

Theory of Mind in Dual-Language Picture Books: Exploring Secondary Students' Perceptions

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Abstract

Most research with dual-language picture books has focused on early childhood and primary aged children. This study is the first to contribute to understandings of how dual-language picture books may be used with secondary students to support their academic achievements and engagement through celebrating linguistic and cultural knowledge. It describes the response of secondary students to three of 134 dual-language picture books used over six sessions in a secondary school in Aotearoa New Zealand. Participants viewed and read a variety of dual-language picture books, completed activities, and discussed their responses to the picture books. Data was collected from the students via audio recordings, field notes, artifacts, and written responses. The findings show that participants employed theory of mind and utilised Cummins's ("Empirical and Theoretical Underpinnings") interdependence hypothesis to respond to the picture books and discuss issues that affirmed their cultural and linguistic identities. Participants engaged enthusiastically with unfamiliar languages and cultures by drawing on their personal experiences.

Keywords: dual-language picture books, linguistic knowledge, identity, cultural knowledge, secondary students, high school students, theory of mind, interdependence hypothesis, Aotearoa New Zealand, translanguaging

There is a growing body of work exploring the role that children's literature can play in language revitalisation (Hadaway and Young; Brouwer and Daly) and language learning more generally (Hudelson et al.; Zaidi). Aotearoa New Zealand is linguistically and culturally diverse: in 2011 it was home to 160 languages (Royal Society of New Zealand Te Aparangi). Te reo Māori, the language of tangata whenua (indigenous people), and New Zealand Sign

Language (NZSL) are official languages of Aotearoa New Zealand, whilst English is the de facto official language. Languages have also been brought to Aotearoa New Zealand from other countries in the Pacific that New Zealand has obligations to, such as the Cook Islands and Niue, from other Pacific Peoples migrants, and immigrants from Asia and Europe. As a result, classrooms are also increasingly diverse, reflecting trends worldwide. As research (Cummins, “Intercultural Education”; Zaidi; Naqvi et al., “DLB as an Emergent-literacy Resource”; Edwards et al.; Garcia and Wei) has shown, inclusive and responsive methods of teaching that utilise and affirm students’ cultural and linguistic identities are necessary to support students if they are to succeed in education and, ultimately, society. In this article I explore secondary students’ responses to dual-language picture books to demonstrate how these texts can be used to enable students to affirm their cultural and linguistic identities.

Context

Aotearoa New Zealand remains stubbornly monolingual, despite progress made by language activists and advocates (East). On one hand, once suppressed by legislation, banned from schools, and brought to the verge of extinction, te reo Māori has been undergoing a period of hard-fought revitalisation since before the first kohanga reo (language nest) was established in 1982 (Te Kōhanga Reo). Over the last four decades, te reo Māori has become more visible in homes, classrooms, government-run organisations, and public spaces. In education, Māori medium school enrolments have also grown to 3.1% of the school population, 95.8% of which identify as Māori (Ministry of Education [MoE], “School Rolls”). However, in 2023, only 28.5% of students were learning te reo Māori at secondary (13–18-year-old) school (MoE, “Māori Language”). In spite of the more than 80,000 Pasifika students enrolled, less than 12,000 students were studying Pacific languages in secondary schools (MoE, “Pacific Language”).

Second-language secondary student numbers in Aotearoa New Zealand have also been declining since the early 2000s (East).

Beliefs About Language and Identity

Societal, historical, and political beliefs about different languages contribute to the construction of hierarchies in which languages are promoted or minimised according to “hierarchies of prestige” (Liddicoat 5). Each language’s visibility, or lack thereof, has an impact on the affirmation and acceptance of that language and culture in the society in which that hierarchy exists. Aotearoa New Zealand’s language hierarchy tends to discount community and minority languages (de Bres) and speaking a second language has been considered to have few advantages, leading to low or declining student enrolments.

Research conducted both locally and internationally has established that a feeling of belonging and acceptance is necessary for students to participate successfully in education (Hadaway and Young; Zapata and Laman; Garcia-Mateus and Palmer; Menken and Garcia). Students who are allowed to bring all aspects of themselves to the classroom are empowered to use their prior experiences and knowledge to scaffold and progress their learning. Moreover, students who feel confident and accepted in the classroom are more willing to learn about and accept ideas from others. Both of these things affirm students’ identities and improve awareness of other cultures, as well as students’ own.

The Aotearoa New Zealand curriculum for secondary education has been undergoing a series of changes since 2020 to better meet students’ cultural and linguistic needs. The refreshed curriculum retains principles that align with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), advocating for a genuine relationship between home and/or community culture, and school (Ladson-Billings 467). The refreshed curriculum moves into the sphere of Paris’s Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) (Paris), with key changes that seek to develop pluralism of culture

and language for the benefit of students. An example of this is Change #2, which provides “equal status for mātauranga Māori [Māori knowledge]” (MoE, “Te Mātaiaho”). The revised curriculum also makes explicit the “provision for the active protection of taonga (treasures), including te reo Māori [Māori language], tikanga Māori [Māori protocol], and mātauranga Māori [Māori knowledge]” (MoE, “Te Mātaiaho”). This change also draws on Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) theory (Yosso). These forms of cultural wealth – treasures, language, protocols, and knowledge – are presented as assets, which communities can draw upon to succeed in education and society. It is hoped that both CSP and CCW have not been “conceptualised for the purpose of finding new ways to co-opt or exploit the strengths of Communities of Color” (Yosso 82) but as a “goods unto themselves” (Alim et al. 266) to develop equitable and socially just teaching spaces.

Rudine Sims Bishop’s 1990 metaphor is the ubiquitous place to begin when discussing picturebooks. Describing them as acting as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors for the reader, Bishop reveals picture books’ ability to capture, present, and consider ideas in a myriad of ways. Whilst she referred to monolingual picturebooks in her article about their educational power and potential, dual-language picturebooks are increasingly recognised as playing a role in developing and affirming language and identity, particularly in the diverse twenty-first-century classroom (Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern; Naqvi et al., “DLB as an Emergent-literacy Resource”; Zaidi; Domke, “Probing the Promise”).

Cummins’s interdependence hypothesis posits that there is an underlying cognitive proficiency, which exists and is shared across languages (“Empirical and Theoretical Underpinnings”). He states that pronunciation and other surface aspects aside, learning in one language allows the transfer of academic proficiency to the other (Cummins, “BICS and CALP” 78). The interdependence hypothesis encourages the use of more than one language in order to assist students to acquire a new language, or maintain linguistic and cultural connections to an

existing language. Further research has established a connection between the inclusion of students' full cultural and linguistic understandings, and academic achievement (Cummins, "Bilingual Children"; "Multiliteracies Pedagogy"; "Teaching for Cross-language Transfer"; "Intercultural Education"). Dual-language picture books (Naqvi et al., "Reading DLB"; Daly and Short; Daly and Barbour; Daly and Brouwer), which include two languages in a range of different forms, are accessible, versatile, and combine text and illustration to create meaning. Educators and researchers have therefore looked to their use to support Cummins's hypothesis, and to include and educate students, leading to increased confidence and academic performance. Research conducted thus far seems to confirm that dual-language picturebooks can also be powerful "pedagogical tools" for learning about language and culture (Edwards et al.; Taliaferro; Daly et al.).

Theories which seek to identify and gauge emotional intelligence are often utilised with dual-language picture books. Nikolajeva's ("Reading Other People's Minds" 274) theory of mind, for example, is described as the ability to understand what others think. The term was coined by Premack and Woodruff, originated in cognitive psychology, and is considered an "indispensable social skill" (Nikolajeva, "Reading Other People's Minds" 274). Most theory of mind research has been done with early childhood or primary school aged children, based on when it first emerges in conjunction with specific developmental milestones. The Developmental Lag Theory (Hughes and Devine) considers that all children will eventually develop a similar understanding of conceptual insights necessary for traits such as empathy. However, the Genuine Variation Theory (Hughes and Devine) considers that although the acquisition of new concepts might slow down into middle childhood and beyond, the ability to use theory of mind, especially into adolescence, can continue to mature. Studies have also found that emotional intelligence and theory of mind is developed in picture books through the combination of visual and verbal literacy; the ability to view and parse meaning from discrete

aspects working together. Both Nikolajeva (“Reading Other People’s Minds) and Arizpe and Styles warn against considering picture books as a tool for only very young children and emergent readers, and advocate for development and mastery of both visual and verbal literacy in order to develop a robust theory of mind.

While there has been some research showing how dual-language books can be used in multilingual classrooms (e.g., Naqvi et al., “Reading DLB”; Zaidi; Zapata and Laman; Hudelson et al.) and how younger students (aged 8-11 years) respond to dual-language picture books (Daly et al.; Short et al.), no research to date investigates how older students perceive dual-language picturebooks or how this might affect their engagement with the texts. This article considers the idea that the use of dual-language picturebooks in secondary classrooms may provide students with a way to develop academic progress and literacy skills whilst exploring a variety of unfamiliar languages and cultures, as a result of affirming students’ identity and culture. It addresses the research question: In what ways are dual-language picturebooks perceived by secondary students in relation to their own cultural and linguistic identities?

Methods

The research was conducted using a constructivist paradigm (Narayan et al. with a Year 10 (14-15 years) bilingual (Māori–English) class of twenty-five students at a boys’ secondary school in the North Island of New Zealand. After ethical permission was obtained, seven students and their whānau (family) gave consent to participate in the research, which consisted of six one-hour-long sessions during timetabled classes over four weeks. Pseudonyms were given to all seven participants: Te Ariki; Manaia; Ihaia; Kahurangi; Kauri; Kaea; Tai; and Whaea (teacher) Marama.

A wide variety of pukapuka pikitia reo rua (dual-language picturebooks) were sourced for use in the research using local and school libraries and the researcher's personal collection. The aim was to provide a broad selection of text types¹ involving a range of languages to introduce to the participants. The final selection of 134 fiction and non-fiction books were a variety of types and genres, including silent books, traditional stories, trilingual books, and some with different orthographies. All but ten of the books were published from 2000-2023, the selected date range for the publications. The ten published between 1982-1999 were included because they were published in Aotearoa New Zealand, or had a critical reputation that justified their inclusion. Of the seventeen total languages represented across the books, the three predominant languages used were Māori, Spanish, and English. All of the books were displayed in the first session, and then books were selected for subsequent sessions, or removed from the sessions based on the reflections and responses of the participants.

Participants' responses to the pukapuka pikitia were captured via field notes, audio, completed activity sheets, and written reflections after each session, and the classroom teacher was interviewed before and after the six sessions. Data was analysed using a grounded theory (Braun and Clarke) approach to identify themes. An initial analysis was carried out after the research sessions had been completed by reading and viewing all the collected session data chronologically, highlighting any information related to the research questions, the topic of each session, or to dual-language picturebooks. Once this had been completed, a list of potential themes was compiled. The collected data was again analysed for alignment to the existing ideas, and for the potential emergence of further ideas. Data was then entered into a spreadsheet into coded columns according to these themes, and labelled as relating to one or more of the research

¹ Dual-language book (DLB) refers to any book published partly or wholly in two or more languages. Bilingual or parallel texts have the complete text in two languages in one book. Dual version books are separate versions of the same story in different languages, whilst books which switch between languages, weaving them together, are known as translingual, or interlingual (Barrett).

questions. Themes which emerged were revised by checking the evidence and data, and discussing them with a colleague.

Positionality

I position myself as a Pākehā researcher in this study, with twenty-five years' experience of learning three languages – including te reo Māori – and teaching English, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Languages. I was strongly aware of my responsibility to carefully and appropriately manage aspects of culture and language specific to Te Ao Māori (the Māori world). Therefore, I worked alongside, and gained relevant permissions and guidance from, Māori kaiako (teachers) at all stages of the research. I used a research journal for critical reflections and shared these, where appropriate, with colleagues. In order to prioritise student agency in knowledge construction, and ensure participants felt safe sharing their voices, I undertook whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building) before beginning research sessions, ensured all students could review and alter what they had contributed, and built the research sessions into a wider unit of the creation of pukapuka pikitia, co-constructed with their regular teacher.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion will focus on three key picture books – *My Name is Saajin Singh* (Brar and Kaur), *Where's Halmoni?* (Kim), and *We Are Grateful* (Sorell and Lessac) – that the participants were particularly engaged with, and that illustrate the themes of language awareness, cultural identity, and respect for culture and language which emerged. The insights gained from sessions featuring these texts reveal that secondary students engage with dual-language picturebooks that allow them to draw on community cultural wealth or “funds of knowledge” (Yosso 76) to explore and affirm cultural and linguistic identities.

Names Are Important to Identity

The first theme identified in the data related to the importance of names to participants' identities. *My Name is Saajin Singh* (Brar and Kaur) is the Punjabi and English story of a boy whose name is pronounced incorrectly by his classmates. Saajin must decide what to do, and after a positive discussion with his parents, eventually gathers the courage to correct his teacher, who responds positively. Punjabi is presented as the minority language in the picture book, as is Saajin in his classroom. In the discussion after reading the book, almost all of the participants recounted experiences where their names had been pronounced incorrectly, often repeatedly. The dual-language picturebook provided a mirror, which reflected their experiences with language.

Mr. _____ called me _____. I told him three different times and he still can't say it right.

(Kauri Sn. 5)

They get my first AND last name wrong. They call me [similar but incorrect names].

(Ihaia Sn. 5)

Participants perceived the ongoing mispronunciation of names as evidence of a lack of respect. The actions of teachers and other adults featured heavily in this discussion, and participants were clear that correcting adults carried with it an element of bravery that was not always received well, and may have gone against the cultural values of elder respect. Some of their responses included:

Why don't you correct them? (Whaea Marama Sn. 5)

Don't care! (Kaea Sn. 5)

Embarrassed. (Te Ariki Sn. 5)

Don't want to be disrespectful. (Kauri Sn. 5)

These responses show that participants are aware of the power of language, and the associated powerlessness that comes from shortening, changing, or mispronouncing names

(Keller and Franzak). This powerlessness is emphasised when it is those in authority who are making the mistakes. In the book, Saajin's consideration that "adults don't make mistakes" was rejected by one participant, but others noted that as students, they do not hold the power. Peterson and Alley posit that the mispronunciation, renaming, or otherwise incorrect use of names can be construed as microaggressions, which allow the speaker to express intolerance or racism. Therefore, even if the mispronunciation is well-intentioned or accidental, studies into name negotiations and identity in picture books, such as that by Keller and Franzak have shown that it may be accepted, even as it undermines confidence and a healthy sense of cultural identity. That the participants shared this information during the session may indicate they feel supported in their identities by the dual-language picturebook, which allows for closer examination of the theme contained within.

In addition, participants also engaged with *My Name is Saajin Singh* by making connections with their own names. In the story, the father explains to his son that his name has a beautiful meaning that is lost if it is pronounced incorrectly. Participants shared stories about the origins of their names, connecting them to important gods, family members, and beliefs. As with the younger children who participated in studies by Zapata and Laman, and Naqvi et al. ("Reading DLB"), the picturebook provided an opportunity for participants to bring their identity to the classroom.

"Tāwhirimātea is named after a Māori god," offered Tai. "Kahurangi and Ihaia are named after the bible. Like Moses." "Everyone thinks I'm named after [a famous rugby player] but I'm not. I'm named after my grandfather."

"Who here is named after an ancestor?" asked the teacher. More than half of the students raised their hands. (Field notes Sn. 5)

My Name is Saajin Singh allowed participants to discuss their name and its connection to their personal and cultural identity in the context of the book, and share not only how they

thought Saajin felt, based on the words and images, but how they felt too. The images and words in the picture book worked together to encourage the readers to consider Saajin's name as important, meaningful, and beautiful, with the aim of assisting readers who may also have diverse names to internalise them as contributing positively to a strong cultural identity. This "supplied desire" based on Tuck's "damage and desire" narrative (Thomas and Samjose 21) called for an end to research that saw "disenfranchised communities" as deficient and damaged and thus produced findings that perpetuated negative patterns of thought, in favour of research that championed nuance and self-determination for the future. Supplying desire works against a damage narrative, which puts pain and "brokenness" (Thomas and Samjose 20) in the centre. The implications of encouraging the participants to strengthen both their cultural identity and theory of mind through "wisdom and hope" (Thomas and Samjose 20) are powerful. Participants demonstrated theory of mind by empathising with Saajin's situation and connecting it to their individual experiences (Nikolajeva, "Picturebooks" 250). The discussion in class demonstrated an ability to think critically about ways to solve the situation, based not only on their own feelings, but an understanding of the feelings of others involved. *My Name is Saajin Singh* and other dual-language picturebooks offer a way for participants to continue to affirm their identity by connecting to the themes presented. As with younger students, the older participants in this study could comprehend the situation in the book in relation to their own cultural identity and employed theory of mind to engage with it (Ma).

This discussion was followed by an activity where participants were invited to think about the languages they knew, locate them in their body and colour them appropriately. These language "maps" are also known as language "portraits" (Busch). In the story, Saajin talks about how, in thinking about his name, "he loved the way it looked, he loved the way it tasted, and he loved the way it sounded" (Brar and Kaur). When it is pronounced wrong, it "... made his stomach feel funny ..." and "his name sounded like a frog was stuck in his throat." Saajin has a

physical response to his name in Punjabi, and the researcher and teacher participant wondered where and how the participants felt the languages they spoke. After the task explanation, the participants seemed intuitively to understand the idea that language identity can reside in different parts of the body, and the discussion generated by this activity was lively and insightful.

Kaea's body template (see fig. 1) was orange and green. The green of English occupied about half the space. When questioned, Kaea interlocked his fingers and knuckles to demonstrate that Māori and English are "all jumbled and combined". Later, he presented his body map again, explaining, "I added a bit of English in my head. But it's still mostly Māori. The rest is just accessories" (Field notes Sn. 5).

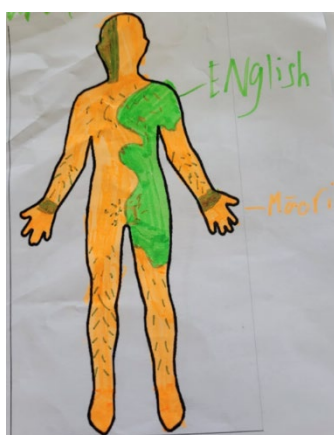


Fig. 1 Kaea's body language map from Session 5.

Meanwhile, Kahurangi coloured his head and feet yellow for Māori (see fig. 4), explaining that his head, "is my identity" and his feet are "to connect to Papatūānuku [earth mother]". His throat is pink for English, because "I speak it a lot" (Field notes Sn. 5).

Next to him, Ihaia said, "Samoan is in my veins" (Field notes Sn. 5). Like Kahurangi, he also labelled his feet green for Māori. In addition, his heart and eyes were green, perhaps indicating his view of the world, and which language was most important to him (see fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Ihaia's body language map from Session 5.

Te Ariki drew pink squiggles inside his head (see fig. 3) and labelled it “English” four times. He then drew an orange cage around his head, fastened with chains. In blue he wrote, “I hear it and surrounded by it all the time. I can’t escape it.” He added Japanese in his arms, with arrows pointing up them, “adding new languages”, indicating they are being absorbed through study. His heart was coloured red and labelled Māori, and besides it he had written, “Māori is in my heart. I didn’t grow up with as much te reo Māori as I wanted to” (Field notes Sn. 5).

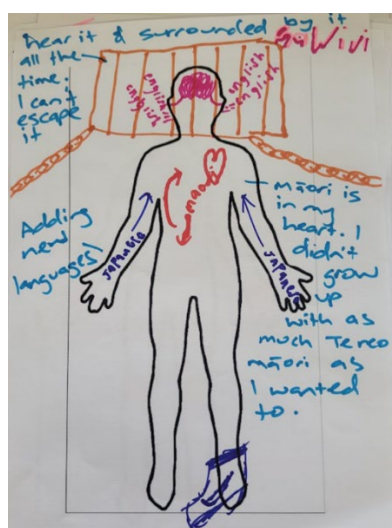


Fig. 3. Te Ariki's body language map from Session 5.

Like the much younger participants in Daly et al.’s study in an American context, these New Zealand secondary students demonstrated visually how the languages they speak occupy

their bodies, and the resulting metaphors reveal their attitudes to those languages. Te Ariki's image indicates a frustration with the ubiquitous place English occupies in his life, despite his efforts to develop his te reo Māori skills. It reflects the difficulties for minority language speakers to use their languages in everyday activities, despite their right to this activity (Ruíz). Ihaia was able to place all his languages, including Maths and Music, in his body, while revealing that it is Samoan that he carries in his blood. All his languages are able to be given space, reflecting perhaps the way that language is used in his life. Kahurangi's connection to Papatūānuku (the earth mother) illustrated language as a conduit for culture and belonging. The languages that the participants spoke occupied their bodies in a way that allowed them to connect to culture and form their identity (Lindfors); the languages dwelt in veins, joints, and organs.

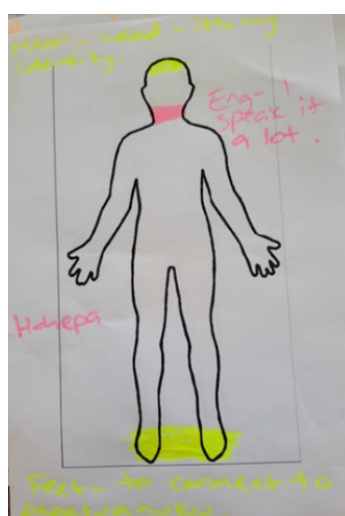


Fig. 4. Kahurangi's body language map from Session 5.

Language Awareness

Where's Halmoni? (Kim), written in Korean and English, is the story of two children who go in search of their grandmother (Halmoni) and encounter a variety of mythical creatures on their fantastical journey. In this picturebook, the theme identified by the researcher was language awareness, or the "understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in

thinking, learning, and social life” (Zaidi 270). Language awareness also encompasses an awareness of the way language can be used for power and control, and understands and welcomes the knowledge that culture and language have a nuanced and “intricate” relationship (Zaidi 271). Participants used the translanguaging of English and Korean to explore different aspects of language connected to their identity. They also used personal experience, combined with Korean orthography and visual references, to interpret the events of the book.

After reading *Where’s Halmoni?*, participants used the hangul orthography (the written form of Korean) to try and write their names. They quickly realised that some of their consonants and syllables did not exist, and they discussed what to do. One participant considered using another name to make it easier, although it was not for his benefit, but for others.

Manaia: I could use a different name?

Whaea Marama: Do you want to?

Manaia: Nah. I don’t care. (Field notes Sn. 4)

Again, like the younger American participants in earlier research (Daly et al.), the New Zealand secondary school participants showed awareness of other orthographies, and that the sounds contained in each symbol for that language may not overlap with those of his own. Therefore, Manaia considered making his name easier for others to pronounce, even though that would mean it would not sound right to him. When considered in conjunction with the importance given to names earlier in the article, this appears to be a powerful lesson about identity in the classroom, realised through developed theory of mind. The participant may be considering the difficulties for second-language learners and making the decision for his name to sound wrong by empathising that sometimes people cannot get it right. The participant is demonstrating control over his identity through the pronunciation of his name (Thomas and Samjose). The same theory of mind may consider that, in a classroom, students have every right

to expect those in authority to say their name right, and their inability to do so may have consequences for the visibility of their culture in the classroom.

While writing their names, the participants diligently sought to approximate the characters they were writing, demonstrating an appreciation of the importance of linguistic capital (Yosso 78). The hangul orthography also provided a safe place for participants to take the role of teacher, sharing information about their culture unbidden. During this time, one of the boys shared: “Did you know miss, before white people came to NZ Māori didn't have letters and sentences. They just used to do carving for their writing” (Manaia Sn. 4). The participant's comments reveal a sophisticated understanding of what language can be (Zaidi), and how it might be represented, as shown by the body language maps. The combination of culture and identity was strengthened by employing theory of mind to transfer that knowledge to other situations.

Participants were also able to use the verbal and visual images to give meaning to the story. When a rabbit appeared, participants returned to previous pages to look for meaning and discovered a ladder to the moon.

Manaia: Where's the rabbit come from? The ladder?

Tai: The moon.

Whaea Marama: Why? Who lives in the moon in western culture?

Tai: Oh, the man!

Whaea Marama: Yeah. What about for Māori?

Manaia: That lady. Rona. She yelled at the moon, and he took revenge.

Whaea Marama: In Japan and Korean culture rabbits live in the moon. (Field notes Sn. 4)

The conversation led to a discussion about a myth held in many cultures: that of someone (or something) living in the moon. The participants accepted the rabbit as a proxy for

Rona, the woman in Māori myth, by anthropomorphising the rabbit. The participants' knowledge of their own culture led to acceptance and understanding of others.

Students Are Curious and Respectful of Other Cultures and Language in DLB

The third key theme was curiosity and respect for cultures not the participants' own. This was particularly evident in student responses to *We Are Grateful* (Sorell and Lessac), which utilises Cherokee and English to tell the reader about a year in the life of the Cherokee Nation. A variety of events through the seasons are highlighted, such as the Cherokee New Year, planting strawberries, and remembering ancestors who perished on the Trail of Tears.

Whilst written mostly in English, key words and phrases are written in the Cherokee script, with pronunciation notes. The participants appreciated these, and tried to pronounce the words properly. As Kahurangi said, "They are translating to make sure we understand" (Sn. 4). Another participant noted that the font and size was different for the Cherokee words on each page, and they used them to learn how to pronounce the words. The end of the book contains the Cherokee orthography, which the participants were interested in. As with *Where's Halmoni?*, they tried to write their names, following the rules listed in the book. Participants' engagement with this aspect of the book showed they understood the importance of showing respect through correct pronunciation. As with the younger participants in Short et al.'s 2022 study, the participants paid close attention to the new language, rather than skipping over it.

The events illustrated in the picturebooks interested the participants. They made specific reference to family, working together, and to "brown faces" (Tai Sn. 4) like their own. This specific reference demonstrates that participants notice when they see faces that look like theirs. Participants also noted that "they speak their language at special events" (Tai Sn. 4), though this is not mentioned explicitly in the text. Participants are leveraging their understanding of where their language might be spoken, and employing that knowledge by empathising with how the Cherokee Nation people might also choose to celebrate, demonstrating sophisticated

“mind reading”, or using cues to understand the thoughts and feelings of others (Nikolajeva, “Picturebooks” 254). Whilst Nikolajeva suggests that young children *may* be capable of understanding the viewpoints of a character, the older participants demonstrated that they could consider their experiences when making meaning of characters in the book.

We Are Grateful also draws explicitly on the lived experiences of indigenous people and therefore places their lives and culture at the centre of the classroom. The comparisons that students drew with their own culture were not leveraged through a Western understanding, further acknowledging and strengthening the cultural wealth of both communities. Dual-language picturebooks provide a visual and verbal representation of these types of wealth, which are accessible, understood, and appreciated by secondary students.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the bilingual secondary school participants derived a great deal from their exposure to dual-language picturebooks, both in terms of their identity and their language awareness. This was summed up by Ihaia during the sixth and final session as follows:

I love dual language books a lot more now, when merging two languages it merges the culture, the art, music, and traditions, and opens a lot of space for that type of stuff giving a better perspective on the world. (Ihaia Sn. 6)

In all three of the texts discussed in this article, participants used theory of mind (Nikolajeva “Reading Other People’s Minds”) to engage with the dual-language picture books. Their understanding of their cultural identity allowed them to empathise with other cultures and identities. Being able to compare other cultures with their own gave participants confidence to share knowledge, and feel safe to explore the knowledge of others.

As shown in this discussion, the dual-language picture books prompted participants to explore how their identities were shaped, negotiated, and developed. These explorations

encompassed identity, awareness of language, and social justice issues of inequity and power, and empowered participants to use their own values to negotiate those discussions. Dual-language picture books gave the participants' community cultural wealth legitimacy and validation in a system that has historically oppressed and marginalised minorities (Yosso 74).

Further research might explore the use of dual-language picturebooks with female secondary school students in an Aotearoa New Zealand context, and might include dual-language picturebooks that deliberately contain the languages of all participants. Research inquiring into how dual-language picturebooks might best be used in secondary classrooms might also offer insights for teachers seeking to foster and sustain students' cultural and linguistic identities, especially when used with culturally sustaining pedagogy and growing the inclusion of community cultural wealth.

Siegler called identity “the voraciously powerful theory one has about oneself” (30). Further to this, Arizpe and Styles point to the work of Siegler, Cummins (*Negotiating Identities*), and McCarty to demonstrate that identity is key to learning. Finally, Nikolajeva (“Reading Other People’s Minds”) posits that the combination of languages and images can foster and develop theory of mind into adolescence. The research I conducted with secondary students and dual-language picturebooks demonstrates the participants employing theory of mind to make decisions and judgements about the value of their culture and identity, and the implications of how others might respond. The use of dual-language picturebooks can have powerful implications for identity and culture in classroom learning with New Zealand secondary students.

Notes

1. Dual-language book (DLB) refers to any book published partly or wholly in two or more languages. Bilingual or parallel texts have the complete text in two languages in one book.

Dual version books are separate versions of the same story in different languages, whilst books which switch between languages, weaving them together, are known as translingual, or interlingual (Barrett).

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