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## The differences between two English Chinese bilingual children's picture books' publishers

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### Abstract

While it is easy to get access to bilingual children's picture books in the current market and the number of published bilingual children's picture books is increasing every year, knowing the many defining characteristics of bilingual children's picture books can help teachers, parents, and students select high quality books. The aim of this study is to compare features of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from different publishers. The researchers examine the differences between two major English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books' publishers: Mantra Lingua and Milet. Close review was conducted on 31 English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books collected from these publishers. Specifically, features were scrutinized in the following areas: 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. The findings illustrate the different 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. Additionally, the findings suggest the areas that need our attentions to better serve bilingual students and multicultural education.

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

### Introduction

The growing population of students with diverse cultural backgrounds in today's classrooms signals an ever-increasing need for high-quality and well-designed multicultural materials to serve students from a variety of backgrounds and in truly multicultural education programs. For language learners and multicultural education, multicultural literature is a dominant tool in promoting children's sense of the world and fostering "cultural pride, familiarity, a sense of belonging, and cultural self-respect" (Fran, 2007, p. 101) <sup>[7]</sup>. Moreover, multicultural literature promotes culturally responsive teaching (Smith & Strickland, 2001) <sup>[23]</sup>, enhances social justice (Souto-Manning, 2009) <sup>[24]</sup>, and develops acceptance to the diversity (Colby *et al.*, 2004) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Bilingual children's picture books are one type of multicultural literature. The benefits of including bilingual children's picture books in a multicultural curriculum have been widely researched. Bilingual children's picture books "can play a large role in mirroring students' natural cultural and linguistic environments in order to provide an effective educational environment" (Whiteside, 2007, p. 7) <sup>[27]</sup>. This type of book "will help children to feel that their personal experience and identity is recognized and valued" (Raymonde, 2008, p. 140) <sup>[20]</sup>. Furthermore, reading bilingual stories to children improves their reading ability through visual information and side-by-side written languages (Ma, 2008) <sup>[14]</sup>.

While it is easy to get access to bilingual children's picture books in the current market and the number of published bilingual children's picture books is increasing every year, knowing the many defining characteristics of bilingual children's picture books can help teachers, parents, and students select high quality books. From this point of view, it becomes essential to review bilingual children's picture books' characteristics in detail.

Many familiar forms of bilingual children's picture books are readily availability, such as English/Spanish, English/French, and English/German, all of these following a similar format.

But English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books by themselves exist in a variety of formats due to the unique linguistics features of written Chinese and systems for its transliteration. Importantly, Chinese characters exist in two distinct forms: the "traditional" system and the "simplified" system. Simplified Chinese characters were developed by reducing the number of strokes of traditional Chinese characters. Each system has a corresponding phonetic system for pronouncing Chinese characters and for typing Chinese characters into computers: Pinyin "uses the same 26 English letters to represent initials (e.g., 声母) and finals or compound finals (e.g., 韵母)" of the simplified Chinese characters (Huang & Chen, 2012, p.136) <sup>[9]</sup>. Zhuyin Fuhao is the phonetic system of traditional Chinese, which used a modified Latin alphabet and four tone marks to transcribe traditional Chinese characters.

To provide a full review of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books, this study focused on English/simplified Chinese (with Pinyin) bilingual children's picture books and English/traditional Chinese (without Zhuyin Fuhao) bilingual children's picture books.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Theory

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Theory (CRPT) (Gay, 2000) <sup>[8]</sup> examines the relationship between multicultural education and ethnically diverse students' academic performances. This theory states that culturally responsive education significantly influences the academic achievement of students with diverse cultural backgrounds. It also recommends that teachers should connect curriculums to students' lives (Gay, 2000) <sup>[8]</sup>. CRPT relates to the present study because high quality multicultural literature can be an effective teaching resource. Integrating high quality multicultural literature into curriculums makes them validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory (Gay, 2000) <sup>[8]</sup>.

### Literature Review

#### Issues in Children's Picture Books Publishing Genre

The advantages of traditional literature are reported by Mendoza and Reese (2001) <sup>[15]</sup> who believe traditional literature can stimulate psychosocial functions, offer effective teaching strategies, and open a door to other cultures. Nevertheless, issues arise when publishers focus only on traditional literature. Readers are deprived of the chance to learn about the contemporary lives of diverse people when they are exposed to only traditional literature. "Using folk tales produced by mainstream and minority authors and publishers to teach about the cultures of various people has a firm foundation in the United States" (Nathenson-Mejia & Escamilla, 2003, p. 102) <sup>[18]</sup>. However, it is difficult for publishers to resist the temptation to rush into the huge market opened by the demand for such works, resulting in low quality books with inaccurate cultural representations. Issues with problematic Chinese cultural references were reviewed by Cai (1994) <sup>[3]</sup>, who found that Chinese people were misrepresented in 73 children's picture books published in the US. For instance, Cai (1994) <sup>[3]</sup> noticed the mixing images of Chinese culture with other cultures in the book titled *Tikki Tikki Tembo*. The name of the Chinese boy featured in the story has a Japanese name instead of Chinese name. Cai also stated that other images

indicate that the setting of this story is Japan based on the visuals such as the buildings, the dress and hair style of a lady, and the clogs worn by children. However, these images are in contradiction to the setting of the story which was in China.

When publishing children's picture books, publishers must consider making books available in various genres. Previous research has documented the merits of books with different genres. For example, song picture books are the picture books that feature songs. These books benefit emerging literacy in many ways. They allow students to build on acquaintance and satisfaction, to have chances to restate and guess what is going to happen, to increase vocabulary and knowledge of story structures, to enhance thinking and problem-solving skills, and to cultivate innovative expression and language activity (Renck & McDonald, 1997) <sup>[21]</sup>. "Fiction, poetry, and nonfiction offer young children a multitude of opportunities to gain information, to become familiar with print, to be entertained, and to experience perspectives other than their own" (Mendoza & Reese, 2001, para.1) <sup>[15]</sup>. Nonfiction or informational books not only have educational purposes (Mendoza & Reese, 2001) <sup>[15]</sup>, but also promote children's curiosity in researching and participating in the outside world (McElmeel, 1995) <sup>[16]</sup>.

#### Topic

Picture books with multicultural topics should be included in the publication list. The reason is that "[multicultural picture books] allow young children opportunities to develop their understanding of others, while affirming children of diverse backgrounds" (Mendoza & Reese, 2001, par.1). In addition, incorporating multicultural literature in educational programs can lessen students' adverse opinions of other cultures and enhance students' racial awareness (Whiteside, 2007) <sup>[27]</sup>.

#### Book's Cover

Sipe's (2001) <sup>[25]</sup> study recommends publishers pay attention to the equal quality of a book's cover and content by citing Maurice Sendak's *We Are All in the Dumps* (1993) <sup>[22]</sup> as an example. The picture on the book's dust jacket "contains a color illustration", though it was a "plain light brown and quite thick, suggestive of a corrugated box (p. 25)" in the cover. Sipe also posited that the front and back covers should present consistent pictures. According to Sipe, the front and back covers in *Saint George and the Dragon* (Hodges, 1984) <sup>[12]</sup> reveal different pictures. The front cover illustrated "both the saint with his battered shield and the horrific dragon in a threatening pose," while the back cover "depicts a scribe writing the story or illuminating a manuscript" (Sipe, 2001, p.26) <sup>[25]</sup>. The difference between the book's cover and content may cause readers to be confused about the book's format and lessen their reading interest.

#### Issues in Bilingual Books Publishing

In comparison to publishing monolingual children's books, issuing bilingual children's picture books raises many more considerations. Publishers must consider the style of writing, lines, and words in two languages, alignment problems, issues related to the overall layout of two texts, and pictures on each page.

Walker, Edwards, and Blacksell (1996) <sup>[26]</sup> researched the type of writing in bilingual children's picture books. They observed that when the English text was typeset, the other text was added with handwritten text in bilingual children's picture books. They also pointed out the problem raised by different types of writing, which is that children will read the typed text and neglect the handwritten text as the handwritten text is more challenging to read (Walker, Edwards, & Blacksell, 1996) <sup>[26]</sup>. Other qualities of bilingual children's picture books also have varied impacts on young readers. "Size, and weight of type, spacing and quantity of text can make one language seem more important than the other" (Edwards & Walker, 1996, p.341) <sup>[26]</sup>.

Walker, Edwards, and Blacksell (1996) <sup>[26]</sup> suggested that when lines and words in two languages have different spacing in bilingual children's picture books, it breaks a necessary balance in signaling the equal importance of the two languages. When children see text with more space around words or between words/letters, they think it is easier to read (Walker, Edwards, & Blacksell, 1996) <sup>[26]</sup>.

According to Walker, Edwards, and Blacksell (1996) <sup>[26]</sup>, alignment problems in dual texts occur between the text's size and the inner-baseline spacing of type. Although two texts have the same nominal size, the typefaces of the text may present different sizes (Walker, Edwards, & Blacksell, 1996) <sup>[26]</sup>. The example they cited was that the typeface of 14 point Latin font looks much bigger than 14 point Bengali typeface, for example. Therefore, they recommended that publishers should edit non-Latin fonts and sizes first and only then select the Latin type.

Walker, Edwards, and Blacksell also recommended that when one text in bilingual children's picture books takes up more space than another, publishers should change the size of letterforms in one language to balance the space between the two texts (Walker, Edwards, & Blacksell, 1996) <sup>[26]</sup>. Upon noticing that one text took up more or less space than another, "some children expressed concern about the balance between the two languages and thought that one had more to say than the other" (Walker, Edwards, & Blacksell, 1996, p. 277) <sup>[26]</sup>.

"In an effort to distinguish between the Spanish and English texts in bilingual books, publishers often choose to use a different color, font, and/or style for the Spanish text" (Naidoo & Lopez-Robertson, 2007, p.27) <sup>[17]</sup>. Such format design may be problematic. In the English/Spanish bilingual children's picture books reviewed by Edwards and Walker (1996) <sup>[26]</sup> and Nathenson-McJia and Escamilla (2003) <sup>[18]</sup>, they pointed out that it is hard to read the Spanish text against the page background as it is designed in an illegible format. For example, Naidoo and Lopez-Robertson (2007) <sup>[17]</sup> found out that the Spanish text in *Moon Rope/Un lazo a la luna* (Ehlert, 1992) <sup>[6]</sup> is hard to read as it is silver and the background is blue. Indeed, they also found out the English and Spanish texts are both illegible in *My Name Is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz/Me llamo Celia: La vida de Celia Cruz* (Brown & Lopez, 2004) <sup>[2]</sup> because both text fonts are italicized.

Due to some complicated situations, "the designs used in bilingual books vary greatly" (Whiteside, 2007, p.4) <sup>[27]</sup>. The complicated situations are the features of original text in bilingual children's picture books, the time for editing bilingual children's picture books, the accessibility of many resources (Such as high quality translators and illustrators), the dilemma of balancing two texts (such as keeping the two

texts equivalent), and "publishers sometimes allow quantity to replace quality" to "fill the huge void" in book market (Naidoo & Lopez-Robertson, 2007, p. 24) <sup>[17]</sup>. When bilingual children's picture books' publishers concentrate on producing a higher quantity rather than quality of books, "the product will not portray language or culture in a way that is accessible for the reader" (Whiteside, 2007, p. 4) <sup>[27]</sup>.

## Methods

### Publisher Selection

Our study began by finding the names of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books' publishers that issued English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from 1998 to 2008 in the US market. The names of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books' publishers were found on Amazon.com. After obtaining the names of publishers, an online investigation was conducted to determine how many English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books each publisher has produced. The names of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books' publishers and numbers of published books are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Numbers of published English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books 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

We stipulate that publishers with the most books can best demonstrate the typical features of bilingual children's picture books' publishers. According to Table 1, Mantra Lingua and Milet produced many more English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books than other publishers. Thus, these two publishers were selected for this study.

### Bilingual Children's Picture Books

After getting the names of the target publishers, English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books were collected from these publishers. 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.

### Research Questions

Huang and Chen (2015; 2016) <sup>[10-11]</sup> did research on the features of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books which were published in the United States. Huang and Chen (2015) <sup>[10]</sup> found that the reviewed English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books covered a variety of genres and topics; the information on covers of the reviewed books may or may not be consistent with the presentation and sequence of various scripts in their bodies; the information about author, illustrator, and translator was limited; illustration contained some stereotypical and

culturally inappropriate images; and book theme in the reviewed books was found to promote bilingualism, promote multicultural, and neutral.

Huang and Chen (2016) [11] examined the text quality of English/Chinese bilingual children’s picture books. They found out that the English text utilized many language effects and the information about bilingual children’s picture books was available in English. The Chinese text was edited with language effects. Information about the book was not accessible in Chinese. In many cases, Pinyin failed to clearly correspond with its referred Chinese character and was not accurate. The appearances of both scripts displayed three patterns: the Chinese text may or may not have the same language effects as its English text; the information about the book was not accessible in two languages; and multiple translation errors were documented in simplified and traditional Chinese texts.

Research from the above studies provides an analytical-framework for this study. Data from two bilingual children’s picture books’ publishers were used to answer the following research questions: (1) what are the different features of English/Chinese bilingual children’s picture books from two publishers; (2) how does the information on two publishers’ websites differ?

**Data Analysis**

The discussion of the different features of English/Chinese bilingual children’s picture books from Mantra Lingua and Milet were examined according to the following categories: genre, topic, paratextual material, Chinese language preference, the English text effects, the Chinese text effects, the relationship between the English text and Chinese text, and series book.

By ‘genre’ we refer to the kind of the reviewed book. By ‘topic’ we refer to whether the story belongs to specific cultural area (such as China, the Middle East, ancient Greece, Germany, or Africa). ‘Paratextual material’ refers to materials relating to but outside the book itself; these include, for example, book reviews, illustrator introductions, story introductions, and author introductions. ‘Chinese language preference’ indicates the Chinese language system selected by each publisher. The English text formal effects refer to any special graphic or other effects that are used to emphasize the English text. The Chinese text formal effects refers to the same or similar special effects used to emphasize the Chinese text. By ‘the relationship between the English text and Chinese text’ we refer to the relative font size in each language and whether the English and Chinese texts feature the same special effects at the same time. ‘Series books’ are those in a succession of books that share certain distinctions. The ‘cover’ and ‘body’ refer to whether the language features and the sequence of two languages on the book cover match those in the body.

Each of us examined all of these features in the books from Mantra Lingua and Milet twice; we arrived at common conclusions after different viewpoints were discussed between us.

**Results**

**Genre**

It has been found that the reviewed books in Mantra Lingua covered more genres than those published by Milet (see Table 2). The genres in the bilingual children’s picture books from Mantra Lingua covered eleven areas while the

genres in the bilingual children’s picture books from Milet covered four areas.

**Table 2:** The Number of Genres from Mantra Lingua and Milet

Genre	Mantra Lingua	Milet
Folktale	6	0
Patterned book	1	0
Diary	1	0
Narrative	3	0
Fable	1	0
Nursery rhyme	1	0
Poetic	1	0
Narrative poem and repetitive	1	0
Personal account	0	2
Realistic fiction	1	0
Traditional literature	0	3
Informational	4	4
Animal fantasy	1	1
Total number of genre	11	4

**Topic**

Books with various topics have been published by Mantra Lingua (see Table 3), which were both general and stories originating from specific countries such as China, Middle East, Korea, ancient Greece, Jamaica, and Germany. Milet only published two types of books: general and stories originating from Africa. As shown in Table 3, Mantra Lingua published more books that had general and other topics than Milet.

**Table 3:** Numbers of Books’ Topics from Mantra Lingua and Milet

Topic	Mantra Lingua	Milet	
General	14	7	
Cultural Specific	China	2.5 (One reviewed book contains two stories. So the topic of each story counts as 0.5)	0
	The Middle East	1	0
	Korea	1	0
	Ancient Greece	0.5 (One reviewed book contains two stories. So the topic of each story counts as 0.5)	0
	Jamaica	1	0
	Germany	1	0
	Africa	0	3

**Paratextual Material**

Based on the sample we analyzed, Mantra Lingua books offered more paratextual material than those from Milet. Six types of paratextual material were available in and for Mantra Lingua books, while three types of supplementary information were available in Milet books. Details are displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4:** The Number of Books with Paratextual Material from Mantra Lingua and Milet

Paratextual Material	Mantra Lingua	Milet
Story introduction	10	7
Book review	3	0
Story introduction and Book review	4	0
Story introduction and Illustrator introduction	1	0
Book review and Illustrator Introduction	1	0
Story introduction and Author’s introduction	0	1
Paratextual material is not available	2	2
Total number of types	6	3

### Chinese Language Preference

As note, 'simplified' and 'traditional' are the two systems of written Chinese. The two publishers selected different Chinese language systems for their English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books. While the Chinese text in Mantra Lingua is always simplified Chinese, the Chinese text in Milet is traditional Chinese.

### The English Text Effects

Mantra Lingua used many graphic effects (including italicizing, capitalizing, boldfacing, and underlining) to emphasize the English text. Milet did not usually employ any special graphic effects to emphasize English text.

### The Chinese Text Effects

The Chinese text in some Mantra Lingua books was found to have graphic effects. No book was found to use special effects to highlight the Chinese text in Milet.

### Relationship between the English Text and the Chinese Text

#### Font Size

English and Chinese texts from Mantra Lingua books have different font sizes; the Chinese text is bigger than the English text. The English and Chinese texts in Milet books were found to have similar font sizes.

#### Special Effects in the Relationships between Texts

Special effects used in relating the English and Chinese texts from Mantra Lingua books include the following variations. The Chinese text in most books fully matches with its English text as both texts use or do not use special graphic effects at the same time; the Chinese text in some books partially matches with English, i.e. not all the Chinese text use the same special effects as the English text; the Chinese text employs different effects with its matching English text; or, finally, some books included no effects in the Chinese text, while the English text uses special graphic effects.

The special effects in Chinese in Milet books do not match with their English texts. Where one text has special effects, the other text does not have special effects.

#### Series Books

Books are categorized as series books when they are written by the same author, published by the same publisher, and their topics remain the same. While series books are unavailable from Mantra Lingua, Milet publishes series books. For example, *Elmer's day* (Mckee, 1998)<sup>[28]</sup> and *Elmer's colors* (Mckee, 2008), as well as *Eating* (Swain, 2000)<sup>[29]</sup>, *Celebrating* (Swain, 2000)<sup>[29]</sup>, and *Carrying* (Swain, 2000)<sup>[29]</sup> are series books published by Milet.

#### Cover & Body

Cover and body in this study refers to whether the language features and the sequence of two languages on the cover matches those in the body. The cover may or may not be consistent with its body in bilingual children's picture books. When the language features and the sequence of two languages showed on the cover are found to be the same in the body, the cover is deemed as 'consistent' with its body. When the language features and the sequence of two languages shown on the cover are different from the

language features and the sequence of two languages in the body, the cover is considered 'not consistent' with its body. In this study, covers are found to be consistent with bodies in books from Mantra Lingua, while covers are not consistent with their bodies in all but one Milet books (see Table 5).

**Table 5:** The Number of Books' Consistency from Mantra Lingua and Milet

Cover & body	Mantra Lingua	Milet
Consistent	15	1
Not consistent	6	9

### Information on Publishers' Websites

Being the world's largest publisher of bilingual children's picture books, Mantra Lingua is a UK-based publishing house that supplies award-winning multilingual education resources for different age students. In addition to providing bilingual children's picture books in many different languages, they also have book set, posters, dictionaries, software, and more than 700 complementary audio files. Their patented "PENpal" technology supports multilingual audio files created by Mantra Lingua and also allows users to make their own audio recordings. They provide solutions for specific challenges to classroom teachers as well. However, it does not provide information about authors, illustrators, and translators.

Milet is an independent book publisher for a wide range of audience in the United States. Milet publishes a large range of bilingual children's picture books for children and young adults. It also features bilingual dictionaries. However, information about authors, illustrators, and translators was also not available from Milet's website.

### Discussion & Implications

Children, parents, schools, and libraries need rich experience and knowledge about the quality of bilingual children's picture books. However, bilingual children's picture books provided by publishers differed in quality. "Since books are a major influence on the formation of a child's values and attitudes" (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 1998, p. 109), selecting high quality bilingual children's picture books to use becomes a critical issue for parents, schools, and libraries. The standards of quality of bilingual children's picture books lie in the hands of bilingual children's picture books' publishers. Discussing the features of the bilingual children's picture books we reviewed can help develop a better understanding of what standards would best guide high quality productions from bilingual children's picture books' publishers.

### How English/Chinese Bilingual Children's Picture Books from Mantra Lingua and Milet Differ in Quality?

#### Both Publishers' Perspectives

Both publishers' perspectives on bilingual children's picture books influence the quality of their bilingual children's picture books. When publishers attach importance to the quality of bilingual children's picture books, the books will have higher quality. When publishers allow "the rapid production of low quality materials" (Whiteside, 2007, p.11)<sup>[27]</sup> because of the rising call for bilingual children's picture books, quality will be replaced by quantity and "the product will not portray language or culture in a way that is accessible for the reader" (Whiteside, 2007, p.4)<sup>[27]</sup>.

English and Chinese clearly do not hold the same value for both publishers we reviewed. One language in a bilingual children's picture book looks more important than the other when it is printed in a bigger, heavier type, with more space, and larger text overall (Edwards & Walker, 1996) <sup>[26]</sup>. Often times, publishers take English in bilingual children's picture books more seriously than the other language (Naidoo & Lopez-Robertson, 2007) <sup>[17]</sup>. Two languages in Mantra Lingua were not treated equally. The English text in some books from Mantra Lingua was found to more important than the Chinese text. Milet failed to treat two languages on an equal footing.

Naidoo and Lopez-Robertson (2007) <sup>[17]</sup> explain why the two texts in English/Spanish bilingual children's picture books are different in quality. They claim that publishers maintain the English text in high quality because of copy editors and the quality of Spanish text is low. In this study, the English text was carefully edited by the copy editors from both publishers. However, the Chinese text shows low quality presumably from a lack of qualified copy editors.

The non-original text is viewed in different ways by both publishers. On one hand, simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese are two language systems of Chinese. Both publishers did not fully present the features of Chinese to readers by focusing on one Chinese system in English/Chinese bilingual books. On the other hand, most Chinese text had special effects in Mantra Lingua and the Chinese text did not have such effects in Milet.

### Impossible Difficulties

Publishers of bilingual children's picture books have been accused of producing low-quality books for a long time (Naidoo & Lopez-Robertson, 2007). However, they should not take full responsibility. It is highly possible that they face some challenges.

As "many publishers of dual texts choose already popular books and add other languages to an existing English version" (Walker, Edwards, & Blacksell, 1996, p. 280) <sup>[26]</sup> and "the other language is either fitted into available space alongside the English, or both languages are reset" (Walker, Edwards, & Blacksell, 1996, p. 280) <sup>[26]</sup>, it is hard to make sure the added language has the same quality as the original language. In this study, Milet and Mantra Lingua were short of enough room to present paratextual material about the book in two languages within one page and edit two languages with equal quality (Walker *et al.* 1996) <sup>[26]</sup>. Due to the features of some languages, such as Chinese, the visual effects are different when both languages have the same font size. It is hard to make them equal in quality.

Lacking related and valuable resources prevented both publishers from supplying high quality bilingual children's picture books (Huang & Chen, 2016) <sup>[11]</sup>. There is not much research about the quality of bilingual children's picture books that can help publishers recognize the features of high quality bilingual children's picture books, particularly in English and Chinese (Huang & Chen, 2012; Huang & Chen, 2016) <sup>[9, 11]</sup>. In addition, both publishers do not have access to such resources as qualified translated text editors, proofreaders, and reviewers to check their products (Huang & Chen, 2012; Huang & Chen, 2015) <sup>[9, 10]</sup>.

### Bilingual Children's Picture Books in the Future

With the findings from this study as well as the development of modern technology, bilingual children's picture books

will likely demonstrate some new features. First of all, it is hoped that publishers address the needs identified in this study and produce higher quality books than those published theretofore. What's more, digital bilingual children's picture books will be available, which will make the content more attractive and language learning especially convenient. Differently from traditional paper bilingual children's picture books, digital bilingual children's picture books tell stories through new methods which could attract new readers. Readers could turn to the audio in digital bilingual children's picture books for help when they have difficulty in reading in either their first or second language. And at last, not being limited to traditional design, future bilingual children's picture books may have new and exciting design features. For example, paper folding bilingual children's picture books, puppet bilingual children's picture books, touch experience bilingual children's picture books, and film bilingual children's picture books.

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

The results not only reveal different features of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from two major English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books' publishers, but also provide a checklist to guide future bilingual children's picture books' publishers in producing high quality books. These guidelines include:

1. Avoid making formation of the pages too difficult and allowing for equal emphasis between languages.
2. Texts in each language should be attached with equal importance. The two texts should have similar font size, length, weight of type, and space on the page.
3. The two texts should be emphasized with similar special effects (such as color, italicizing, capitalizing, boldfacing, and underlining).
4. The color of both texts should be easy to read against the background.
5. The book cover and body should be consistent in handling each language.
6. Books should cover a variety of genres and topics to meet diverse readers' needs.
7. The Chinese language feature (simplified Chinese or traditional Chinese) should be indicated accurately.
8. Paratextual material on and within the book should be available, including introductions; information on authors, illustrators, and translators; and book reviews or helpful summaries. What is more important, the Paratextual material should be offered in both languages.

### Conclusion

Bilingual children's picture books open the window for teaching as they provide supplemental materials, support language development (Agosto, 1997; Naidoo & Lopez-Robertson, 2007) <sup>[1, 17]</sup>, and raise cultural awareness (Perkins & Mebert, 2005; Whiteside, 2007) <sup>[19, 27]</sup>. This study compares the features of English/Chinese bilingual children's picture books from Mantra Lingua and Milet. Knowing the features of bilingual children's picture books from the publishers assists students, teachers, and parents in selecting high quality books for multiple purposes. This study also has important implications for researchers, practicing teachers, and publishers in terms of the use and production of bilingual children's picture books. The

findings suggest the areas that need publisher's further attention to better serve bilingual students and multicultural education in general.

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## Appendix A

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

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## Appendix B

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

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