

Shared Reading of Wordless Picturebooks as a Translanguaging Practice

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Previous studies have highlighted the value of shared reading, an adult reading picturebooks with one or more children, for developing young children's multilingual and multimodal literacy, or capacity to interpret meanings constructed through languages and other communication modes. However, very few studies have examined the potential of shared reading of wordless picturebooks (WPBs) in which meanings are mainly constructed through visual resources (e.g., images and design). The present study brings together translanguaging and multimodality for analysing multilingualism alongside multimodal literacy in early childhood. Specifically, it examines the interaction of 15 Mandarin-English bilingual parent-child dyads engaged in shared reading of the award-winning WPB *Sunshine* (Ormerod, 1981), and interviews with these parents about their language use during shared reading. A multimodal analysis of the shared reading interactions and a thematic analysis of the interviews revealed that the parents and children engaged in translanguaging, that is, the practice of fluidly combining their languages and other meaning-making resources, and the reasons why parents did that. The findings point to four important functions that translanguaging could support during shared reading of wordless picturebooks with young bilingual children: (1) facilitating use and learning of the heritage language; (2) supporting children's school readiness by referring to and emphasising school-related routines and concepts in the majority language (in this study, English) and (3) promoting children's understanding of visual conventions and story comprehension. Findings have implications for families and educators who seek to promote bilingual development alongside fostering children's developing visual and multimodal literacy.

Keywords: translanguaging; shared reading of wordless picturebook; multilingual development; multimodality; preschool children

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