



## The Similarities between Two English/Chinese Bilingual Children's Picture Books Publishers

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### Abstract

Bilingual children's picture books are one means of preparing students for living in our global society and diverse environments. The educational values of high-quality bilingual children's picture books have been confirmed by studies. Although numerous bilingual children's picture books are readily available in the current market, these books vary in quality. It is our responsibility to ensure readers get access to high quality bilingual children's picture books. To assist teachers and parents in selecting high-quality English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books for the school curriculum and family literacy practice, this study examines the similar features of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from different publishers. The researchers investigates the similarities between two major English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books publishers: Mantra Lingua and Milet. The similarities between 31 English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books collected from these publishers were examined. Specifically, similar features were scrutinized in the following areas: topic, Chinese language selection, Chinese translator, Chinese translation errors, information about the illustrator and translator, qualified author or illustrator, information about the book, illustration, and theme. The results display the similar features of the English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books reviewed from Mantra Lingua and Milet and present them for consideration by students, teachers, and parents. Furthermore, the results suggest the areas where future bilingual children's picture books publishers can improve to produce high-quality bilingual children's picture books.

**Keywords:** Differences, English/Chinese, bilingual children's picture books publishers, children's literature

### INTRODUCTION

The ethnicity of the school population is going to be more diverse year by year. The diversification in student's ethnic backgrounds sends a signal to include appropriate

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multicultural materials in the school curriculum to "educate students on multiple cultures and promote empathy and respect towards all peoples" (Whiteside, 2007, p. 3). Bilingual children's picture books are one means of preparing students for living in our global society and diverse environments. The educational values of high-quality bilingual children's picture books have been confirmed by studies. Several publications have appeared in documenting the impact of bilingual children's picture books on students' cognitive development (Datta, 2007; Kenner, 2004; Robertson, 2006), language development (Agosto, 1997; Salas et al., 2002), and multicultural awareness development (Whiteside, 2007; Perkins & Mebert, 2005). Bilingual children's picture books are found to promote bilingualism and biliteracy (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003; Jeffers, 2009). Bilingual children's picture books also provide an opportunity for parents, grandparents, and siblings to develop language and literacy skills of students (Gregory & Williams, 2000; Kenner et al., 2007; Ma, 2008).

Although numerous bilingual children's picture books are readily available in the current market, these books are vary in quality. It is our responsibility to ensure readers get access to high quality bilingual children's picture books. In an effort to help students, teachers, schools, and parents select high quality bilingual children's picture books, inspecting the quality of bilingual children's picture books becomes necessary. Criteria for the selection of well written children's literature proposed by Laycock (1998) provide a reference for examining the quality of children's literature. These standards apply to bilingual children's picture books as bilingual children's picture books are one parts of children's literature. Laycock (1998) proposes that the quality of children's literature is determined by story, background information, illustration, and language. Huang and Chen (2012; 2015; 2016) provide successful experiences for evaluating the quality of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books. According to Huang and Chen, the quality of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books could be examined by genre, topic, cover and body, the credibility of authors, illustrators and translators, illustration, language, the English text's quality, the Chinese text's quality, the correspondence between the English text and the Chinese text, and theme. To further develop better understanding on the quality of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books, Huang et al. (2023) examine the differences between two major English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books' publishers. They found that the examined publishers display differences in genre, topic, paratextual material, Chinese language preference, English and Chinese formal textual effects, the relationship between the English text and the Chinese text, series book, cover and body, and the information on these publishers' websites. Although bilingual children's picture books publishers have a variety of ways to design bilingual children's picture books, bilingual children's picture books of different bilingual children's picture books publishers have similarities. This study focuses on investigating the similarities between English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books publishers. Through studying the similarities between bilingual children's picture books publishers, we will gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding of bilingual children's picture books, foster bilingual children's picture books publishers attach importance on the quality instead of the quantity of their bilingual children's picture books, and encourage the publishers to produce bilingual children's picture books that

"portray language or culture in a way that is accessible for the reader" (Whiteside, 2007, p. 4).

Bilingual children's picture books focus on various linguistic groups, for instance, English/Spanish, English/Arabic, English/Italian, and English/French. In virtue of the language background of the researcher in English and Chinese, this study primarily focuses on English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books. There are four types of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books available in the current market, which are English/simplified Chinese (without Pinyin), English/simplified Chinese (with Pinyin), English/traditional Chinese (without Zhuyin Fuhao), and English/traditional Chinese (with Zhuyin Fuhao) bilingual children's picture books. As the researcher is accomplished in simplified Chinese (with/without Pinyin) and traditional Chinese (without Zhuyin Fuhao), this study focuses on three types of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books: English/simplified Chinese (without Pinyin), English/simplified Chinese (with Pinyin), and English/traditional Chinese (without Zhuyin Fuhao) bilingual children's picture books.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Information about the Book**

In Huang and Chen's (2015) study, three types of information about the reviewed English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books were provided by bilingual children's picture books publishers. These information are story introduction, introduction of author or illustrator, and book review. Based on the information about the book, readers could know the qualification and credibility of bilingual children's picture books.

Story introduction is the way that publishers explain what the book is about or why they issue this book. Reading story introduction is one of the steps that potential customers make decision on whether to read this book. This information not only answers the most concerned question from readers: why should I buy this book, but also responds to other important questions, such as if this book teaches me something, if I am inspired, and if this book is useful.

Author introduction introduces the author(s) to readers. It transfers specific information about the author to readers, such as the author's name, related education background, publications, and awards. After getting to know the author, readers believe the author can provide qualified works for children. When the author is credible, the target book is outstanding and attractive.

Illustrator introduction introduces the illustrator to readers. It gives readers more information about the illustrator. For example, the illustrator's name, related education experience, achievements, and awards. With these information, readers believe the illustrator is qualified. Thereby, the quality of illustration in the target book is high.

When selecting books for children, the greatest difficulty is making decision on whether to get this book for children. Lacking the knowledge of the value of the book leads to the hesitation. Book review is an excellent source to determine the worth of the book because

it discusses the content of the book, states the reviewer's personal opinion about the book, and analyzes the book. By providing book review, publishers recommend the book to potential readers and provide more information about the book.

## Translation

The quality or accuracy of translation considerably influences the quality or the precision of bilingual children's picture books. As a good translation builds a bridge between two different cultures (Naidoo & Lopes-Robertson, 2007), the translated text that fails to demonstrate its high quality breaks the connection between "the target culture (to which the translation is aimed)" and "the source culture (where the texts come from)" (Yamazaki, 2002, p. 53).

Many types of translation errors in bilingual children's picture books were recognized by publications. "[A]wkward dialogue, misuse of words, and an overgeneralization of the Spanish language" (Naidoo & Lopes-Robertson, 2007, p. 26) in English/Spanish bilingual books "disrupt the unfolding of the stories overall and create highly redundant texts for the bilingual reader" (Barrera & Quiroa, 2003, p. 263). Meaning- for-meaning translation (or word-for-word translation) may alter the exact phrasing of a text to ensure the spirit of the text is being conveyed (Whiteside, 2007). The overuse will potentially has negative effect on comprehension and communication (Saeed & Fareh, 2006). "Inappropriate expressions, mangled grammar, or ambiguous sentences that do not reflect the beauty, rhythm, and spirit of the Spanish language" (Schon, 2006, p. 49-50).

Huang and Chen (2012) observe Chinese translation and Pinyin in English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books. They identify eight types of Chinese translation errors and five types of Pinyin errors in the reviewed books. The findings reveal that Chinese translation errors in the reviewed books were inappropriate expression, wrong Chinese translation, word-for-word translation, classical Chinese translation, overuse Chinese character, omission, wrong Chinese character, and zeugma. Pinyin errors presented in the reviewed books were tone mistake, tone omission, letter omission, used incorrect Pinyin, and lacked essential Pinyin letters.

## Translator

Publications have documented what should the translator do in order to provide high quality translation. Levine (2006) asserts that "the translator must apply his or her own art to making the text visible, understandable" (p. 18). When translating one language to another, there may not equivalent words or phrases in two languages. Translator should find other appropriate alternative words or phrases (Naidoo and Lopes-Robertson, 2007).

In view of "the work of a translator is to build a bridge—a sound, sleek, and smooth bridge that perfectly, and seamlessly, connects the book in question with a new group of readers" (Diego, 2007, p. 1), great attention needs to be put on selecting translators (Lee, 2002). Naidoo and Lopes-Robertson (2007) suggest that the translator should be the person who know the target language and culture very well and not only speak the language. Smith and Higonnet (2002) recommend publishers to find translators who come from the

same cultural group with the author and the background of the story. Lee (2002) develops three requirements for choosing qualified translator, these requirements include: the translator's first language must be the target language and this person should have well knowledge about the target language; the translator must write the original text again in another language without changing anything; and the translator should translate the subject they are strong at.

## Illustration

The significant role of illustration in children's picture books has been long confirmed by many researchers. Illustration is found to develop students' oral reading and comprehension (Feathers & Arya, 2012), increase the skills of deciphering the text (Doonan, 1993), support the story (Higonnet, 1990), intertexture the text and pictures (Moss, 1990), make students "feel respected and included" (Naidoo & Lopes-Robertson, 2007, p. 26), and "change the implications of the words, ... [and] express through the visual conventions of another culture values surprisingly equivalent to the ones implied by the story" (Nodelman, 1988, p. 87).

Previous studies indicate that illustration in children's literature is problematic. A common problem is that illustration contains stereotypical images misconception which exhibits the same look of people from an ethnic group (Naidoo & Lopes-Robertson, 2007). According to Huang and Chen (2015), illustration in reviewed English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books contains stereotypical and inappropriate images in Chinese and western culture. They found that the images of Chinese women were illustrated with the same faces, hairstyles, and clothes in *Yeh-Hsien: A Chinese Cinderella* (Casey, 2006). Cai (1994) argue that many visual images of Chinese culture in the reviewed children's literature were not accurately represented Chinese culture. All Lations is illustrated with dark hair, dark eyes, and brown skin (Naidoo & Lopes-Robertson, 2007).

## Publisher's Perspective on Multiculturalism

Diversification is an obvious phenomenon in current classrooms and this trend is going to continue. Publishers are not hesitate to keep up with this trend and set promoting multiculturalism as their publishing goal. Children's Book Press announces that they aim at increasing "cooperation and understanding through multicultural and bilingual literature, offering children a sense of their culture, history and importance" (Children's Book Press, 2005, n.d.). Kane/Miller Book Publishers also produce multicultural literature for children. They explain their reason as "the children of the coming millennium will not simply be citizens of their own countries, they truly will be citizens of the world" and children "search the world for books that through great stories and arresting illustrations enrich the lives and the imaginations of the children who read them" (Kane/Miller, 2006. n.d.).

Through studying the similarities between bilingual children's picture books publishers, we will gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding of bilingual children's picture books publishers and their bilingual children's picture books, foster bilingual children's picture books publishers attach importance on the quality instead of the

quantity of their products, and encourage publishers to produce books that "portray language or culture in a way that is accessible for the reader" (Whiteside, 2007, p. 4).

## METHODOLOGY

### Bilingual Children's Picture Books Publishers Selection

To explore the similar features between English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books published by major publishers, this study began by finding the names of publishers that produce English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books in the US market. An online research was carried out to locate the publishers that release English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books in the US market. After obtaining the names of publishers, another online investigation was conducted to determine how many English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books have produced by each publisher. The names of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books publishers and numbers of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books published by each publisher are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Numbers of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books published by bilingual children's picture books publishers

Publishers	Number of published books
Pan Asian Publication	8
CE Bilingual Books	1
Front Street Imprint of Boyds Mills Press	1
Children's Books Press	0
Mantra Lingua	21
Milet	12

Publishers with the most products could best exhibit the similar features of bilingual children's picture books. According to Table 1, Mantra Lingua and Milet produced more English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books than other publishers. Therefore, these two publishers were selected for this study.

After identifying the target publishers, English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from these publishers were collected. The data source includes thirty-one English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from the two publishers that carry multiple English/Chinese titles. Out of these books, twenty-one English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books were collected from Mantra Lingua. Ten English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books were available from Milet.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher is native Chinese and has high proficiency in English. All the English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books were independently read and the similarities between two publishers were marked by the researcher during readings. The

researcher created three columns for coding: the first column for Mantra Lingua, the second column for Milet, and the last column for similarities notes. Employing the tables created by the researcher and the researcher's personal background knowledge, the researcher determined the similarities. When the similarities were found, the data was appropriately recorded in the data collecting table. The process of scrutinizing the similarities was conducted twice. When different results occurred, consensus was reached through further analysis.

Huang and Chen's (2012; 2015; 2016) study on English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books focuses on the features of these books. Results from the above studies provide an analytical-framework for this study. The discussion of the similar features of the English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from two publishers were reviewed according to the following aspects: topic, Chinese language selection, Chinese translator, Chinese translation errors, information about the illustrator and translator, qualified author or illustrator, information about the book, illustration, and theme.

Topic refers to whether the story is general or not general. Chinese language selection indicates the Chinese language system used by each publisher. The coding of Chinese translator concentrates on the ethnic backgrounds of the person who translate the text from English into Chinese. The researchers examines if the Chinese translation is correct. Information about the illustrator and translator refers to if the name of the book's illustrator or Chinese translator is available on its cover or back page. Codes are developed to note if the author or the illustrator is a well published author or illustrator and if he/she has won some related awards. This information is collected from the reviewed books, publisher's website, and google search. Information about the book refers to if story introduction, illustrator introduction, author introduction, and book review are available in the book and these information was presented in which language. Illustration is coded to see if the images are presented appropriately or authentically for children. The researchers codes the theme as whether the main idea of the story is promoting multiculturalism (which means if the book tells the story from diverse cultures and classic groups) or not.

## FINDINGS

### Topic

Table 2 shows the types of topic of the reviewed books from Mantra Lingua and Milet by numbers. According to Table 2, the types of topic of the reviewed books from these two publishers are general and not general. Most of the books from the two publishers had general as topic.

**Table 2.** Types and numbers of topic of the reviewed books from Mantra Lingua and Milet by numbers

Topic	Mantra Lingua	Milet
General	14	7

Not general	7	3
Total	21	10

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## Chinese Language Selection

Each publisher focuses on one Chinese language system. While English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from Mantra Lingua were English/simplified Chinese, Milet published Engl books.

## Chinese Translator

Both publishers selected non-native and native Chinese to translate books from English to Chinese. Sylvia Denham (non-native Chinese) and Fang Wang (native Chinese) served as the Chinese translators for Mantra Lingua. In Milet, Davis Tsai (non native Chinese) and Lori Chen (native Chinese) were the persons who translated English to Chinese.

## Chinese Translation Errors

Chinese translation problems were noticed in the reviewed books from two publishers. In Mantra Lingua, "have a dream" in *Ali Baba & the Forty Thieves* (Attard, 2005) was formally translated into "造梦" (build a dream). In *Welcome to the World Baby* (Robert, 2005), "new born (baby)" was translated into "诞生 (naissance)", which was inappropriate in the context. "诞生 (naissance)" is used in respected people and solemn occasions, which cannot describe a new born baby. In addition, "with a huge smile" was translated into "挂着巨大的笑容 (hang a huge smile)" in the same book. "挂着(hang)" and "巨大的(huge)" were not used to describe "笑容 (smile)".

In Milet, the Chinese adjective characters "轻轻的" in the phrase "轻轻的溜进去" of *Mamy Wata and the Monster* (Tadjo, 2000) cannot describe "溜进去" in Chinese. "轻轻的" mean the movement is slow and gently. "悄悄的" mean the sound is small or no sound, which can describe "溜进去" in Chinese. In *The lucky grain of corn* (Tadjo, 2000), the translation "身上躺下汗滴" has two problems: the first one is the Chinese character "躺 (to lie down)" should be "淌 (to drip)". Even though these two Chinese characters are pronounced the same, their meanings and writing are drastically different; the second problem is "躺 (should be淌)下" are not used to describe "汗滴" in Chinese because it is used when the quantity is large. "流下" are the right characters to describe "汗滴" because it is used when the quantity is small. Obviously, the quantity of sweat is small and "流下" are appropriately to describe "汗滴".

## Information about the Illustrator and Translator

Two publishers did not provide the names of the illustrators or translators in some books. Even if the names of translators were available in some books, the only available

information was whether the translator had Chinese ethnic background according to the name. Further information was not available from the book or Google search engine.

### Qualified Author or Illustrator

Some authors or illustrators selected by Mantra Lingua and Milet are well published authors or illustrators and also some awards owners in related field.

In Mantra Lingua, Henriette Barkow, the author of *Ellie's Secret Diary* (Barkow, 2004), is a well published author of children's books. Books published by Henriette Barkow are *That's My Mum* (Barkow, 2001), *Three Billy Goats Gruff* (Barkow, 2001), *Buri and the Marrow* (Barkow, 2001), *Giant Turnip* (Barkow, 2001), *If Elephants Wore Pants* (Barkow, 2004), and *Nita Goes to Hospital* (Barkow, 2005). The illustrator of *Dear Zoo* (Campbell, 2004) has illustrated several popular children's books, such as *It's Mine!* (Campbell, 1999), *Noisy Farm* (Campbell, 2004), *Zoo Animals* (Campbell, 2005), *Dear Santa* (Campbell, 2007), *ABC Zoo* (Campbell, 2010), *Oh Dear!* (Campbell, 2010), *I'm Hungry!* (Campbell, 2010), *I Won't Bite!* (Campbell, 2010), and *I'm Not Scary* (Campbell, 2010).

The author of *Augustus and His Smile* (2008), Catherine Rayner, has won many awards for this book (in English), such as the BEST NEW ILLUSTRATOR AWARD in the Booktrust Early Years Awards in 2006 (this award was a set of annual literary prizes for children's picture books), the Kate Greenaway Medal (which is the ultimate accolade in British children's picture book to recognize distinguished illustration in a book), the 'Read it Again' Cambridgeshire Picture Book Award, the English 4-11 Award in 2007, and the Royal Mail Scottish Children's Book Awards (0-7 category) in 2007 (this award is an important part of the literary calendar in Scotland). The illustrator of *Hansel and Gretel* (Gregory, 2005), Jago, has won many children's book illustrator awards. Jago was the winner of the UK Further Education Funding Council Calendar Prize in 2000, the Macmillan Prize for Children's Illustration - Highly Commended Award in 2003, AOI Images 28 Annual - AOI Silver Award (Student Section) in 2004, National Literacy Association Wow! Award in 2006, Moonbeam Children's Book Awards - Gold Medal in 2007 (this award dedicates to identifying the best children's books published each year for the North American market. It is one of the fastest growing U.S.-based award contests focused on children's books.), National Jewish Book Award for Young Readers in 2009, and ALA Notable Award in 2010.

In Milet, the author of *Elmer's Day* (Mckee, 2008) has produced several characters that have developed into highly popular series. The Elmer series books are well-known among children. For example, *Elmer's Weather* (Mckee, 2004), *Elmer's Special Day* (Mckee, 2009), *Elmer and Rose* (Mckee, 2010), *Elmer and the Hippos* (Mckee, 2010), *Elmer's Christmas* (Mckee, 2011), *Elmer's Opposites* (Mckee, 2012), and *Elmer and the Rainbow* (Mckee, 2012). The illustrator of *Elmer's Colors* (Mckee, 2008) provided vibrant visual representations for many children's books. For instance, *Elmer's Friends* (Mckee, 1994), *Elmer's New Friends* (Mckee, 2002), *Elmer in the Snow* (Mckee, 2004), *Not Now, Bernard* (Mckee, 2005), *Zebra's Hiccups* (Mckee, 2009), and *Elmer and the Big Bird* (Mckee, 2012).

The author of *Frog and the Wide World* (Velthuijs, 2000) has received the Hans Christian Andersen Medal by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) and many

international awards, including the Dutch Silver Pencil Award and the German Bestlist Award (twice). His series of Frog books have received excellent reviews in major newspapers and educational publications. The illustrator of *Mamy Wata and the Monster* (Tadjo, 2000) is an award winner. She received the Literary Prize of L'Agence de Cooperation Culturelle et Technique in 1983 and the UNICEF (the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) Prize in 1993 for *Mamy Wata and the Monster*, which was also chosen as one of Africa's 100 Best Books of the 20th Century, one of only four children's books selected. In 2005, Tadjo won the Grand prix littéraire d'Afrique noire ([one of the major literary prizes of Black Africa for Francophone Literature](#)) and in 2016 the Bernard Dadié national grand prize for literature (This is a national grand prize).

### Information about the Book

Both publishers provided majority of books with extra information and the information was only in English not in two languages. A small amount of the reviewed books lacks extra information (see Table 4).

**Table 3.** Number of books with/without extra information from Mantra Lingua and Milet

The Availability of Extra Information	Mantra Lingua	Milet
With extra information	19	8
Without extra information	2	2
Total	21	10

### Illustration

Some books from both publishers had problems in illustration. In Mantra Lingua, the background in each page of *The Crow King* (Joo-Hye, 2005) was too weak to easily read the texts. Additionally, the background of *Fox Fables* (Casey, 2006), *Hansel and Gretel* (Gregory, 2005), and *Augustus and His Smile* (Rayner, 2008) were blur. Some pictures in *The Crow King* (Joo-Hye, 2005) were full of violence as they contained blood and sworand beheaded pictures, which were not appropriate for children. In Milet, the images of some people in *Mamy Wata and the Monster* (Tadjo, 2000) did not have mouth.

### Theme

As shown in Table 4, both publishers produced books with different themes. The number of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books with the theme of multiculturalism is a little more than the books without multicultural theme.

**Table 4.** The theme of reviewed books from Mantra Lingua and Milet by numbers

Theme	Mantra Lingua	Milet
Promoting multiculturalism	11	6
Not promoting multiculturalism	10	4
Total	21	10

## DISCUSSION

Bilingual children's picture books occupy an important position in current school education and family literacy practice. To select high quality bilingual children's picture books for multicultural curriculum, developing our understanding of bilingual children's picture books publishers is necessary. Therefore, this study examines the similarities of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from two major bilingual children's picture publishers.

The similarities identified in this study reveal that the reviewed publishers share similar high and low quality. To completely address the question of how the reviewed publishers share similarities, the researcher will discuss this question from the following two aspects: producing bilingual children's picture books with similar high quality and producing bilingual children's picture books with low quality.

### Producing Bilingual Children's Picture Books with Similar High Quality

Similar high quality shared by two publishers are books with general or not general topics, selecting qualified authors or illustrators, providing the majority of books with extra information, and publishing books with multicultural theme or different themes. It is widely agreed that bilingual children's picture books that maintain a high literacy quality will "allow young children opportunities to develop their understanding of others", "affirm children of diverse backgrounds" (Mendoza & Reese, 2001, abstract), and better assist students in adapting to a global society (Reddish, 2000).

Nowadays, more students with different cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds become members in US classrooms. Parents would like to maintain their children's heritage language and develop their children's mainstream language at the same time. Children need good literature to get acquainted with the mixed environment and survive in that environment. Bilingual children's picture books with general or not general topics and multicultural theme or different themes are excellent materials for them. General topic books stimulate children's imagination and set good societal morals by covering a wide-range aspects in our daily life. Bilingual children's picture books with not general topics and themes broaden children's view, inspire them in reading, and make good connection between reading and excitement. Bilingual children's picture books that promote multiculturalism would benefit children in understanding the differences, respecting other cultures, appreciating uniqueness, and sharing diverse values.

Two publishers devote themselves to improving the quality of their bilingual children's picture books by selecting qualified authors or illustrators and providing majority of

books with extra information. Having qualified authors or illustrators on board will improve the book's quality and their skillful works will attract more children. By providing extra information about the book, the publishers make their books more professional.

### **Producing Bilingual Children's Picture Books with Similar Low Quality**

Similar low quality identified in this study include missing information about the illustrator or translator, presenting information about the book only in English (not in two languages), focusing on one type of Chinese language system (simplified Chinese or traditional Chinese), Chinese translation has errors, and illustrations are problematic. Low quality bilingual children's picture books hamper children from achieving academic success and lessen bilingual children's picture books' potential educational values.

Two publishers did not cautiously scrutinized their bilingual children's picture books before publishing. Being driven by the large market in bilingual children's picture books, publishers allow "the rapid production of low quality materials" (Whiteside, 2007, p.11). The information about the illustrator or Chinese translator is the basic information about the book. Without these information, the bilingual children's picture books seem non-professional and it is difficult to evaluate illustrator's or Chinese translator's credibility. Thus, evaluating the quality of bilingual children's picture books becomes hard. One apparent feature of bilingual children's picture books is displaying two languages at the same time. Presenting information about the bilingual children's picture books only in English (not in two languages) did not wholly display the book's bilingual feature. Moreover, the single language in bilingual children's picture books creates challenges for monolingual parents and teachers when they select bilingual children's picture books for students. It will be hard for them to make decision on whether having this bilingual children's picture book based on the language they do not know.

Two publishers did not show respect to Chinese language, Chinese culture, original author (Naidoo & Lopes-Roboertson, 2007). Chinese children "have the right to see themselves and their culture respectfully and accurately portrayed in books" (Naidoo & Lopes-Roboertson, 2007, p.27). Poor translation and inaccurate images "may result in negative self-images and may lead to feelings of shame for one's culture and oneself" (Naidoo & Lopes-Roboertson, 2007, p.26). To value Chinese language and culture, information about the book should be presented in English and Chinese (not only in English), English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books should focus on simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese, and Chinese translation should be correct. To respect the original author, the Chinese translation should turely express the thought from original author.

Unavailable resources could be an important reason that prevent publishers from polishing their products with high quality. Firstly, it is possible that each bilingual children's picture books publisher is lack of simplified or traditional Chinese translator to completely display Chinese language features to children. Mantra Lingua may be short of traditional Chinese translators and Milet may be in the absence of simplified Chinese translators. Secondly, it is high likely that bilingual children's picture books publishers

are short of qualified Chinese translator to provide high quality Chinese translation, qualified illustrators to truly reflect Chinese culture, and qualified editors to proofread Chinese translation and illustration. Furthermore, the space in each book is limited. It is hard to include all the information in limited room, particularly presenting all the information in two languages.

There is one thing needs our attention. Although it is highly recommended to find a translator or illustrator who is from China, the quality of Chinese translation or illustration is not influenced by the ethnic background of them. As long as the Chinese translator or illustrator knows Chinese and Chinese culture very well and has extensive living experience in China, their works are qualified.

### **A Checklist for Future Bilingual Children's Picture Books Publishers**

Literature has "a major influence on the formation of a child's values and attitudes" (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 1998, p. 109). Good literature has positive effects on children. From the major categories in this study, the researcher provides a checklist to guide bilingual children's picture books publishers issue high quality bilingual children's picture books. The checklist includes:

1. Bilingual children's picture books should focus on various topics and themes.
2. Information about the authors, illustrators, and Chinese translators should be accessible in the book, such as their names, related education/training background, previous works, and awards. This information should be displayed in two languages.
3. The information about each bilingual children's picture book should be available. Additionally, this information should be presented in two languages.
4. The languages in bilingual children's picture books should correct, especially the translated language.
5. Carefully selecting translators. The ideal translators are the people who can speak the translated language or know the target culture very well. Using this translator's previous works as the selection standards and find other professionals to look over the translation.
6. The illustration should be appropriate for children and exclude any pictures with violence, blood, murdering, etc. Moreover, the illustration should actually reflect the target culture.
7. While it is better to find an illustrator who is from the target culture (Naidoo & Lopes-Robertson, 2007) or has extensive living experience in that culture, the publisher also needs to use this illustrator's previous works as the selection standards and find other professionals (who know specific culture and appropriate illustration issues among children very well) to check the illustration.

### **CONCLUSION**

The value of high quality bilingual children's picture books has been recognized in education, which makes it important for bilingual children's picture books publishers to provide high quality bilingual children's picture books. The raise in the call for bilingual

children's picture books "has led to the rapid production of low quality materials" (Whiteside, 2007, p. 11). Thus, it is worth our attention to evaluate bilingual children's picture books. The present examination of the similarities among English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books published by two major publishers has shown that the English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books share some perspectives that were varied in quality. After identifying these similarities, this study points out the areas that can be improved. The issues explored in this study can also serve as a guideline for researchers and teachers to "find multiple ways to affirm diverse voices."

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## APPENDIX A

### English/Chinese Bilingual Children's Picture Books Reviewed (Mantra Lingua)

Attard, E. (2005). *Ali Baba and the forty thieves*. R. Holland (Illus.). S. Denham (Trans.). London: Mantra Lingua.

Barkow, H. (2004). *Ellie's secret diary*. S. Garson (Illus.). S. Denham (Trans.). London: Mantra Lingua.

Barkow, H. (2005). *Nita goes to hospital*. C. Petty (Illus.). S. Denham (Trans.). London: Mantra Lingua.

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Barkow, H. (2010). *The Giant Turnip*. Illustrated by Johnson, R.

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Curtis, C. (2008). *I took the moon for a walk*. A. Jay (Illus.). F. Wang (Trans.). London: Mantra Lingua.

David, M. (2013). *Mei Ling's Hiccups*. Derek Brazell (Illu.). Mantra Lingua.

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Mills, D. (2013). *Mei Ling's Hiccups*. Illustrated by Brazell, G and translated by Wang, F. Mantra Lingua.

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Waddell, M. (2006). *Farmer duck*. H. Oxenbury (Illus.). S. Denham (Trans.). London: Mantra Lingua.

## APPENDIX B

### English/Chinese Bilingual Children's Picture Books Reviewed (Milet)

McKee, D. (1998). *Elmer's day*. L. Y. French (Trans.). London: Milet.

McKee, D. (2008). *Elmer's colors*. L.Y. French (Trans.). London: Milet.

Mycek-Wodecki, A. (2008). *Minutka: The bilingual dog*. Y. K. Sheng (Trans.). London: Milet.

Secmen, E. (2014). *Sight*. Illustrated by Dittopoulos, C. and translated to English by Parmar, A. Milet.

Swain, G. (2000). *Eating*. D. Tsai (Trans.). London: Milet.

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