DUAL LANGUAGE PICTURE BOOKS: SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN’S ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING WHILE MAINTAINING THE HOME LANGUAGE

by

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ABSTRACT

This graduating paper explored the ways in which young children learn an additional language – in this case English, and the ways in which early childhood educators can support children’s English language learning. Research findings consistently show that children benefit from using their home language in education particularly in the early years. By including the child’s home language, the young learner is more likely to engage in the new language learning process. It gives children confidence and can help to affirm their identity. Thus, when introducing English to the child in an early childhood education classroom, it is vital that an additive model of language (i.e., both English and the child’s home language) is supported. The paper emphasizes the important role dual language picture books can play in supporting the child’s home language while also supporting the child’s English language learning. An annotated bibliography of ten dual language (English – Chinese) picture books suitable for children 3- to 8-years-of age were identified and included as a resource. A teaching strategy was suggested for each book for engaging young children in language activities aimed at supporting young children’s home language and English language learning.
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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

In the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia there are increasing numbers of English Language (EL) learners in all schools. Usually children who are at the beginning stages of learning English (Gibbons, 2002, p.1).

Early childhood education (ECE) in British Columbia (BC) faces the challenge of meeting the needs of increasing numbers of immigrant and refugee children who speak a language other than English (one of the two official languages of instruction in Canada – the other being French). In BC, 74.8% of children speak a home language (L1) other than English – the language of instruction at both early childhood settings and school (Statistics Canada, 2009).

Research underscores the importance of supporting children’s communicative competence with English in order for them to succeed academically. Supporting children’s communicative competence is also necessary for creating safe and caring environments for children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds as they learn English (Government of Alberta, 2009).

As a future early childhood educator, I understand the importance of maintaining two languages for children whose first language is not English (i.e., the home language L1 and English L2). I would like to study in more depth how to best support young children’s English language acquisition while maintaining their first language (L1 home language) in early childhood classroom settings. The purpose of this paper is to explore through the scholarly literature ways to create a better environment for children whose first language is not English to learn English as a new language, recognizing that language development affects young children’s sense of identity, overall development, and well-being.
The guiding questions for this project are:

- How can ECE teachers and caregivers support children’s English language learning while maintaining and developing the home language? and
- How can ECE teachers develop effective programming that enhances English language learning for young children whose first language is other than English?

Gibbons (2002) writes that in the past there have been two competing ideologies that framed the way educators view learning: 1) the transmission model of teaching and learning that posits the teacher as transmitting skills or knowledge into the empty mind of the learner. In this model language is simply the channel that carries knowledge; and, 2) the progressive model that places the learner at the center of the educational process. In this model, the child is seen as an active constructor of knowledge, with the teacher’s role as that of creating the learning opportunities. In this model the child’s language is seen primarily as a result of cognitive engagement and abilities. Both of these approaches view learning as an individual endeavor, that is, learning occurs within the individual (p. 11-13). However, there is an alternative model that is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1986). This theoretical model (sociocultural) emphasizes the social and collaborative nature of learning and language development in which learning occurs between individuals. Thus, sociocultural theory frames my study.

**Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism posits that individuals make sense of their world by being with and interacting with others (Vygostsky, 1986). In early childhood education context, social constructivism emphasizes that children’s learning relies on their participation in various social activities, that is, learning occurs in social environments through interaction with others in meaningful contexts (Vygostsky, 1986). Given that learning occurs in social interactions language
plays an essential role in learning. Language is the tool which connects what is being learned with the components of language such as words (e.g., key vocabulary), sentences and so forth. These components are combined during and through participation in social interactions as students engage in meaning-making (Vygotsky, 1986).

Vygotsky’s theory of social constructivism is built on two main principles: The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO).

**Zone of proximal development (ZPD)**

Vygostsky (1978) describes the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as:

The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

Thus, Vygotsky believes that under the guidance of a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and through appropriate assistance (or scaffolding) a learner will achieve mastery of a task.

In the literature the ZPD has become closely linked with the term scaffolding. Scaffolding is the term used to describe the process through which a teacher or MKO provides support to a student to work within her/his ZPD. As the student becomes more confident in completing tasks within the ZPD the scaffolding or support is gradually removed so that the student will be able to perform the task on her/his own (Vygostsky, 1978).

This learning process must be facilitated by an MKO. Dahms, Geonnotti, Passalacqua, Schilk, Wetzel, and Zulkowsky (2007) - write that the MKO is a person who has a better understanding than the learner regarding a particular task, concept or process. Often the MKO is the learner’s teacher, however, this is not always the case and occasionally it might be the learner’s peer(s) who are more knowledgeable and who perform the task of scaffolding a peer’s learning
with in the ZPD.

Gibbons (2015) suggests that the notion of the ZPD offers teachers a way to understand and enable learning, specifically when supporting young English language learners (ELL). That is, it is what teachers (MKO) choose to do in classrooms, and in particular the kinds of support (scaffolding) they provide, which is of crucial importance to the educational success of their students. The ZPD provides young ELL student with a learning context, that is slightly too hard for the student to do on their own, but simple enough for them to do with the assistance of a MKO. This framework helps early childhood educators to design English language learning opportunities for young children.

Gibbons (2015, P.15) offers the following example of scaffolding, in this case between parent (MKO) and child:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigel</th>
<th>try eat lid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>what tried to eat the lid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>try eat lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>what tried to eat the lid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>goat, man said no, goat try eat lid, man said no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>goat try eat lid, man said no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>why did the man say no?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>goat shouldn’t eat lid, (Shaking head) good for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>the goat shouldn’t eat the lid, it’s not good for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>goat try eat lid, man said no, goat shouldn’t eat lid, (Shaking head) good for it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gibbons writes that this example illustrates the ways in which Nigel’s father scaffolded Nigel’s initial three-word utterance into something much more complex. It also offers a way of thinking about the ways in which a teacher might structure opportunities for scaffolding young children’s English language learning. For example, during a picture book read aloud the teacher might illicit
the young students’ comments and through careful questioning scaffold these comments into more complex utterances regarding the picture book text or illustrations.

While the above section has outlined social constructivism as a framework for thinking about children’s learning and specifically the ways in which a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can scaffold children’s learning including English language learning, the next section will explore young children’s stages of learning English as a new language; how to create a supportive learning environment for young ELLs; and, the role of dual language picture books in supporting young children’s English language learning.
SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the theoretical perspectives and research findings from the review of literature relevant to this project. First, this literature review offers a description of the stages in young children learning English as a new language. Next it examines the ways in which Early Childhood Educators can create safe learning spaces for young English language learners, and finally, the role of bilingual picture books in young children’s language learning is explored.

**Stages in children’s learning English as a new language**

Children in Canada come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Many young immigrant children arrive in Canada speaking a language other than English. Other children, although born and raised in Canada, speak a language other than English in the home and with other family members (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). For these children, whose first language (L1) is not English, beginning pre-school or attending a childcare center means not only adjusting to the new routines and expectations of the pre-school or childcare center but also doing so in a largely unfamiliar language (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). Part of the role of an Early Childhood Educator (ECE), therefore, is considering how best to support and meet the needs of these young English language learners (ELLs).

Children go through a number of stages as they begin to learn English and it is vital that ECE understand: 1) what stage each child is at in the acquisition of English; and 2) how to support children to progress to higher stages.

The importance of learning English does not mean that the ECE teacher should require children to focus on English entirely and abandon all use of the child’s first language or languages. In fact, a solid body of research suggests that this is not the best way to proceed (Auerbach, 2016). A child’s first language contributes to the child’s identity awareness,
encourages ongoing development, and eases the social and emotional transition that occurs when the child begins school (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). At this initial stage, it is important for the school or childcare center and home to work together to support the continued development of the first language. This support is important for a number of reasons:

- A rich store of knowledge learned in the L1 transfers easily into the L2; for example, it is easier for a child to match objects or identify attributes if they can already do so in their L1.
- Reading and storytelling in the L1 models and strengthens literacy processes that can transfer to the L2.
- Children who see their previously developed skills acknowledged in their early learning settings are likely to feel more confident and take the risks involved in learning in their new environment. These children will see English (L2) as an addition to their first language (L1) rather than a substitute for the L1.
- Children who continue to develop a strong foundation in their first language as they learn other languages are well prepared for participating in a global society (Alberta Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8)

Additionally, it is important to remember that family relationships can weaken if children and parents do not share a common language of communication; therefore, it is essential that ECE professionals support the child’s home language. Such support includes encouraging parents and caregivers to:

- Provide opportunities for children to hear and use their first language at home and in the community;
- Find and share books in the child’s home language;
• Sing songs, recite rhymes and tell stories from the child’s culture in the home language;
• Play games from the child’s culture; and
• Take children to events where their home language is spoken and later discuss what took place with the children in their home language (Alberta Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 8).

In the pre-school or childcare setting, children quickly realize that using their home (L1) language may not be an effective means of communication and may enter a period where they rarely speak and use nonverbal means to communicate. However, this nonverbal period is in fact an active period of language learning. During this period the child is learning features, sounds and the vocabulary of the new language (receptive language) but not actually using the new language to communicate (Magruder, Hayslip, Espinosa, and Matera, 2013). During this silent period ECE professionals can support children’s learning through:

• Offering children multimodal ways to represent engagement and learning (e.g., music, movement and art);

• Providing many opportunities for children to engage with hands-on activities (e.g., water, snow, sand table all of which offer children opportunities to engage in inquiry about the qualities and attributes of these materials); and,

• Inviting children to participate by pointing to familiar objects (e.g., illustrations in picture books during read aloud events).

Following this period of absorbing the new language (English), the child begins to use the new language through telegraphic speech or what is sometimes referred to as headlines –phrases learned from other children or teachers for example, “Look it” to engage others in play. Espinoza (2010) writes that these phrases which children hear from others help them to achieve their social
goals. During this period when young ELL children are using telegraphic speech the ECE professional can support the children’s language learning through:

- Modelling (e.g., pointing to words in the text during read aloud events)
- Using explicit language to label actions as the teacher carries them out. For example, saying, “First I’m going to put this red block here. What should I put next?”
- Labeling the children’s actions in the same way as above;
- Verbalizing the teacher’s thinking (think aloud strategy) when solving a problem, for example, “Let’s see why this tower is falling down. Is it too tall? Let’s see what happens if we take the top block off.” This invites the children to begin problem solving strategies.
- Using language along with demonstration when introducing a new skill or concept. (Alberta Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 11).

In a supportive and inclusive environment, children can successfully begin to produce more complex language, this is referred to as the developing stage. In this stage, children begin to move from memorized sentences and phrases toward original and spontaneous English communication; however, errors in language usage are common during this period as children experiment with the new language and learn its rules and structures. Espinoza (2010) writes:

It is important for early childhood educators to understand that code switching (switching language for portions of a sentence) and language mixing (inserting single items from one language into another) are normal aspects of second language acquisition. This does not mean that the child is confused or cannot separate the languages. The main reason that children mix the two languages in one communication is because they lack sufficient vocabulary in one or both language to fully express themselves. (p. 5)
There is a great deal of variation in the time it takes for ELL children to develop age-appropriate English language proficiency. As discussed and outlined above, ECE teachers need to have diverse strategies aimed at supporting children’s language development at each stage. In addition, it is important that the ECE professional ensure that there is a collaborative relationship between home (caregivers) and school aimed at supporting the young child’s English development (Gestwicki, 2016). Thus language and language learning must be perceived as a dynamic cycle that requires teachers to build strong relationships with families and communities in order to promote and support children’ English learning – such relationships must be built on respect for young ELL children, the children’s parents, and the children’s cultures and home-languages. It is the responsibility of the ECE professional to provide a safe and comfortable environment for all children and families. Only then will parents feel free to share their information, situations or struggles with their child’s teachers and caregivers.

The next part of this literature review explores creating safe spaces for young ELL children.

Role of the learning environment for young ELL children

One aspect of the role of the early childhood professional is to consider how to best create supportive learning environment for all children including the language needs of English language learners. Worthington (2008) identifies three aspects of the classroom environment essential to meeting the needs of all young children, but particularly important for children for whom English is a second or additional language. These aspects of the classroom environment should:

- Reflect the children’s diversity (culturally and linguistically);
- Provide opportunities for children to interact with each other; and,
- Be rich in language (p. 6).
Reflecting children’s diversity. Overt acceptance and valuing of the diversity of all children in a childcare center is important. Worthington (2009) suggests that when children feel valued, they are likely to feel comfortable and motivated to engage in classroom activities. There are several ways that the classroom environment can positively reflect children’s linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For example, having books in multiple languages and “about objects and events that occur in various cultures and locations in the world” (Worthington, 2009, p.8). Additionally, having posters, pictures, props (dramatic play center), storybooks, music, musical instruments and the foods served in the center that reflect different cultures. Displaying children’s work including artwork, illustrates that children’s work is valued and illustrates to families that the contributions their children make to the classroom environment are appreciated.

ECE professionals can convey acceptance and value through their positive interactions with all children, -Worthington writes,

Through interactions the teacher is expressing and demonstrating that everyone has something important to say and contribute to the entire class and to each other. Providing opportunities for the children to interact with other children and adults who speak the same first language, if possible, and with children who speak on English is another way of expressing value for the ELL’s first language. (p. 8).

Finally, it is important to remember that all young children, even in early childhood settings with homogenous populations, benefit from classroom environments that encourages or enables them to:

- Value linguistic and cultural diversity;
- Enrich their store of cultural knowledge; and
- Expand their world view and understand perspectives and experiences of people whose
background is different from their own. (Coelho, 2012, p. 166)

**Provide opportunities for interaction.** In order to become proficient in English, English language learners need many opportunities to interact in social and learning situations. In the early childhood years, play is the vehicle for children’s cognitive, social and language learning, and, as such, ECE professionals should promote play as the primary activity for young children in their care, as “The relationship between language development and play is two-way: Language makes it possible for children to adopt roles, and to negotiate the rules and goals of play. Dramatic or pretend play stimulates the development of language” (Government of Alberta, 2009, p. 10).

Haynes (2015) notes that play allows young children to construct knowledge in ways that meet their individual needs and interests, which she argues can build a stronger foundation for later learning. Some of the benefits of interactive play activities which are considered particularly important in supporting young ELLs suggested by Haynes (2015) are as follows:

- Oral language practice
- Using new words many times in different contexts
- Social/emotional learning through role play
- Imaginative pretend play—a precursor to symbolic reasoning
- Exploration and observation
- Hands-on, multimodal learning
- Multiple media, including visuals and props
- Constructive, collaborative activities
- Telling and retelling stories and play themes
- Vocabulary development in context of authentic experiences
- Opportunities for multi-age, multi-language, and multi-ability groups that expose children
To support these types of play activities it is essential to equip the early childhood setting with materials that foster opportunities for rich language in both the home language (L1) and English.

The research of Fassler (1998) found that kindergarten ELL students’ interactions with peers during episodes of play supported their oral English production. Fassler (1998) identified that the children in the study used a variety of communicative strategies including gestures, code switching and re-phrasing to interact with different-language peers. Additionally, as the children engaged in episodes of cooperative play they extended each other’s conversations by requesting elaboration and clarification. Piker (2013) also noted the ways in which play supported young ELLs’ English language development. However, Picker’s research suggests that optimal English language development occurs in mixed-language groupings. This finding implies that children should be encouraged to form mixed language groupings for play activities.

**Language rich environment.** A rich language learning environment strives to expose children to high quality language in many forms. Children’s exposure to language should be meaningful, deliberate and engaging. Thus, a language rich early childhood setting fosters all aspects of language, for example, a classroom library and a dramatic play center. Reutzel and Clark (2011) write that the hub of an effective literacy classroom is the classroom library and that it must be stocked with a variety of engaging reading materials that represent the diversity of the children in the classroom. The books in the classroom library should be changed often and include books on themes/units that children are engaged with (e.g., Plants). Regular read alouds of these books will provide children with the key vocabulary for that theme/unit. For example, a unit on *Plants* might include the key vocabulary seed, root, stalk, leaves, flower. Books on this topic might include: Lois Ehlert’s *Growing Vegetable Soup* (1987) which can be found as a dual language edition.
As discussed above, children can learn much from each other. A dramatic play center not only contributes to children’s cognitive, intellectual and emotional development, it can also foster and promote language development. To facilitate children’s dramatic play, the early childhood professional can provide play scenarios and materials that encourage young children to talk. For example, providing children with the props and materials for an outdoor garden center will help children use the special and technical vocabulary of a garden center.

Finally, it is important for the early childhood educator to engage often with children to model language and to encourage children to talk about their learning experiences.

**Dual language (bilingual) picture books**

As discussed above, the premise of fostering ELL children’s English language acquisition is to create a supportive learning environment. Additionally, the materials provided to young ELLs are an important factor that impacts young children’s English language learning. Dual language books (sometimes called bilingual books) -- books that are written in two languages, typically English on one page and another language on the adjacent page (Daly, 2016). can both support and enrich the language and literacy development of young ELL students. Semingson, Pole, and
Tommerdahl (2015) write that dual language books or bilingual books can provide cultural and linguistic support for young language learners while supporting the maintenance of the home (L1) language (p. 133). The authors write:

Bilingual texts can expose all students to culturally relevant reading that provides opportunities for students to see themselves reflected in what they read, to look into other cultures that may be quite different from their own, and to step into the place of others in a vicarious experience with books set in new place and with new cultures. (Semingson, Pole, & Tommerdahl, 2015, p. 133).

In full-text translations, the whole story is presented in two languages. While both languages are usually placed on one page, or facing pages, sometimes a different ink color or type face is used to call attention to the different languages. Other dual language books tell a story in one language with some words and phrases from the second language added or embedded. Sometimes when the second language words are embedded they are introduced alongside the first language counterpart. For examples, Julie Flett’s *Wild Berries* (2013), which tells the story of a young boy and his grandmother picking wild blueberries is written in English with Cree words introduced.
Dual language picture books are books which not only tell stories or give information in two languages, but also place illustrations (images) alongside or between the language texts. It can be argued, therefore, that dual language picture books tell a story or give information in 3 ways: through two languages and the language of the images. Thus, these dual language picture books are more appropriate with young English language learners since the young ELL reader can rely on the illustrations (images) and the context of the story to support the language learning. An example, of this is Dedie King’s *I see the sun in China*. This story is told through both Chinese and English and also through the wonderful illustrations.
However, there are a number of questions concerning how to best use dual picture books in the early childhood education setting. Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne, and Pfitscher (2012), identify several challenges faced by early childhood education professionals wishing to include dual language picture books in their practice including:

- locating culturally relevant stories
- how best to engage young ELL children with dual language picture books; and
- developing strategies to support language learning (p. 22)

These challenges will be tackled in the next section:

- Choosing dual language picture books appropriate for sharing with young children whose L1 language is Chinese;
- Teaching strategies for engaging young ELL students whose L1 is Chinese.

**Summary**

In Chapter 2, I described the stages involved in children’s learning English as a new language. ELL Children experience a number of stages as they begin to learn English. It is
significant that ECE professionals realize what stage each child is at in the acquisition of English and how to support children in moving to higher stages. Also, this chapter discussed the role of the learning environment for young ELL. In order to best create supportive learning environment, early childhood educators acknowledge and address children’s diversity. Only by doing this, teachers can provide appropriate opportunities for interaction with children from different background. Moreover, it is important for educators to create a language rich environment. Using dual language picture books not only helps young ELL understand content better, it also benefits children learn English (L2) while maintain their L1 language.
SECTION 3: CONNECTIONS TO PRACTICE

Since I am a Chinese speaker educator and work primarily with Chinese L1 children and families, I have chosen to explore a range of dual language books written in both English and Chinese. In this way, I hope to both maintain the child’s home L1 language as well as support the child’s English language learning. In this section I focus on strategies for using high quality dual language picture books in order to support early childhood educators’ practice. Through using dual picture books, teachers can effectively promote young children English learning while maintaining and valuing children’s first language.

Dual language picture books consist of text in two languages as well as illustrations, with both text and illustrations/images playing a significant role in telling the story or providing information. According to Vacca and Vacca (2011), “picture books produce a variety of meaning because the illustrations enhance the story, clarify and define concepts, and set a tone for the words” (p. 52). Thus, illustrations or images in the picture book provide children with much information that is equally available to both native speakers of English as well as children who are learning English. That is, the illustrations provide English language learners (ELLs) with “contextual clues to construct content area meaning in a language they [have] not fully master[ed]” (Rubinstein-Ávila, 2003, p. 130). This suggests that picture books (that provide visual scaffolding) should be part of the early childhood education classroom and part of the early childhood educators’ literacy teaching practices.

If, as argued here, sharing high-quality dual language books is a vital factor in supporting ELL children’s language and content development, it is important to identify appropriate picture books to share with young ELLs. Harper (2016) suggests that in choosing a high quality picture book a teacher should consider:
[The] literary elements (plot, character, setting, theme, and style), visual elements (line, color, shape, texture, and composition), artistic style (realistic, abstract, folk or cartoon), and artistic medium (pen and ink, pastels, pencil, collage, woodcut, old paints, watercolors, or photographs) consistent with high-quality children’s literature (P.82).

As discussed earlier, it is important to include young children’s home languages in the classroom, dual language pictures respect the child’s home language while introducing English and when shared by a skilled early childhood educator can support children’s English language learning and information/concept learning that ELLs need to keep learning new and more difficult concepts while they are developing their new English skills.

**Annotated bibliography of dual language (bilingual English – Chinese) picture books for children aged 3- to 8-years-of-age.**

As a teacher who will be working primarily with young ELLs for whom Chinese is their L1, I am interested in developing a set of dual language picture books resource (Chinese – English) that respects these young ELLs first language (Chinese) while supporting their English language learning. In the following section, I present dual language picture books (Chinese – English) appropriate for sharing with young children whose L1 language is Chinese. I also include suggestions for language activities for each book.

To create this list of quality dual language books for supporting the English language learning of L1 Chinese speaking children. I examined, analyzed and evaluated a range of picture books before identifying the following 10 children’s picture books which I judged to be of good quality based on the literacy elements, visual elements, artistic style, and art medium as outlined by Harper (2016). The themes in these books are appropriate for children from 3- to 8-years-of age, many highlight important cultural symbols, such as the chopsticks, the dragon, the Great Wall,
Shaolin Temple, Mulan and images of an emperor as leader – these are familiar cultural elements for young Chinese children and it is expected that they will be able to build a vocabulary of these words in English.

When searching for dual language books (English – Chinese), the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) was very helpful. The VPL is dedicated to supporting Vancouver residents’ lifelong learning, reading and information needs. It offers abundant books, magazines, videos, and activities for different age groups including children, adolescent, parents and elders. VPL is one of best resource for supporting teachers and caregivers in assisting children’s English language learning. VPL provides not only abundant children’s books for reading, but also helps in finding the high quality books that are adequate for the child. It is an essential resource to early childhood educators, teacher and parents.


   **Age: Preschool and Kindergarten**

![Cover of Summertime Rainbow](image)

This is a lovely picture book that focuses on the simple concept of color. It tells the story of some
rabbits that observe the blue sky, white clouds and lush green grass.

Activity: While reading aloud this picture book have the children identify any colors that they recognize in the illustrations. Collect these words and write them in both Chinese and English with objects in nature that illustrate the color. Pin this poster on the classroom bulletin board.


Age: Preschool and Kindergarten

This book identifies and celebrates springtime. It invites young children to count eggs and goslings and to explore the natural world in springtime.
Activity: While reading aloud this picture book have the children count the number of birds on each age and discuss what the children recognize in the illustrations. In small groups invite the children to create nests using sticks, moss and feathers. Ask the children describe their nests (language switching between Chinese and English) and decide how many eggs they will create out of playdough to put into the nests. The nests will be part of a display of Spring.

Hop on Pop is a book published as part of the Random House Beginner Books series, and is subtitled "The Simplest Seuss for Youngest Use". It contains several short poems about a variety of characters, and is designed to introduce basic phonics concepts for children. This lively picture book can be used to teach young children in kindergarten or preschool phonemic awareness a skill considered essential in reading. Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice and hear the individual sounds in words. Hop on Pop offers an opportunity for teaching young ELL learners to hear the sounds in words by recognizing and hearing the rhymes in the book and then practicing this skill by producing their own simple rhymes.

**Activity:** After several readings of Hop on Pop and demonstrating several examples of rhyming pairs, ask students if they can name a rhyming pair in English.


**Age:** Preschool and Kindergarten

Caterpillar longs to be able to fly. He envies Bumblebee’s wings, and he wishes he could soar through the air like a bird. But all he can do is crunch and munch his way through a blackberry
bush.

**Activity:** Before reading, invite children to describe what they see in the front cover of the picture book and ask:

- Do you think the caterpillar can fly or not?”
- Why do you think that?

Following a read aloud of the book ask the children:

- Why do you think Butterfly smiled at Caterpillar?

The purpose of these questions is to have young students begin to infer from the story and illustrations and to express their ideas in both Chinese and in English (language switching).


**Age: Preschool and Kindergarten.**

This classic picture book for young children is now available in a Chinese – English dual...
language edition. The predictable rhyme and beautiful tissue-paper collage illustrations make this picture book a favorite with young children.

**Activity:** During a read aloud, children can be invited to join in when they become familiar with the predictable text. The children may be invited to predict and name each animal as it is introduced. I invite the children to make the sound the animal makes or move like the animal. For example, Brown Bear might have a very loud, growly voice, and Purple Cat may “meow” as she says, “I see a white dog looking at me.” Brown Bear might have big, slow movements, while Purple Cat might use a paw to wash herself.


**Age:** Preschool and kindergarten

![I Can Eat with Chopsticks](image)

This traditional tale tells of the day Xiao Mo brought home a piece of bamboo stick that she picked up from the forest. The little bamboo stick helped Xiao Mo’s mother to pick out vegetables from a bowl of hot soup, helped Xiao Mo to gather the remaining rice in her bowl, and helped Xiao Mo’s father to stir eggs. However, the capable little bamboo stick felt helpless when
he tried to pull out noodles from a bowl and so Xiao Mo found him a helper. With two bamboo sticks working together, they were able to cut buns into halves, pick up vegetables and do many other chores. With father's help, the two bamboo sticks had a new look and overtime, they became today's well-known chopsticks!

This is a wonderful book to introduce chopsticks, which have been used as kitchen and eating utensils in virtually all of East Asia for thousands of years.

**Activity:** After reading this book, children will be given chopsticks and encouraged to explain in English how to use chopsticks. Children will be put into groups and encouraged to use the chopstick to pick up different objects. During both the reading and the activity, children will be encouraged to use basic words and phrases in both Chinese and English.


**Age:** Primary

*The Little Monkey’s Journey* is a colorful storybook based on the *Journey to the West*. folk
tales and myths depict traditional cultural ideals and distant stories of life. Because these stories are so popular with and familiar to Chinese people, they are ideal for Chinese ELLs.

**Activity:** When reading, discuss graphics and their meaning. Why did the illustrator choose this graphic device, and how does it add to the story? How many characters in this book? Have you ever heard about *Journey to the West*? Is there any difference between these two stories? These questions encourage children to enjoy deep thinking and open-minded expression. Teachers can build a firm foundation of enjoying English reading that will last a lifetime.


Age: Primary grades.

The story of Mulan tells the legendary tale of a woman warrior from the Northern and Southern dynasties period of Chinese history. Inspired by a real legendary figure, Hua Mulan, people believe that the origins of this story are from a poem written about her, titled *The Ballad of Mulan.* Hua Mulan takes her aged father's place in the army. Mulan fought for twelve years and gained high merit, but she refused any reward and retired to her hometown.

**Activity:** This story of Mulan can help kindergarten and primary aged children explore gender
roles. In the famous scene of Mulan’s transformation from a young woman to a young man, Mulan is shown cutting her hair and putting on her father’s armor before going to war. The following question can be used to lead discussion about gender roles in ancient China:

- In Mulan’s community, how were girls and women expected to behave? Brainstorm and record children’s responses.

- Are these expectations the same in our community? What is similar and what is different? Record children’s ideas on a ‘T’ chart (Same – Different).

Through these questions, children are encouraged to think about gender roles deeply. Gender stereotypes are culturally ingrained ideas about appropriate behaviors for males and females. Dual language books, such as Mulan, can influence children’s views on gender in the 21st century. Children’s English learning can be supported with rich language environment that tackles issues such as gender identity through a good quality dual language book that opens up important issues followed by respectful discussion.


**Age: Primary.**
This book is an imaginative story about time travel. A boy of today and a Little Emperor from the past find adventure together in the Forbidden City. On a visit to the Forbidden City, Xiao Ming loses his father. He sees a small gate and after going through it he is transported back in time to the days of China’s last emperor Puyi. The boy emperor shows Ming his favorite parts of the city. Ming described the airplanes and cars of the future and the Little Emperor shows Ming his treasures before Ming is transported back to his own time.

The Forbidden Palace, an iconic building in China, is a former Chinese imperial palace from the Ming dynasty to the end of the Qing dynasty.

**Activity:** This is a wonderful book to explore the ancient buildings in the Forbidden City and ancient Chinese culture. It offers an opportunity for teaching young ELLs to recognize the difference between old and modern Chinese buildings. In groups I would have children explore copies of the illustrations from the book and ask them to identify the differences between the ancient world of China and the modern day world of China. Children would be encouraged to express their ideas in Chinese, English and through drawing/representing.


**Age: Kindergarten and Primary**
This beautifully illustrated dual language, multicultural children's picture book follows Ming as he discovers the birth of Kung Fu. After Xiao Ming participates in a martial arts exercise at school, his parents take him on a trip to the Shaolin Temple—the birth-place of Kung Fu—in the central Henan Province of China. The temple is situated in the forests of Shaoshi Mountain, one of the seven mountains of Song Mountains. With a history of over 1,500 years, the grand Shaolin Temple has precious stone-carvings in its many buildings. At the Warrior Monks School (Wuseng Yuan), sees monks practicing Kung Fu and jumps in to learn some martial arts skills.

Activity: Teacher read-aloud help students learn new words and ideas. In this case, vocabulary associated with the ancient culture of China. Following a read aloud, students will be encouraged to talk about their impression of the Shaolin Temple.

- In groups students will be asked to identify and share 5 words that describe the Shaolin Temple in both English and Chinese. Students will share these words and the teacher will record them on a ‘T’ chart – English word on one side and the Chinese word on the other side.
Summary

This section has identified a range of dual language picture books to use in the early childhood education classroom (preschool to grade 3) and has provided some activities to support young children’s (3- to 8-year-old) English language development, while being respectful of the child’s home language, the stages of second language development, and the rich ECE environments is identified in Section 3.
SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS

This graduating paper explored the ways in which young children learn an additional language – in this case English, as well as the ways in which early childhood educators can support children’s English language learning. Research findings consistently show that children benefit from using their home language in education particularly in the early years. By using the child’s home language, the young learner is more likely to engage in the learning process. It gives children confidence and can help to affirm their identity (Shin, 2010). Thus, when introducing English to the child in the early childhood education classroom, it is vital that is an additive model of language (i.e., both English and the child’s home language are supported), and not what Garcia (2003) refers to as a subtractive model (i.e., substituting English for the home language).

This paper is rooted in a theory of social constructivism and the zone of proximal development (ZDP). Social constructivism provides a framework for thinking about children’s learning and specifically the ways in which a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can scaffold children’s learning including English language learning. Children go through a number of stages as they begin to learn English. It is vital that ECE professionals understand what stage each child is at in the acquisition of English; and how to support children to progress to higher stages. In the hands of a skills teacher, dual language books can support children’s English language acquisition.

Ten children’s dual language (English – Chinese) picture books were identified. The approximate age for which each book is appropriate was identified and a teaching strategy was suggested for engaging young children (3- to 8-years-of age) in additive language activities aimed at both supporting young children’s home language while supporting the young children’s English language learning.
**Recommendations**

ECE teachers and caregivers are eager to support children’s English language learning. The study for this paper showed the importance of maintaining the child’s first language. Parents are the best role models for children to develop strong L1 skills such as vocabulary, proper grammar, and natural communication skills. Early childhood educators can recommend to parents to speak their native languages with their children and to read dual language picture books at home.

Teachers can create rich learning environments where development of diverse languages thrives; and where there is an awareness and acceptance of each child’s stage of the development of the second language. Finally, it is important for the early childhood educator to engage often with children to model language and to encourage children to talk about their learning experiences.

How to best create a language rich environment for young children whose first language is not English should be a continuous challenge to teachers. Faced with technology development, early childhood professionals have to consider how to best use contemporary resources to create a high quality environment for language learning. Teachers should pay attention when choosing reading materials and pedagogy. I sincerely appeal to professionals in this field to pay attention to this area of research. It is vital for educators to work closely with researchers and to thoughtfully support the development young children ELL.
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