but it is different for children because they still try to find out who they are, why I move to here why I live here.

In this paper, I discuss a picture book called "Grandfather Counts by Andrea Cheng in 2000. This picture book is sophisticating because it gives us the various condition of the immigrant who lives in America. I choose this picture book to analyze it and the relationship between the picture book and the author.

In this picture book, I will talk further about the making connection process in Grandfather Counts. Firstly, I discuss the background of the study, the relationship between the author and the picture book, the discussion, and the conclusion of this picture book.

### **IMMIGRANT AS PORTRAYED IN CHILDREN PICTURE BOOK**

In the present, America is famous as the immigrant country because there are so many authors who create picture books based on immigrants' real experience in their family who came from different countries. Based on some

picture books, it tells about some relatives who visit their family abroad; the relatives visit their family who has been an immigrant in abroad.

As immigrants increase fast, America must be ready for what immigrants children need in school. Immigrants children are also hard to adapt to their new land because of the difference in language, culture, and education. In addition, adaptation process and missing friend in homeland also become hard things for them.

Based on so many picture books, American children are able to understand what immigrants experienced in their lives while the immigrant children feel that they exist. The readers can feel the picture books so much because two of authors are the same. The authors categorize common experience into 3 groups; making the transition, making the connection, and becoming American.

The transition is not an easy process for any immigrant children because sometimes they feel homesick, and missing their friends in the homeland. They get transition processes that are painful mostly. They have no choice which means that they have to adjust to their new beginning in America such as learning the cultures, language and many others.

After having transition processes, they would experience a phase that is called making connection. When they get better to live in America, they look for people who have the same as their country in America. They gather to celebrate special events and traditional cultures from their countries in America. Some immigrants also try to call their family in homeland and some of them also has a desire to go back to their home.

As time goes by, immigrants will feel comfortable and used to be living in America. Even some of them change their names so that it sounds like more American. Some of them also celebrate American special celebration while the others collaborate 2 different cultures in America.

## **DISCUSSION**

In this paper, the writer tries to relate making connection process with a picture book by Andrew Cheng “Grandfather Counts”. Grand Father Count tells the story of Helen who is a mixed-child from China and America. His mother is from China and his dad is from America. The story begins when Helen’s grandfather from China came to her house. She was a little bit angry and she had to give up her room to her grandfather so she cannot watch the trains passes by from her room. When Gonggong arrived, he looked wondered and disappointed because his grandchildren only speak English. Same as her grandfather, Helen also seemed confused that her grandfather only speaks Chinese. At first, Gong-gong just read the newspaper that he brought from China. However, the next day, Gong-gong joined Helen who watched the trains go by behind her house. Helen and his grandfather counted the trains together; suddenly Gong-gong started counting the trains passed by using Chinese and Helen repeated her Grandfather, while Helen also taught her Grandfather to count using English. Both of them taught each other to count in their own languages a This book tells us that Helen

and her grandfather learn together about Chinese and English by counting trains that pass by.

Based on the paraphrase above, we can see that there are so many differences which appear in Grandfather Counts picture book. We know that Helen and her sisters are children from a mixed parent; his mother is from China and her father is from America. It means that there are some cultural differences in the family e.i. Helen and her sisters who were born in America and also grow up in America have a different perspective about respecting their parents compared with her mother who is originally from China. As we know, perhaps in America the level of respect for people who have older age than them is not as high as people from Asia, especially from China. According to the picture book, we see that from the statement of Helen's mother that parents are very important to her so she has to take care of her parents; moreover, when Hellen's mother knows that her dad will visit her family in America, of course, it will be the responsibility of her to take care of her father. In the other case as a good mother, Hellen's mother also tries to teach Chinese language and culture to Helen and her sisters. Helen's mother and father have tried to put Helen and her sisters in the Chinese school but in fact, they cannot adapt well the condition because in that school the kids already speak Chinese which makes them not confident and not continues to learn about Chinese language and culture. It makes Helen and her sisters are hard to learn about Chinese heritage and makes her grandfather wondered why Helen and his sisters only speak English.

In addition, her grandfather's/Gong-gong's visit to America opens the way for Helen and her children to learn about Chinese language and culture. How Helen's mother responds when she knows that her father will visit from China explicitly gives Helen and her sisters a lesson one of the cultures that usually Asian or Chinese people do. In the other case, Helen's grandfather also teaches them about Chinese language and culture by reading a Chinese newspaper and counting the trains passes behind their house which makes them learn their own languages. Those things also make Helen's foster interest in learning more about her Chinese heritage. It shows that her grandfather becomes one of the media of making transition process.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, America is a big country who has so many citizens, and it also an interesting place to live in, especially for the immigrants. There are so many immigrants who live in America for many reasons e.i. to have a good life, trying to have a different condition, and being married to American.

Based on the picture book, we know that Helen's mother is married to the American man and they have children who were born in America. As a parent, Helen's mother tries to teach her children about her origin either the language or the culture, but it was not an easy thing for her; she has tried to put her children in Chinese school but they cannot adapt well. Finally, Helen's grandfather visit can

change the situation. By a simple thing, learning to count trains pass by near her home make them learn about the Chinese language.

We can see that family or relative's visit can help someone to learn a new thing for them, especially in this case learning about a heritage which is very important for some people.

## **REFERENCES**

- Cheng, Andrea (2000) "*Grandfather Counts*" published by Lee and Low Book New York
- Lamme, Linda, Danling Fu, and Ruth Lowery. "Immigrants as Portrayed in Children's Picture Books." *The Social Studies* (May/June 2014): 123-28.
- "Teacher's guide for grandfather counts" [https://www.leeandlow.com/books/grandfather-counts/teachers\\_guide](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/grandfather-counts/teachers_guide) (Accessed on July 1, 2018)