

Selecting high quality dual language texts for young children in multicultural contexts: A UAE case

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Bilingual literature for children is valuable in encouraging literacy in second language learners. Stories can enhance vocabulary and language abilities, learning encounters, subject content, social aptitude, and other skills in the early reader through text as well as illustrations. This paper explores issues in selecting quality dual language picture books with the aim of deepening understanding of what is meant by 'quality' dual language books, in terms of text quality, specifically translation accuracy, cultural relevance and book information. Four English/Arabic bilingual children books were evaluated by three raters from different backgrounds. A mixed method approach was followed to combine qualitative evaluations of these books with quantitative scores based on inter-rater reliability. Findings highlight the importance of interplay between picture and verbal text in picture books, urging educators to give more explicit attention to illustrations in any evaluation of text quality in picture books.

Introduction

All children appreciate stories. They create fascinating pictures in their minds when engaged with a story. Storytelling is common to all societies. For centuries stories have formed children's characters by conveying numerous social, moral and social norms. Since early childhood education is also concerned with teaching values and morals, storytelling becomes a critical pedagogical tool for instilling values, morals and citizenship (Zavan, 2010). Teachers can exploit stories and narration in any lesson to improve information development and knowledge processing (Hanlon, 2000).

Storytelling is a very beneficial teaching strategy because it widens children's knowledge, social activities and cultural convictions. Stories also strengthen the bond between teachers and students (Zavan, 2010). Children's books are important because a child's love for books leads to greater verbal skills, increased literacy, higher levels of self-confidence, clearer opinions, and stronger ability for critical thinking (Hanlon, 2000). Books can even help children in adverse environments to adapt better to their surroundings. Using tales to teach is practical and engaging as well as educationally advantageous.

This paper seeks to explore issues in selecting quality dual language picture books for young children. The main aim of the current study is to deepen understanding of what is meant by a 'quality' dual language book in terms of text quality, in particular translation accuracy, cultural relevance and book information. It builds on two previous related studies (Dillon, Hojeij, Perkins & Malkawi, 2018; Huang & Chen, 2016). Huang & Chen (2016) evaluated English/ Chinese dual language picture books and found that the thirty-one Chinese texts they analysed lacked quality overall in comparison with the English

texts under the four criteria they explored (text appearance, language effects, book information and translation accuracy). Dillon et al. (2018) evaluated twenty-four English/Arabic dual language picture books under the same four criteria, adding cultural relevance as a fifth criterion. Their study found that text appearance and language effects were of similar quality across both languages, English and Arabic, in the books they analysed. However, deficiencies were noticed in relation to the quality of translation accuracy, cultural relevance and book information across both languages.

In order to deepen understanding of what is meant by a quality dual language picture book, the three critical areas of translation accuracy, cultural relevance and book information will be explored in the literature review.

It should be noted that this paper is written in the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The books explored were chosen because they are available in the Curriculum Resource Center and the Early Childhood Learning Center of the federal institution where the authors are employed, similarly to Dillon et al.'s 2018 study.

Literature review

As our world is getting smaller and closer due to globalisation, most countries have become multicultural melting pots where people from all ethnic backgrounds, religions, and languages co-exist in one place. Bilingual literature for children is ever more important in such contexts, because it allows readers to evaluate their own place in the world through connecting with books. Bilingual books, or dual language books, are available in various genres and age groups and involve translations from one language to another (Semingson, Pole & Tommerdahl, 2015). It is fundamental for children to have access to books which are culturally and linguistically correct, so they can understand their place in the world.

Young bilingual readers need affirmation and education in both their languages. They need to see themselves in both languages, as culture and language contribute to identity formation. When bilingual children can relate to both languages at home and at school, they flourish. Bilingual literature provides many learning opportunities based on students' experiences within their bilingual world.

In their study discussing the benefits of using bilingual books in classrooms where English is a second language, Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern (2003) indicated that since the mid 1980s, an expanding number of bilingual and multilingual books have been published the United States. Although most bilingual books target the large Latino population in America, US publishers are starting to deliver small numbers of storybooks in other languages such as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Urdu. These books come in diverse formats and arrangements which are controlled by adjusting and adapting the content and illustrations. Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern (2003) listed five specific bilingual book formats:

1. Books with the whole text in two languages;
2. Books distributed in various adaptations for every language;
3. Books that switch between languages;
4. Books in English, scattered with words or expressions in another language;
5. Books accessible just in a language other than English.

When choosing bilingual books for the classroom, there are several critical attributes to consider. Components that should be analysed closely include the plan of the book (e.g. one part in one language, the following in another), distribution origin (e.g. business, imported, or interpretations in which messages in another language are embedded, notwithstanding the English content), design (e.g., one language at the top, the photo in the centre, the other language at the base), and quality of production, (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003).

Using bilingual books can provide cultural and linguistic assistance for language learners. Bilingual books can be used for language and literacy learning, preservation of the native language, and also to provide students with culturally relatable experiences. They can provide students with opportunities to see themselves reflected in what they read, to investigate different societies that might be very unique in relation to their own, and venture into the place of others in an empathetic involvement with books set in new places and new societies. This mirrors, windows, and doors framework is at the core of educating in ways that show regard and acknowledgment, while giving rich social encounters through books (Semingson, Pole & Tommerdahl, 2015; Botelho & Rudman, 2010).

Semingson, Pole, and Tommerdahl (2015) offered descriptions of four common formats for bilingual books for children used in their own Spanish-English context of the US. These formats are: 1) full-text translations, 2) single-language translations, 3) embedded text, and 4) concept bilingual books. To explain further, full-text translations place both languages on one page or on opposing pages presenting the whole story in both languages. Sometimes, an illustration separates the two languages or different fonts; or colours are used to highlight the difference between languages. In single-text translations, books are published entirely in one language with whole book translation into another language. At times these translations are simultaneous while sometimes the original publication precedes the translation. Furthermore, embedded texts tell a story in one language with some words or phrases added from the second language (similarly to those explored in Al Bataineh and Gallagher, 2018). These books rely on illustrations to aid with the switching between the two languages. Finally, concept bilingual books use two languages to focus on one theme. For example, a concept book about colours would have illustrations of the items in a specific colour and the name of the colour in the two focus languages.

Translation accuracy

Bilingual books provide learners with opportunities for self-reliance as they are able to understand second language text with less support (Whiteside, 2007). “The presence of two languages offers scaffolding for the learning of children from minority communities; it also offers the possibility to increase the awareness of language of *all* children, including monolingual English speakers” (Edwards, Monaghan & Knight, 2000, p.140). As such, the quality of translation is a very important consideration for the success of a bilingual book; however, it has been somewhat neglected (Hadaway & Young, 2014; Edwards & Walker, 1996). Translation accuracy is a challenging area that raises various concerns.

When it comes to critiquing bilingual books, Walker, Edwards and Blacksell (1996) identified three main categories for evaluation: 1) typography, 2) production, and 3) language. Typography is concerned with the visual balance of the two scripts in the book. Second, production has to do with the quality of the two scripts to ensure they are equally important. Finally, language deals with the translation accuracy and accessibility of the non-English text. The translated text should match the original in terms of reading level and formality of language.

With that said, there are various aspects of translation accuracy that must be tackled in more detail. Studies indicate that non-English texts must be the same reading level as the English texts. In addition, the texts should match in formality to make the translation accurate (Salas et al, 2002; Walker, Edwards & Blacksell, 1996). For example, when children’s books written in colloquial language are translated into a more formal language, it creates confusion and ambiguity for the readers.

In order to avoid uncertainty, it is important to consider who translates and what type of translation to follow, word-for-word or meaning-for-meaning translation. While some mainstream publishers may not be aware of the sensitivity of translation accuracy, smaller community publishers can be more so, particularly as translation might be dialect-specific. However, as most children’s literature is published mainstream, publishers should rely on translators who are familiar with children’s literature. Not anyone who is bilingual can translate a children’s book. Accurate translation requires language skills that can guarantee that the translated work parallels the original in terms of tone, content and language functions (Edwards & Walker, 1996).

Authors, publishers, and translators must decide whether to use word-for-word or meaning-for-meaning translation. A verbatim translation is helpful for vocabulary acquisition in the second language, but the meaning might become affected. They might not conserve the integrity of the text in terms of idioms, culture, humour and word choice required to communicate the intent of the story as authentically and accurately as possible. These translations can also be affected by the design and layout of the book and text may be shortened and changed to suit the aesthetics of the book (Hadaway & Young, 2014). So, while word-for-word translations are linguistically accurate, they are stylistically unsound. However, a translation meaning-for-meaning will affect the exact phrasing of

the text but ensures that the essence of the text is preserved (Baker, 1995). For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that as translation of children's literature can be problematic, equivalency between Arabic and English texts may not be achieved (Dillon, Hojeij, Perkins & Malkawi, 2018).

In conclusion, high quality bilingual literature with accurate translation provides children with the chance to read the world around them and gives them confidence to write their own stories. Not only does bilingual children's literature bridge together two languages, but also it connects the two parts of children's lives and identities.

Cultural relevance

When considering the criterion of cultural relevance, the checklist in Dillon et al. (2018) proposed ratings of excellent (reflecting children's cultural identities and literary heritage very well), good (reflect reflecting children's cultural identities and literary heritage moderately well), fair (including references to or pictures from a known culture, but not the local culture), and poor (including pictures of or references to aspects that are not appropriate in the culture). While these ratings are appropriate at one level, local cultural relevance, they might not be appropriate for a broader sense of cultural relevance. Blackledge (2000) highlighted that the best types of dual language books are those which are written from the perspective of the home culture and translated into English, rather than vice versa, because it helps to make the books more culturally relevant. However, Dillon et al. (2018) noted that it is difficult to say which cultures should in fact be represented in dual language books in the UAE context. This is due to the particular cultural context of both expatriate children and Emirati children in the UAE. They highlight the need for further exploration of this area in the UAE context.

Williams and Haag (2012) referred to a number of presentations made at the 2011 Children's Literature Assembly Workshop, as it investigated cultural contexts and related issues in children's literature. Nikki Grimes, Jenny Han, Julia Kuo and Kathy Short made some interesting comments that are cited by the above-mentioned authors. Of relevance to the present study is the issue that Nikki Grimes cautioned against beliefs commonly held by teachers and librarians, that books about a particular culture are only appropriate for children from that particular culture (Williams & Haag, 2012).

On one hand, Han mentions that when she was a young reader, she 'searched for characters who looked like her but did not find them' (Williams & Haag, 2012, p. 54). On the other hand, Ommundsen noted that 'children's literature is affected by globalization and changes in society' (2011, p. 33). The tension between the two binaries of representing the local culture and representing diversity gives pause for reflection. As Ommundsen (2011) asked whether it is possible to find a cosmopolitan attitude in Norwegian children's literature, it is appropriate that in the context of the UAE we should consider the same thing. Furthermore, Ommundsen asked whether children's literature could 'mirror a shift from a monocultural society towards a multicultural society' (2011, p. 35). The cosmopolitan openness to otherness is worth considering.

Kathy Short highlighted three aspects of multicultural literature - accuracy, authenticity, and representation. One observation she made is that 'literature must reflect a picture of a culture that not only affirms an insider's perspectives but also allows those from another culture to identify with and value the cultural similarities and differences' (Williams & Haag, 2012, p. 55). Sometimes inaccuracies or stereotypes in books might not ring true for insiders, as specific images (text or illustration) of a culture might be over-represented. Kathy Short's recommendation of never sharing a book on its own but instead always in relation to others rings true in this case (Williams & Haag, 2012). Ulu and Bayraktar (2014) concurred by saying that stories in picture books should not present a single viewpoint.

Book cover information

When we are about to buy or read a book, we usually look at the information given on the back cover (Gea Valor, 2005). This book information is therefore of importance to any consumer of a book, and in the context of dual language picture books where the reader of the book might speak only one of the two languages, it is of particular importance. Furthermore, in the context of dual language picture books, the intended audience is a child. However, in many circumstances, particularly educational contexts, the child will not be the one who chooses to purchase the book in the first place. Therefore, it is of crucial importance that the book information is sufficiently informative to the person responsible for purchasing the book or reading the book with emergent readers.

The term 'blurb' is often used to describe book information as a short description on the back cover of a book (nder, 2013). The contents of blurbs may vary depending on the intended audience. However, they tend to describe the contents of a book, as well as evaluating and recommending a book by including extracts from reviews in well-known publications (Gea Valor, 2005). Essentially, blurbs can be seen as marketing strategies encouraging potential customers to buy and read a book. All in all, blurbs have a persuasive function as well as an informative function (nder, 2013; Gea Valor, 2005). This is of relevance to anyone purchasing a dual language picture book for children.

Blurbs are structured in certain ways that may vary depending on purpose or discipline. Bhatia (2004) suggested a six-move schema of blurb structure to include 'headlines, justifying the book, appraising the book, establishing credentials, endorsements, and targeting the market' (cited in nder, 2013, p. 174). However, Gea Valor (2005) suggested a three-move schema including description, evaluation, and information about the author. Crucially to the present study, nder (2013) found that cross-cultural variation in the generic structure of blurbs is not high. His study showed that in the Turkish context (in comparison with the UK context), authors are usually praised in print and telecommunication media rather than in blurbs. He explained this by noting that poor reading habits are common in Turkey and therefore blurbs as persuasive writing need to be supplemented by other media. nder (2013) also cited Kathpalia's 1997 work, which suggested that blurbs in the Singaporean context are more inclined to indicate the value of the book rather than an evaluation of the book.

With that said, we must also consider similarities and differences in rating children's literature due to reviewer variances. According to Wilson and Bishop (1998), reviewing children's literature requires disciplined guidance by specific criteria in order to ensure reliability among reviewers. In this study, reviewers followed Dillon et al.'s (2018) checklist (see Appendix A), thus leaving little room for subjectivity and personal preference.

Method

This study extends findings from a previous qualitative study which saw two researchers from the team critically evaluate the text quality of 24 dual language picture books (Dillon et al., 2018). The current paper takes a more mixed approach, by combining qualitative evaluations of four English/Arabic individual books identified as excellent, good, fair and poor, with quantitative scores based on inter-rater reliability. The purpose of calculating inter-rater reliability is to establish how reliable each category of text appearance, language effects, book information, translation and cultural relevance is.

Findings from the following two methods of exploring what is meant by a good book will then be presented and discussed:

- Quantitative measures of internal consistency between three raters of six randomly chosen dual language picture books (using Dillon et al.'s 2018 checklist, available in Appendix A);
- Qualitative descriptive analysis of one excellent, one good, one poor and one fair dual language picture book, using the five criteria of text appearance, language effects, translation accuracy, cultural relevance and book information (Dillon et al., 2018). Bibliographical details for the English/Arabic dual language children's picture books reviewed are provided in Appendix B.

A random sample of 6 English/Arabic books was chosen from the bank of 24. These were rated by three knowledgeable individuals with bilingual proficiency, using the checklist in Appendix A. The raters were research assistants in the College of Education at Zayed University. To establish reliability for review, the three raters reviewed the 6 books independently. Each rater completed the rating individually and discussed the results resulting in an acceptable level of inter-rater agreement of 94.5%. Once assured that there were no major concerns in terms of inter-rater reliability, all 6 books were triple-rated by all 3 members, and each rater completed their review independently with minimal instruction.

Following on from this, four books, rated as excellent, good, fair or poor respectively by the research team are discussed in the Findings section as representative examples of the rating outcomes.

Guiding questions

This research will answer the following guiding questions:

- How consistent are reviews of children's dual language literature across raters?
- Do raters rate cultural relevance differently and if so why?

Participants

As mentioned, the participants in the present study were 3 female research assistants in the College of Education at Zayed University. The research assistant team is important to consider as part of this examination. They were selected based on their Arabic/English language proficiency, their educational backgrounds, and involvement in children's literature. They were of Arabic ethnicity but with differences in their nationalities. Table 1 provides further information.

Table 1: Participant information

	Age range	Languages spoken	Academic qualifications
R1	30 - 40	Native proficiency in Arabic, English and French	Masters degree in educational leadership from Zayed University, UAE
R2	20 - 30	Native Arabic speaker with bilingual proficiency in English	BSc in education from Zayed University, UAE
R3	30 - 40	Native Arabic proficiency and high proficiency in English	Masters degree in educational leadership from Zayed University, UAE

All participants had living experiences in the UAE, other Arab and Gulf nations, as well as English-speaking countries. As such, similarly to Huang and Chen (2016), they were aware of the cultural, social, and linguistic issues depicted in children's picture books.

Findings

Inter-rater reliability

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency that can show how closely related a set of items are as a group. Therefore, descriptive statistics were employed and Cronbach's alpha was calculated based on the scores given by each rater (R1, R2 and R3). A reliability coefficient above 0.7 can be considered acceptable in many social sciences contexts (IDRE, n.d.). The categories which were found to be most reliable were text information (0.87), book information (0.86) and language effects (0.85). The score above 0.8 suggests that the items have relatively high internal consistency. Translation accuracy indicated a lower level of internal consistency (0.54) while cultural relevance indicated a very low level of internal consistency (0.39).

We can derive from this that there was a high level of inter-rater reliability for text information, book information and language effects, whereas there was a low level of

inter-rater reliability for translation accuracy and cultural relevance. Across all of the categories, there was much more agreement between R1 and R2, while R3 could be seen as an outlier across the two weaker categories. The implications of this will be explored in the Discussion section.

Category: Excellent

Title of book: *Alhamdoulillah*

Text appearance

Throughout this book, the text appearance remained consistent and equal. The font size, colour and spacing is well-displayed in both languages, and the reader is not distracted with the way both languages appear on the page.

Language effects

The most important yet minimal language effect used throughout this book is the bold print and font colour, which highlights the word “alhamdoulillah”. Whenever the word “alhamdoulillah” appears on the pages, a different colour font or bold print is used (in both languages) to give emphasis to the word. This makes the text easier to read and the narrative identifiable.

These features, along with the book’s well-defined use of space for both text and pictures, earns it an excellent rating in this category.

Availability of book information

Included as part of the book information is a brief acknowledgement, publisher name and contact information, and a mention of additional titles produced by this publisher. However, all of this information is available in English only, earning a “good” rating in this category.

Translation accuracy

The book maintains the overall meaning and there were no noticeable grammatical errors. Also, the sentence structure is maintained in both languages, which gives the book an excellent rating.

Cultural relevance

The book (*Alhamdoulillah*) stresses the importance of gratitude for Allah and all things that He provides for people. It strongly connects with children’s backgrounds and what they believe in. It teaches children to think of many blessings that they have. In Islam, parents teach their children to be grateful for the many great things Allah blesses humans with. The word *alhamdoulillah* means gratitude in English and it is used throughout the book in each page to teach children the importance of thanking Allah for all the blessing He gives. In the book, the author teaches children to say *alhamdoulillah* when they finish eating, when they sneeze, and when they wake up, and so on.

A sample of raters’ comments are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Rating examples for *Alhamdoulillah*

	R1	R2	R3
Text appearance	Text appearance is excellent. Font style, size, colour, and spacing throughout the book are very good.	Font size and colour are the same in both languages.	The font size, colour, and space used from page to page and on the same page is very consistent.
Language effects	Equal language effects were used throughout the book in English and Arabic including the book information. Even the space for text and pictures is excellent.	Very few language effects are used in this book. Only the word “alhamdoulillah” is highlighted in bold and in font colour every time the author used it.	There are almost no language effects. I noticed that when the bold font is used to highlight and put emphasis on the word “alhamdoulillah”
Availability of book information	Information about the book or the author or publisher is mentioned only in English.	This book has information on the cover, the back cover, and the spine. The publisher name and contact info are clearly mentioned with title if other books that this publisher produces. Also, there is a brief acknowledgment written by the author. But note that all this info are mentioned in English only.	The book information is mentioned clearly in English only. Publisher name, contact information, and other information are also mentioned.
Translation accuracy	Excellent translation accuracy between Arabic and English which makes this story very easy for the readers to understand.	Accurate translation between languages with no grammatical errors.	Translation among English and Arabic is correct and the reader can easily understand the story.
Cultural relevance	This book is highly relevant to the culture in the UAE. It is in line with the Islamic values and beliefs. This book has a moral lesson to teach the children on appreciating what they have and thanking Allah at all time.	This book has excellent cultural relevance because it teaches children to be thankful for the food, when they wake up and even when they sneeze.	Excellent cultural relevance. It is very much in line with the UAE and Islamic beliefs and values. The word “alhamdoulillah” means Thank God. So it teaches children to thank God for everything they have and for all the blessings.

Category: Good
Title of book: *Feelings*

Text appearance

The same size, colour and style of font used in this book is consistent in both languages. However, the font colour and size of the title (*Feelings*) on the cover of the book does not appear the same. In English, the font used is larger and bolder, while the font in Arabic is smaller and appears less bold. This difference is noticeable, but not distracting. For this reason, the rating of “good” was given in this category.

Language effects

This book uses language effects in a very useful way by bolding each word that describes a feeling. Words such as “thoughtful”, “proud” and “frightened” have been bolded on each page, which also correspond with a picture of a child showing that feeling/emotion. The only exception is found on the page with the word “surprised”. The word “surprised” is bolded In English. However, in Arabic, both words “feeling and surprised” have been bolded. This is the only discrepancy noted, yet still earning a “good” rating.

Availability of book information

Even though this title is a small board book, it still includes publishing information and a brief description of the book on the back cover. English is the only language used for the book information, placing it in the “good” category.

Translation accuracy

The author mentions different types of feelings such as excited, bored, sad, empathetic and so on. Throughout the pages, the translation is mostly accurate. However, the translation to Arabic has its flaws, one of them is the use of advanced vocabulary in some components of the story. The author could have used a simpler version of the Arabic language, for example the word *مستغرفا* is an advanced word for the age group which is 2-4 years old. Also, some pages did not keep the translation organised and in sequence for both languages on the same page.

Cultural relevance

On the first page of the book, there is a girl at the beach building sand castles which is culturally relevant in the UAE, as children are familiar with the dry and sandy environment. Moreover, in the book there are children from different ethnic backgrounds, making it highly relevant to the local context of the UAE.

A sample of raters’ comments are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Rating examples for *Feelings*

	R1	R2	R3
Text appearance	Text appearance is good. Differences between the font in the two languages is seen in the title. The font used in the English texts is larger and bolder than the Arabic.	Font size and colour are consistent to a certain extent. For example, the Arabic texts looks smaller and less bold than the English.	The font size, colour, and space used in the book is almost the same except with the title and the difference in the font between Arabic and English.
Language effects	Language effects were used throughout the book in English and Arabic. The author used these effects in a very effective way. For example, words that describe feelings are in bold and a picture next to them to show a child expressing the feeling.	Language effects are used in a very smart way throughout the book. It is noticeable that words of feelings and emotions are all in bold with a picture to show this feeling.	A very good use of language effects. For example, words that describe feelings such as “thoughtful”, “proud” and “frightened” are in bold font. One exception is found on the page with the word “surprised” which was bolded in English but in Arabic text, both words “feeling and surprised” have been bolded. There are almost no language effects. I noticed that when the bold font is used to highlight and put emphasis on the word “alhamdulillah”.
Availability of book information	Information about the book or the author or publisher is mentioned only in English.	This book has information about the publisher and a brief description of the book on the back cover but only in English.	The book information is mentioned clearly in English only. Publisher name and contact information are also mentioned.
Translation accuracy	Translation is accurate between Arabic and English but the choice of vocabulary words is not suitable to the age group (2 to 4 years) example the word: استغرفا in Arabic is very difficult for a child to understand its meaning.	Translation is mostly accurate but it is not organised or in the same sequence for Arabic and English on some pages.	Translation among English and Arabic is correct but inconsistent on some pages. Additionally, there are some words in Arabic that are difficult to understand by the readers.

Cultural relevance	This book is relevant to the culture in the UAE. You can see on the first page a picture of a girl on the beach as well as pictures of children coming from different ethnicity and background which is similar to the population of the UAE.	This book has to a certain extent cultural relevance to the UAE (example: the sandy beach).	I see very minimal cultural relevance only if we can consider the picture of the beach and a girl playing with the sand castle which shows the summary weather and the sandy beaches in the UAE.
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Category: Fair**Title of book: *The shepherd boy****Text appearance*

There are several pages within this book where the font colour and size are different and appear to be bigger or smaller. Although the font style is consistent in their respective languages, some pages contain text in white, while other pages contain black font. The appearance of smaller text in Arabic can be distracting to the reader.

Language effects

Very few language effects are used in this book. However, in certain passages, quotation marks are shown to indicate spoken voices, and exclamation points are used to highlight emotion. In one of the passages, an exclamation point is shown in Arabic, but not in the English text. A “fair” rating was assigned to this book for this reason.

Availability of book information

The shepherd boy is a small board book which contains book information on the cover, inside cover and on the back cover of the book. The language information is indicated in both Arabic and English on the cover and along the spine of the book. The publisher name and disclaimer are also listed in both languages on the back cover. However, information about the book and summary are listed only in Arabic, while publisher contact information is in English only. There is a sufficient amount of information about the book, but available only in either Arabic or English.

Translation accuracy

The title of the book has two different meanings. In Arabic, it means ‘The shepherd’s lie’ (كذبة الراعي); whereas in English, the word lie wasn’t mentioned at all (*The shepherd boy*). This makes the translation of the title inaccurate, as the main theme of the story is how lying affected the shepherd boy’s life. Therefore, the Arabic title suits the content of the story better than the English title.

Cultural relevance

The book talks about a boy who lies repeatedly to trick the villagers about the wolf eating his sheep. It teaches a valuable lesson which that if a person lies nobody will believe him/her afterwards, which definitely teaches children that they will face consequences for

fibbing. It's related to one of the core values of Islam, which is that "lying is forbidden". Likewise, the women in the story appear to be wearing head scarves and long dresses which makes the content of the book culturally relevant. However, the weather and the nature of the dry environment in the UAE make it hard for people to plant their own food, unlike the people in the story, which makes it less culturally relevant.

A sample of raters' comments is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Rating examples for *The shepherd boy*

	R1	R2	R3
Text appearance	Font is different between the pages. Some texts are in white and others in black.	English words are bigger than the Arabic.	The font of the English words is not clear for the readers.
Language effects	English language throughout the book seemed to have higher emphasis when compared to the Arabic.	Not many language effects and emphasis are placed on the English language .	There is difference in the language effects used throughout the book. For example: an exclamation point is shown in Arabic, but not in the English text.
Availability of book information	Information about the book and summary are listed only in Arabic. Information about the publisher are in English only.	It has book information on the cover and back cover and the spine but available only in either Arabic or English.	The book information is indicated in both Arabic and English on the cover and along the spine of the book.
Translation accuracy	Poor translation accuracy, for example: the title of the book has two different meaning. In Arabic, it means 'The Shepherd's Lie' (كذبة الراعي), in the English title, the word lie wasn't mentioned at all.	Inaccurate translation in the title and word to word translation was found in the body text.	This story is about lying and how it affected the shepherd boy's life. The English title does not show this idea as the Arabic title does.
Cultural relevance	This book is related to our Islamic beliefs which forbid lying. However, pictures included about planting food is not relevant to the UAE.	This book is relevant to the culture and religion of the children in the UAE. Lying is not allowed and women in the story appeared to be wearing head scarves and long dresses.	This book has no cultural relevance.

Category: Poor**Title of book: *A bee and me****Text appearance*

The fonts used in this book vary in size, colour and spacing from page to page, and sometimes within the same page. On the cover of the book, the title is listed using different sized fonts and colours in both languages. This makes both the Arabic and English titles difficult to see and read. Several passages within this book show the English text in a larger font, which gives the impression that the English text is more important because it is more visible. For these reasons, a rating of “poor” was given in this category.

Language effects

There is no consistency in language effects throughout the book. In some pages, the text is smaller than the previous sentence on the same page and in the same language. Often, the text is written on top of pictures or dark colours, making it difficult to read. Sometimes the text is placed very close to the alternating text in the other language, also making it difficult to see and read. In addition, a third font and paragraph are included, which is the English phonetic spelling of the Arabic translation. This third paragraph also uses a different font, which competes with the other two passages directly above it. The English text appears to stand out the most and is given greater preference throughout the book.

Availability of book information

A bee and me contains almost no book information. On the inside of the title page, there is a notation which explains that Arabic is written and read from right to left, and English read from left to right. Sample sentences are shown for both with the first few words highlighted in the same colour. A sample of the phonetically spelled pronunciation in Arabic is also shown. However, this book contains no information about the author and there is no publishing information. Additionally, the end of the book contains about 10 pages of blank pictures from the story that can be used for colouring by the reader/user. This feature, unfortunately, is not explained or outlined within the book. These pages only list the words “I coloured it” (sic) on each page, where the word ‘coloured’ is misspelled on every page.

Translation accuracy

The book was written in three languages, Arabic, English, and a transliteration of Arabic which makes the book complicated and difficult to comprehend. There are multiple grammatical errors, one of them being on the second page where they the word “is” is omitted as follows: “What one cool thing you can to Maymay the bee?” On another page the “I” is not capitalised. On the same page, they say “It is the beginning of spring signal” which shows that the book was poorly translated.

Cultural relevance

This book lacks cultural relevance. It does not contain strong and relevant vocabulary, nor does it have any moral lesson to teach to children. A sample of raters’ comments is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Rating examples for *A bee and me*

	R1	R2	R3
Text appearance	Font size is different throughout the book. In addition, the English text has a larger font, which gives preferences to the English.	Font size and colour is not the same and sometimes on the same page. Title colour and font is different in Arabic and English. The English text is more visible to readers.	The font size, colour, and space used from page to page and on the same page is not consistent. Even there is a big difference in the size of the font used in Arabic and English. Example of the =
Language effects	Text is not clear on several pages. For example, it is located very close to the text translated in the other language which makes it very difficult to see and read. More emphasis is put on the font of the English text.	The text is placed on the top of the pages and written in dark colours which makes it unclear for the readers. In addition, a third font and paragraph are included, of the English spelling of the Arabic translation.	The text size is different between each sentence on the same page and within the same language. The English text appears to be clearer and more visible than the Arabic.
Availability of book information	Information about the book or the author or publisher is missing. Additionally, no information is given that at the end of the book, there are blank pictures which the reader can colour. The author gave example of sentences to show how Arabic and English are written and highlighted the first words in the same colour. A sample of the phonetically spelled pronunciation in Arabic is also presented.	It doesn't have any book information on the cover or the back. I was surprised to see almost 10 pages of blank pictures at the end of the book without mentioning this activity within the book. Also, on each of these 10 pages you can see the word "coloured" misspelled as "coloered".	The book information is not seen anywhere in the book but I noticed that inside of the title page, there is an explanation to the readers on the way that Arabic and English are written
Translation accuracy	Poor translation accuracy, between the three languages (Arabic, English, and conversations in Arabic) which makes it very difficult and complicated for the reader to understand the story.	Inaccurate translation between three languages with many grammatical errors. For example, on page 2 the verb to be "is" is missing. Another mistake is not having the "I" in capital letter.	Translation among English, Arabic and another form of Arabic is very poor. For example, the translation of the sentence "it is the beginning of spring signal" is incorrect.

Cultural relevance	This book is not relevant at all to the culture in the UAE. The vocabulary is very bad and if I was a teacher, I wouldn't let my students read it.	This book has no cultural relevance and besides it has no moral lesson for children who read it.	I cannot find any cultural relevance for this book.
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Discussion

This paper aims to deepen understanding of what is meant by selecting 'quality' dual language books in terms of text quality, in particular the critical areas of translation accuracy, cultural relevance and book information. The quantitative measures of inter-rater reliability and the qualitative analysis of four books rated as poor, fair, good and excellent have provided further guidance on ways in which various stakeholders can select quality dual language books for young children.

The criterion of cultural relevance appears more complex than initially thought. It is interesting that the criterion of cultural relevance showed a low level of internal consistency in the inter-rater reliability test. This means that across the three raters, either the criterion description was not helpful, or the three raters interpreted the description differently. The one outlier whose scores were markedly different from the other two raters happens to be an Emirati national, while the other two raters are Lebanese and Yemeni nationals. Perhaps the Emirati rater was considering aspects that are culturally relevant to the UAE specifically, whereas the other two raters may have been considering cultural relevance differently. This finding suggests that these books did not allow readers from another culture to identify with and value the cultural similarities and differences (Williams & Haag, 2012, p. 55). This is mainly due to the sensitive context in the UAE which imposes on the educators choosing the books a need for sensitivity to the cultural contexts of both expatriate and Emirati children in the UAE (Dillon et al., 2018).

It seems that going forward, the descriptors for this criterion may need to be altered to account for different interpretations. They also need to be considered in relation to illustrations, not relying only on text quality. Julia Kuo discussed the 'role of an illustrator in communicating culture in ways that are authentic' (Williams & Hagg, 2012, p. 54). Ommundsen (2011) highlighted the importance of the interplay between pictures and words in picture books, urging us to give more specific attention to illustrations in any evaluation of text quality among picture books.

Julia Kuo also spoke to the importance of the illustrator depicting the culture, 'in a way that encourages an understanding of that culture and encourages a more diverse worldview' (ibid., p. 54). Kathy Short in the same publication noted that 'the number of books about different ethnic groups remains fairly low' (Williams & Hagg, 2012, p. 55). There must be a space where the multicultural nature of the UAE can be explored through multilingual children's literature.

The criterion of translation accuracy shows a high level of inter-rater reliability between the three raters. Therefore, we are satisfied that the criterion is described accurately in the checklist used. The book descriptions indicate that translation for overall meaning seems to be more effective than word-for-word translation, in the case of translating from English to Arabic and vice versa (Baker, 1995; Edwards & Walker, 1996). Some translations were found to be at higher reading levels, which should be avoided as it could cause confusion and create a mismatch in reading expectations and tone (Walker, Edwards & Blacksell, 1996).

Conclusion

Children's literature is of great value both at home and in school. In order to give children the best quality books, educators and parents alike should be able to evaluate the quality of the books in terms of various criteria, specifically text appearance, language effects, availability of book information, translation accuracy, and cultural relevance. High quality children's literature provides readers with opportunities to enhance their cultural knowledge, emotional intelligence, personal identity, and social development. Presenting children with quality literature can add to the development of conscientious, mindful, positive, and thoughtful people.

The quality of translation is a very important consideration for the success of a bilingual book and was raised as a key concern in this study. This study indicates a need for a translation team comprising authors, publishers, translators and early childhood experts to ensure accuracy of translating for overall meaning, as well as maintaining appropriate sentence structure and the overall reading level, tone and formality of the book.

Only when children are able to see themselves in a book can they create their identities and relate their personal experiences. In this study, the Emirati rater could not see the cultural relevance of these books the same way the two Arab expatriate raters did. To this end, this study implies the value of having raters from diverse cultures, languages, and social classes on panels deciding which children's books should be published or brought to schools.

The small sample of both books and raters does impose a limitation on this study. While the selection of participants met the objectives of the study, further research is recommended to look into a greater variety of children's bilingual books to be evaluated by a larger number of raters from diverse backgrounds. Due to the novelty of this research in a UAE context, further research is recommended, to assess children's reading development and comprehension, comparing three groups, one with English books only, the second with Arabic only, and the third with both English and Arabic books.

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Appendix A: Criteria and ratings for dual language books

(after Dillon, Hojeij, Perkins & Malkawi, 2018)

Criterion #1:	Equal font style, size, colour, spacing throughout the	Excellent
Text appearance	book.	
	Some differences in font style, size, colour, spacing, but not distracting.	Good
	Some differences in font style, size, colour, spacing, that distract from text.	Fair
	Many differences in font style, size, colour, spacing that changes viewpoint of content and gives preference to one language.	Poor

Criterion #2: Language effects	Equal language effects were used throughout the book in both languages, including book information.	Excellent
	Some changes in language effects were used in both languages in order to place emphasis on specific words in the story.	Good
	Minor changes in language effects were used in some parts of the book, in one language only.	Fair
	Different language effects were used throughout the book, which placed a higher emphasis of one language over the other.	Poor
Criterion #3: Book information	Description of the book and information about the author is available in both languages, in equal scripts.	Excellent
	Description of the book and information about the author is available in both languages, with less information given in one of the languages.	Good
	Description of the book and/ or about the author is available in one language.	Fair
	No information about the book or author available.	Poor
Criterion #4: Translation	Translation of all content matches and has the same meaning in both languages, with no errors. The translation is written with equal comprehension level/age level in both languages.	Excellent
	There are minor translation differences in meaning in one language. The translation has minor comprehension level/age level issues in both languages.	Good
	There is word for word translation with minor consideration for content meaning. The translation contains words not appropriate for the age/ comprehension level in both languages.	Fair
	Translation of most of the content contains many errors. It is obvious that the book was translated from one language into another, with no consideration for age/ comprehension level.	Poor
Criterion #5: Cultural relevance	The entire book is culturally appropriate and reflects children's cultural identities and literary heritage very well (e.g. 3 or more references to or pictures of local culture).	Excellent
	The book is culturally appropriate and reflects children's cultural identities and literary heritage moderately well (e.g. includes one or two references to or pictures of the local culture).	Good
	The book includes references to or pictures from a known culture, but not the local culture.	Fair
	The book is not culturally appropriate because it includes pictures of or refers to tales that are not appropriate in the culture.	Poor

Appendix B: English/Arabic dual language children's picture books reviewed

Aguleh, A. (2015). *Alhamdulillah*. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates: Learn With Me. ISBN: 9781329058491.

Feelings (2015). West Sussex, England: Milet. ISBN: 9781785080692.

The shepherd boy (n.d.). Beirut, Lebanon: Digital Future. ISBN: 9786144080535.

A bee and me. Lavergne, TN: Create Space. ISBN: 9781512258103.

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