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ABSTRACT

In Texas and other border states, the increasing numbers of Hispanic students magnifies the numbers of non-English speakers or limited English speakers. The statewide Texas distribution of students revealed that 58% of all students are minority students, with Hispanics making up the largest minority group, 40.6% of all students. This paper discusses the value of using translated and bilingual literature with Hispanic students. For the purposes of the paper, "Hispanic," the term used by the U.S. Census Bureau, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and the Texas Education Agency, will be used; bilingual literature will refer to Spanish/English books or dual language publications available in both Spanish and English. Four awards that specifically target the literature of other languages translated into English and Hispanic literature are the paper's focus--the Mildred L. Batchelder Award, the Pura Belpre Award, the Americas Award for Children and Young Adult Literature, and the Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award. The paper contains sections on translated award books, on bilingual award books, and on using translated and bilingual books with children. Cites 10 translated award books and 22 bilingual award books. (Contains 15 references.) (NKA)

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Award-Winning Dual Language Literature: Translated and Bilingual.

by Maureen White

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Award-Winning Dual Language Literature: Translated and Bilingual

by

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A presentation at a symposium on “International Literacy Links Through Dual Language Acquisition: Teacher/Librarian Research Projects Affect Teaching and Learning” at the 19th World Congress on Reading, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 29-August 1, 2002.

Introduction and Rationale

Children want to see people like themselves in books. In a study of children’s books published between 1994-1999, Helbig and Perkins (2001) found that of the approximate 25,000 children’s books published during that time, only 541 related to experiences of parallel (minority groups). Yet, the racial composition of classrooms is no longer White and middle-class. According to Galda and Cullinan (2002), almost one-third of students entering school in the U.S. are African American, Asian American, or Latino. Literature in the United States is slow in reflecting this changing ethnicity. Awards related to specific cultures in the U.S., such as the Coretta Scott King Award and the Pura Belpré Award, have helped improve the situation, but more needs to be done. Librarians and teachers need to be aware of the award-winning literature from other cultures and languages as well as award-winning bilingual literature (specifically for this paper, Spanish/English) available in this country. In addition to a knowledge of this literature, they will also want to plan to use and promote it with children and adults.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) provided a view of how the racial composition of classrooms has changed. OERI (2001) reported that between 1972 and 1999 the percentage distribution of White public school students enrolled in grades K-12 in the U.S. dropped from 77.8% to 61.9% and minority enrollments grew from 22.2% to 38.1% of the total school population. The largest growth rate was in Hispanic enrollments, which rose from 6% to 16.2% of the total school enrollment (U.S. Census Bureau, January, 2002a). Projections for growth of Hispanics in the total population indicated that between 2005 and 2050, the Hispanic population would grow from 13.3% to 24.3%, while Whites will drop from 69.3% to 52.8%. At the same time the African American population will rise from 12.3% to 13.2%, American Indian, Eskimos, Aleut will remain constant at 0.8%, and Asian Pacific Islanders will rise from 4.3% to 8.9% (U.S. Census Bureau, January, 2002b).

In Texas and other Border States, the increasing numbers of Hispanic students magnifies the numbers of non-English speakers or limited English speakers. The statewide Texas distribution of students revealed that 58 percent of all students are minority students (Texas Education Agency, 2002) with Hispanic making up the largest minority group, 40.6 percent of all students. In the largest school district in the State, the Houston Independent School District, 55% of the 208,000 students in 289 schools are Hispanic

and 24% of all students in the schools are in special bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) education classes. In Texas the highest percentages of students served in bilingual and ESL programs are in the border areas as well as the largest districts including Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, El Paso, and Fort Worth.

For the purposes of this paper, *Hispanic*, the term used by the U.S. Census Bureau, OERI, and the Texas Education Agency, will be used. Hispanic literature will also include literature referred to as Latino/Latina literature. *Bilingual* literature will refer to Spanish/English books or dual language publications available in both Spanish and English.

Values of Translated and Bilingual Literature

According to children's literature researchers and authors, Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002, pp. 191-192), multicultural literature has value for all children for the following reasons:

- Children who see people like themselves represented positively in excellent multicultural literature derive self-esteem and pride in their own heritage.
- Reading multicultural literature is a way for Euro-American children (and their parents, teachers, and librarians) to learn about or to become aware of other peoples and their cultures.
- Multicultural literature shows Euro-American children not only that other groups are worthy, but also that they have something to teach others.
- Emotional involvement and vicarious experience with multicultural characters through works of literature reduce students' prejudices toward another culture.
- Reading about issues and problems peculiar to children of a specific culture from the perspective of story characters who themselves are members of the group may help children of that culture to cope with the same problems themselves.

Reading teachers, English as second language teachers, and bilingual teachers as well as the regular classroom teacher are in need of good literature that reflects the diversity of children in their classrooms. In order to promote the enhance the abilities of these students, professional reading and library groups have encouraged the publication of Hispanic, bilingual, and translated materials to promote reading opportunities for these children. Awards are also given to promote the publication of these books.

Four awards that specifically target the literature of other languages translated into English and Hispanic literature will be the focus of this paper. The Mildred L. Batchelder Award is given to a book from another culture and language that is translated into English and sold by U.S. publishers. It is awarded by the Association of Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The Pura Belpré Award is given biennially to literature culturally specific to the Hispanic (Latino/Latina) culture and includes bilingual Spanish/English books. It is also awarded by the ALSC division of ALA. Two other awards for Hispanic literature include (a) the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature awarded by The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), Center for Latin American and Caribbean

Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and (b) the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, given by Southwest Texas State University.

Translated Award Books

An understanding of children and literature from other countries and languages can be shared with children in the United States when the best books from other countries and languages are translated and published in English for children in our country. The Batchelder Award is awarded to the American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States. The Award was established in 1966, and since 1979 has been awarded annually. Beginning in 1994, Honor books could be selected by the committee. There are five members on the committee appointed by the president of ALSC. Folk tales and picture books (text must be as important as pictures) are not considered eligible for consideration. See The Mildred L. Batchelder Award web site (<http://www.ala.org/alsc/batch.html>) for an overview, criteria, and a complete listing of Award recipients.

Several outstanding Batchelder Award books that have been successful with children include:

- 2002 Batchelder Honor, Morgenstern, S. (2001). *A book of coupon*. (Rosner, French trans.);
- 2000 Batchelder Honor, Björk, C. *Vendela in Venice* (Crampton, Swedish trans.);
- 1998 Batchelder Award, Holub, J. (1997). *The robber and me* (Crawford, German trans.);
- 1998 Batchelder Honor, Heindenreich, R. (1997). *Nero Corleone: A cat's story* (Orgel, German trans., 1997);
- 1988 Batchelder Honor, Wassiljewa, T. (1997). *Hostage to war: A true story*. (Trenter, Russian trans.);
- 1997 Batchelder Award, Yumoto, K. *The friends* (1996). (Hirano, Japanese trans., 1996);
- 1996 Batchelder Honor, Hoestlandt, J. (1995). *Star of fear, star of hope*, (Polizzotti, French trans., 1995);
- 1994 Batchelder Honor, Rol, Ruud van der, & Verhoeven, R. (1993). *Anne Frank: Beyond the diary* (Langhamn & Peters, Dutch trans.);
- 1992 Batchelder Award, Orlev, U. (1991). *The man from the other side* (Halkin, Hebrew trans.); and
- 1986 Batchelder Award, Innocenti, R. (1985). *Rose Blanche* (Coventry & Graglia, Italian trans.).

Bilingual Award Books

Established in 1996, the Pura Belpré Award is presented biennially to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. Bilingual books

are also eligible for the award. The same age criteria (0 through 14 years old) apply as it does for the Caldecott, Newbery and Batchelder Award. Award and Honor Book Awards may be given for both narrative and illustration. The seven-member committee is composed of members of ALSC and the ALA Latino library affiliate, REFORMA. See The Pura Belpré Award web site (<http://www.ala.org/alsc/belpre.html>) for an overview, criteria, and a complete listing of award recipients.

Bilingual Pura Belpré Award or Honor Books that have proven popular with children include:

- 2002 Pura Belpré Narrative Honor. Alarcón, F.X. (2000). *Iguanas in the Snow and other winter poems/Iguanas en la nieve y otros poemas de invierno*. Illus. by M.C. Gonzalez;
- 2000 Pura Belpré Illustration Award. Garza, C.L. (1999). *Magic windows/Ventanas mágicas*. Illus. by the author;
- 2000 Pura Belpré Narrative Honor. Herrera, J.F. (1998). *Laughing out loud, I fly: Poems in English and Spanish*;
- 2000 Pura Belpré Narrative Honor. Alarcón, F.X. (1998). *From the bellybutton of the moon and other summer poems/Del ombligo de la luna y otros poemas de verano*. Illus. by M.C. Gonzalez;
- 1998 Pura Belpré Narrative Honor. Alarcón, F.X. (1997). *Laughing tomatoes and other spring poems/Jitomates risueños y otros poemas de primavera: poems*. Illus. by M.C. Gonzalez;
- 1998 Pura Belpré Illustration Honor. Ada, A.F. (1997). *Gathering the Sun: An alphabet in Spanish and English*. Illus. by S. Silva;
- 1996 Pura Belpré Illustration Honor. Garza, C.L. (1995). *In my Family/En mi familia*. Also recipient of the 1996 Américas Award; and
- 1996 Pura Belpré Illustration Award. Soto, G. (1995). *Chato's kitchen*. New York: Putnam. Available in Spanish and English.

Another important award for Hispanic literature is the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature given by The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This award is given to books that authentically and engagingly portray Latin American, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States. . The award has been given since 1993 and also includes an annual "Commended List." Since 1996 two awards are given in a Picture Book and Fiction category. See also the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature for information on criteria and award winners (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach_americas.html).

Several bilingual Américas books that have been especially well-received by children and not previously mentioned in this paper are:

- 2001 Américas Picture Book Award. Argueta, J. (2001). *A movie in my pillow/Una película en mi almohada*. Illus. by E. Gómez;
- 2000 Américas Picture Book Honorable Mention. Pérez, A.I. (2000). *My very own room/Mi propio cuartito*. Illus. by M.C. Gonzalez;

- 2000 Américas Commended List. Jiménez, F. (2000). *The Christmas gift/El regalo de Navidad*. Illus. by C.B. Cotts;
- 1998 Américas Picture Book Award. Ancona, G. (1998). *Barrio: José's neighborhood*. Photos. by the author. Available in Spanish and English;
- 1997 Américas Commended List. Ehlert, L. (1997). *Cuckoo: A Mexican folktale/Cucú: Un cuento folklórico Mexicano*. Illus. by the author;
- 1995 Américas Commended List. Keister, D. (1995). *Fernando's gift/El regalo de Fernando*;
- 1995 Américas Commended List. Ada, A.F. (1995). *Mediopollito/Half-chicken*. Illus. by K. Howard; and
- 1994 Américas Commended List. Carlson, L.M. (ed.). (1994). *Cool Salsa: Bilingual poems on growing up Latino in the United States*.

The Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award awarded by Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas, is given annually to the author or illustrator of the most distinguished book for children and young adults that authentically reflects the lives and experiences of Mexican Americans in the Southwestern region of the United States. See Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award web site (<http://www.education.swt.edu/rivera/mainpage.html>) for criteria, award winners and nominees.

Several award-winners and nominees winning books that have been well-received by children and not previously mentioned in this paper include:

- 2000 Winner. Pérez, A.I. (2000). *My very own room/Mi propio cuartito*. Illus. by M.C. Gonzalez;
- 1999 Nominee. Medina, J. (1999). *My name is Jorge on both sides of the river: Poems in English and Spanish*. Illus. by F.V. Broeck;
- 1999 Nominee. Alarón, F.X. (1999). *Angels ride bikes/Los angeles andan en bicicleta*. Illus. by M.C. Gonzalez;
- 1998 Winner. Salinas, B. (1998). *The three pigs/Los tres cerdos*. Illus. by the author;
- 1998 Nominee. Jiménez, F. (1998). *La mariposa*. Illus. by Simon Silva. Available in Spanish and English;
- 1997 Winner. Mora, P. (1997). *Tomás and the library lady*. Illus. R. Colón. Available in Spanish and English; and
- 1996 Nominee. Mora, P. (1996). *Uno, dos, tres/One, two, three*. Illus. by B. Lavallee.

Using Translated and Bilingual Books with Children

Booktalking, creating "path finders" that include both translated and bilingual book, reading aloud the books from other cultures, having bilingual books read in both languages, and having translated and Hispanic books available for students are but a few ways to increase the knowledge and use of these books by children and adults. Especially helpful are two books by Sherry York (2002), *Picture books by Latino writers* and *Children's and young adult literature by Latino writers* that provide additional ideas

on how to promote, select, and use this literature. Quality translated and Hispanic books are reviewed by well-known review journals, including *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *Horn Book*, and *Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books*.

Translated literature from other countries is often a “hard sell” to children in our country. One example of a successful way to put these books into the hand of students was created by Nancy Bluemel, middle school librarian, along with seventh grade teachers in the Grapevine-Colleyville (Texas) Independent School District. They assisted students in a study of a country that each student would like to know more about. Using print and electronic resources, developing travel packets, and reading a piece of authentic literature selected with the librarian’s assistance were parts of the research process. Throughout the process, the students continued to compare the facts they were gathering with “leads” in the literature which helped them to gain a better understanding of the country they had chosen to study and the people who lived there. Combining the reading of authentic literature with research proved to be an excellent way to give students an emotional and not just factual insight into other countries. It also provided a benefit that the teachers and librarian were not expecting. Many students said that they would never have checked out the authentic literature that they selected to read. They began reading the books reluctantly; finished them enthusiastically saying, “That was a really good book.” Bluemel’s conclusion was that they had inadvertently created an audience for translated and international literature (White and Bluemel in *Inspiring Connections*, 2001). See also, Hill, White, & Brodie (2001), *Selecting and Promoting Young Adult and Children’s Award-Winning Books* for additional information on promoting American Library Association and International Reading Association award books.

In spite of the fact that only a relatively small number of translated and Latino/Latina/Hispanic children’s books are published, there is available a good number of *outstanding* translations and bilingual books. Of particular note is the large number of outstanding picture books. A number of translated and bilingual books have received awards and positive reviews. It is our responsibility as children’s librarians and teachers to access these books of quality and share them with children. If we begin this venture of sharing outstanding books at an early age, we validate to children that outstanding literature does not just come from our own country, but comes from many other countries and language from around the world.

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Hoestlandt, J. (1995). *Star of fear, star of hope*. Illus. by J. Kang, Trans. from the French by M. Polizzotti. New York: Walker. 1996 Batchelder Honor Book. (Ages 8 & up). Setting: France.

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