# Bilingual Synergies

## A Semiotically-framed Inquiry into the Iconotextual Complexities of Bilingual Picturebooks

MA Thesis
Name of author: Sonali Kulkarni
Student number: 2061885
MA track: Jeugdliteratuur – International Master
Department of Culture Studies
School of Humanities and Digital Sciences
Date: July 2021
Supervisor: Prof. dr. Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer
Second reader: Dr. Sara van den Bossche

# Summary

*Bilingual Synergies* is an extended study that focuses on the iconotextual complexities of bilingual picturebooks. As a "seminal part of the modern book and media world" (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013a, p.v), bilingual picturebooks are increasingly becoming objects of scholarly research even though they continue to be relatively understudied in comparison to their monolingual counterparts. A large part of the existing research focuses on the *use* of bilingual picturebooks in critical contexts of multicultural education, language learning, awareness and preservation, etc. However, theoretical engagement with the iconotextual dynamics of bilingual picturebooks remains scare. The present study therefore delves deeper into the internal mechanisms of bilingual picturebooks and then theoretically examines their connection with the social and pedagogical potential of bilingual picturebooks.

The investigation of the iconotextual dynamics of bilingual picturebooks is based on Sipe's (1998) semiotic theory of the synergistic relationship between words and images in picturebooks. Upon adapting Sipe's triadic model and his use of the concept of *transmediation* to the context of bilingual picturebooks, it is found that the existence of an additional language considerably complicates the semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks and adds more layers to the process of meaning-making. The three components of bilingual picturebooks – images, Language 1 and Language 2 – can each be understood in relation to the others, leading to a virtually unending process of (re)interpretation. Moreover, not only are the three components understood in relation to each other but the meaning of the bilingual picturebook is also made at the intersection of the three components. That is, the meaning-making process involves the interpretation of each of the components by drawing insights from the others, as well as the integration of these interpretations to create a cumulative whole.

This complex semiotic landscape has an explicit impact on the potential role of the reader. Here, the study draws upon the disruptive concept of *translanguaging* that rejects arbitrary boundaries between languages and focuses instead on a single linguistic-semiotic repertoire. Owing to the existence of two languages and semiotic modes, bilingual picturebooks create a *translanguaging space* in which the reader is invited to mobilise her single repertoire for the process of meaning-making. However, the process of interaction between text and images is not identical to that between texts in Languages 1 and 2 since

visual and verbal information is processed differently (Sipe, 1998). Therefore, this study argues that the process of transmediation proposed by Sipe is inadequate to describe all the interactions that take place within the bilingual picturebook since it only accounts for "*intersemiotic* translanguaging" (Baynham & Lee, 2019, p.13). However, as demonstrated by the semiotic model, meaning-making from bilingual picturebooks also includes the interaction between Language 1 and Language 2 which is a form of *interlingual* translanguaging. The process of *translation* corresponds to interlingual translanguaging and is therefore complementary to transmediation. Therefore, the translanguaging space created by bilingual picturebooks invites the reader to mobilise her single linguistic-semiotic repertoire by undertaking the processes of transmediation *and* translation.

The instrumental value ascribed to bilingual picturebooks is closely connected to this potential role of the reader as a transmediator and translator. Siegel (1995) argues that transmediation has a generative power because it entails the creation of links between two modalities that do not exist a priori, leading to reflective thinking. The argument is extended to the complementary process of translation since it, too, invites the reader to forge a connection between the two languages. Translation, then, compounds the generative power of transmediation. Therefore, bilingual picturebooks derive their well-established social and pedagogic potential from their ability to foster generative thinking which, in turn, is a product of their complicated semiotic landscape and the translanguaging space that it creates.

# Preface and acknowledgements

*I speak three languages, write in*
*Two, dream in one.*
*Don't write in English, they say, English is*
*Not your mother-tongue. Why not leave*
*Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,*
*Every one of you? Why not let me speak in*
*Any language I like? The language I speak,*
*Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness*
*All mine, mine alone.*
*(-Kamala Das, An Introduction, 1965)*

Growing up, I loved dictionaries. I would sit with a huge tome – all too big for my eight-year-old body – and browse through our dusty English-Marathi dictionary on weekend afternoons. I think this rather peculiar hobby of mine underlines two key facts: firstly, this was clearly enough warning for my family that I was going to grow up to be a weird adult! Secondly – and on a more serious note – the English-Marathi dictionary was where my worlds met. Similar to millions of other children growing up in urban India at the turn of the new millennium, I began my schooling in English and would then glide back into Marathi, my "mother tongue," once outside of school. The books we read in school, both for instruction and delight, were almost exclusively in English. And I treasured them. They were, after all, the windows and sliding glass doors that allowed me to peek into the lives of English children solving mysteries and American girls whose houses were swept away by cyclones. Sims Bishop (1990), from whose celebrated work the above metaphor of windows and sliding glass doors is taken, says "when the lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror;" a mirror that reflects our own lives and experiences. As a young reader, I looked for these mirrors but often in vain. The lighting conditions were never quite right. They were most-often windows into a monolingual reality, but rarely the multilingual space that I occupied.

Over the two decades since I was a dictionary-reading child, bilingual picturebooks have proliferated in India, providing millions of children a mirror that reflects their linguistic reality. A dictionary is no longer the only book where their worlds meet. And this trend is far from unique to India. From publishers specialising in bilingual picturebooks to apps and websites, the rise of bilingual picturebooks is clear. And yet, the large body of picturebook

research is left wanting in terms of engagement with bilingual picturebooks. So, this study comes from a place of personal childhood experience that continues to shape my interaction with the world, and love and academic curiosity for picturebooks. In my scholarship application for the Erasmus Mundus International Master in Children's Literature, Media and Culture programme, I had written that being able to study what you love is a privilege but that being able to apply that education to real-world situations is even more rewarding. Over the course of this study, I have had the absolute privilege of combining topics that I hold dear: picturebooks and language. And I hope that the study can make a small but valuable contribution to teachers, caregivers, and parents of bilingual children, publishers and fellow scholars.

# Table of Contents

# Table of figures

## Chapter 1
## Introduction

*Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language.*
*(-Gloria Anzaldua, 1987)*

In 1998, Indian language activist and former professor, Dr G. N. Devy, carried 700 copies of the literary magazine *Dhol*[1] to a destitute and largely unlettered village in Western India. These were the first copies of *Dhol* in the local Chaudhary language: a tribal language with no print history spoken in the village. Dr Devy left the copies along with a basket to collect money, inviting the locals to buy them for ₹10 each. He returned to find all the copies sold out and the basket filled with the villagers' hard-earned ₹10 notes or whatever they could afford to pay from their daily wages. Devy narrates the incident in an interview:

> This must have been the first printed material they saw in their life in their own language. These were unlettered daily wage workers who had paid for something they could not even read. I realised this primordial pride and power of the language (Devy in Biswas, 2017).

This incident touches upon several key issues such as the value of visibility in (print) media, the precarious position of minority languages and the pressing need to preserve them, and the intuitive but complex connection between language and identity. It may be argued that seeing their language in print – even if they unfortunately could not read it – served as a validation of the local villagers' voice and thereby a reaffirmation of their culture which is often overshadowed by the "mainstream" cultures and languages of the neighbouring states. This symbolic validation of their language and culture is intricately tied to the reaffirmation of their identity, substantiating Anzaldua's abovementioned coupling of ethnic and linguistic identities.

The problematisation of the nexus between language, representation and individual/social identity has reverberated across humanistic and social scientific disciplines such as applied and educational linguistics, literacy and education,

---

[1] *Dhol* (meaning "drums" in several Indian languages) is an initiative of Devy's Bhasha Research Trust to preserve tribal knowledge and languages by bringing them into print. Presently, *Dhol* is published in eleven tribal languages from Western India.

developmental psychology, and literary and media studies. The field of children's literature, too, has increasingly addressed the matter through academic discourse on multicultural children's literature that engages with "the sociocultural experiences of previously underrepresented groups" (Gopalkrishnan, 2011, p.2). The ever-growing body of scholarship on bilingual picturebooks[2] stands testimony to this shift in academic current. As the next chapter will demonstrate in detail, scholars have hitherto focused on the pedagogical and social potential of bilingual picturebooks by focusing on their ability to challenge sociolinguistic hierarchies and promote multicultural identities. As such, they have highlighted the efficacy of bilingual picturebooks in critical contexts such as multicultural education, second language and literacy acquisition, and fostering home-school connection for multilingual students (Sneddon, 2008; 2009; Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013a), as well as representation, maintenance and preservation of indigenous and minority languages (Daly, 2016; Hadaway & Young, 2014). These studies, among several others, underscore the immense pedagogic potential of bilingual picturebooks and firmly establish them as potent instruments in educational and social settings. However, theorisations on the intrinsic mechanics of bilingual picturebooks – that is, the functioning of bilingual picturebooks as an artform and literary-aesthetic medium - remain scarce.

This lack of theoretical engagement with the aesthetic and iconotextual facet of bilingual picturebooks affects the field of picturebook research in several ways. Firstly, understanding how bilingual picturebooks work as an artform and medium is essential to their successful production and implementation by teachers, parents and other mediators. Edwards and Walker (1994) echo this belief and state that it is essential to analyse the "configuration of texts and pictures" (p.154) in bilingual picturebooks if we are to seriously encourage children to read texts in other languages. As demonstrated in depth at a later stage, bilingual picturebooks manifest themselves across the entire spectrum of word-image dynamics. The lack of a systematic exploration of these dynamics limits the progress of academic discourse within the field. On the one hand, it cements the unnecessarily restrictive characterisation of bilingual picturebooks as *tools* for use in the classroom, widening the gap between pedagogical and literary research on bilingual picturebooks. On the other hand, the under-theorisation is symptomatic of the monolingual bias in academia. The monolingual bias, also known as the monolingual perspective or monolingual mindset, is a viewpoint that

---

[2] Bilingual picturebooks are often interchangeably referred to as "dual language picturebooks" in academic literature

considers monolinguals to be the norm and multilinguals an exception to that norm (Barratt, 2018). This bias is observed clearly in picturebook research where current literature on the functioning of picturebooks treats them as an intrinsically monolingual medium, limiting the lexicon for theorising bilingual picturebooks. As a corollary of the monolingual bias and the resulting paucity in domain-specific theoretical frameworks, bilingual picturebooks remain at academic margins. Several decades ago, Nodelman expressed a similar concern over the lack of vocabulary to address picturebooks. He stated that "the more we are capable of understanding and finding words to describe our responses to works of art, the more we are able to enjoy them" (Nodelman, 1998, Preface), highlighting the importance of a specific grammar and framework for the development and appreciation of any given artform.

In the light of the above, this study takes as a point of departure the intention to initiate a theoretical discussion on the mechanics of bilingual picturebooks. As such, it delves deeper into the aesthetics of bilingual picturebooks to examine the complexities of the bilingual iconotext and its connection with the well-established social-pedagogic potential of bilingual picturebooks. Aesthetics is an all-encompassing term that can include a variety of intratextual features such as design, typography, illustration style, literary technique and the internal dynamics through which all these features function as an artistic whole. The present study narrows in on these internal iconotextual dynamics and can therefore be considered the first step in a much broader inquiry into the aesthetics and pedagogics of bilingual picturebooks. In order to draw a connection between the intrinsic and instrumental value of bilingual picturebooks, this study answers the following guiding questions: How does the existence of an additional language complicate the semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks compared to monolingual picturebooks? What impact can this complex semiotic landscape have on the role of the reader and how does it potentially contribute to the instrumental value of bilingual picturebooks? By means of exploratory answers to the guiding questions, the study hopes to propose an initial theoretical framework and lexicon for future theoretical or empirical discussions on bilingual picturebooks.

Through the course of this study, bilingual picturebooks self-evidently refer to picturebooks that employ two languages either parallelly or interlingually. The definition will be discussed in a later section but it is essential to mention at the outset that while some scholars also consider translated picturebooks under the multilingual picturebook

umbrella (Hadaway & Young, 2018), they are beyond the scope of the present inquiry. The translation of picturebooks is a burgeoning academic subfield in itself which continues to describe and problematise the specific features of picturebooks and the challenges that they present to a translator. This study will be delimited to the theorisation of picturebooks that present two languages at the same time. It is also important to clarify that when referring to picturebooks of any kind (monolingual, bilingual, wordless), the spelling 'picturebook' will be used instead of 'picture book' or 'picture-book.' This choice has been made in keeping with Lewis' (2001, p.xiv) argument that the term "works better to reflect the compound nature of the artefact itself."

Attention must be drawn to the fact that several scholars, including Lewis in the above argument, address picturebooks as "artefacts" or "artforms," emphasising their aesthetic dimension. This is reflected in the trajectory of picturebook research – either empirical or text-based – which is built on a solid foundation of medium-specific theory aiding discussion, analysis and meta-theory in the field of picturebook research. In order to investigate some of the aesthetic complexities of bilingual picturebooks, the present study liberally draws upon this existing picturebook theory and borrows key insights concerning the functioning of picturebooks such as, but not limited to, the concepts of synergy (Sipe, 1998) and iconotext (Hallberg, 1982), the dynamics of text-image interaction, as well as the ever-growing body of empirical findings concerning children's responses to and meaning-making of picturebooks. The latter is influenced by reader-response and reception theories, making them inevitable components of the present inquiry concerning the impact of the complex bilingual iconotext on the educational potential of bilingual picturebooks. Similarly, picturebook theory on the interaction between text and images is based on a theoretical framework derived from semiotics as demonstrated by, for example, Sipe's (1998) Peircean analysis of the picturebook which will serve as a foundation for the study.

However, as mentioned previously, the above theories perpetuate the monolingual bias in that they mainly focus on monolingual texts and readers. In order to challenge the bias and attempt at an expansion of the said theories to accommodate the ever-growing body of multilingual children's literature, this study then explores the use of concepts from translation studies as well as the disruptive concept of translanguaging. As a discursive domain continuously straddling the boundaries between languages and cultures, translation is deemed appropriately positioned to complement the aforementioned theories by adding the dimension of multiple languages to their predominantly monolingual

conceptual apparatus. It is being increasingly argued that translation, having "consistently enlarged its epistemological ambition" (Ribeiro, 2004, p.186), has developed into an overarching "metaphor for connection, exchange, transfer and transformation" (Guldin, 2016, p.1). It is at this interdisciplinary theoretical juncture between picturebook theory, semiotics, applied linguistics, and translation studies that this study positions itself to theoretically explore bilingual picturebooks, their complexities and their social-pedagogical potential. As a theoretical exploration, the study will not undertake in-depth analyses of individual bilingual picturebooks but will, instead, use some examples to illustrate key arguments.

Having established the aims, relevance and core concepts, the remainder of the study will be structured as follows: Chapter 2 will contextualise the development of bilingual picturebooks within the socio-political developments that have shaped the last several decades and undertake a critical review of the current literature on bilingual picturebooks. Chapter 3 addresses the first guiding question of the present study by focusing on the complex bilingual iconotext. To this end, it first provides a working definition of bilingual picturebooks before developing a semiotic model to understand how the existence of an additional language complicates the bilingual iconotext. Building upon the insights from Chapter 3, Chapter 4 shifts attention to the impact of the semiotic complexities of the bilingual iconotext on the potential role of the reader. The discussion is framed within the context of translanguaging and borrows concepts from translation studies. The concepts are borrowed to demonstrate the layered process of meaning-making in bilingual picturebooks and to examine the relation between their intrinsic and instrumental values.

# Chapter 2

## *"Two ways I talk":* Contextualising bilingual picturebooks within society and academia

*Two ways I talk*
*Both ways I say,*
*Your way is more powerful.*

*So gently I offer my hand and ask,*
*Let me find my talk*
*So I can teach you about me.*
*(- Rita Joe, 1978)*

In her poignant poem *I Lost My Talk*, Mi'kmaq[3] elder and Poet Laureate, Rita Joe, recounts her traumatising childhood experience of being an indigenous student at the Shubenacadie Residential School in Nova Scotia, Canada. As a speaker of the Mi'kmaq language, she – along with thousands of other indigenous children – was compelled to learn English in order to assimilate into Canadian society at the expense of her native language and culture. Often enforced through corporal punishment, the English-only policies had a severe impact on the bilingualism of students, many of whom reclaimed their indigenous languages only after years of oppression (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). While the Canadian government has since formally apologised for the "cultural genocide" (*ibid*.), the English-only language policies exemplify an early approach to bilingualism that entailed the complete erasure of the native language in order to maximise proficiency in the dominant language.

This approach has since changed and the last several decades have witnessed a paradigm shift in the ideas governing the study and practice of bilingualism. The first section of the present chapter aims to situate the phenomenon of bilingual picturebooks within the context of this paradigm shift and the socio-political developments that surround it. Such a contextualisation is deemed essential because this study takes as a point of departure the social and pedagogical potential of bilingual picturebooks and the ever-growing body of scholarly work thereon, with the intention to complement it through theorisation on

---

[3] The Mi'kmaq are a First Nations People indigenous to the present-day Maritime Provinces of Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island) and parts of the United States of America such as Maine and Massachusetts.

iconotextual complexities. Understanding the ecology in which the social-pedagogic potential plays out is a necessary precondition to appropriately framing the theoretical argument regarding the internal dynamics within the larger academic context of the discourse on bilingualism and bilingual picturebooks. Here, it must be noted that the forthcoming contextualisation often draws upon insights on *multi*lingual picturebooks in general to highlight the trends in the rise of non-monolingual spaces and readerships around the globe. However, the terms 'bilingual' and 'multilingual' are not used interchangeably. Bilingualism is understood as a specific case of multilingualism. Similarly, bilingual picturebooks constitute the larger body of multilingual picturebooks and, by extension, multilingual children's literature in general. This study, despite references to multilingual children's literature, is squarely delineated to bilingual picturebooks.

Historically, multilingual picturebooks can be traced back several hundred years to Johann Amos Comenius' *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* [The World in Pictures] first published as a Latin-German primer in 1658. However, the resurgence of bilingual picturebooks is a relatively recent phenomenon. Scholars place it in the 1960s in the United States (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013a) and the 1970s in England (Sneddon, 2009). Other countries such as Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa have since published multilingual picturebooks as well although their publication varies markedly across countries, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Even though multilingual picturebooks constitute a small portion of the book market in these countries, Kümmerling-Meibauer calls them a "seminal part of the modern book and media world" (2013a, p.v). It is therefore vital to trace the shifts in the intellectual and socio-political climate that have contributed to this status of bilingual and multilingual picturebooks.

## 2.1. Bilingual picturebooks: reasons for proliferation

Kümmerling-Meibauer's categorical claim that multilingual picturebooks are a "seminal part" of the contemporary children's book market may strike as bewildering or even overly optimistic since monolingual picturebooks continue to significantly overshadow their multilingual counterparts in terms of publication, sale and academic engagement. However, the claim must be understood in light of the pace at which multilingual picturebooks are gaining a stronghold within the industry and the academy. For example, *Publishers Weekly* (Ahuile, 2019) reports that the New York Public Library alone has more

than 1000 bilingual books which include board books, novels and, certainly, picturebooks. The same report mentions the diversification of offering by cultural organisations such as the Children's Museum of Houston through the inclusion of bilingual children's books. It is interesting to note that a similar trend is observed all the way across the globe in India, a country with a radically different demographic and sociocultural context, with independent publishers such as Tulika and Pratham Books publishing a rapidly increasing number of bilingual picturebooks to cater to the country's dynamic sociolinguistic landscape.

This proliferation is the product of several interconnected factors such as globalisation, mass migration, decolonisation and the associated shift in epistemological standpoints. While tracing the publication of multilingual picturebooks, Hadaway and Young (2018) state that the number of books on the market varies greatly across countries and "reflects economic, political and sociocultural issues" (p.261). This becomes apparent if we return to the above examples of India and the United States. As Kümmerling-Meibauer (2013a) points out, the rise of bilingual and multilingual picturebooks in the 1960s in the United States is "stimulated by educational and cultural studies, which investigate the linguistic and cultural foreknowledge of immigrant students […]" (p.iv), highlighting that the history of largescale immigration into the United States played a pivotal role in creating fertile ground for the development of multilingual children's books. Immigration into the United Kingdom from the New Commonwealth in the 1960s and 1970s and the more recent mass migration for political reasons into Europe are similar examples of migratory processes reconfiguring demographic and sociolinguistic realities of the countries, giving rise to dynamic multilingual spaces that demand reconsideration of the reading materials and educational strategies devised for children.

In India, however, the growth in bilingual and multilingual children's literature may be attributed to its long colonial history. The English language and its use as a medium of instruction in schools was introduced in the country during British rule, ascribing to the language the hegemonical status that it continues to enjoy nationally. The hegemony of English is apparent in every aspect of India's sociocultural fabric including education and children's publishing, making India the third largest producer of English language books after the United States and the United Kingdom (Subramaniam, 2013). The decolonisation of India and the subsequent formation of the Indian nation-state brought about a renewed sense of identity and interest in Indian languages. The Indian Constitution now recognises 22 Indian languages, formally validating the multilingualism inherent to India. However,

English remains the official language along with Hindi, generating a complex national psyche characterised by postcolonial hybridity. This hybridity, occupying what postcolonial scholar Homi K. Bhabha (1994) terms the liminal "third space," creates a conducive environment for the development of multilingual literature such as bilingual picturebooks. Other formerly colonised nations such as South Africa, New Zealand and Canada also exhibit varying levels of linguistic hybridity and, as the next section will demonstrate, publish bilingual picturebooks to challenge the hegemony of the colonial language(s) by revitalising and preserving native voices.

Hybridity, however, is not unique to postcolonial contexts. Contemporary globalisation, characterised by rapidly developing transport and communication technologies, results in unprecedented contact and transfer across the globe through the intense flow of people, goods, and discourses. With regard to the flow of people across "porous and permeable" national borders (Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2013, p.2), globalisation is very closely related to the topic of migration already discussed above. Additionally, the characteristic technological advancement and the resulting exchange of cultural content through media generate hybrid and multilingual spaces even without the apparent displacement of people. For example, Allison (2006) contends that the unprecedented import of Japanese popular culture into the United States in the form of manga, anime and videogames drives the interest in the Japanese language in educational settings. Such hybrid spaces can then serve as a platform on which linguistic identities are negotiated by multilingual readers and writers.

Here, it is essential to understand that the impact of the socio-political and economic developments discussed above is not limited to the reconfiguration of national demographics and the subsequent creation of hybrid spaces that foster the growth of multilingual literature such as bilingual picturebooks. These developments are accompanied by deep-rooted epistemological changes concerning the very notion of language, influencing the theories and practices surrounding bilingualism. With regard to contemporary globalisation, Blommaert (2010) states:

> [G]lobalization forces sociolinguistics to unthink classic distinctions and
> biases and to rethink itself as a sociolinguistics of *mobile resources*, framed
> in terms of trans-contextual networks, flows and movements. (p.1, emphasis
> added)

This fluid conceptualisation of language as a "mobile resource" stands in stark contrast to the traditionally monolithic and structuralist understanding of language as evidenced by the educational model discussed above with reference to the English-only policies in the Residential Schools in Canada. The rethinking of language at a conceptual level espoused by Blommaert in the above quote is representative of the paradigm shift in language studies and associated disciplines, making multilingualism the "topic du jour" and destabilising concepts such as mother tongue and native speaker (May, 2013, p.1). As a result, bilingualism has increasingly come to the centre stage of applied and sociolinguistics and several misconceptions surrounding the topic have been systematically challenged and dismantled by scholars. These misconceptions typically embody unfounded concerns about bilingual children's delayed language development or the negative effect of the home language in the acquisition of the dominant language used in school. Experimental psycholinguist, François Grosjean (2010), is among the several scholars to have systematically dismantled these misconceptions over the course of the last several decades. He states:

> This [misconception] is totally wrong. On the contrary, the home language can be used as a linguistic base for acquiring aspects of the other language. It also gives children a known language to communicate in (with parents, caretakers, and, perhaps, teachers) while acquiring the other. (Grosjean, 2010, p.176)

These new ideas about the developmental aspects of bilingual children have significantly challenged the deficit orientations of viewing bilingual children in terms of a *lack* of monolingual proficiency, resulting in an increasing number of classrooms willing to honour the home/community languages of bilingual children. In her monograph, Sneddon (2009) argues that it is teachers in such classroom contexts who turn increasingly to bilingual picturebooks as tools to bring students' languages into the classroom.

These reformed attitudes towards bi- and multilingualism among children are also mirrored by language policies in many countries. After severe resistance to bilingual education in several states of the United States of America, a large majority has now approved the 'Seal of Biliteracy,' an award given by schools to recognise students' bilingual

and biliterate proficiency[4]. Across the Atlantic, policy level changes are also introduced by the European Commission with the goal to begin foreign language education at an early age to ensure that European students know two languages in addition to their mother tongues (The Council of the European Union, 2014). New Zealand provides another topical example with recent educational policies enforcing the reintroduction of the Māori language that is now taught in all primary classrooms along with separate schools that use Māori as the medium of instruction. This recognition of the need to institutionally revitalise the Māori language challenges the postcolonial hegemony of the English language and promotes bilingualism in the country. In fact, bilingual picturebook scholar, Nicola Daly, states that the establishment of schools with Māori as the teaching language has led to a significant increase in published material in the language (2016), squarely demonstrating the impact of the changing attitudes towards bilingualism and policies on the development of bilingual picturebooks.

Several other countries across the globe such as India, South Africa and Canada have similar policies that not only support but encourage multilingualism. In fact, the philosophy behind these national-level policies is mirrored at the international level. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) constituted in 1989 and ratified by almost every country in the world illustrates this point clearly. Article 30 of the UNCRC bestows upon all the children belonging to minority and indigenous communities across the world the right to use their own language (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1990). Other UN bodies such as UNESCO have also laid emphasis on the use of local and regional languages in education to sustain and revitalise them and strengthen "the small, local identities frequently based on language" (UNESCO, 2003, Introduction). In addition to reflecting the changing attitudes towards bi- and multilingualism, these national and international policies also demonstrate an increasing acknowledgment of the linguistic "Other."

This acknowledgment of the Other is closely associated with Poststructuralism, which has itself had far reaching consequences on the conceptualisation of language. As an intellectual movement stirred by the apparent discrimination of minorities in the late Capitalist world, a new generation of poststructuralist thinkers were at the helm of a sustained critique against the universal approach to human experience, giving impetus to

---

[4] https://sealofbiliteracy.org/

the concept of alterity and drawing the ethnic, linguistic, postcolonial Other to the fore. To a large extent, the rapidly rising awareness about the preservation and/or revitalisation of endangered and minority languages can be linked to the rise of the Other. More specifically, Poststructuralism directly problematised the structuralist view of language that treated it as a closed and authoritative system, impervious to change. As Habib (2011) explains:

> [Poststructuralism] rejected [...] the concept of structure, the use of binary oppositions, and structuralism's ahistorical approach, emphasizing instead the *indeterminate* and *polysemic nature* of semiotic codes and the arbitrary and constructed nature of the foundations of knowledge. (p.230, emphasis added)

Building upon this intellectual foundation, poststructuralist sociolinguistics treats language as a contested space and understands it as an activity that we participate in rather than a monolithic structure or system we draw upon (Pennycook, 2010). This has decentred language as a pure and abstract entity, propelling the development of concepts such as translanguaging that, once again, destabilise the normativity of monolingualism. Translanguaging refers to the contemporary understanding of bi- and multilingualism and rejects arbitrary boundaries between languages, focusing instead on the existence of a single linguistic repertoire possessed by the speaker. Chapter 4 revisits the concepts thoroughly and provides further details. Concepts such as translanguaging - in describing the everyday practices of non-monolinguals - uphold a positive and dynamic view of bilingualism and create a framework to understand the presence of and interaction between two languages within a single space. As such, they have significant conceptual currency in terms of bilingual picturebooks and constitute the constellation of socio-political and epistemological developments that have contributed implicitly or explicitly to the proliferation of bilingual picturebooks.

## 2.2. Review of existing research on bilingual picturebooks

The above section clearly demonstrates the effects of the key socio-political and cultural developments from the 20th century on bilingual picturebooks. On the one hand, these developments have caused an increase in multilingual and multicultural spaces and created

a climate conducive to the growth of bilingual picturebooks. On the other, they have contributed to a paradigm shift in the notions and theories surrounding language in general, and bi-/multilingualism in particular. Perregaux (2009, p.131) rightly states that bilingual books facilitate (classroom) practices that align with theories on bilingualism and plurilingualism.[5] A large portion of the relatively limited scholarship on bilingual picturebooks focuses on such practices that draw upon contemporary notions of language and bilingualism and seek to investigate the potential of bilingual picturebooks to translate these theoretical arguments into practice. This kind of research is primarily undertaken in educational settings. In the context of this study, the term 'practice-based' is used to categorise such research that focuses on the *instrumental* value of bilingual picturebooks within schools and communities. On the other end of the continuum, text-based research self-evidently engages with *intratextual* features such as the representation of bilingualism and diversity in bilingual picturebooks, as well as iconotextual issues of word-image interaction. The present section will critically review some of the key studies on bilingual picturebooks in order to underline the need for a study such as this one that draws a connection between the aesthetics and the pedagogics of bilingual picturebooks.

One of the earliest book-length contributions to draw attention to bilingual picturebooks is *Building Bridges: multilingual resources for children* (The Multilingual Resources for Children Project, 1995). While the project does not exclusively focus on multilingual *reading* resources, its early contribution to scholarship on bilingual picturebooks is significant in two ways: Firstly, born out of the intersection of interests between a typographer and a specialist in language and education, the project offers a bird's-eye view and initiates a discussion on design challenges in bilingual picturebooks, the relative status of the two languages, and the placement of images with regard to the two languages. The more recent text-based studies reviewed later broaden this discussion through sophisticated analyses. Secondly, the project undertakes fieldwork in four mainstream and five community schools[6] in East London to survey the use and perception of bilingual books among students and teachers. It concludes that bilingual books

---

[5] « Le livre bilingue permet d'ouvrir à des pratiques qui rejoignent les théories qui s'élaborent sur le bilinguisme et le plurilinguisme. »
[6] In this context, community schools refer to voluntary schools held outside of mainstream school hours to cater to specific linguistic, cultural or religious needs of immigrant or ethnic minority students

have the potential to act as a bridge between the languages of the school
and home; they also have the effect of raising monolingual children's
awareness of, and interest in, other languages. (*ibid.* p.56)

Sneddon (2008; 2009) builds on these findings and undertakes an ethnographic study with six bilingual children from immigrant families in East London schools, learning to read their home languages by using bilingual picturebooks. Although the children speak different languages and have different reading levels in English as well as their home languages, the study presents encouraging evidence concerning the students' motivation to read their home languages alongside English. Moreover, and of particular relevance to the present study, Sneddon demonstrates that there is an apparent transfer of skills and concepts between the two languages while reading bilingual texts, aiding the children's comprehension of the text. Illustrations also add a layer of interpretative support to the process. This is exemplified by 9-year-old Sarah, born in London to parents from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Sarah is therefore fluent in English and French. As a primary reading strategy, Sarah first reads in French and uses the English text to check her comprehension. When faced with unfamiliar words in both languages, she bases her comprehension on the illustrations, highlighting that the bilingual picturebook format contributes to Sarah's vocabulary and literacy in French. This experience is echoed by the other participants in the study who are learning to read a diverse range of home languages such as Albanian, Turkish and Urdu. Freeman, Freeman and Ebe (2011) make similar claims to argue for the inclusion of students' home languages and cultures in the classroom by means of bilingual books that potentially serve as "bridges to biliteracy" (p.233).

Sneddon's findings concerning the value of the bilingual picturebook format for second language literacy acquisition are also confirmed by Thibeault and Matheson (2020) who undertake a similar study, but in the context of French immersion schools in Canada that adopt "content-based language instruction" (p.376) to facilitate the acquisition of French among English-speaking children.[7] As such, instead of focusing on the voluntary acquisition of literacy in minority home languages, they investigate reading strategies in a context in which French literacy acquisition is *mandated* at the institutional level. Despite the starkly different context, Thibeault and Matheson report that using equivalent

[7] In support of the institutional bilingualism in Canada, the French-immersion schools are aimed at English-speaking students. The aim of these schools is to facilitate the development of bilingualism among children by teaching educational content in French to students who speak English at home.

passages in the two languages appeared to be the most common reading strategy, supporting Sneddon's claim that the comprehension of bilingual texts is situated at the intersection of the two languages. Thibeault and Matheson further expand the discourse on reading strategies for bilingual picturebooks by recognising the difference between parallel texts (that is, bilingual picturebooks in which the entire text is provided in both languages) and interlingual texts (where two languages are used interlingually to create one text), reporting that the students who successfully recognised the structural difference between the two formats were able to adapt their reading strategies appropriately.

The above two studies reveal some pertinent points with regard to the present study. Firstly, both demonstrate the importance of the interaction between the two languages in the meaning-making process of bilingual picturebooks. While this interaction is investigated by Sneddon, and Thibeault and Matheson as a reading strategy, understanding it at the iconotextual level would not only deepen the insight on how bilingual picturebooks work but would also, as mentioned in the previous chapter, provide a lexicon to describe and problematise the reading strategies reported in the above studies. Secondly, Sneddon demonstrates the centrality of illustrations to successful comprehension of bilingual texts. Since Thibeault and Matheson undertake a "moderate inductive analysis" (Anadón & Savoie-Zajc, 2009 cited in Thibeault and Matheson, 2020, p.382) wherein "previous research orients the preliminary categories through which the analysis is done," (*ibid.*), their study does not consider the effect of illustrations on cross-linguistic reading strategies even if both the bilingual texts used in the study are picturebooks. This underlines the need to iconotextually investigate not only the interaction between the two languages but also between the languages and the illustrations. Finally, Thibeault and Matheson's expansion to interlingual texts highlights that they are structurally different from parallel texts and warrant an investigation of their intrinsic mechanics in order to facilitate optimal use in classroom settings such as the ones discussed in the above studies.

The potential of bilingual picturebooks is not limited to language classrooms. Hadaway and Young (2013, 2014) argue that bilingual books offer a "permanent means of preserving language" (2014, p.359) and that the use of bilingual books with young children can revitalise indigenous languages and increase awareness about cultural and linguistic diversity. They draw attention to the intricacies in the selection process indicating the controversy and criticism encountered by bilingual books due to the delicate balance

between commercial interests and indigenous concerns. In order to understand and address these issues, they draw upon ideological theory and recommend minute attention to three key areas: awareness, positionality and multiple perspectives. That is, they link the language revitalisation potential of the bilingual books to certain intrinsic features such as a. the mechanisms with which the book raises awareness about languages, b. the positioning of languages within bilingual books and the message that it communicates as regards the status of the indigenous language, and c. the representation of multiple perspectives.

While these guidelines pertain to all indigenous bilingual books and not solely *picturebooks*, several examples used in their suggestions for "creating awareness with bilingual books" (Hadaway & Young, 2014, p.362) are in fact bilingual picturebooks and warrant being understood as such. For example, they underline the potential of Bouchard and Willier's Cree-English bilingual picturebook *The Drum Calls Softly* (2008) to highlight special traditions such as the round dance and foster intergenerational dialogue among indigenous communities. Owing to its picturebook format, the foregrounding of Native traditions is achieved by the bilingual text (poem, in this case) *and* the illustrations. Understanding how these two components operate at the iconotextual and narrative level within a bilingual picturebook setting is therefore essential to recognising the full extent of the potential of bilingual picturebooks for language revitalisation.

It is important to emphasise that the present study is by no means the first one to identify the need to engage with bilingual picturebooks at an iconotextual and narrative level. New Zealand linguist and children's literature scholar, Nicola Daly, has undertaken some key analyses of bilingual picturebooks, particularly focusing on issues of positionality mentioned by Hadaway and Young (2013). In order to examine the relative dominance of the two languages from the bilingual text, Daly frames her analyses within the sociolinguistic concept of linguistic landscapes. Increasingly used in media and literary studies, linguistic landscapes conventionally refer to language use in public spaces such as signage, street names and advertising material (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), and "reflect the real and everyday use and relative status of languages within a community which can often be in contrast to the official language policy of a government" (Daly, 2018, p.558). Notably, Daly extends the notion of 'public space' to bilingual picturebooks and uses the linguistic landscape lens to analyse textual and paratextual elements. Here, Daly concurs with scholars' claims about the semiotic potential of typography (see Serafini & Clausen, 2012;

Unsworth *et al.*, 2014) and makes assumptions about how certain typographic choices indicate dominance. For example, the position of the text (in languages read from left to right, on top and on the verso page) and the relative size of the text reflect dominance of one language over the other.

Using the linguistic landscape framework and the above assumptions, Daly (2016) analyses Māori-English bilingual picturebooks. As discussed in the previous section, Māori is an indigenous language in New Zealand that has been the object of several revitalisation efforts and government policies in recent years. Daly's analysis of the bilingual text reveals that the growing presence of such bilingual picturebooks in New Zealand is in itself a positive indicator in terms of indigenous language revitalisation. However, it also sheds light on the effect of language positionality on the bilingual picturebooks' potential to act as tools for language preservation. She highlights the example of a recent award-winning non-fiction bilingual picturebook *Mōtiti Blue and the Oil Spill* (McCauley and Waaka, 2015) that includes full text in Māori and English, but the information panels about the actual oil spill event are in English only. Commenting on several instances of this nature, Daly concludes that they are indicative of "the lower status of Māori and perhaps also of a dominant monolingual culture" (2016, p.15).

In a later study, Daly (2018) undertakes a more quantitative analysis of a corpus of 211 Spanish-English bilingual picturebooks from the Marantz Collection in the United States. This analysis yields identical results with English receiving more space and prominence in the linguistic landscape, further demonstrating the nuanced way in which the two languages in a bilingual text interact with each other. Once again, Daly concedes that the presence of Spanish serves a symbolic purpose in augmenting the status of the language within the sociolinguistic context of the United States. However, the two studies also demonstrate that intratextual design choices influence the interaction between the two languages and thereby the overarching message that they may involuntarily convey. The novel introduction of the concept of linguistic landscape therefore provides an effective framework to investigate the interrelations between the linguistic components of bilingual picturebooks. But in doing so, Daly does not take into account the illustrations from her objects of analysis and focuses more on the "bilingual" component of bilingual picturebooks.

**Figure 1**

*Visual representation of Daly's conceptual framework*
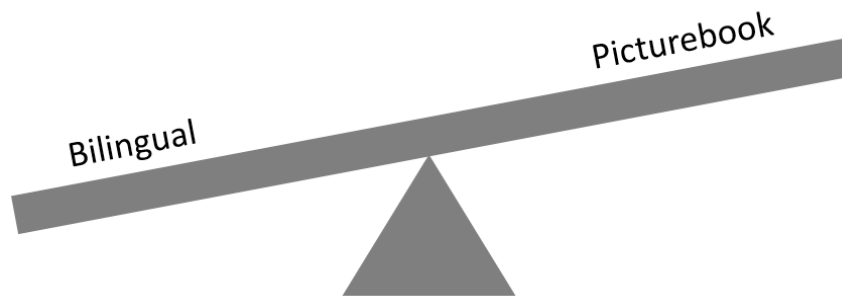


To the contrary, Kümmerling-Meibauer's (2013b) theoretical approach to bilingual picturebooks places the word-image interaction at the centre. Building upon the solid foundation of picturebook research that underlines the crucial role played by the intersection between text and images in the meaning-making process of picturebooks, Kümmerling-Meibauer undertakes a multimodal content analysis of two bilingual picturebooks (English-Korean and German-Farsi) to demonstrate the complexity of visual and linguistic codes present therein. As a consequence of this complexity, she links the competence to comprehend the bilingual picturebooks to the linguistic concept of code-switching which, simply put, is "the ability to connect different languages" (*ibid.* p.18). According to Kümmerling-Meibauer, bilingual picturebooks are situated at the intersection of two cultures and therefore present several culture-specific visual codes which are interpreted by readers using a process similar to codeswitching. That is, the reader continuously switches between the text and the words to make meaning of the picturebook. Interestingly, Kümmerling-Meibauer assumes a monolingual reader as she states that readers proficient in English or German are not able to read Korean or Farsi. As such, even though she touches upon the positive impact of an *unknown* language or script in supporting the "experience of alterity" (*ibid.*) and theoretically acknowledges the need to distinguish between the two linguistic codes, her codeswitching framework treats the additional language as a mere symbolic presence and barely addresses the interaction of the two languages. It can therefore be said that Kümmerling-Meibauer focuses on the "picturebook" or multimodal component of bilingual picturebooks.

**Figure 2**

*Visual representation of Kümmerling-Meibauer's conceptual framework*
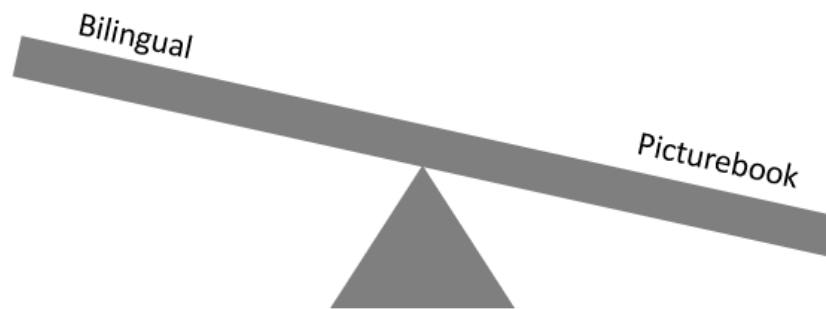


The above two approaches complement each other but also underscore the need for a cohesive framework that takes into account both the bilingual nature and the specific picturebook characteristics of bilingual picturebooks. Moreover, this section squarely demonstrates that practice-based and text-based research on bilingual picturebooks are two sides of the same coin, supporting the intention of the present study to investigate how the iconotextual complexities of bilingual picturebooks are connected to their pedagogical potential. The above studies have already paved the way for such an investigation. The rest of the study will now build upon the context and research presented in this chapter and will begin by developing a conceptual framework to investigate the complex semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks. The impact of this complex semiotic landscape on the role of the reader will then be discussed in view of connecting the aesthetic complexities of bilingual picturebooks with their instrumental value.

# Chapter 3

## *"The whole is something besides its parts"*: The semiotics of bilingual picturebooks

> *In the case of all things which have several parts and in which the totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the whole is something besides the parts, there is a cause;*
> *(-Aristotle, translated by W.D. Ross in Aristotle's Metaphysics, 1924)*

Aristotle's metaphysical quote on the nature of unity has been quoted and misquoted, translated and re-translated for millennia and has found its way into an extraordinarily diverse range of disciplines spanning from Systems Engineering to Gestalt Psychology. More topically, the quote – or rather, its variant "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (employed by Nodelman, 1988, among others) – has been incorporated successfully in children's literature, notably within the domain of picturebook research that crucially problematises the relationship between the visual and verbal elements present therein. The large body of picturebook research has come to be defined by the insights that it provides on the unique multimodal character of picturebooks and its implications for the meaning-making process. The present chapter aims to build on these insights to understand the dynamics of bilingual picturebooks. As discussed in detail in the previous chapters, bilingual picturebooks are a burgeoning phenomenon owing to several concomitant socio-political and cultural developments, resulting in increased academic interest in the aesthetic and more particularly social-pedagogic qualities of bilingual picturebooks. However, as the above review of some of the key studies in the field highlights, the text-based studies tend to pay more attention to either the bilingual or the multimodal characteristics of these cultural artefacts. Moreover, traditional picturebook theory is largely subject to the monolingual bias. That is, it takes the monolingual reader and the monolingual text as the norm.

In an endeavour to redress this imbalance and propose a cohesive framework to understand bilingual picturebooks, this study aims to examine how the internal dynamics of bilingual picturebooks relate to their social-pedagogic potential by adopting the following guiding questions: How does the existence of an additional language complicate

the semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks compared to monolingual picturebooks? What impact can this modified semiotic landscape have on the role of the reader and how does it potentially contribute to the instrumental value of bilingual picturebooks? In order to draw a connection between the aesthetic complexities and the social-pedagogic potential of bilingual picturebooks, it is first essential to problematise some of the aesthetic complexities and understand them within a framework that highlights the bilingual as well as the multimodal characteristics of bilingual picturebooks. Only then is it possible to proceed to exploring how these dynamics relate to the oft-discussed potential of bilingual picturebooks. To this end, this chapter begins to narrow in on the concept and some definitions of bilingual picturebooks. After arriving at a working definition, semiotic theory and its relationship with picturebooks will be discussed to then expand the framework and apply it to bilingual picturebooks.

## 3.1.  Bilingual picturebooks: definition and types

In developing a working definition of bilingual picturebooks, an initial step is to examine the term "bilingual picturebook" at a linguistic level. In doing so, it becomes apparent that "bilingual" acts as a qualifier of "picturebook," clearly indicating that bilingual picturebooks are a *type* of picturebook. Postmodern picturebooks or wordless picturebooks offer a structurally analogous example. Both are specific types of picturebooks in which the qualifiers "postmodern" or "wordless" add further details about their specific nature but they remain firmly grounded in the larger territory of picturebooks. As such, their definition is inevitably dependent on the definition of picturebook.

In their elaboration on the work of Bosch Andreu (2007), Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini (2018) discuss the various approaches taken by scholars to define picturebooks. Bosch Andreu's insightful classification of picturebook definitions stems from the desire to propose a "neutral" definition that could potentially be included in non-specialised dictionaries (2007, p.26).[8] Nevertheless, the classification lays the groundwork for a specialised and theoretical discussion on picturebook definitions and demonstrates the great variety of perspectives brought to the topic. It divides existing definitions and commentary into four categories: 1. Picturebook as a type of book, 2. Picturebook as words

---

[8] "El objetivo de este trabajo es buscar una definición "neutral" de álbum; una definición genérica que pudiera incluirse en un diccionario no especializado."

and images, 3. Picturebook as a sequence, and 4. Picturebook as art.[9] Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini (2018) extend this work by bringing in definitions and commentary from scholarship in English as well as by proposing two more categories of approaches through which picturebooks continue to be understood: Picturebook as performance for an audience and Picturebook's effect on the audience. While a reproduction of all the definitions that fall into the above categories is beyond the scope of this study – and has already been done succinctly by Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini (2018) - these categories succeed in demonstrating the extent of the diversity in scholarly commentary on the topic. In fact, one of the earliest definitions of picturebooks is also one of the most comprehensive and touches upon almost all of the categories discussed above:

> A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and foremost, an experience for the child. As an art form, it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning of the page. On its own terms its possibilities are limitless. (Bader, 1976, p.1)

This multifaceted definition sheds light on several components of picturebooks that are then echoed in the works of other scholars. On the one hand, it underlines that the picturebook is an artform, a commercial product as well as a social, cultural and historical document. On the other, it foreshadows the growing engagement with the performative element of picturebooks and their materiality by drawing attention to design features and the "drama of the turning of the page" (*ibid.*). However, given that the present study intends to understand the *internal* dynamics of bilingual picturebooks, Bader's definition most importantly highlights the interdependence of words and pictures that has since become the standard for literary and narrative theorisations of picturebooks. In fact, Bosch Andreu (2007) remarks that the majority of scholarly descriptions of picturebooks are from a literary perspective and centre around the word-image dynamic. For example, Arizpe and Styles (2003) define picturebooks as "a book in which the story depends on the interaction between written text and image" (p.22). Similarly, in a more recent contribution, Canadian

---

[9] Translation of titles of categories taken from Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini (2017, p.16)

scholar Sylvia Pantaleo (2014) describes them as books whose "total effect depends on the text, the illustrations, and the reciprocity between these two sign systems" (p.15).

Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini (2017), in proposing the additional category of picturebook definitions in terms of their effect on the audience, collate several scholarly opinions about the pedagogical potential of picturebooks. They use Pantaleo's (2014) emphasis on picturebooks as tools for the development of critical thinking and visual literacy to illustrate the category of definitions that focus on the pedagogical potential of picturebooks as one of the *effects* that they have on the audience. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, this trend has definitely been applied to bilingual picturebooks as they are largely understood in terms of their pedagogical effect on the audience. However, keeping in mind the aim of the present study to understand how bilingual picturebooks work at the intrinsic and instrumental level, it takes cognizance of all the facets of existing picturebook definitions presented by Bosch Andreu and Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini but adopts an understanding primarily centred around word-image interaction. In doing so, aspects of the definitions by Arizpe and Styles (2003) and Pantaleo (2014) are combined to state that the picturebook is an artform serving several social and pedagogical purposes whose story and total effect are dependent on the text, images and the interaction between the two modes.

It is important to emphasise that both the *story* and the *total effect* of picturebooks are dependent on the interaction between the two modes as it underlines that the internal dynamics of picturebooks affect not only the narrative but also its reception. This integration of the components from the definitions proposed by Arizpe and Styles on the one hand and Pantaleo on the other is essential particularly since the present study – as a second step - intends to understand the relation of the internal workings of bilingual picturebooks with their well-established social and pedagogical potential. In this context, the "total effect" of the picturebook refers to the entire range of reception dynamics including comprehension, appreciation and instrumental use by the audience. A primary definition that acknowledges this range of reception dynamics is therefore a necessary precondition for investigating how bilingual picturebooks work and how these workings impact the total effect that they produce.

Having arrived at a suitable definition for picturebooks, it is now essential to understand what the qualifier "bilingual" adds to the concept of bilingual picturebooks. A surface-level understanding of the qualifier "bilingual" is fairly straightforward and etymologically self-

evident, referring to the presence of two languages. However, research in bilingualism and bilingual education clearly indicates that defining the term "bilingual" is in fact a complicated undertaking. Usually problematised in the context of individuals or children, the term has been met with diverse opinions as regards the extent to which one needs to know and/or use the two languages to be categorised as a bilingual. While the traditional view laid stress on equal or "balanced" fluency and command in the two languages, recent approaches emphasise the diversity of what bilingualism entails and focus on language *function* instead of language dominance or fluency. With the intention to dispel the myth that bilingual individuals must have equal competence in the two languages, Grosjean stresses the diversity in bilingual individuals and places them on a continuum:

> At one end we find the migrant worker who may speak with some difficulty the host country's language and who does not read and write it. At the other end, we have the professional interpreter who is fully fluent in two languages. In between, we find the scientist who reads and writes articles in a second language but who rarely speaks it, the foreign-born spouse who interacts with friends in his first language, the member of a linguistic minority who uses the minority language only at home and the majority language in all other domains of life [...]. (2010, p.22)

Grosjean's statement highlights that when used as a noun ("a bilingual") or as a qualifier in relation to individuals (a "bilingual" child), the term can refer to a wide range of linguistic realities ranging from someone who possesses "native-like" competence in two languages and uses them equally, to a new learner with limited linguistic resources in the second language. The qualifier is equally complicated when used in association with books or picturebooks. Must a picturebook contain two languages equally to be categorised as a bilingual picturebook? Or do picturebooks that include loanwords or phrases in another language also fall into the category? Similar to the broad understanding adopted by scholars such as Grosjean, the qualifier "bilingual" allows a wide range of linguistic configurations also when employed in association with picturebooks.

As such, the definition of picturebooks discussed above can be integrated with the complexities of the qualifier "bilingual" to arrive at a definition of bilingual picturebooks. In this study, bilingual picturebooks are understood as an artform presented in two languages used to varying extents, which serves several social and pedagogical purposes,

and whose story and total effect are dependent on the text(s), images and the interaction between the sign systems. One of the standard definitions put forward so far states that bilingual or dual-language books are "books that are written in two languages, typically English on one page and another language on the adjacent page" (Naqvi *et al.*, 2013, p.504). Since this definition categorically states that the books are "written in two languages," it does not allow the nuances and variations in language use that are seen very often in bilingual picturebooks as understood over the course of this study.

Perregaux recognises these nuances and states that the bilingual book can be situated on a continuum that ranges from a monolingual book to a bilingual/multilingual book in which the languages have their own textual space (2009, p.132).[10] The definition proposed for use in this research demonstrates that Perregaux's statement concerning bilingual books in general stands true for bilingual picturebooks as well. Owing to the diversity that the term "bilingual" affords, several kinds of picturebooks that use two languages can be categorised as bilingual picturebooks. Daly (2016) concurs and presents the following taxonomy: interlingual books, parallel texts and simultaneous or sequential publication. The first category refers to books that have a primary or carrier language interspersed with words from another language. This category is exemplified – among several others - by *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* by Samantha Vamos (2009) in which English acts as a carrier language with several interspersed Spanish words to tell the story of everything a family does to welcome a new baby. The title itself demonstrates this interlingual nature of the picturebook which has the Spanish words "Mi Amor" [My Love] interspersed in an otherwise English title.

The second category, parallel texts, presents the same information in two languages within the same picturebook. In their classroom-based study discussed in the previous chapter, Thibeault and Matheson (2020) use Brunelle and Tondino's (2017) French-English picturebook *Enchantée!/Pleased to Meet You!* as an example of this category. This bilingual picturebook narrates the story of how Soso, a teacup Chihuahua, and Frieda, a mouse, become friends. The story is presented in French and English and the same information is available in both languages on the same page. Daly's third category, simultaneous or sequential publication, refers to translated picturebooks that are published as two separate versions. Examples of this last category abound and have been subject to extensive study

---

[10] « Le livre bilingue peut dès lors se situer sur un continuum partant d'un livre monolingue jusqu'à la réalisation d'un livre bilingue/plurilingue où les langues occupent chacune un même espace textuel. »

within the field of translation of children's literature (see Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini, 2017). As already mentioned in the introductory chapter, this last category is left out from this study since translated picturebooks continue to be examined by translation studies scholars. Additionally, even if they present a text in two languages, they do not do so within the *same* picturebook. As individual entities, they are monolingual and therefore do not fall under the purview of this study.

Even though Daly's categorisation provides insight into the ways in which two languages can be presented in picturebooks, it is important to return to Perregaux's notion of bilingual books as a *continuum* since the boundaries between the categories can be blurry. An interlingual picturebook with only a few loanwords from another language is situated towards the monolingual end of the continuum whereas a text like *Enchantée!/Pleased to Meet You!* that presents complete text in both languages is placed at the bilingual end. Therefore, the quantity of the additional language used determines the position of the bilingual picturebook on the continuum. For example, *The Lost Ball/La Pelota Perdida* by Lynn Reiser (2002) is an English-Spanish bilingual picturebook that presents a peculiar presentation of the two languages. While the amount of text is divided almost equally into English and Spanish, the text is not identical since each language belongs to two different characters in the book, each of whom gives related but not completely identical information. In a sense, the complete story is presented "interlingually" as in *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor.* However, since the second language is not just interspersed but rather constitutes a significant portion of the entire text, it is situated more towards the bilingual end of the continuum.

Acknowledging the wide range of bilingual picturebooks, this study limits itself to works that situate themselves towards the bilingual end of the continuum and examine the inner dynamics of bilingual picturebooks that fall under the same category as *Enchantée!/Pleased to Meet You!* and *The Lost Ball/La Pelota Perdida.* It is hypothesised that the complexities of the internal dynamics of such bilingual picturebooks are significantly different than monolingual picturebooks around which current picturebook theory is developed. This is attributed to the fact that they present almost equal amounts of texts in two languages and therefore complicate the semiotic landscape and reception dynamics of such picturebooks. To investigate this in further detail, it is important to understand existing theoretical frameworks that address issues of semiotics and reception of picturebooks. The following

section endeavours to discuss the said frameworks and is therefore situated at the intersection of picturebook theory, semiotics and reception theory.

## 3.2. Picturebooks and semiotics

Picturebooks have undergone a rise in stature over the last several decades as a veritable object of study examined in literary and cultural studies. Through their reliance on the visual aspect to communicate the complete meaning of the story and render its full effect on the reader, picturebooks have increasingly challenged the verbocentric ideology (Eco, 1976) prevalent in society as well as academia. Here, verbocentric ideology or verbocentrism refers to the bias that accords "privileged status to language over images, music, and movement" (Siegel, 1995). Nodelman's (1988) monograph *Words About Pictures: Narrative art of children's picture books* is an early effort that brings to light this prevalent verbocentrism and redresses it by drawing attention to the visual aspect of picturebooks. As a part of this undertaking, Nodelman builds upon the commentary of his contemporaries and states:

> [A]ll of us seem to have arrived independently, and more or less at the same time, at the conclusion that picture books have distinct characteristics, that they organize visual information in a way different from what we usually expect of visual art, and that we might best understand them by considering them in the light of some form of *semiotic* theory. (1988, Preface, emphasis added)

Nodelman's statement highlights the stronghold that semiotic theory has gained in picturebook research over the last several decades. In justifying his own theoretical approach and that of his contemporaries, Nodelman states that semiotics provides the most appropriate framework to examine the visual aspect of picturebooks since it "focuses on the conditions under which meanings are created" (1988, Preface). Here, the conditions refer to the manner in which the text and images are presented in the picturebook. Although Nodelman's focus is on the *visual* aspect of picturebooks, his argument about the suitability of semiotics as a theoretical framework holds true not only for picturebook *images* but also for picturebooks in their entirety. That is, replacing "visual images in picture books" in Nodelman's argument with "picturebooks" provides an equally

compelling reasoning for the employment of semiotics in picturebook research: "since the major task of [picturebooks] is to communicate information, they make most sense in terms of an approach that focuses on the conditions under which meanings are communicated" (1988). As discussed at a later stage in this section, this reasoning is apparent in the work of several picturebook scholars such as Sipe who make use of semiotic theory to understand the process of meaning construction and interpretation in picturebooks. It is therefore a logical next step to build a similar framework to examine bilingual picturebooks.

Prior to discussing some of the existing semiotic approaches taken to picturebooks, it is essential to briefly understand semiotics as a discipline. Most commonly understood as the study of signs, semiotics is a field of inquiry that more precisely focuses on the creation of meaning through signs. Late Italian semiotician Umberto Eco, in one of the broadest definitions of semiotics, states that "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign" (1976, p.7). Such a definition greatly expands the purview of semiotics. As Chandler rightly explains:

> All meaningful phenomena (including words and images) are signs. To interpret something is to treat it as a sign. All experience is mediated by signs, and communication depends on them. Semioticians study how meanings are made and how reality is represented (and indeed constructed) through signs and sign systems. (2017, p.2)

This explains the wide reach of semiotics, touching diverse disciplines such as anthropology, literary criticism, film and media theory, and sociology. Despite its extensive applicability, semiotics is not institutionalised as a discipline within the academy. On the one hand, all the disciplines that employ it have adopted and absorbed its concepts so seamlessly that it "rendered semiotics invisible as an autonomous theory" (Lagopoulos & Boklund-Lagopoulou, 2020, p.7). On the other hand, when mentioned as an autonomous theory, it tends to be studied as a subfield of linguistics. This ascription of semiotics to linguistics may once again be attributed to the verbocentrism which deems non-verbal signs such as the aural or the visual subordinate to verbal language, both written and spoken.

Interestingly, Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who was one of the two central figures in semiotics, proposed the term *semiology* to refer to the broader science of signs

which included linguistics as a *subfield*. However, as a linguist primarily concerned with theorising *language* as a system of signs, Saussure's semiotic theory is paradoxically limited to the linguistic sign in the form of written or spoken words. Rendered brief, Saussure's semiology is based on a dyadic model that treats the sign as a unified whole comprising two distinct components: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the mental representation of the sound of a word and the signified refers to the linguistic value or the concept of the sign (Saussure, 1916). Saussure stresses that these two concepts are psychological in nature and bear no direct referential link with the world. Signs and language are therefore viewed as autonomous structures, decoupling them from the producer and receiver of the sign.[11]

To the contrary, Saussure's American contemporary, Charles Sanders Peirce, was more concerned with the logical and referential function of all kinds of signs. In this vein, he proposed his triadic model of signs which serves as the basis of Sipe's (1998) semiotically framed examination of picturebooks. The Peircean semiotic model states that a sign consists of three distinct components that interact to render the meaning of a sign: the representamen, the object, and the interpretant (Peirce in Chandler, 2017). The *representamen*, also known as the sign-vehicle for the sake of clarity, refers to the form taken by the sign. For example, the written word "cat" is a representamen. The *object* refers to that which is being represented whereas the *interpretant* is the receiver's interpretation of the representamen. These three elements interact with each other in a process called semiosis.

**Figure 3**

*Peirce's model as a semiotic triad*
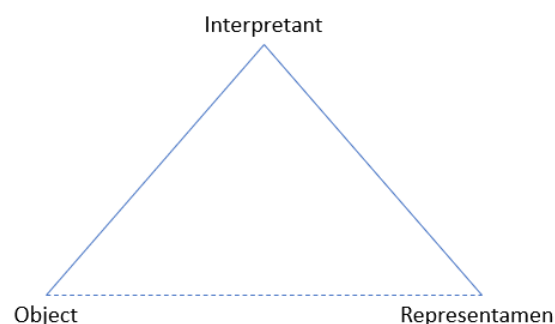


*Source: Chandler (2017)*

[11] Saussure's semiology is primarily understood through his posthumously published *Cours de linguistique générale* [Course in general linguistics] (1916) which was ghost-written by some of his students. Contemporary historical linguists in non-Anglophone scholarship examine the extent of editorial interventions and (mis)interpretations to challenge and undo the rigidity of Saussure's doctrine (see Stawarska, 2015).

Chandler (2017) explains the Peircean triad succinctly and in simpler terms. He states that "the sign is a unity of the thing that does the representing (the representamen), what is represented (the object), and how it is interpreted (the interpretant)." The final component of the triad, the interpretant is decidedly Peirce's most innovative and significant contribution to the field. In Figure 3, a dotted line is used to connect the representamen and the object in order to indicate that there is not necessarily a direct link between the two. It is in the mediating influence of the interpretant that the other two components unite (Chandler, 2017). The introduction of the interpretant therefore opens Peircean semiotics to the role of the receiver of the sign, making it a highly pertinent foundation upon which to build a semiotically-framed theory of picturebooks.

Prolific picturebook scholar, Lawrence Sipe, in his seminal paper *How Picture Books Work: A Semiotically Framed Theory of Text-Picture Relationships* (1998), appreciates the value of Peirce's model due to the inclusion of the interpretant as one of the constituents of the sign, and the theoretical opportunities that it creates in terms of understanding how meaning-making works in picturebooks. Sipe also exploits the centrality of the receiver of the sign in the process of meaning-making to combine insights from reader-response theory with Peirce's semiotic triad. As a field that is distinguished and named in terms of its implied reader, children's literature has justifiably placed the child reader at the centre of several of its discussions, and has liberally drawn upon insights from reader-response critics such as Wolfgang Iser. Sipe continues this theoretical tradition and bases his examination at the intersection of Peircean semiotics and reader-response criticism, whilst drawing upon theories of aesthetics and literacy.

As a study that focuses on picturebooks, Sipe inevitably draws attention to the conceptualisations of the text-image relationship of his contemporaries to establish that "the essence of the picture book is the way the text and illustrations relate to each other" (1998, p.97). Several attempts have been made both before and after Sipe's seminal paper to frame the text-image relationship in picturebooks using a wide range of metaphors and insights from the related field of multimodality. Sipe proposes his own key term "synergy" (1998, p.98) which has since become the cornerstone of picturebook theory. The appeal of the term lies in its ability to concisely and creatively describe the interdependence of the text and images within a picturebook. Sipe claims that the text and images have "a synergistic relationship in which the total effect depends not only on the union of text and illustrations but on the *perceived interactions* or *transactions* between these two parts"

(1998, pp.98-99, emphasis added). By means of his proposed model, he intends to understand these perceived interactions or transactions and their effect on meaning making.

In this vein, Sipe claims to take a phenomenological approach to picturebooks; that is, he performs a qualitative enquiry to understand their experiential and lived aspects. In his own words, he focuses on understanding what happens in our head during the process of relating verbal and visual information to each other (1998, p.99). To this end, he builds on the works of Suhor (1984) and Siegel (1995) to use Peirce's semiotic triad to examine picturebooks through the lens of "transmediation." Here, transmediation refers to the "translation of content from one sign system to another" (Suhor, 1984, p.250). To a large extent, Sipe owes a debt to Siegel's innovating coupling of Suhor's theory of transmediation and the Peircean triad. Borrowing this innovative association and combining it with the synergistic relationship between words and images in a picturebook, Sipe begins by stating that the two sign systems in picturebooks (words and images) create two sets of semiotic triads.

**Figure 4**

*Two semiotic triads in picturebooks*
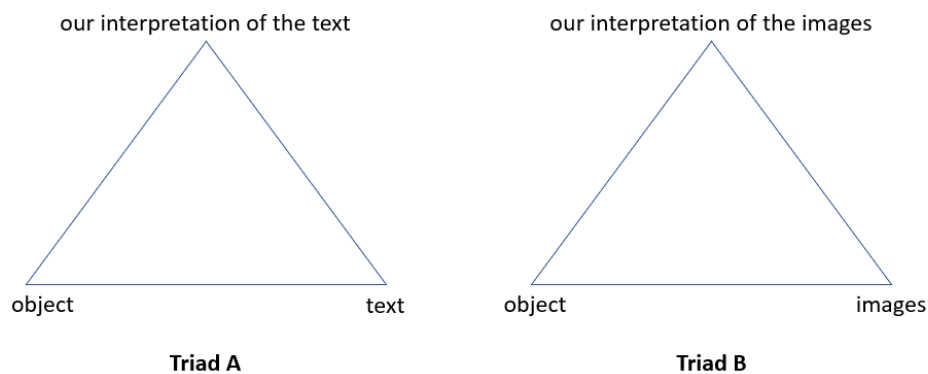


*Source: Sipe (1998)*

However, as synergistic artefacts, picturebooks present the two semiotic modes as a unified whole dominated by the semiotic interdependence that then creates complete meaning and effect. In the pedagogical context of non-verbocentric classrooms, Siegel (1995) demonstrates that the process of transmediation takes place when relating signs from two different systems with each other. She explains:

> When a learner moves from one sign system to another, semiosis becomes even more complex in that an entire semiotic triad serves as the object of another triad and the interpretant for this new triad must be represented in the new sign system. (Siegel, 1995, p.461)

Translated to the context of picturebooks, this process of transmediation takes place through the oscillation between the texts and images where both can be interpreted in relation to the other. Here, Sipe draws support from Iser's (1978) reader-response criticism in which the reader assumes a central role in the process of reading. According to Iser, the reader participates actively in the creation of meaning as any literary work is realised through the convergence of the reader and the text (Sipe, 1998). That is, the reader continually fills "gaps" present in every text in his or her own way. This theory is intuitively well-suited to Peirce's semiotic triad owing to its emphasis on the interpretant as the mediator between the object and the representamen. Sipe's integration of the two theories is therefore seamless. He argues that Iser's conceptualisation of the reader as a co-creator of meaning can be extended to picturebooks where the reader fills the gaps in the text with the information provided in the illustrations and vice-versa, rendering new interpretations of both the sign systems. This justifies his use of the term "synergy". Furthermore, Sipe represents the synergistic relationship by means of a modified version of the Peircean triad:

**Figure 5**

*Sipe's representation of the semiotic interaction between text and images*
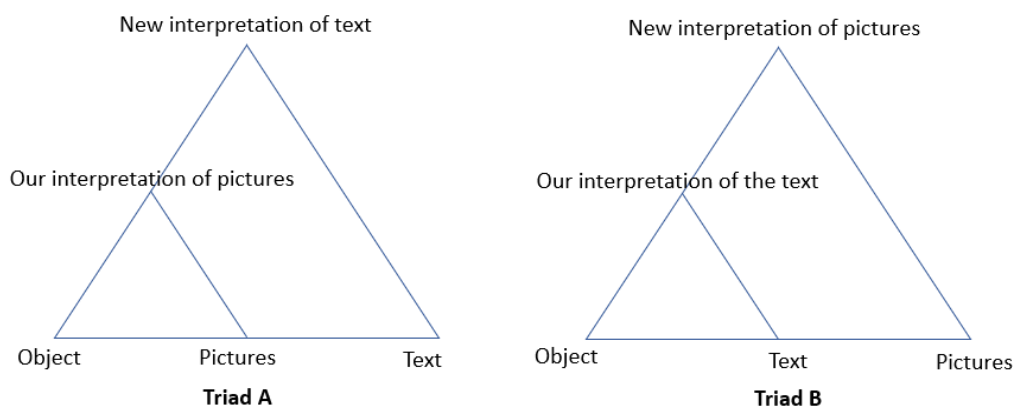


*Source: Sipe (1998)*

In this semiotic representation of the synergistic relationship between the text and pictures in a picturebook, Sipe illustrates the previously mentioned "perceived interactions or transactions" (1998, pp.98-99) between the two components. According to Sipe, when the reader transmediates between the text and pictures, two possibilities arise: 1. The reader interprets the pictures in terms of the words, or 2. The reader interprets the words in terms of the pictures. Triad A in Figure 5 represents the first possibility. Here, the reader moves from the sign system of pictures to that of words, and in this process of transmediation, "the semiotic triad with pictures as representamen becomes the object of a new triad, and the interpretant for this new triad changes as well." (Sipe, 1998, p.103). The inverse is true for Triad B. What follows is a potentially never-ending oscillation between words and images that highlights the inexhaustible nature of meanings formed by the word-image relationship in picturebooks. Such an understanding of transmediation follows Eco's claim that the dynamism of the interpretant in Peircean semiotics potentially leads to "unlimited semiosis" (1976, pp.68-69) referring to the possibility of successive interpretants *ad infinitum*. This also justifies Siegel's (1995) claim that transmediation can be viewed as a special case of semiosis.

Viewed as such, Sipe's adoption of the term transmediation and his employment of the term in relation to a modified semiotic triad to explain the dynamics of picturebooks creates fertile ground for the problematisation of the semiotics of bilingual picturebooks. As discussed in detail in the previous section, bilingual picturebooks are indeed a type of picturebook which essentially means that Sipe's entire theoretical framework discussed thus far is applicable to bilingual picturebooks as well. However, the discussion on the definition of bilingual picturebooks also highlights that the qualifier "bilingual" refers to a distinct set of qualities that distinguish this category of picturebooks from other types. The following section applies and extends Sipe's framework to the particular context of bilingual picturebooks in order to demonstrate their aesthetic and iconotextual complexities.

## 3.3.   The semiotics of bilingual picturebooks

Sipe's framework discussed in the previous section demonstrates that meaning-making from picturebooks is a complex process. This complexity is apparent in the semiotic model of transmediation proposed by Sipe. Here, it is possible to note that it is in fact the aesthetic and iconotextual composition of picturebooks - comprising two distinct sign systems that

function synergistically - that necessitates transmediation and thereby contributes greatly to the complexity of the meaning-making process. Extending this understanding to bilingual picturebooks that comprise not two but *three* sign systems in the form of Language 1 (L1), Language 2 (L2) and images, it is fair to assume that the iconotextual complexities increase exponentially, rendering the meaning-making process all the more intricate. Sipe's framework therefore creates a suitable foundation to examine these aesthetic complexities of bilingual picturebooks in relation to the first guiding question of the study: How does the existence of an additional language complicate the semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks compared to monolingual picturebooks?

Although Sipe's model and his concept of synergy have been used extensively in picturebook research, they are not without their shortcomings and criticisms. A prime example is Nikolajeva and Scott's (2001) key text *How Picturebooks Work* in which they level criticism against Sipe's phenomenological model. Focusing on his analysis of Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), Nikolajeva and Scott disagree with Sipe's decision to begin the analysis by first treating the words and the images separately before moving onto the process of transmediation. They also claim that like most Peircean models, "Sipe's interpretation favours the schematic and abstract" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p.5). While it is true that Sipe's model is schematic, its ability to theoretically present the intricacies of picturebooks cannot be denied. As Nikolajeva and Scott point out themselves, many other attempts to theorise picturebooks tend to focus on either the visual or textual elements therein. A pertinent example is Nodelman's (1988) pioneering monograph that acknowledges the centrality of word-image interaction but focuses primarily on the visual aspects. Later semiotic approaches such as the one taken by Painter, Martin and Unsworth (2013) address picturebooks but, like Nodelman, restrict themselves to image analysis. Sipe's model, although schematic, transcends this limitation by focusing on the synergistic relationship between words and images. It may also be argued that this model serves as a foundation upon which more concrete models or empirical studies may be built.

Having defended the relevance of Sipe's model for picturebook research in general and the present study in particular, it is equally important to provide some clarifications. Despite its apparent strengths, a primary objection may be taken to Sipe's claim that his proposed model focuses on the "*phenomenological dynamics* of the synergistic relationship" (1998, p.99, original emphasis) between words and images. While Sipe's model greatly succeeds in demonstrating the complex semiotic interaction between words and images,

terming a schematic model "phenomenological" reduces the intriguing and highly intricate process of reading into what is primarily a *theoretical* model. Admittedly, the analysis of *Where the Wild Things Are* does – to a certain extent – highlight the lived experience of reading the picturebook in question. However, the model in itself remains decidedly theoretical as pointed out by Nikolajeva and Scott (2001). For example, Sipe states that the two semiotic systems form two separate semiotic triads first that then interact through the process of transmediation. While this is theoretically accurate, a *phenomenological* understanding would demonstrate that the interpretation of the words and images can never be independent of each other since the iconotext is perceived as a whole before turning to the detailed meaning-making of words and images. This would therefore refute the possibility of independent semiotic triads existing in the first place.

Bearing these limitations of Sipe's model in mind, the present study wishes to clarify that the model for bilingual picturebooks proposed below is heavily inspired by Sipe but does not borrow his claim to phenomenology. It is instead an exploratory and theoretical model that intends to demonstrate the extent to which the presence of an additional language alters the semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks, contributing to the aesthetic and iconotextual complexity thereof.

The definition of bilingual picturebooks proposed by this study emphasises two facts that are central to the model: 1. The text is presented in two languages used to varying extents and 2. The total meaning and effect is dependent on the interaction between the text(s) and images. These facts make it clear that bilingual picturebooks are composed of three distinct semiotic systems: Language 1 (L1), Language (L2) and images.

**Figure 6**

*The three semiotic systems in bilingual picturebooks*
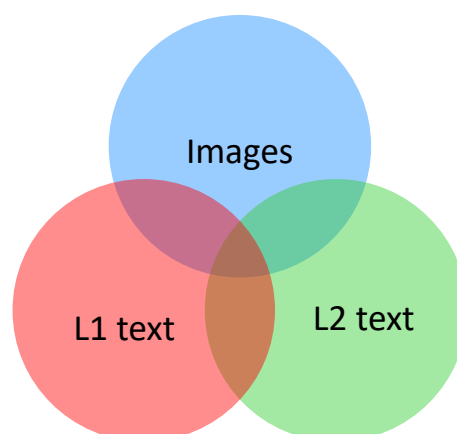
A few terminological and conceptual clarifications must be made at this juncture. Firstly, for the sake of clarity, the languages will be termed Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2). This terminology must not be confused with the terminology used in linguistic fields such as second language acquisition and bilingualism in which L1 and L2 refer to the chronology in which a speaker learns the two languages. That is, the "native" language is referred to as L1 and the subsequent languages as L2, L3 and so on. Similarly, L1 and L2 do not bear connotations of implied linguistic importance or hierarchy. Here, L1 simply means the language that is read first by the reader and L2 is the language that is read after. While the positionality of the languages within the bilingual picturebook may imply a social hierarchy and determine the reading order (Daly, 2014; 2016), L1 and L2 in the context of this study are not determined by their positionality either. This is to allow for the possibility that the reader agentically chooses which language is read first. This agency is more likely to occur in the case of parallel texts – that is, bilingual picturebooks in which the same information is provided in L1 and L2 – since the reader can decide which language to read first on the basis of her linguistic preference and/or competence. This claim about the reader's agency is supported by Sneddon's (2009) ethnographic study discussed previously in which she cites the example of an English-French bilingual reader, Sarah, who *chooses* – as a reading strategy – to read French first followed by English.

Interlingual texts – that is, bilingual picturebooks that tell a single story by alternating between two languages – on the other hand, afford this agency to a much lesser degree. This is the case because a single linear story is narrated using two languages interlingually. It is therefore the linearity of the story that dictates the reading order between the languages. Even in this case, however, L1 refers to the language that is read first and L2 refers to the language read after. The *Betty & Cat* series (Jacobs & Duvernois, 2016) can be used to illustrate the issue of L1 and L2 in interlingual picturebooks. In all the three books in the series, the entire stories are narrated interlingually. The two narrators, Betty and Cat, speak French and English respectively and the entire story is narrated through their alternating perspective. As such, the order of the languages changes from one opening to the next. Even in this case, however, the terminology is maintained consistently. So, while French can be the L1 in one opening, English can take its place in another.

A second important consideration is the distinction between a semiotic *mode* and *system*. In multimodality studies from a social semiotic perspective, a mode is understood as a channel of representation or communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Writing,

drawing and gesturing are examples of modes. Picturebooks are therefore rightly classified as multimodal texts that comprise at least two modes: the written and the illustrated. Further research on picturebooks has considered additional modes such as touch and materiality as well as typography. The two languages in a bilingual picturebook therefore use the same mode of writing. But as signs that are governed by distinct socially and culturally shaped conventions, they constitute different semiotic *systems*. Taking the examples of English, Mandarin and Arabic would facilitate this explanation. While all three, in their written form, use the same *mode*, they clearly embody three distinct semiotic *systems*.

Bilingual picturebooks are therefore multi*modal* and comprise three semiotic *systems*. Theoretically, these three systems occupy their own space within the picturebook text and therefore form three semiotic triads:

**Figure 7**

*Peircean triads formed by the three semiotic systems*
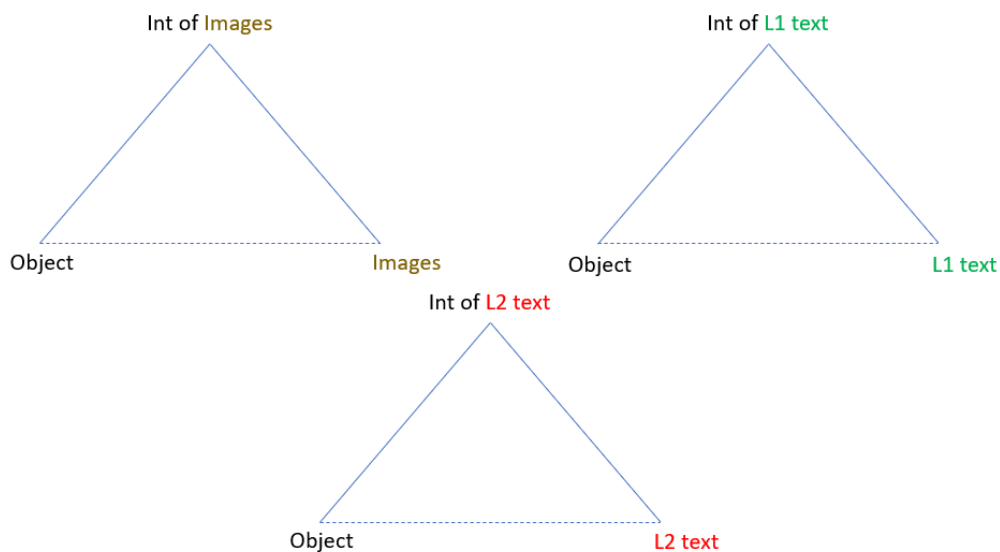


*Adapted from Sipe, 1998*

As seen in Figure 7, a minor modification is made to the Peircean triad proposed by Sipe; in keeping with Chandler's (2017) model, a dotted line is used between the object and the representamens (images, L1 and L2) to highlight that they are mediated by the interpretants. Each sign system therefore theoretically constitutes a unified whole with three distinct

representamens and interpretants. The following opening[12] from the English-Marathi bilingual picturebook *The Catty Ratty Tale*/मांजरांची मेजवानी [Mānjarānchi Mejavāni, trans: The Cats' Feast] (Saura Writer's Group, 2014) may be used to concretise the concept of three semiotic systems and thereby three triads:

**Figure 8**

*Opening 1 from* The Catty Ratty Tale/मांजरांची मेजवानी



In a village far away there lived some fat cats.
In the same village far away there also lived some rats.
Do you think the cats and rats were friends?

दूरच्या एका गावात काही गबदूल मांजरं राहात होती.
त्याच गावामध्ये काही उंदीरही राहात होते.
त्यांची एकमेकांशी मैत्री असू शकेल काय?
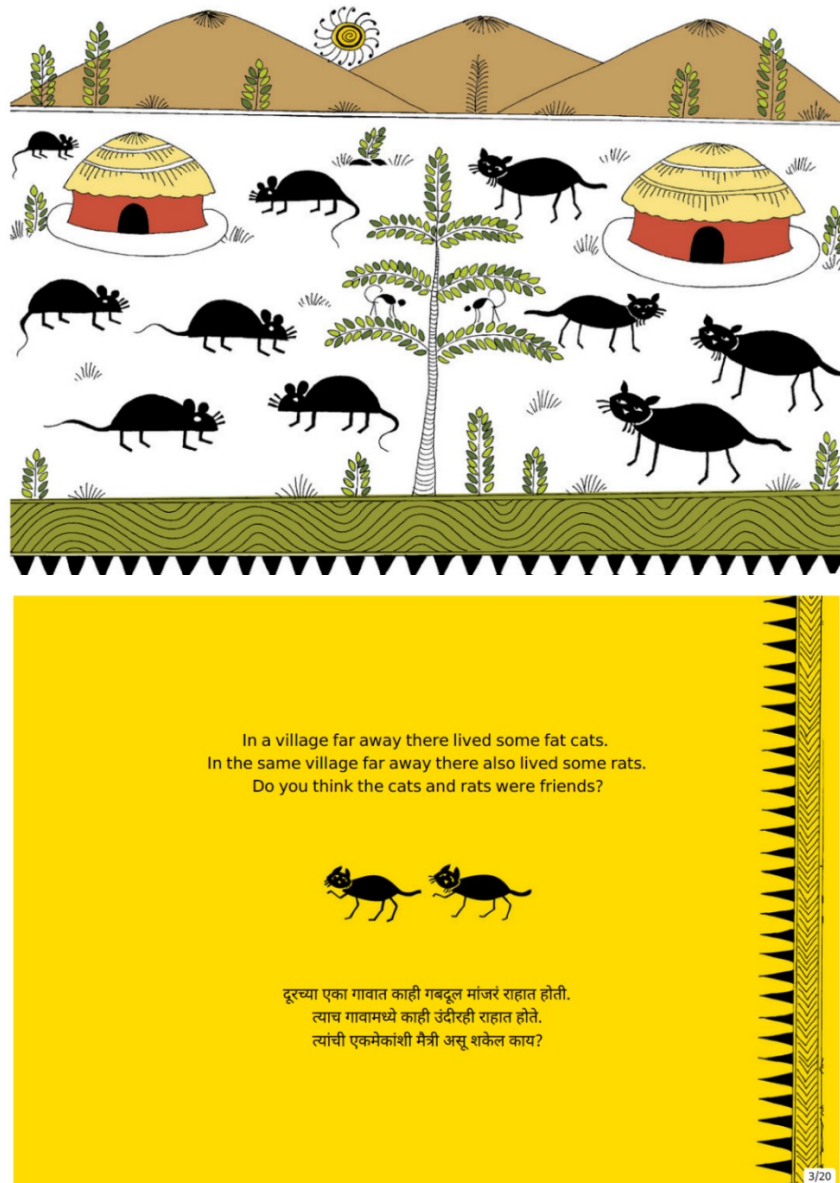
*Source: StoryWeaver, Pratham Books*

---

[12] All the openings in the bilingual picturebook are doublespreads, but for the sake of reproduction in this study, the two pages have been presented one below the other due to constraints of space and layout.

In the above doublespread, the illustrations are presented on the first page and the text is presented on the second, first in English and then in Marathi using the *Devnagri* script. This is an example of a parallel bilingual picturebook since the same text is presented in both the languages. The layout of this bilingual picturebook makes the distinction between the semiotic systems fairly clear and it is therefore straightforward to observe that the three semiotic systems presented here are the illustrations, the text in English and the text in Marathi. According to the model presented in Figure 8, these three potentially create three triads. For example, the first sentence of the English text reads "In a village far away there lived some fat cats" (*ibid*.). Without going into the syntactic details of the sentence, it is possible to treat the entire sentence as a collective *representamen* whose *object* is the concept of a faraway village inhabited by fat cats. In this example the representamen (the written sentence) is not directly connected to the object (the concept that is portrayed) unless it is mediated by the interpretant. A similar triad is formed by the text in the Marathi sentence "दूरच्या एका गावात काही गबदुल मांजरं रहात होती" [In a faraway village, there lived some chubby cats] (*ibid.*).

Moving on to the example of the illustration, it is possible to see that similar to the texts, it contains several distinct components (illustrations of cats, rats, tree, huts, sun, to name a few). At the risk of complicating the model at hand, each of these components can be understood as a distinct sign in which the illustration of the cat, for example, is a representamen separate from the illustration of the hut, each with its own object and interpretant respectively. However, Sipe's (1998) elaboration of Lessing's theorisation of the differences in the perception of different artforms provides key insight into the manner in which the individual objects coalesce into a unified whole. Building upon Lessing's concepts of *simultaneity* and *successivity* of perception, Sipe highlights that visual and verbal information is perceived differently. Elucidating Lessing's position, Sipe states:

> Lessing argued that, since our experience of the world has two components
> or modes (space and time), all of the arts could be classified on the basis of
> which of these two modes were experienced while the viewer or listener was
> engaged in a work of art. (1998, p.99)

Visual art such as painting, sculpture, or in this case illustration, predominantly employs the spatial mode and is seen all at once. It is therefore perceived *simultaneously*, unifying

all the individual components into a singular whole. To the contrary, verbal information predominately employs the temporal mode and therefore, written text is processed *successively* or *sequentially*. That is, unlike a painting that is largely seen all at once, a poem, for example, must be read in linear fashion with one word read sequentially after another. This sequential nature of language presents important implications when a particular semiotic landscape comprises not one but two languages.

As discussed previously, when two languages are used in bilingual picturebooks, this can be done in various ways. Either the same information is provided in L1 and L2 resulting in a parallel bilingual picturebook, or the entire story is told by alternating between the languages leading to an interlingual bilingual picturebook. In either case and irrespective of the languages used, the sequential nature of language dictates that one language is necessarily read after the other. That is to say, unlike images or other visual information, written language cannot be perceived simultaneously. Hence, in bilingual picturebooks, one language (L1) is always read before the other (L2). Even if a dynamic view of bilingualism such as the one proposed under the translanguaging lens (García & Li Wei, 2014) were to be adopted wherein bilinguals psycholinguistically possess a *single* linguistic repertoire that integrates linguistic features, at the textual level, bilingual picturebooks such as the ones considered in this study present two distinct languages. As the semiotic model will – in concurrence with the single repertoire theory – demonstrate, these distinct languages then interact and coalesce in the process of meaning. However, in terms of perception of the written word, the languages are first necessarily read in a sequential manner notwithstanding the psycholinguistic dynamics of bilingualism.

A primary implication of this sequentiality is on the process of meaning-making in bilingual picturebooks. Since L1 is read first, it is interpreted by the reader before moving on to the next language. Within the semiotic model, this may be represented by an individual triad as shown above. However, since L2 is read *after* L1, the interpretation of L2 necessarily takes place in relation to L1. Here, it is possible to build on Siegel (1995) and Sipe (1998) to demonstrate how this process of reading L2 in relation to L1 takes place and the hermeneutic complexities that it creates. Drawing upon Siegel, Sipe shows how the movement from one sign system to another shifts an entire semiotic triad to the position of the object of another triad whose interpretant changes accordingly. A similar process takes place when the reader shifts from L1 to L2. In this case, since L1 is necessarily read and interpreted first, L2 is understood in relation to L1.

**Figure 9**

*Triadic representation of L2 understood in relation to L1*
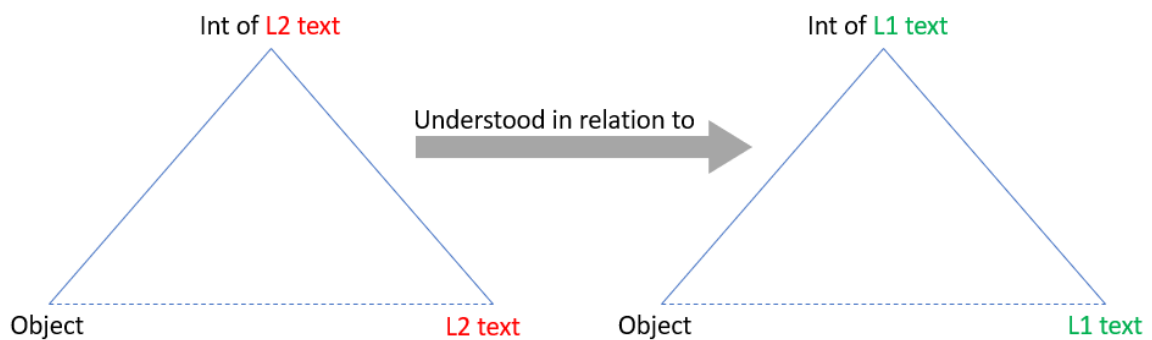


As seen in Figure 9, the understanding of L2 in relation to L1 can be schematically represented as the entire L2 triad transacting with the L1 triad. This transaction between the two triads can be conceptualised as a movement or displacement of the L2 triad towards the L1 triad. While the brevity of Sipe's paper prevents him from explaining the underlying mechanics of his transmediation model, it too can be best understood with the notion of movement. In fact, the "trans-" prefix in the term *trans*mediation is a Latin root that implies movement as it signifies meanings such as "beyond" or "across." Therefore, in the process of understanding L2 text in relation to L1 text, the L2 triad moves towards the L1 triad, resulting in a superimposition of the two. Owing to this superimposition, the L2 triad occupies the space of the object of the L1 triad.

**Figure 10**

*Semiotic triad representing the interaction between L1 and L2*
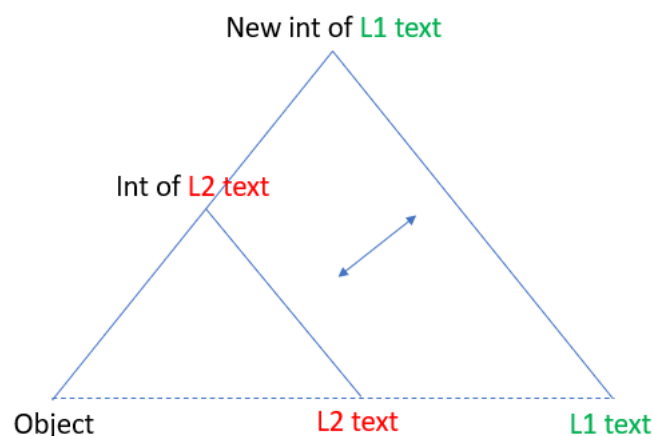
However, when the L2 triad becomes the object of the L1 triad, it necessitates the reinterpretation of L1. That is, even though the reading of L2 text builds upon the already interpreted L1 text, this reading of L2 in itself provides new insights which in turn affect the cumulative meaning leading to the reinterpretation of L1. In the semiotic model, this translates into a new interpretant for L1. Moreover, as Eco (1976) followed by Siegel (1995) and Sipe (1998) state using various terminologies, this process of oscillation or interaction is potentially unending, theoretically resulting in an infinite number of new interpretants.

Once again, the practice-based studies by Sneddon (2008; 2009) and Thibeault and Matheson (2020) can be used to exemplify how this process of interaction between L1 and L2 is observed acutely while working with actual child readers. Sneddon (2008; 2009) reports her observation of Sarah, a French-English bilingual reader with above average reading skills in both languages, who chooses to read the French text first and then the English text in all the parallel bilingual picturebooks that she read over the course of Sneddon's observation period. Therefore, within the context of the present schematic model, French and English may be termed L1 and L2 respectively. Due to her superior biliteracy skills, Sarah succeeds in decoding the L1 independently and then moves to L2. Having already read the same story in L1, the decoding of L2 necessarily takes place within the context of L1. That is, the entire L2 triad assumes the place of the object of the larger L1 triad. However, as the model suggests, this process generates a new interpretant for L1. In the case of Sarah, this is observed through her use of the L2 (English) to "check" her understanding of L1 or comprehend unfamiliar words. In this case, not only is the understanding of L2 based on L1 but this also modifies her interpretation of L1 throughout the process.

The integrated triad presented in Figure 10 therefore schematically represents the transactions that take place between L1 and L2. However, Sipe's original model demonstrates clearly that text and images within a picturebook also enter into an interactive process with each other. A similar process takes place within bilingual picturebooks as well. However, the complexity of the process is compounded by the transactions between the two texts. This is to say that when all three semiotic systems are considered, interactions take place at several different levels. As discussed above, one level of semiotic interaction takes place between the two languages, which can be schematically represented as Figure 10. This integrated text can then enter into a transaction with the illustrations. This process is similar to the process of transmediation proposed by Sipe.

However, instead of text in a single language, here, text in two languages interacts with the images. Similar to Sipe's proposition, two possibilities may arise in this situation: 1. The integrated text is understood in terms of the images, or 2. The images are understood in terms of the integrated text. As discussed above in relation to Figures 9 and 10, this can semiotically be understood as a veritable movement and superimposition of the semiotic triads leading to further complex semiotic triads of bilingual picturebooks that embody the interaction between three semiotic systems:

**Figure 11**

*Semiotic triads representing the interactions between the three semiotic systems in bilingual picturebooks*
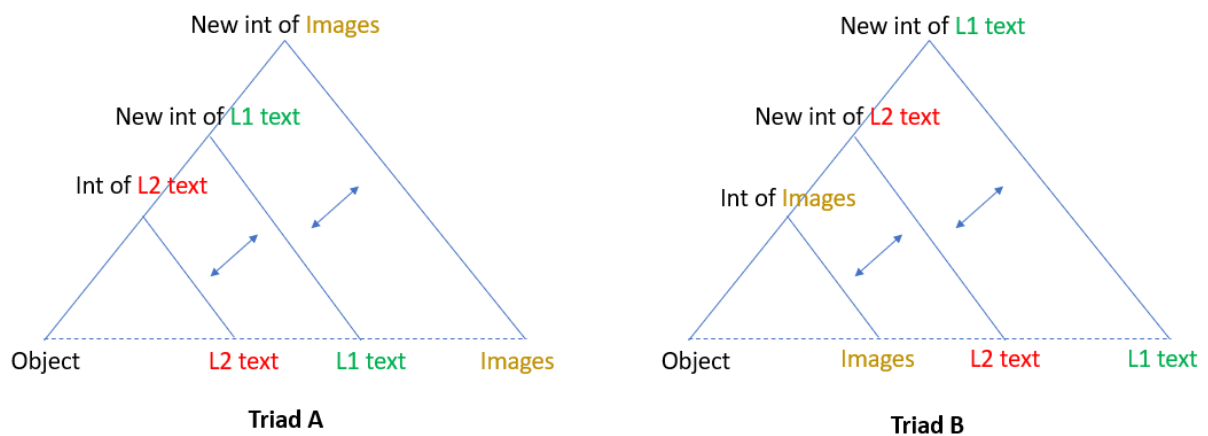


Here, Triad A represents the first scenario in which the text – that is, the cumulative meaning of L1 and L2 – is understood in relation to the images. In this case, the entire integrated triad representing the interaction between L1 and L2 becomes the object of the triad representing the images. Since the object of this outer triad changes, it necessarily modifies the interpretant leading to a reinterpretation of the images. Therefore, in Triad A, L2 text draws upon the understanding of L1 text, whilst modifying the interpretation of L1. The meaning produced through this interaction can be further understood in relation to the images, which then leads to a new interpretation of the images as well. Similarly, in Triad B, the images draw upon the meaning created through the interaction of the two texts, modifying the previous interpretations of L1 and L2 in the process. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the arrows, this process of perceived interaction and transaction goes both ways, rendering the oscillation potentially unending.

Here, it is essential to note that the Triad A and B from Figure 11, represent two of the several possibilities of interaction between text and images. As mentioned previously, the reader can agentically choose the order of reading particularly in the case of parallel texts. For example, L1 may be read first, then the images and then L2. Here, the images will be understood in relation to L1 and L2 in understood in relation to the cumulative meaning of L1 and images. As clarified in criticism of Sipe's model, the actual phenomenology of reading a bilingual picturebook may vary from the theoretical examples presented in this section. Having said this, the logic of overlapping semiotic triads can still be used to understand the semiotic interaction in all of the possible interaction that can take place while reading a bilingual picturebook.

Returning to the example of the English-Marathi bilingual picturebook *The Catty Ratty Tale*/मांजरांची मेजवानी briefly discussed above will facilitate the concretisation of the theoretical abstractions presented thus far. Before moving on to the analysis of the complex semiotic landscape of the body of the bilingual picturebook, the paratext in itself foreshadows the semiotic complexity.

**Figure 12**

*Cover: The Catty Ratty Tale/ मांजरांची मेजवानी*
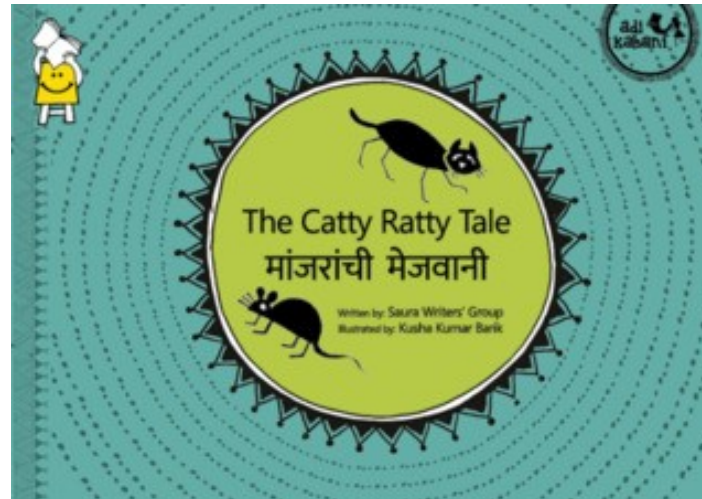


*Source: Pratham Books*

The cover of the bilingual picturebook integrates the titles in both languages within a graphic layout. Perceived simultaneously in its entirety, the illustrations depicting a cat and a rat provide a hint about the main subject of the story. The English title *The Catty Ratty*

*Tale* complements the illustrations and confirms that the body of the bilingual picturebook will pertain to cats and rats. The Marathi title मांजरांची मेजवानी [Mānjarānchi Mejavāni], on the other hand, is not a direct translation of "The Catty Ratty Tale." Instead, it means "The Cats' Feast." The Marathi text therefore does not even mention the rats that are apparent in the illustrations and the English title. This gap may however be filled by the reader, based on the common understanding of the animosity between cats and rats. Hence, it is in the interaction of the two titles that the reader arrives at the interpretation that the catty ratty tale is perhaps a tale of the cats feasting on the rats. That is, if English is considered L1 and Marathi is L2, the Marathi title borrows the understanding that the story involves rats even if it in itself does not include this component. But in this process of interaction, the connotation of the word "feast" in this context results in the reinterpretation of the English title as well. This interpretation can be explored further in relation to the illustrations which may be understood as the cat chasing the rat in circles. Therefore, the cover of the bilingual picturebook in question already exemplifies the semiotic model presented in Figure 11. Opening 2 from the bilingual picturebook provides further instances of the synergistic interactions between the three semiotic systems and will therefore be used as an additional example.

**Figure 13**

*Opening 2 from* The Catty Ratty Tale/मांजरांची मेजवानी
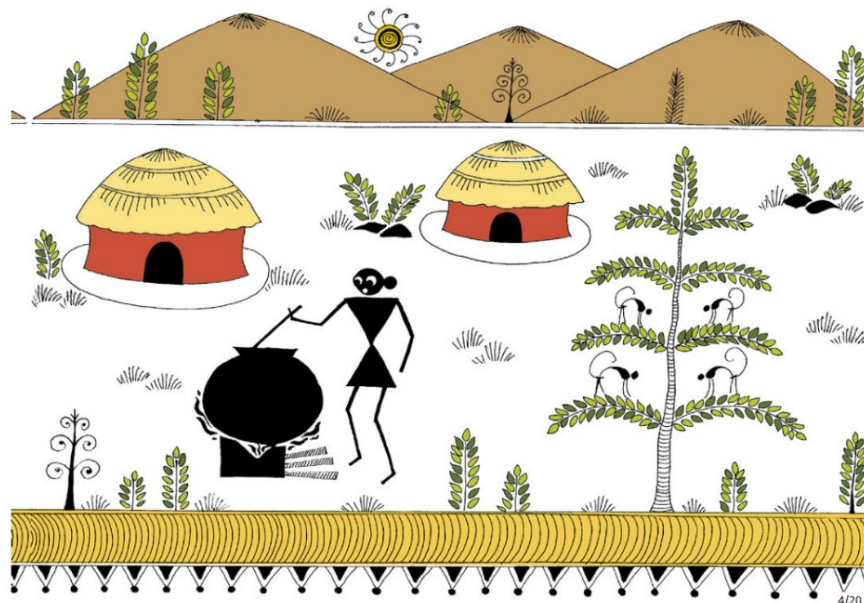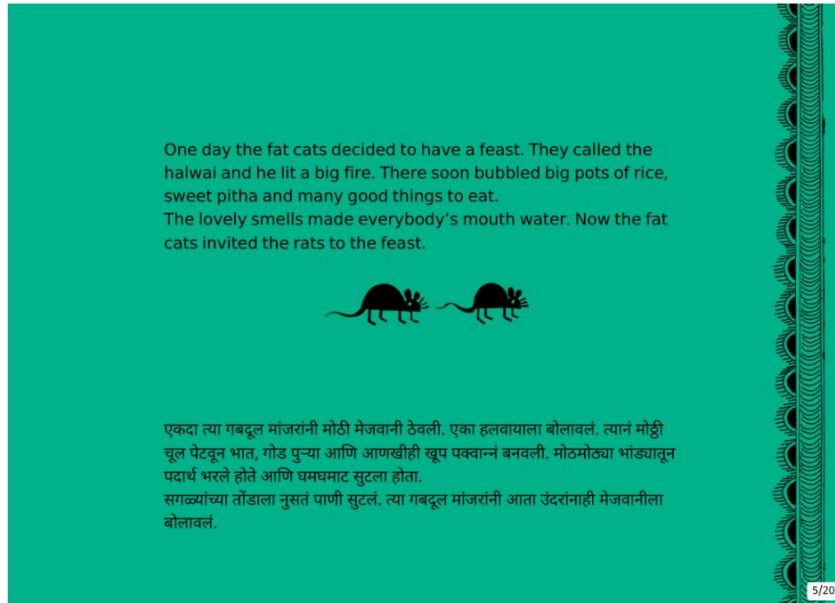
*Source: StoryWeaver, Pratham Books*

Similar to the example of the cover, the oscillation between the images, L1 and L2 takes place throughout the bilingual picturebook. For example, the illustrations from the opening presented in the above figure depict a human figure cooking, instead of the titular characters. Within the context of the entire iconotext, this gap creates intrigue about the whereabouts of the characters and is in turn filled by the texts that provide further information about the situation. However, this particular opening displays further complexity. With the intention to explain the cats' plan to throw a feast, the English text states that they invite a "halwai" to cook. That is, the English text integrates the Marathi word for "chef" and blurs the boundaries between the two languages. As such, even though the bilingual picturebook is predominantly parallel (i.e., presents the same text in both languages), peculiar instances such as this further complicate the semiotic landscape. In this particular example, as a transliteration of the Marathi word "हलवाई" [trans: chef], the English usage "halwai" belongs to the same semiotic system as the rest of the English text. Nevertheless, its comprehension by the reader depends on an implied process of transaction between English and Marathi while reading what is primarily an English text.

This example squarely illustrates the use of language as a "mobile resource" (Blommaert, 2010, p.1) and can be understood using the lexicon provided by the translanguaging lens. According to this theory, the transaction between English and Marathi, and thereby the comprehension of the entire sentence, takes place within the larger context of a *single* linguistic repertoire from which bilingual readers pick and choose judiciously to adapt to

the reading situation (García & Li Wei, 2014). Building upon this understanding, it can then be argued that *any* instance of L1 and L2 comprehension in bilingual picturebooks takes place within the larger linguistic repertoire in which all the linguistic resources of bilingual speakers and readers are in a constant state of flux and interaction. Such an understanding demonstrates that the semiotic complexities arise not only from the interpretative interactions and synergy between the three semiotic systems but also from the *implied transactions* between the two languages at a psycholinguistic level, resulting from the existence of a single linguistic repertoire. A detailed problematisation of the psycholinguistic dynamics of bilingual reading comprehension are beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it suffices to point out that the iconotextual complexities of bilingual picturebooks seen in the form of the intricate semiotic landscape are compounded by psycholinguistic processes that merit further exploration in relation to bilingual reading.

Unlike parallel bilingual picturebooks that predominantly present the same information in both L1 and L2, interlingual picturebooks alternate between the two languages to narrate the same story. The two languages therefore do not present the same information, leading to varying levels of interaction with each other as well as the images. The model presented in Figure 11 foregrounds the constant interaction between the three semiotic systems when one is understood in terms of the other. However, the fact that L1 and L2 texts in interlingual picturebooks present different but narratively related information adds a layer of semiotic complexity. Here, L1 and L2 necessarily interact with each other to communicate the full meaning of the text and create an integrated triad such as the one presented in Figure 10. However, since the texts are not identical, the L1 and L2 texts also interact independently with the images generating different meanings through the process of transmediation (see Figure 5). But since the L1 and L2 texts and the images constitute a single narrative whole, the meanings created through the independent interaction of L1 and L2 with the images also transact with each other leading to a layered interpretation of the two texts and images. The *Betty & Cat* series by Jacobs and Duvernois can be used as a pertinent example since it presents the stories interlingually in French and English.[13]

---

[13] The books in the series are also available in bilingual combinations of French, English, Dutch and Spanish

**Figure 14**

*Opening 6 from Au chenil avec Betty & Cat In the kennel*



*Source: Hennie Jacobs, 2016*

*Au chenil avec Betty & Cat In the kennel* is one of three books in the series, narrating the story of Betty and Cat when their owners leave them with a caretaker to go on vacation. In the beginning, Betty and Cat are unhappy about their changed living situation and miss their owners. Betty, however, grows to like the place because of all the other dogs around but Cat continues to dislike the place. Opening 6 (pp.10-11) of the interlingual picturebook can be understood with this backdrop. Here, Betty narrates her perspective first, making French L1 in this context. The L1 text reads:

> Aaah! Ça fait du bien, une petite sieste. Mais maintenant j'ai envie de me promener un peu. J'attends... Et voilà la jeune fille qui arrive, cette fois-ci avec une laisse ! Cool ! [Aaah ! That feels great, a quick nap. But now I really want to go for a walk. I'll wait.... And here's the young girl, and she comes with a leash! Cool!] (Jacobs & Duvernois, 2016, p.10)

The illustrations, depicting a visibly happy Betty complement the L1 text. However, the illustration also portrays Cat's rear in motion, indicating that Cat is escaping. The L1 text makes no reference to Cat since it is Betty's perception of the situation. As a synergistic iconotext, however, the L1 text can be understood in relation to the images, creating significant tension between the words and images. This tension creates a segue between L1

and L2 because even though L1 does not mention Cat, when understood in relation to the illustrations, it modifies the interpretation of L1 by highlighting that Betty's perspective perhaps does not do justice to the entire situation.

L2 text, on the other hand, gives Cat's perspective and reads: "When she opens the doors, I'm going to try and escape. She's busy cuddling Betty, so... Now! Yes! I'm free" (*ibid.*). Evidently, an inverse interaction takes place in this case. L2 text complements the part of the illustration where Cat escapes but makes no reference to Betty's state of mind, creating a similar tension between the words and the images. This example demonstrates that L1 and L2 texts interact independently with the images to create contrasting tensions. However, as a linear text, the meanings created from the interaction between L1 and the images and L2 and the images transacts to form a cumulative meaning of the doublespread. In this case, it is in the interaction of L1, L2 and the images that the reader arrives at the conclusion that Betty and Cat have strikingly different outlooks towards their situation and are completely unaware of each other's feelings. A similar tension is the underlying theme of the entire series where Betty and Cat often have very different ideas about life and are not always aware of these differences. Nevertheless, they inhabit a shared space in harmony over the course of the series.

The two examples presented above – *The Catty Ratty Tale* and *Au chenil avec Betty & Cat In the kennel* – highlight that, as bilingual picturebooks, parallel and interlingual texts share several features in terms of the semiotic complexities due to the interaction between the three systems. In both cases, semiotic interaction takes place at several levels that then generates cumulative meaning of the bilingual picturebook text. Additionally, as the model demonstrates, the variations in the cumulative meaning are virtually inexhaustible, foregrounding the interpretative liberty that the reader enjoys in these texts. However, the semiotic model presented herewith also provides tools for a deeper analysis of bilingual picturebooks. For example, the model provides a suitable framework to understand the differences in the semiotic landscapes of parallel and interlingual picturebooks. As the next chapter will demonstrate in detail, the semiotic complexities discussed thus far using the framework of the semiotic model have important consequences for the instrumental value of bilingual picturebooks. That is, despite its abstract and schematic nature, the model can be employed successfully to understand the dynamics of a particular bilingual picturebook in order to gauge the pedagogic and social possibilities that it presents. Secondly, the model challenges the monolingual bias by assuming a bilingual reader who is capable of harnessing

her extensive linguistic repertoire to make meaning from a complex multi-layered text. The following chapter will now build upon the insights provided by the semiotic model in terms of the iconotextual complexities to bilingual picturebooks to examine how they impact the role of the reader and thereby contribute to the instrumental value of bilingual picturebooks.

# Chapter 4

## *Travelling Signs, Travelling Concepts*: The impact of the semiotic complexities of bilingual picturebooks on the role of the reader

> *But concepts are not fixed. They travel – between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods and between geographically dispersed academic communities. Between disciplines, their meaning, reach and operational value differ. These processes of differing need to be assessed before, during and after each 'trip'.*
> *(-Mieke Bal, 2002)*

Much like bilingual picturebooks themselves, the academic practice of interdisciplinarity embodies a component of movement and flux. The previous chapter and the semiotic model for bilingual picturebooks demonstrates the depth of the interactions between the various semiotic components of those picturebooks, as well as the semiotic boundaries that they transcend. As an interdisciplinary inquiry placed at the intersection of picturebook theory, semiotics and applied linguistics, this study, too, is in a state of movement – not between sign systems but between theoretical concepts borrowed from a wide range of disciplines. One such concept that will frame the present chapter is that of *translanguaging* with its genesis in the domain of bilingual education. As mentioned previously, one of the aims of the present study is to challenge the monolingual bias prevalent in society and academia. To recapitulate, the monolingual bias refers to the viewpoint that monolingualism is the norm and multilingualism is an exception to that norm. The previous chapters have highlighted instances of this bias within academia. Sipe's semiotic model in itself can be considered an example of the monolingual bias since it assumes a monolingual text and reader.

Translanguaging is a disruptive concept that can be used successfully to frame the present discussion on the impact of the complicated semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks on the potential role of the reader without resorting to assumptions of monolingualism. It is however necessary to recognise that in the process of interdisciplinary borrowing, the concept is made to 'travel' across disciplines and orders. In its original use in the field of bilingual education, it is used in relation to pedagogy and the dynamics of multilingualism within the classroom. In this study the concept will be used as a theoretical

construct to situate the role of the reader in the context of the complicated semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks. That is, not only does it travel from the discipline of applied (educational) linguistics to children's literature but also across orders or planes; it travels from the plane of pedagogy to that of a theoretical construct. As such, there is an inevitable shift in the understanding and the affordances of the concept. The above epigraph, taken from Mieke Bal's *Traveling Concepts in Humanities* (2002), underlines this shift in operational value and emphasises the need to re-evaluate concepts when they cross disciplinary boundaries. To this end, the present chapter will begin by introducing the concept of translanguaging and clarifying the theoretical standpoint taken. The framework of translanguaging will then be used to discuss the role of the reader by equally drawing upon concepts from translation studies.

## 4.1.  Translanguaging: Introduction and problematisation

As Chapter 2 has discussed in some detail, the rise of bilingual picturebooks may be attributed in part to the socio-political developments and the concomitant epistemological changes that have taken place in relation to the perception of language. As García and Li Wei (2014, p.9) explain, new patterns of global flow of people, goods and discourses enable interactions in what are termed 'contact zones' between speakers of distinct origins, reshaping languages and the cultures that they carry. This challenges the perception of language as a monolithic, context-free structure. The roots of this school of thought can be traced back to the Bakhtinian concept of *heteroglossia* which – through its emphasis on the multiplicity of voices - initially aimed to challenge the unitary official Soviet discourse in the 1920s. The concept has since travelled extensively across the humanistic and social scientific disciplines and has developed into a central tenet of the inextricable tying of language to social context and *usage*. Such an understanding of language as a resource or activity has resulted in the conceptualisation of the term *languaging*. Baynham and Lee explain the term clearly:

> In the effort to rethink language not as a thing [monolithic structure] but as a *dynamic activity*, it is thus necessary to be creative, to innovate linguistically – in this case, to shift from noun to verb. (2019, p.15, emphasis added)

The use of language as a verb is indeed a creative solution that draws attention to the process of using language for communication instead of an understanding of language as a taken-for-granted entity. The concept of *translanguaging* is an extension of this conceptualisation of language as a verb, but in a context which specifically involves more than one language (*ibid.*). The term was first coined by Cen Williams (1994) to describe a particular bilingual pedagogy used in an English-Welsh classroom. It was therefore squarely used in the post-/decolonial context of Wales where Welsh is a minority language vis-à-vis English.

Translanguaging was later popularised and brought into mainstream sociolinguistics by Cuban-American bilingualism scholar Ofelia García and her colleagues. Their use of the concept focuses on language practices in educational settings that challenge the pathologizing of students who speak more than one language. García and Li Wei explain:

> [T]ranslanguaging is an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as *one linguistic repertoire* with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages. (2014, p., emphasis added).

Several components of García and Li Wei's description of translanguaging merit unpacking but commentaries on their pioneering use of the concept have focused on the notion of linguistic repertoire. Before moving on to demonstrating the relevance of this notion to the present argument on bilingual picturebooks, it is essential to highlight that through its emphasis on the fluidity of language and the existence of a single linguistic repertoire, translanguaging creates a suitable framework to challenge and redress the monolingual bias in research. That is, translanguaging demonstrates that the boundaries between monolingualism and bilingualism are not as well defined as once believed, thereby challenging the othering of non-monolinguals. Moreover, it "takes as its starting point the *language practices of bilinguals* as the norm, and not the language of monolinguals" (García, 2012, p.1, original emphasis). As the next section in this chapter will demonstrate, this conceptualisation can be extended to draw a connection between non-monolingual language users and the texts - such as bilingual picturebooks – that they encounter.

With respect to García and Li Wei's use of the term translanguaging, it is important to draw attention to the primary understanding of bilingualism that they espouse. They build upon the work of Canadian scholar Jim Cummins (1979) who proposed the concept of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) to hypothesise the cognitive interdependence between the two languages of bilingual individuals. Developments in neurolinguistics have validated and extended Cummins' hypothesis, demonstrating that the two languages indeed interact collaboratively in communicative situations (García & Li Wei, 2014). Taking a cue from these insights, García and Li Wei adopt a *dynamic* understanding of bilingualism instead of a dual one. That is, they propose the concept of a *single linguistic repertoire* from which bilingual users dynamically choose resources to meet the requirements of any given communicative situation. With this concept of a single linguistic repertoire in mind, they propagate the adoption of a *translanguaging stance* by teachers who engage with bilingual students in their classrooms. In adopting such an understanding, they propose the blurring of boundaries between individual languages and squarely object to the deficit orientation through which bilingual students tend to be viewed in school and social settings. The case of Rita Joe discussed in Chapter 2 is a manifestation of the deficit orientation in which her knowledge of her indigenous language was considered a hindrance to her acquisition of English. A *dynamic* view of bilingualism would, however, consider the indigenous language as well as English as belonging to a single, extended repertoire in which features of both languages collaborate.

García and Li Wei's proposed use of translanguaging is therefore as a process of "doing" language where features of two or more individual languages interact within a single repertoire to generate flexible and non-hegemonic language practices. That is, their discussion on translanguaging is undertaken from a *practice*-oriented perspective to challenge and enhance existing bilingual pedagogies, and describe language practices of bilingual individuals. How then does this decidedly descriptive and practice-oriented concept serve as a tool to frame a discussion on the impact of the complicated semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks on the role of the reader? Baynham and Lee (2019) extend the concept of translanguaging from a pedagogical tool to a theoretical construct used "as a tool for thinking with" (p.13). The present study follows Baynham and Lee and chooses to adopt a broad understanding of translanguaging; one that goes beyond its *application* in bilingual education.

Even as a broad theoretical construct, translanguaging is based firmly on the notion of a *single* linguistic repertoire that challenges the boundaries between individual languages. Upon initial examination, this concept would therefore appear incompatible with the semiotic model for bilingual picturebooks that is fundamentally based on the existence of *two* languages. In order to reconcile this theoretical difference, it is essential to make a distinction between the cognitive phenomenon of language which is situated within a single linguistic repertoire *inside* the user, and the manifestations of this cognitive phenomenon *outside* the user. That is, even though a bilingual individual is a "translanguager" who mobilises a single repertoire of language, the forms taken by language in the world outside are indeed governed by distinct socio-cultural norms, resulting in distinct languages that are mutually incomprehensible without the mediating influence of an active translanguager.

It may once again be beneficial to return to the example of Sarah from Sneddon's (2008; 2009) study. As a French-English bilingual, Sarah is a translanguager who uses either of the two languages, or a combination thereof, by mobilising her internal linguistic repertoire. However, in the bilingual picturebooks that Sara reads over the course of the study, the two languages do exist independently of each other. That is, it is in Sarah's knowledge of the two languages that they collaborate to create a single internal linguistic repertoire. *Outside* of this knowledge and at a textual level, they exist as independent systems. Understanding bilingual picturebooks at a narrative and iconotextual level therefore demands the treatment of the two languages as separate from each other since this provides insights into the particular complexity of bilingual picturebooks.

The previous chapter shows that a text-oriented approach such as the semiotic model can be used successfully to understand the complexity of bilingual picturebooks. However, in order to address its impact on the potential role of the reader, it is important to adjust the theoretical gaze and adopt a more user-oriented framework. As the above discussion on the topic suggests, the theoretical construct of translanguaging is one such user-oriented framework that is primarily engineered for bilingual users and "has a boundary-crossing dimension" (Baynham & Lee, 2019, p.17). Hence, even though it seemingly follows a different epistemology and is placed on a different plane of thinking vis-à-vis the semiotic model, its emphasis on dynamism and a single repertoire creates fertile ground for initiating a discussion on the reception of bilingual picturebooks in relation to their intrinsic mechanics.

Here, given that the notion of a single linguistic repertoire is the central tenet of translanguaging, it is essential to underline that in its original formulation by Williams followed by García and Li Wei, translanguaging addressed a multi*lingual* repertoire. That is, it was considered that the communicative repertoires of language users comprised a range of *linguistic* features. In their seminal study *Translation and Translanguaging*, Baynham and Lee (2019) build on the work of Spotti and Blommaert (2017) to state that repertoires are not limited to linguistic resources but also feature other semiotic modes. That is, the translanguaging repertoire is not only multi*lingual* but also multi*modal*. Seeking inspiration from Jakobson's (1959) tripartite classification of translation (interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic) Baynham and Lee demonstrate through empirical data that translanguaging, too, transcends the linguistic and can be classified into *inter*lingual, *intra*lingual and inter*semiotic* translanguaging. As the names clearly suggest, *inter*lingual translanguaging draws on different languages available in the repertoire, *intra*lingual translanguaging pertains to language varieties, registers and dialects, whereas inter*semiotic* translanguaging draws on different modes (see Baynham & Lee, 2019 for examples and empirical data).

Taking into consideration the interlingual and intersemiotic interactions discussed in the semiotic model for bilingual picturebooks, the relevance of translanguaging for the present study becomes apparent. The following section will now use the concept of translanguaging in relation to all the theoretical affordances discussed above to frame the role of reader within the complicated semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks. In doing so, the remainder of the chapter will focus on the second guiding question of the present study: What impact can the complex semiotic landscape have on the role of the reader and how does it potentially contribute to the instrumental value of bilingual picturebooks?

## 4.2. Transmediation and beyond: The bilingual picturebook reader in the translanguaging space

The above section presents the disruptive concept of translanguaging that reshapes our understanding of how bi- and multilinguals *do* language. The literature on this notion of d*oing* language, or approaching language as a practice, is expanding rapidly but a large majority equates *doing* language to the composition or production of language. That is, translanguaging often deals with *speakers* and their translingual utterances. But language

*practices* go beyond the explicit performance of language through composition and also include reception and comprehension. In the context of this study, therefore, the concept of translanguaging is used as a theoretical construct to enable thinking about the *reception* of bilingual texts. So, how can a concept used predominantly for language composition be extended to examine reception?

Building upon the insights from Chapter 3 concerning the semiotic complexities of bilingual picturebooks, this study argues that bilingual picturebooks – owing to their rich and complex semiotic landscape – create a *translanguaging space*. As García and Li Wei explain, "[a] translanguaging space allows multilingual individuals to integrate social spaces (and thus 'language codes') that have been formerly practiced separately in different places" (2014, p.24). Baynham and Lee (2019) call this space a "transformative nexus zone" in which language users "mediate different languages, language varieties, registers, discourses and modalities with a relatively weak *consciousness of the border*" (p.35, original emphasis). This concept of translanguaging space can be illustrated using the case of the millions of students in India who attend schools with English as the medium of instruction. In the social space of the school, they are required to communicate exclusively in English whereas they shift to their native languages in the social space of the family and community. Since several bilingual picturebooks in India are published in English and an Indian language, they create a space where the reader can integrate the two social zones by occupying the translanguaging space created by the bilingual picturebook.

As the discussion in the previous section has demonstrated, and as Baynham and Lee (2019) state, translanguaging is inextricably linked to the notion of the linguistic-semiotic repertoire. As said, the single repertoire therefore becomes a central tenet of the translanguaging space. That is, by creating a translanguaging space, bilingual picturebooks invite the reader to mobilise this single repertoire, which is an integration of linguistic and semiotic codes. Meaning is therefore made through the mobilisation of this single repertoire, using which the reader navigates through all the distinct components presented by the bilingual picturebook. This navigation of components is already studied by Sipe (1998) but this is done in relation to conventional (monolingual) picturebooks. He examines how the reader negotiates the two different semiotic modes (text and images) to make meaning from picturebooks. However, Chapter 3 demonstrates that the presence of an additional language significantly complicates the bilingual picturebook iconotext. It is

therefore essential to revisit Sipe's study and recontextualise his findings in relation to bilingual picturebooks and the translanguaging space that they create.

Sipe suggests that owing to the synergy between words and images in picturebooks, complete meaning is made through the interaction between the two. The reader plays an active role in enabling this interaction by filling the gaps between the two components and making cumulative meaning by undertaking the process of transmediation. Here, transmediation is understood as the transfer of meaning from one sign system to another. By means of his triadic model, he demonstrates how the process of transmediation generates new interpretations, highlighting the central role played by the reader in the meaning-making of picturebooks. Building upon this foundation, however, Chapter 3 has demonstrated that due to the complicated bilingual iconotext, there are additional layers of semiotic and linguistic interaction. The process of transmediation is then inadequate to describe all the interactions since the process is closely tied to inter*modal* exchanges as seen in its utilisation by Suhor (1984), Siegel (1995) and Sipe (1998). It therefore does not represent the mobilisation of the *entire* linguistic repertoire that includes different modalities as well as languages.

An appealing and straightforward solution may well be to argue that the translanguaging space enables readers to engage in the overarching process of translanguaging which includes all the various layers of interaction between L1, L2 and images and the meaning-making thereof. While such an employment of the term is theoretically accurate, Baynham and Lee argue that even if translanguaging is an all-encompassing concept and process of creation of meaning across linguistic and semiotic codes, it is essential to have "more analytic specificity in the ways that translanguaging is often used" (2019, p.13). The requirement of this analytic specificity is indeed pertinent to the present study. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, visual and verbal information is processed differently by the reader due to their respective simultaneity and successivity. That is, the process of oscillation between two languages is not identical to that of oscillation between visual and verbal elements even though all of the components belong to a single repertoire and function within a single translanguaging space. Here, Baynham and Lee's (2019) categorisation of translanguaging as interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic proves useful.

As understood by Suhor (1984), Siegel (1995), and Sipe (1998), transmediation corresponds to the process of *intersemiotic* translanguaging. That is, in the process of receiving a multimodal text and making meaning from the different semiotic modes, the

reader draws upon the semiotic codes in the single linguistic-semiotic repertoire. However, a thorough navigation of the translanguaging space created by bilingual picturebooks would require the reader to undertake a process corresponding to inter*lingual* translanguaging as well. The concept of translation may be employed here to describe this process of interlingual translanguaging. Translation is an overwhelmingly broad concept and is rightfully a discipline in its own right. On the one hand, the term can be used to refer to the activity of rendering a written text from one language into another, as well as the product of this process. Used as such, it pertains to the technicalities of interlingual transfer of written text. On the other hand, however, translation is increasingly used in a metaphorical sense to describe the transnational and transcultural exchanges that are emblematic of late-Globalisation. Bella Brodzki, in an attempt to highlight the use of translation as a framework to understand contemporary life and society, states:

> Translation is no longer seen to involve only narrowly circumscribed technical procedures of specialized or local interest, but rather to underwrite all cultural transactions, from the most benign to the most venal. (2007, p.2)

This broad stance on the term translation reflects the breaking away of the discipline from rigid boundaries between languages that need to be bridged through translation, to an understanding of translation as cultural and linguistic mediation. Such a conceptualisation of translation – "abstracted away from all its technicalities" (Baynham & Lee, 2019, p.43) – aligns with interlingual translanguaging and complements the process of transmediation.

It may therefore be argued that within the translanguaging space of bilingual picturebooks, the active role of the reader may potentially go beyond the process of transmediation. As mentioned above, the reader dynamically mobilises a single repertoire of linguistic-semiotic codes. This mobilisation of the repertoire takes the form of transmediation *and* translation. That is, the reader draws upon the resources from the repertoire to transmediate between the two modes as well as to translate between the two languages. However, in keeping with Baynham and Lee's assertion, these processes of transmediation and translation of meaning are done with a relatively weak consciousness of borders. The translanguaging space of bilingual picturebooks, therefore, opens additional opportunities for the reader to interact actively with the text. Answering the guiding

question concerning the impact of the complex semiotic of bilingual picturebooks on the role of the reader, it may be said that the reader, along with being a transmediator, is invited to assume the role of a translator and is made to challenge the boundaries between the languages.

The examples of parallel and integrated bilingual picturebooks discussed in Chapter 3.3 illustrate this process of translation. Opening 2 from *The Catty Ratty Tale* presents a particularly pronounced example (see page 45). As discussed in detail in the previous chapter, this particular opening employs the word "halwai" which is the transliteration of the Marathi word for chef in the English text. The comprehension of the contents of this particular opening therefore depends on the *implied transaction* between Marathi and English within the translanguaging space. This transaction is undertaken by the reader who assumes the role of the translator and mediates not only between the two languages but also the contexts and cultures that they carry. These implied transactions are observed in all interactions between L1 and L2. The semiotic model demonstrates that since languages are read sequentially, L2 is always understood in relation to L1. This underlines that there is always implied transaction between the two languages which is carried out by the reader-translator.

Moreover, the in-depth analysis of the opening in question - in keeping with the semiotic model for bilingual picturebooks - squarely demonstrates that even if transactions take place at various levels, cumulative meaning is made at the intersection of all these exchanges. In the abovementioned opening from *The Catty Ratty Tale*, for example, the illustration of the human figure cooking over a big pot contributes to the implied transaction between the English text and the borrowed word "halwai." Cumulative meaning is therefore created through the intersection between the *interlingual* and *intersemiotic* transactions. The same observation is made in terms of interlingual texts such as *Betty & Cat* that do not present the same information in both languages but instead narrate the entire story interlingually. In this case, the alternate use of two languages to narrate a single story in fact amplifies the complexity of the processes of translation and transmediation wherein both processes then need to coalesce to create meaning of the iconotext. The following figure attempts to represent the transactions and processes schematically:

**Figure 15**

*Schematic representation of the processes at play within the translanguaging space*
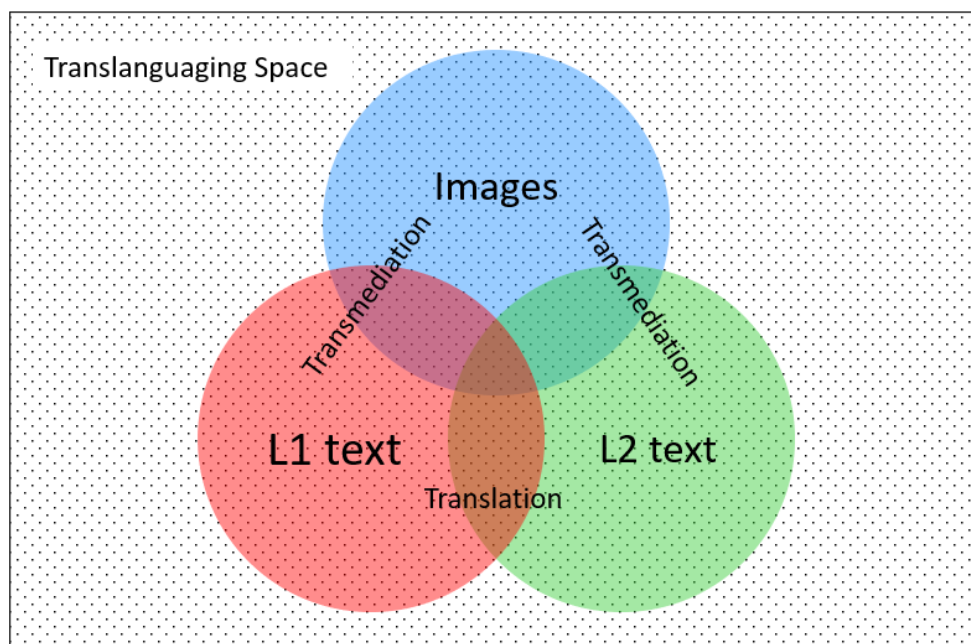


As the above figure represents, the meaning of the bilingual iconotext is found at the intersection L1 text, L2 text and Images. Moreover, since the interactions between the three components are executed through the processes of translation and transmediation, meaning-making would then entail the aggregate of the two processes. In other words, the reader potentially mobilises the entire linguistic-semiotic repertoire to not only actively transmediate and translate, but also to combine the meanings created through the two processes. The potential role of the reader therefore goes beyond the transmediation and translation of meaning and also includes the integration of the two.

In summary, the complex semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks creates a translanguaging space in which the reader is encouraged to utilise her single linguistic-semiotic repertoire to undertake the processes of translation and transmediation with a relatively weak consciousness of linguistic and semiotic borders. Having undertaken these processes, the reader has the opportunity to negotiate the meanings created by the two processes and integrate them to create the cumulative meaning of the story. This underlines that due to the several levels at which iconotextual interactions take place between the semiotic components of bilingual picturebooks, meaning-making too includes several layers, bestowing upon the reader the ability to generate meaning across languages and modalities.

The active role of the reader required by the characteristics of the bilingual picturebook has an explicit connection with the social and pedagogical value ascribed to bilingual picturebooks (see Chapter 2.2 for a discussion on the use of bilingual picturebooks in communities and classrooms). In Siegel's (1995) account of the process of transmediation, on which Sipe (1998) bases his seminal article, she champions transmediation as an inherently *generative* process. In this aptly titled paper, *More Than Words: The Generative Power of Transmediation for Learning*, Siegel follows from Suhor's (1984) use of transmediation to argue that transmediation "may foster development of a wide range of cognitive, aesthetic, and psychomotor skills" (1995, p.461). To support this claim, she focuses on the potential of transmediation to increase learners' opportunities to engage in generative and reflective thinking. She states that this form of thinking, and thereby learning, is a product of forging connections between the two modalities that do not exist a priori. For example, when students are encouraged to read a book and then draw a picture about what they read, they need to create a link between the printed linguistic content and the modality of visual representation. That is, there is an "absence of a ready-made link" between the content in the two modalities, which "creates an anomaly that sets generative thinking in motion" (Siegel, 1995, p.463). The process of transmediation also emphasises the search for *commonality* across semiotic modes for meaning-making. This idea of commonality resonates with the notions of translanguaging space and single repertoire, since they, too, pertain to the idea of blurred borders and commonality. This highlights the relevance of Siegel's argument for bilingual picturebooks.

Siegel's argument, when combined with Sipe's, demonstrates clearly that picturebooks in general invite reflective thinking due to the centrality of the process of transmediation. However, as discussed above, the translanguaging space of bilingual picturebooks complicates the role of the reader by extending it beyond the realm of transmediation. Within this space, the reader is potentially also a translator and *integrator* of meaning. Here, it may be argued that the generative and transformative power of transmediation – as discussed by Siegel (1995) – is compounded by these complementary processes of translation and integration. Similar to transmediation that entails forging links between text and images that do not exist a priori, translation is based on drawing connections between L1 and L2 that do not exist outside the mediating influence of the reader-translator. This mediation may be undertaken by a reader who is already proficient in the two languages and therefore draws the connections with ease, or by a beginner who is learning

one or both languages. In either case, bilingual picturebooks possess a generative power that draws upon the affordances of the translanguaging space. Moreover, as García and Li Wei explain, any translanguaging space "has its *own* transformative power because it is forever ongoing and combines and generates new identities, values and practices" (2014, p.24, emphasis added). Therefore, the generative power of transmediation is amplified by concomitant process of translation and integration, as well as the very nature of the translanguaging space that holds the said processes.

It may then be argued that bilingual picturebooks derive their well-documented social and pedagogic potential from their ability to foster generative thinking which, in turn, is a product of their complicated semiotic landscape and the translanguaging space that it creates. One of the commonly cited uses of bilingual picturebooks is the development of home-school connection for students that speak more than one language (The Multilingual Resources for Children Project, 1995; Sneddon, 2008; 2009; Freeman, Freeman & Ebe, 2011). As discussed above, this is achieved due to the translanguaging space of bilingual picturebooks in which language users can combine different social spaces and challenge the arbitrary borders between them. Similarly, bilingual picturebooks act as a potent tool for language learning because they require the mobilisation of the entire linguistic-semiotic repertoire. It is through the layered meaning-making processes such as translation and transmediation involved in the reading of bilingual picturebooks that the reader can draw connections between L1, L2 and images which demonstrably results in vocabulary development and language learning (see Sneddon, 2008; 2009; Thibeault & Matheson, 2020).

Another key use of bilingual picturebooks is in the context of linguistic and cultural awareness and language preservation (Hadaway & Young, 2013; 2014). Since the centrality of the complex bilingual iconotext and the resulting translanguaging space is not as apparent in these contexts, the example of *The Catty Ratty Tale*/ मांजरांची मेजवानी (Saura Writers Group, 2014) can illustrate this point. This bilingual picturebook is a part of the *Adi Kahani* series by Pratham Books[14]. This special series features stories from India's rich

---

[14] The picturebooks are available as monolingual and bilingual editions across several Indian languages. But owing to the rich linguistic diversity of India, the bilingual picturebooks act as bridge between different language communities. While a bilingual picturebook edition is also available in the tribal language in question, the English-Marathi edition is chosen for the study due to the author's own linguistic competence in the language pair.

repertoire of tribal folklore. The story in *The Catty Ratty Tale*/ मांजरांची मेजवानी is borrowed from a tribal community in Eastern India; the bilingual picturebook endeavours to document and share the tales and culture of the tribal community. The body of the bilingual picturebook, however, makes no reference to the tribal community or its land. On the other hand, the illustrations - made by artists from the tribal community - are deeply rooted in the cultural and artistic heritage of the tribal community.

**Figure 16**

*Example of Saura Mural Style*



*Source: StoryWeaver, Pratham Books*
*Note: Also see Figures 8, 12 and 13 from Chapter 3*

Hence, even though the text is based in a neutral "village far away" (Saura Writers Group, 2014, Opening 1), the culturally-specific illustrations firmly base the story within the tribal and indigenous context. Even if the reader may not necessarily identify the exact tribe to which the artform belongs, she may draw upon all the visual codes in her linguistic-semiotic repertoire to identify Indian and tribal origins of the illustrations. Otherwise, the paratext provides this information and clearly states that the artform follows the Saura Mural Style. Facilitators such as parents, teachers or community elders can also provide this information to then enable reflective thinking and cultural awareness. The bilingual picturebook

therefore serves its purpose of raising cultural awareness due to the linguistic and semiotic interaction within the bilingual iconotext and the potential role played by the reader in the transformative creation of links that do not exist a priori.

This chapter has thus far argued that the complex iconotext of bilingual picturebooks discussed in the last chapter has a direct impact on the process of reception since it opens up a translanguaging space. Within this space, the reader potentially engages in the generative and transformative processes of transmediation, translation and the integration of the two. It is from these processes of transfer and integration, and the dynamic role assumed by the reader, that bilingual picturebooks assume their social and pedagogic potential. This demonstrates the inherent and often understudied interdependence between the aesthetics and pedagogics – or, the intrinsic and instrumental value – of bilingual picturebooks.

## Chapter 5
## Conclusion and Discussion

The present study is inspired by the immense social and pedagogic potential of bilingual picturebooks on the one hand, and the paucity of academic research on their iconotextual dynamics on the other. This lack of theoretical engagement is deemed problematic since understanding how bilingual picturebooks work is essential for the optimisation of their production by publishers and implementation by teachers, parents and other caregivers. Secondly, the lack of theory specific to bilingual picturebooks hinders the progress of the field by limiting the lexicon available to describe, analyse and problematise bilingual picturebooks. This also perpetuates the monolingual bias in academia since picturebook research assumes both a monolingual text and reader.

In recognition of these limitations, this study has been conducted with the overarching aim to initiate a theoretical discussion on the internal mechanics of bilingual picturebooks and then, understand their connection with their well-established social and pedagogic potential. In other words, the underlying goal of this study has been to examine the relationship between the intrinsic and instrumental values – or, the aesthetics and pedagogics - of bilingual picturebooks. To this end, the study has adopted two, more specific guiding questions: How does the existence of an additional language complicate the semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks compared to monolingual picturebooks? What impact can this complex semiotic landscape have on the role of the reader and how does it potentially contribute to the instrumental value of bilingual picturebooks? By means of answering the guiding questions, the study has challenged the monolingual bias in picturebook research and arrives at a vocabulary and framework specific to bilingual picturebooks that can be used for future research on the topic.

The foundations for such a framework are found in the work of Lawrence Sipe. His semiotically-framed theory of how (monolingual) picturebooks work has provided the basic architecture for developing a semiotic model to understand the iconotextual dynamics of bilingual picturebooks. The employment of this model clearly indicates that the presence of an additional language in the iconotext complicates the semiotic landscape and thereby the internal mechanics of bilingual picturebooks. This is because the three semiotic systems (Language 1, Language 2 and images) can each be understood in relation to the others. For example, due to the sequentiality of language, L2 is always understood in relation to L1. The

model demonstrates that during this semiotic interaction, L1 also gets reinterpreted based on the insights drawn from L2. This oscillation between the two texts is potentially unending, leading to an infinite number of new interpretations. A similar process of semiotic interaction takes place when the cumulative meaning of L1 and L2 is then understood in relation to the images, adding another layer of interpretative complexity. Such semiotic interactions can follow a variety of permutations based on the order in which the semiotic systems are interpreted. These permutations notwithstanding, the meaning and total effect of the bilingual picturebook is made at the intersection of all three systems. These findings answer the first guiding question. The presence of an additional language complicates the semiotic landscape of bilingual picturebooks by exponentially increasing the transactions between the iconotextual elements and thereby adding layers to the process of meaning-making.

These semiotic complexities bear significant implications for the potential role of the bilingual picturebook reader. Building upon the above findings, the present study has undertaken a metacritical discussion on the various processes of meaning-making undertaken by the reader. The innovative concept of translanguaging has been pivotal in this discussion concerning the active role of the reader. Owing to their complex semiotic landscapes, bilingual picturebooks create a translanguaging space in which the reader is invited to mobilise her single repertoire that comprises linguistic and semiotic codes. By means of this mobilisation, the reader potentially undertakes the processes of transmediation *and* translation during the reception and comprehension of bilingual picturebooks. Through these processes, the reader is invited to forge connections between the two languages and modalities that do not exist a priori, resulting in generative and reflective thinking. It is this type of readerly engagement that greatly contributes to the potential of bilingual picturebooks.

These findings not only respond to the second guiding question but also evoke the overarching line of inquiry concerning the intrinsic and instrumental values of bilingual picturebooks. Combining the answers to the two guiding questions, it is apparent that the aesthetics and pedagogics of bilingual picturebooks are intricately connected and merit holistic study. To a large extent, bilingual picturebooks derive their social and pedagogic potential from their internal mechanics and the generative nexus space that they create for the reader. In arriving at this conclusion, the study also meets its associated goals of challenging the monolingual bias and creating a lexicon and framework specific to bilingual

picturebooks. For example, the study challenges the assumption of a monolingual text and reader by framing the discussion within the concept of translanguaging that firmly opposes the hegemony of monolingualism. The discussion on this concept of translanguaging and the adaptation of Sipe's (1998) model to analyse how bilingual picturebooks work also provide a vocabulary to discuss bilingual picturebooks and take their study further.

Moreover, this study bridges the gap found in the text-based research on bilingual picturebooks. As discussed in Chapter 2, existing research on the intratextual dynamics of bilingual picturebooks favours either their bilingual or multimodal characteristics. The present study focuses on both these aspects and contributes to the field of picturebook research by proposing a holistic framework. Similarly, owing to its underlying goal to examine the relationship between the aesthetics and pedagogics of bilingual picturebooks, it negotiates between the formerly separate research strands of practice-based and text-based research. Moreover, the second part of the argument in this study not only draws upon the concept of translanguaging but also expands it beyond the composition of language to its reception and comprehension. In this sense, the study contributes to the ever-growing academic discourse on translanguaging and underlines its close connection with bilingual picturebooks.

However, the intention to connect the intrinsic and instrumental values of bilingual picturebook by examining the iconotextual complexities and their potential impact on the role of the reader leads to an ambiguity concerning the "reader." The reader, as used in this study, is neither entirely the reader assumed by the text nor an empirical reader of bilingual picturebooks. This reader therefore has one foot inside the bilingual picturebook and one foot outside, in the real world in which the bilingual picturebook is potentially read and used. As such, this reader is neither the implied reader nor the actual one in the strict sense or the terms. This reader may be provisionally considered an *in-between* reader placed on a continuum between the imagined implied reader and the actual empirical reader. In the course of this study, the in-between reader assumes qualities closer to the implied reader in discussions concerning iconotextual dynamics, and is closer to – but lesser than – the actual reader in discussion on the potential role of the reader. The constant back and forth between the worlds inside and outside the bilingual picturebook further compounds this conceptual ambiguity and merits reconsideration in future studies.

The semiotic model for bilingual picturebooks presents another limitation. Even though it constitutes the backbone of the present study, it is decidedly theoretical and therefore

cannot represent the intricacies of the actual reading process. For example, it addresses the interactions between the two languages and images but does not account for the varying degree of interpretative effort required for drawing connections between these components. Depending on the linguistic competence of the reader in the two languages concerned, facilitating the interaction between L1 and images may well be considerably easier than with L2. The quality of illustrations could also lead to a similar discrepancy in the degree of interpretative effort.

Issues of translation could also have a similar effect. Since bilingual picturebooks are often translations of pre-existing monolingual texts, sub-optimal translations may potentially complicate the linguistic-semiotic interaction and thereby the processes of meaning-making. Moreover, the semiotic model and the resulting argument assumes a perfect reader and reading situation. Particularly in the case of parallel texts, the actual reader may entirely skip the reading in L2 and proceed to the next page only having read the text in one of the languages. This could particularly be the case if the design choices made during publishing valorise one language over the other by using a better, larger font or by giving one language spatial preference over the other. This then highlights the need to include other aesthetic components such as typography and layout in future studies to arrive at a more holistic framework for understanding bilingual picturebooks. As mentioned in the Introduction, this study could therefore be considered a first step in a much larger inquiry on the aesthetics and pedagogics of bilingual picturebooks.

These limitations notwithstanding, the insights gained from the study are highly relevant to bilingual picturebook publishers as well as teachers and classroom leaders. Deeper understanding about how bilingual picturebooks work in terms of their iconotextual interactions and in relation to notions of language and bilingualism provides important guidelines to publishers about the centrality of illustrations, positionality as well as design choices. As Daly rightly points out "publishers need to consider more carefully what it is to be bilingual when they are deciding on how to place and use the two languages within bilingual books" (2018, pp.564-564). The semiotic model can also serve as a framework to optimise the translations of text from one language to another during the creation of a bilingual picturebook. The insights drawn from the discussion on the reasons for proliferation of bilingual picturebooks can also enable publishers to identify niche markets for the development and sale of bilingual picturebooks.

Teachers and mediators, on the other hand, can draw upon the findings of this study to create lessons plans for using bilingual picturebooks within the classroom that do justice to the multilingual space occupied by bilingual picturebooks. Current research already demonstrates that teachers turn to bilingual picturebooks to accommodate students' home languages in the classroom. Understanding bilingual picturebooks as translanguaging spaces can be insightful to such teachers who can challenge the deficit orientation in bilingualism studies and harness the potential of bilingual picturebooks to foster the development of the entire linguistic repertoire of bi- or multilingual students. The study demonstrates the structural differences between parallel and interlingual picturebooks which can support teachers to choose the right kind of bilingual picturebooks for classroom interventions. A predominantly monolingual class with a few bilingual students could benefit from parallel picturebooks that use the dominant language and the language(s) of the bilingual students. This ensures that all the students can understand the story and then engage in a discussion about the second unfamiliar language, thereby increasing their cultural and metalinguistic awareness. Immersion classrooms, on the other hand, could benefit from an interlingual text.

Additionally, the academic relevance of this study is in its interdisciplinary contribution to both picturebook research as well as studies on bilingualism in general, and translanguaging in particular. The findings from this study can be incorporated into research on bilingual picturebooks apps, language learning apps and bilingual media content for children and young adults such as video games. Online platforms such as StoryWeaver and Bilingual-Picturebooks.org also create an intriguing further avenue since the insights derived from this study can be complemented by research in media studies to understand how the affordances of the platforms alter/reinforce the iconotextual dynamics of bilingual picturebooks. Moreover, an important extension of the study is the empirical testing of the findings. Neurolinguists make use of sophisticated eye tracking technology to examine the reception of visual data. Such studies can be undertaken to empirically examine how readers engage with bilingual picturebooks.

It can therefore be said that by examining the iconotextual complexities of bilingual picturebooks, this study demonstrates that they are an interesting literary and social phenomenon and can be examined further in a variety of directions. The sociopolitical factors contributing to the rise of bilingual picturebooks discussed in Chapter 2 clearly highlight that we find ourselves in an increasingly interconnected and multilingual world.

This world witnesses an ever-growing number of children seeking mirrors of their multilingual reality. The present study contributes to the creation and optimal use of such mirrors.

# References

Ahuile, L. (2019, 7 June). Bilingual Books in Spanish. *Publishers Weekly*. https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/80401-bilingual-books-in-spanish.html

Allison, A. (2006). The Japan fad in global youth culture and millennial capitalism. *Mechademia*. 1(1), 11-21.

Arizpe, E., & Styles, M. (2003). *Children reading pictures: interpreting visual texts.* RoutledgeFalmer.

Bader, B. (1976). *American Picturebooks From Noah's Ark to the Beast Within*. Macmillan Publishing Co.

Bal, M. (2002). *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide*. University of Toronto Press.

Barratt, L. (2018). Monolingual Bias. In Liontas, J. I., & DelliCarpini, M. (Eds.), *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0024

Baynham, M., & Lee, T. K. (2019). *Translation and translanguaging*. Routledge.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.

Bishop, R. S. (1990). Windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives*, 6(3).

Biswas, S. (2017, 27 October). The man who 'discovered' 780 Indian languages. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-41718082

Blommaert, J. (2010). *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge University Press.

Bosch Andreu, E. (2007). Hacia una defi nición de álbum [Towards a Definition of a Picturebook]. *Anuario de investigación en literatura infantil y juvenil.* 5, 25–46.

Bouchard, D., & Willier, S. (2008). *The Drum Calls Softly*. Red Deer Press.

Brodzki, B. (2007). *Can these bones live?: translation, survival, and cultural memory.* Stanford University Press.

Brunelle, J., & Tondino, T. (2017). *Enchantée/Pleased to meet you!*. Les images de la libertée/Lady Liberty Pictures.

Chandler, D. (2017). *Semiotics: The basics*. Routledge.

Cummins, J. (1979). Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency, Linguistic Interdependence, the Optimum Age Question, and Some Other Matters. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*. 19, 121–129.

Daly, N. (2016). Dual language picturebooks in English and Māori. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature, 54*(3), 10-17.

Daly, N. (2018). The linguistic landscape of English–Spanish dual language picturebooks. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 39*(6), 556-566.

Eco, U. (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press.

Edwards, V., & Walker, S. (1994) Multilingual resources for children. *Language and Education, 8*(3), 147-156.

Freeman, Y., Freeman, D., & Ebe, A. (2011). Bilingual books: Bridges to literacy for emergent bilinguals. *Reclaiming reading: teachers, students, and researchers regaining spaces for thinking and action.* 224-235.

Garcia, O. (2012). Theorizing Translanguaging for Educators. In Celic, C., & Seltzer, K., *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators.* http://www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu/files/2013/03/Translanguaging-Guide-March-2013.pdf

García, O., & Li Wei. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Gopalkrishnan, A. (2011). *Multicultural Children's Literature: A Critical Issues Approach.* SAGE Publications.

Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual: Life and Reality*. Harvard University Press.

Guldin, R. (2016). *Translation as metaphor*. Routledge.

Habib, M. R. (2011). *Literary criticism from Plato to the present: An introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.

Hadaway, N.L., & Young, T. A. (2013). Celebrating and Revitalising Language: Indigenous Bilingual Children's Books. Bookbird: *A Journal of International Children's Literature.* 51(3), 56-68.

Hadaway, N. L., & Young, T. A. (2014). Preserving languages in the new millennium: Indigenous bilingual children's books. *Childhood Education, 90*(5), 358-364.

Hadaway, N. L., & Young, T. A. (2018). Multilingual picturebooks. In Kümmerling-Meibauer, B (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks*, (pp. 260-269). Routledge.

Hallberg, Kristin. (1982). Litteraturvetenskapen och bilderboksforskningen. *Tidskriftför litteraturvetenskap.* 3–4, 163–168

Iser, W. (1978). *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response.* Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jacobs, H., & Duvernois, C. (2016). *Au chenil avec Betty & Cat In the Kennel.* Hennie Jacobs.

Jakobson, R. (1959/2012). On linguistic aspects of translation. In Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader.* Routledge, 126–131.

Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication.* Arnold Publishers.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. (2013a). Introduction: Multilingualism and Children's Literature. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature, 51*(3), 12-21.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. (2013b). Code-Switching in Multilingual Picturebooks. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature, 51*(3), iv-x.

Lagopoulos, A. P., & Boklund-Lagopoulou, K. (2020). *Theory and Methodology of Semiotics: The Tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure* (Vol. 28). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.

Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of language and social psychology, 16*(1), 23-49.

Lewis, D. (2001). *Picturing text: The contemporary children's picturebook.* Routledge/Falmer.

May, S. (2013). *The Multilingual Turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and Bilingual Education.* Routledge.

McCauley, D., & Waaka, T. (2015). *Mōtiti Blue and the Oil Spill: A Story from the Rena Disaster.* Mauao Publishing.

Naqvi, R., McKeogh, A., Thorne, K., & Pfitscher, C. (2013). Dual-language books as an emergent literacy resource: Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy.* 13(4), 501-528.

Nikolajeva, M., & Scott, C. (2001). *How Picturebooks Work.* Garland Publishing.

Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. (1990). *Convention of the rights of the child.* United Nations.

Oittinen, R., Ketola, A., & Garavini, M. (2018). *Translating picturebooks: Revoicing the verbal, the visual and the aural for a child audience.* Routledge.

Painter, C., Martin, J.R. & Unsworth, L. (2013). *Reading visual narratives: image analysis of children's picture books.* Equinox.

Pantaleo, S. (2014). Exploring the Artwork in Picturebooks With Middle Years Students. *Journal of Children's Literature.* 40(1), 5–26.

Pennycook, A. (2010). *Language as a Local Practice.* Routledge.

Perregaux, C. (2009). Livres bilingues et altérité : nouvelles ouvertures pour l'entrée dans l'écrit. *Figurationen,* 9(1–2), 127–139.

Reiser, L. (2002). *The Lost Ball/La Pelota Perdida*. Greenwillow Books.

Ribeiro, A. S. (2004). Translation as a metaphor for our times: postcolonialism, borders and identities. *Portuguese Studies, 20*, 186-194.

Rubdy, R., & Alsagoff, L. (2013). The Cultural Dynamics of Globalisation: Problematizing Hybridity. In Rubdy, R., & Alsagoff, L. (eds.), *The Global-Local Interface and Hybridity*, (pp. 1-14). Multilingual Matters.

Saura Writers Group. (2014). *The Catty Ratty Tale/ मांजरांची मेजवानी*. Pratham Books.

Saussure, F. (1916). *Cours de linguistique générale : publié par Charles Bally et Albert Sechehaye avec la collaboration de Albert Riedlinger*. Librarie Payot.

Sendak, M. (1963). *Where The Wild Things Are.* Harper & Row.

Serafini, F., & Clausen, J. (2012). Typography as semiotic resource. *Journal of Visual Literacy, 31*(2), 1-16.

Siegel, M. (1995). More Than Words: The Generative Power of Transmediation for Learning. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*. 20(4), 455-475.

Sipe, L.R. (1998). How Picture Books Work: A Semiotically Framed Theory of Text-Picture Relationships. *Children's Literature in Education*. 29(2), 97-108.

Sneddon, R. (2008). Young bilingual children learning to read with dual language books. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 7*(2), 71-84.

Sneddon, R. (2009). *Bilingual books – Biliterate Children: learning to read through dual language books*. Trentham Books.

Spotti, M., & Blommaert, J. (2017). Bilingualism, multilingualism, globalization, and superdiversity: Toward sociolinguistic repertoires. In García, O., Flores, N., & Spotti, M. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Language and Society.* Oxford University Press, 161–178.

Stawarska, B. (2015). *Saussure's Philosophy of Language as Phenomenology: Undoing the doctrine of the course in general linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Subramaniam, M. (2013). Children's Book Publishing in India. *Publishing research quarterly, 29*(1), 26-46.

Suhor, C. (1984). Towards a semiotics-based curriculum. *Journal of curriculum studies*. 16, 247-257.

The Council of the European Union. (2014). *Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on multilingualism and the development of language competences*. Official Journal of the European Union.

The Multilingual Resources for Children Project. (1995). *Building bridges: multilingual resources for children*. Multilingual Matters, The University of Reading.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf

Thibeault, J., & Matheson, I. A. (2020). The Cross-Linguistic Reading Strategies Used by Elementary Students in French Immersion as They Engage with Dual-Language Children's Books. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La revue canadienne des langues vivantes.* 76(4), 375-394.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation. (2003). *Education in a multilingual world.* UNESCO. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/education-in-a-multilingual-world-unesco-education-position-paper/

Unsworth, L., Meneses, A., Ow Gonzalez, M., & Castillo, G. (2014). Analysing the Semiotic Potential of Typographic Resources in Picture Books in English and in Translation. *International Research in Children's Literature.* 7(2), 117-135.

Vamos, S. (2009). *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*. Viking Juvenile.

Williams, C. (1994). *Arfarniad o Ddulliau Dysgu ac Addysgu yng Nghyddestun Addysg Uwchradd Ddwyieithog*, [An evaluation of teaching and learning methods in the context of bilingual secondary education]. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Wales.