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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed ethnic authenticity with regard to language use in 16 books for children and young adults used in Central Michigan University's English 582 course, "Cultural Pluralism in Children and Young Adult Literature." Four ethnic groups were included: Native American, African American, Asian American, and Hispanic American. To evaluate authenticity, the study used Gottlieb-Crowell's framework and examined the ethnic background of the author and inclusion of ethnically representative linguistic elements (the borrowing of lexical items from the native ethnic languages and the use of dialect patterns, both syntactic and lexical). Results indicate that there are distinctive patterns for dialogue and narrative language use in multicultural children's and young adults' literature related to ethnic groups. Analysis of the 16 books found 11 language use categories: informative, dialogue, standard English, eye-dialect, slang, proper nouns, common nouns, code switching interlanguage, glossary, and summary. In Native American texts, summaries of passages or the culture in general were typically provided. African American books typically used dialects, or eye-dialects and slang. Asian American stories presented interlanguage patterns. Hispanic American books generally used full lexical and syntactic code switching. A table demonstrates the books' receptive language use by ethnic group. The list of books is appended. (Contains 27 references.) (SM)

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Language Use in Multiethnic Literature For Young Adults

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October 24, 2002

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Language Use in Multiethnic Literature For Young Adults

Introduction

The use of multicultural literature in school reading programs has been shown to enhance the student's awareness for other cultures and to contribute to overall competence in all areas of language arts and reading comprehension (Florez et al., 1986, Rosberg, 1995, Hopkins and Tastad, 1997, Hansen-Krening and Mizokawa, 1997, Reid and Twardosz, 2000, Pirofski, 2001). These findings suggest that including multicultural children's literature in classes can be a meaningful way to introduce young children to other cultures and languages, while at the same time, raising their awareness of and interest in their own culture and first language. Such benefits, it would seem would be related to the variety of languages and language types included in the literature chosen. Yet few studies specifically address linguistic elements as part of determining the authenticity of multicultural literature and as part of understanding how ethnic groups are represented through the language they may or may not be shown to use in the literature. This paper begins to address this gap by analyzing ethnic authenticity with regard to language use in 16 children and young adult literature books used in Central Michigan University's English 582 "Cultural Pluralism in Children and Young Adult Literature" course. Four ethnic groups were analyzed: Native America, African-American, Asian American and Latin, (for list of books see Appendix A).

In Using Multicultural Literature in the K-8 Classroom (1997), Harris discusses various issues in using multiethnic literature in the K-8 classroom. The issues include selection of readings, the depiction of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans and the development of multicultural perspectives in reading. Among the most important features she mentions is the portrayal of ethnic authenticity in the literature to prevent

and/or discourage social stereotyping. However, her study of authenticity neglects to mention linguistic or language issues and the book's review of language-related features, such as dialect, is quite limited, with linguistic issues found only in reference to African-American dialect and Mexican-American bilingualism. Further, Harris discusses only how language is perceived in the specific multiethnic book to which it pertains, rather than as a general issue related to our understanding of and learning about the relationship between language and ethnic identity.

In 1995, Caryl Gottlieb-Crowell reviewed a collection of books that, according to her, "present a vision of a linguistically rich world where language difference is a resource, not an obstacle" (228). Selecting books with authentic images of different cultures and multiple language uses, she considers how words in native languages are integrated into the English texts to tell the stories of the people who speak those languages. In addition, to evaluate the reliability of authentic portrayal, she asked, "is the author or illustrator a member of this cultural-linguistic group or does that person have other qualifications that enhance his or her ability to accurately represent the culture?" (229). Gottlieb-Crowell also mentions code-switching, a distinctive characteristics of bilingual communities, as an authentic way to represent languages and cultures and suggests various books that do so, and she mentions dual-language texts in English and Spanish as well as those that include ethnic languages through cultural traditions and stories.

Methodology

To evaluate authenticity, I used Gottlieb-Crowell's framework and examined the ethnic background of the author and the inclusion of ethnically representative linguistic elements: the borrowing of lexical items from the native ethnic languages and the use of dialect patterns, both syntactic and lexical. Results suggest that there are distinctive patterns for dialogue and

narrative language use in multicultural literature for children and young adults that are related to ethnic groups.

Analysis of the 16 books resulted in the following eleven language use categories: Informative, Dialogue, Standard English, Eye-Dialect, Slang, Proper Nouns, Common Nouns, Code-switching, Interlanguage, Glossary, and Summary. Of these, two are genre issues: Informative, which implies that the purpose of the text is informative, usually tells the reader about an ethnic group's history, while Dialogue is used to present character's language within the experiences of a story (narrative genre). Standard English, Eye-Dialect, and/or Slang categories are language-use categories found within Informative and Narrative texts and Dialogues.

As defined by Katie Wales (1989), Standard English is the model used "for educated written usage throughout the British Isles and even beyond, and it is that variety which is the basis of modern grammars of English" (429). As a generalized written form of English, Standard English in a text would represent mainstream rather than ethnically-representative language and values. Eye-Dialect is "the use of non-standard spelling in literature to suggest non-standard pronunciation" (167), and Slang is the "popularly used individual vocabulary by different social groups" (423). Proper and Common Noun categories identify lexical items used and/or borrowed from the culture that the story represents. The Code-switching and Interlanguage categories are defined as types of language use patterns that occurred in the character's dialogue. While Code-switching refers to the "shifting adopted by speakers between one variety or dialect or language and another" (Wales, 73), Interlanguage refers to the "language system composed of numerous elements, created by the language learner, and not the least of which are elements

from the NL and the TL” (Gass and Selinker, 1994, 11). Each text was also analyzed for whether or not it included a glossary of terms or a summary of the language, culture, and/or story.

Results and Analysis

The following table demonstrates the books’ respective language use by ethnic group. The sixteen books were analyzed for each of the eleven categories.

Table. 1 Ethnic Group Language Use (See Appendix A for book reference)

N=16	Native American	African American	Asian American	Latino
Informational	NA1	AFA1		LA1
Dialogue	NA2, NA3, NA4	AFA2, AFA3, AFA4	ASA1, ASA2, ASA3, ASA4	LA2, LA3, LA4
Standard English (predominant)	NA1, NA2, NA3, NA4	AFA1, AFA2, AFA3	ASA1, ASA2, ASA3, ASA4	LA1, LA2, LA3, LA4
Eye-Dialect		AFA2, AFA4		
Slang		AFA3		
Proper Noun	NA1, NA2, NA3, NA4	AFA1	ASA1, ASA2, ASA3, ASA4	LA1, LA2, LA3, LA4
Common Noun	NA1, NA3	AFA1	ASA1, ASA2, ASA4	LA1, LA3, LA4
Code-switching			ASA1	LA2, LA3, LA4
Inerlanguage	NA3		ASA1, ASA3, ASA4	
Glossary	NA3			LA3, LA4
Summary	NA2, NA3, NA4	AFA4	ASA3, ASA4	LA3

As Table 1 indicates, there are differences in the author's use of ethnically representing the language. The following discusses the usage in individual texts.

Of the four Native American books, a writer of Native American heritage had written three: (1) Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West, (2) In Search of April Raintree, and (14) Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun: An Athabaskan Indian Legend from Alaska. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West discusses aspects of the history between the Native Americans and the settlers of the United States of America, particularly of the post-civil war, westward movement era and the first Battle of Wounded Knee. This book's intent is to share information rather than to narrate characters' experiences or feelings, and as a result, there is no dialogue, and the ethnically representative language use consists only of anglicized tribal names and people, such as "Sioux," "Cheyenne," and "Arapaho."

In Search of April Raintree, a story of a Metis child and her experience growing up in the 1960 and 70's in and out of Canadian foster homes and boarding schools, is written in Standard English exclusively. However, the author does include some understanding of language variety, although the varieties are developmentally used rather than ethnically. Throughout the story, April receives letters from her sister Cheryl as they are growing up, and these letters reflect a child's developmental learning of written English. For example, in the first letters Cheryl sends, she refers to April as "apple" (32).

The story Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun: An Athabaskan Indian Legend from Alaska, about two children who want to live free, focuses on a specific Athabaskan clan group, Gwich'in, and includes Athabaskan character names. For example, the main character's name "Daagoo" is Gwich'in for "ptarmigan." However, no other language related to Native Americans is used.

A Native American story not written by a Native American is Racing the Sun. This story is about Brandon, a 12-year-old boy, who struggles with growing up as an American Indian. The book provides examples of Navajo language in the introductory summary, uses Navajo syntax in the dialogues and throughout the narration, and provides definitions of lexical items in the glossary. For example, the author includes descriptions of phonemes, such as the “slashed L”, for the *th* sound in *hataalii*, also printed as *hataathlii* in the narration, and defined as a ‘singer’ in the glossary. However, with the exception of Brandon’s grandfather, who spoke at an interlanguage level, the syntax in the story is in Standard English.

Of these four Native American stories, three included a summary of the historical aspects of the events told and/or language usages applied. This pattern, evident with these Native American texts, may aid the writer in explaining the story’s implication with regard to the particular Native American tribe’s culture, thereby giving the story more meaning and purpose.

For the African-American books, all the authors were African American. Now Is Your Time! presented a history of African-American experiences in the Americas. This book was informative and did not use dialogue. Its African language was limited to proper nouns such as “Griots,” (African storytellers) (2) and “Abd al-Rahman Ibrahima,” who was one of the first slaves (11).

The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963, a story of a first generation Southern-Black American family’s experience living in the north, uses a white Standard English for most of the dialogue and narration; however, a Southern dialect is also very evident in the book. The use of dialect is related to geographic location of the characters. For example, the mother switches between her Southern and Northern dialect usages. In the north, the mother says, “Bryon Watson, you take off that hat and get over here right this minute!” (87), with full Standard

English syntax and spelling. In the south, she states, “soon’s he gets up? Awww, Momma...” (161); the abbreviated syntax and spelling of “soon’s” reflect a non-standard use.

The story Slam!, which is about a 17 year-old African-American student, Greg Harris, who dreams of becoming a professional basketball player, uses current (Manhattan) slang and in-group terms, such as, “out with my boy” in “I was out with my boy, Ice.” (92), and “dig” in “I dig your game but I don’t dig your attitude” (137).

The Well, about an African American family living in the South during the late 1930’s, uses rich southern dialect terms. For example, characters frequently use “ain’t” for isn’t, “y’all” for you all, and “ma/pa” for mom and pop, and neglect and change the vowel sounds in “to” (t’), “about” (‘bout), and “sir” (sur). However, there are no distinctions made between Southern Black dialect and Southern White dialect.

The use of writing dialects for African-American characters occurred frequently and seems to be a characteristic pattern of these African-American stories, and it may be representative of African-American culture in general. Lisa W. Nikola (1995) discusses various ways in which the language of African-Americans is expressed in contemporary picture books texts as well. For example, in studying the variety of influences on African-American language (e.g. regional dialect and major musical and literary genres indicative of the African-American community), she found that the predominant form of expression associated with African-American folklore is regional dialect. She concludes that African-American language is not only diverse and multifaceted but may be the most diverse, rich and complex, language in the United States. The variety of language use is also true of the four African-American texts in this study; Eye-Dialect and Slang were evident in three of the four African-American texts.

In the Asian-American group, all of the authors are Asian-American. If It Hadn't Been For Yoon Jun was about an adopted Korean girl, April, and her experience in high school when a new Korean boy, Yoon Jun, arrives. April's dialogue consists of a Standard English. However, Yoon Jun's dialogue was that of a Korean-English interlanguage, exemplifying syntax such as the non-standard "don't" in "She don't snore or anything," and the absence of the "be" verb in "best jobs all in Seoul" (101). Also included are some Korean proper nouns, such as "Kimchee," a traditional Korean dish. However, no articles were missing; a well-known problem of Asian-English interlanguage patterns.

The story Journey to Topaz: A Story of the Japanese-American Evacuation is about a Japanese-American family living during World War II in detention camps in the United States. The author uses a Standard English throughout the story but occasionally includes Japanese words such as "Jan Ken Po" (rock, paper, scissors) and "zoris" (shoes) (79) in the dialogues and narration.

The stories Dragon's Gate and Ribbons, written by Lawrence Yep, both included summaries of the research conducted to ensure the story's authenticity. Dragon's Gate, about a Chinese boy, Otter, and his experience working on the San Francisco Railroad uses a Standard English in Roman type for the dialogue of the Chinese as well as for the White speakers. However, italicized words are used to represent a broken-English interlanguage. For example, Otter's Uncle Foxfire's language, a mix of Chinese and English, is presented in italic and involves non-standard syntactic patterns: particularly omissions of auxiliary verbs, such as "You sure boy? If I listen your mother long ago, I never leave Three Willows" (35).

The story Ribbons, about the relationship between a young Chinese American teenager, Robin, and her Chinese Grandmother, is exclusively presented in a Standard English; however,

Robin's grandmother occasionally "muttered something in Chinese" (129). This suggests some level of interlanguage, but no samples are actually included. The only Chinese word integrated into the narration is "paw paw," maternal Chinese grandmother.

Of these four Asian-American stories, three included awareness of an interlanguage, suggestion that interlanguage patterns are common portrayals of Asian American characters. In addition, two of the three stories' interlanguage use was by older generation speakers, for whom the first language would be that of their native Asian culture (i.e., they are not likely to be fully competent in English as a second or foreign language), and If It Hadn't Been For Yoon Jun includes a character who is a transfer student from Korea. Such a preponderance of non-native speaker's language suggests that interlanguage patterns are an almost stereotypically characteristic of a foreign student, as well as of older Asian-Americans.

Latino authors wrote all four of the Latino books. The book Coming to America: The Mexican-American Experience told of the long history of Mexican-Americans. Like the other history narratives, the book is written in a Standard English, and it makes limited use of Mexican-Spanish language. The genre of the book is informative: to tell readers about Mexican-American history. However, it does include some Mexican-Spanish nouns for names, places, and holidays, such as "Cinco De Mayo," for the fifth of May a traditional Mexican holiday celebrating the Mexican defeat of the French in Mexico City in 1862.

Felita, about a young Puerto Rican girl and her experiences moving between neighborhoods in a New York suburb, uses a Standard English for the dialogue used by the young girl, her brothers, and friends, as well as for narration. The mother also shown using Standard English; however, her language is frequently represented through both English and Spanish versions. For example she asked, "Felita, pero que pas? What happened?" (37), suggesting that the mother

actually speaks in Spanish and English, with the English version given as a translation for English readers. Surprisingly, the grandmother's dialogue is written only in a Standard English even though the book states that she spoke no English (55). The older generation's heavy reliance on Spanish in this book suggests that Felita is actually bilingual. Unfortunately, the book neither shows nor addresses the issues that Felita might face in being bilingual, nor does it give any sample of what her interlanguage use might be like.

The story When I Was Puerto Rican told of the author's experiences growing up in Puerto Rico and in the United States. Standard English is predominant in the narration; however, the author does include both Puerto Rican and Standard English usages throughout the story, with a glossary of the Puerto Rican terms at the end and/or an explanation of them in the narration. For example, the author says, "What a jibara," to herself, about herself, in the text, and then defines "jibara" in the next paragraph: "In Santurce a jibara was something no one wanted to be" (39). The glossary then defined 'jibara' as a "rural Puerto Rican with distinctive dialect and customs" (237). This use of Spanish terms helps the reader experience and understand how language differences, in the lexical items included but even more in the cultural values they signify, are part of the author's multiethnic experience.

Taking Sides, a story about a Mexican-American boy, Lincoln, who struggles with moving to a new junior high school and maintain his position and dream of becoming a basketball player, contains both Standard English and Spanish in the dialogues of Lincoln, his mother, and his best friend, Tony, all of whom are Mexican-American. For example, Lincoln's mother asks "Que te paso en la pierna? What happened to your leg?" (29). In addition to Lincoln's code-switching between Spanish and English, he was also a student studying both languages (13), and his Spanish was "getting worse and worse" (34). This leaves the reader to assume that Lincoln is

enrolled in a bilingual program at his new school and the Spanish was his mother's first language. It also raises the reader's awareness of the difficulty involved in maintaining two languages and the potential loss as one becomes more dominant.

The primary language pattern evident in these four Latino young adult stories is that of code-switching between Spanish or Puerto Rican and English languages. In each story, at least one of the characters is capable of speaking in two languages. In Felita, it is the mother, although we can assume that Felita would also be able to speak Spanish. In When I Was Puerto Rican, the author, who tells her own story, frequently includes lexical items from her native language, even though the book is primarily written for an English audience and so written in Standard English. Taking Sides shows that not only was Lincoln capable of understanding his mother, who is bilingual, but that he is also a student studying both languages therefore letting readers assume that he was bilingual, and that Spanish was his first language. The use of both English and Spanish in these books further suggests that such bilingualism is a common characteristic in Latino culture.

Discussion and Conclusion

The language patterns found in the four groups of multicultural texts - Native American, African American, Asian American, and Latino - are important to understanding the way children's literature represents the language-related values and cultures of ethnic groups. Identifying these language patterns can be used to suggest ways of using multicultural children's literature meaningfully, to appropriately introduce young children to other cultures through language, while, at the same time, raising their awareness of and interest in their own culture and first language. In the Native American texts, summaries of the passages or the culture in general were typically provided, giving the reader a better understanding of a cultural content for

what would follow. The African-American books typically used dialects, or Eye-Dialects and Slang in the dialogues, which suggest language characteristics associated with African-American culture. Asian-American stories presented Interlanguage patterns in the character's dialogues, typically with them speaking in what mainstream English speakers might call "broken English." However, of three Asian-American books that showed interlanguage use, two included an older generation, non-native English speaker, further suggesting that generational differences is a part of a cultural progression in acquiring Standard English. In the Latino books, the texts generally used full lexical and syntactic code-switching in the dialogues, suggesting the use of Spanish in Latino families and culture.

The study of such categories and classification of language use in texts is an attempt to begin to understand the way language patterns appear in samples of multiethnic literature. However stereotypic some may be, the patterns are evident and different for each culture. Further study could examine more texts to see if the patterns uncovered in this study are indicative of ethnic literature generally, or if the patterns represent recent changes that could suggest an increasing awareness of differences in language use. In addition, a study could focus on the authenticity and language patterns of children's picture books with respect to ethnic groups; dialect and specific language use may be more evident in these brief stories for children than in the adolescent literature studied for this paper. Picture books could also offer an opportunity to examine the visual cues of the illustrations, which sometime incorporate language, and always carry semiotic meaning, as another textual device that allows the representation of cultural difference and values.

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Appendix A

NA1

Brown, Dec. Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West. New York: Henry Holt and Co. Inc. 1970.

This length book discusses aspects of the history between the Native Americans and the settlers of the United States of America, particularly of the post-civil war., westward movement era and the first Battle of Wounded Knee. This book's intent is to share information rather than narrate an experience or feelings. As a result, the language consists only of tribal names and people, e.g. "Sioux," "Cheyenne," and "Arapaho".

NA2

Culleton, Beatrice. In Search of April Raintree. Winnipeg: Peguis Publisher. 1983.

This is a story of a Metis child and her experience growing up in the 1960 and 70's in and out of American foster homes and boarding schools. The story is written in Standard English. However, throughout the story, April received letters from her sister Cheryl as they are growing up, and these letters reflect a child's developmental learning of English. For example, in the first letters Cheryl sends, she refers to April as "apple" (32).

AFA2

Curtis, Chirostopher Paul. The Watsons Go to Brimingham – 1963. New York: A Yearling Book. 1995.

This story of a first generation Southern-Black American family's experience living in the north generally uses white Standard English; however, a southern dialect is also very evident. For example, the mother switches between her southern and northern usages. While in the north, the mother said "Bryon Watson, you take off that hat and get over here right this minute!" (87), and, while in the south, she states, "Soon's he gets up? Awww, Mommma..." (161).

ASA1

Lee, Marie G. If It Hadn't Been For Yoon Jun. New York: Avon Books Inc. 1995.

This is a story of an adopted Korean girl, April and her experience in high school when a new Korean boy, Yoon Jun, arrives. April's dialogue consists of Standard English. However, Yoon Jun's dialogue is that of a Korean-English interlanguage, with phrases such as "She don't snore or anything," and "best jobs all in Seoul" (101). Also included are some Korean nouns, such as "Kimchee," a traditional Korean dish.

LA1

Martinez, Elizabeth Coonrod. Coming to America: The Mexican-American Experience. Brookfield, CN: Press. 1995.

This book tells of the long history of Mexican Americans. It is an informative book and makes limited use of Mexican-Spanish language. However, it does include names, places, and holidays such as "Cinco De Mayo," for the fifth of May, a traditional Mexican holiday celebrating the Mexican defeat of the French in Mexico City in 1862.

LA2

Mohr, Nocholasa, Illus. By Cruz, Ray, cover art Mujica, Rick. Felita. New York: A Yearling Book. 1990.

This story is about Felita, a young Puerto Rican girl, and her experiences moving between neighborhoods in a New York suburb. The dialogue mostly consists of Standard English used by the young girl, her brothers and friends. However the mother switched between English and Spanish, and interestingly, the grandmother's dialogue was written in Standard English even though she apparently spoke no English, leaving the reader to assume that Felita may actually be bilingual (55).

AFA1

Myers, Walter Dean. Now Is Your Time! New York: Harper Trophy. 1991.

This book presents a history of African-American experiences in the Americas. This book is informative but does not use dialogue. Its African language is limited to proper nouns such as "Griots," (African storytellers) (2) and "Abd al-Rahman Ibrahima," who was one of the first slaves (11).

AFA3

Myers, Walter Dean. Slam! New York: Scholastic Inc. 1996.

Greg Harris, a 17-year-old African-American student, dreams of becoming a professional basketball player. This story uses current (Manhattan) slang and in-group terms, such as, "I was out with my boy, Ice" (92), and "I dig your game but I don't dig your attitude" (137).

NA3

Pitts, Paul. Racing the Sun. New York: Avon Books Inc. 1988.

In this story a 12-year-old boy, Brandon, struggles with growing up as an American Indian. The use of Navajo language appears in the introductory summary of Native American languages, dialogues, throughout the narration, and in the glossary. For example, the author provides descriptions of phonemes, such as the “slashed L”, for the *th* sound in *hataalii*, also printed as *hataathlii* in the narration, and defined as a ‘singer’ in the glossary. With the exception of Brandon’s grandfather, who spoke at an interlanguage level, the syntax in the story is in Standard English.

LA3

Santiago, Esmeralda. When I Was Puerto Rican. New York: First Vintage Books Edition. 1994.

This story tells of the author’s experiences growing up in Puerto Rico and in the United States. Standard English is predominantly used for the narration; however, the author includes both Puerto Rican and Standard English usages throughout the story, with a glossary of the Puerto Rican terms at the end and/or explanations of them in the narration. For example, the author says “What a jibara,” to herself, about herself, in the text, and then defines “jibara” in the next paragraph: “In Santurcc a jibara was something no one wanted to be” (39).

LA4

Soto Gary. Taking Sides. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace and Company. 1991.

A Mexican-American boy, Lincoln struggles with moving to a new junior high school and maintain his position and dream of being a basketball player. The dialogue by Lincoln, his mother, and his best friend, Tony, all of whom are Mexican-American, is a mix between a Standard English and Spanish. For example, Lincoln’s mother asks “Que te paso en la pierna? What happened to your leg?” (29).

AFA4

Taylor, Mildred D. The Well. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers. 1995.

This is a story about an African American family living in the South during the late 1930’s. Rich Southern variations of an eye dialect are included. For example, characters frequently use “ain’t” for isn’t, “y’all” for you all, and “ma/pa” for mom and pop, and the neglected nasal phonemes and vowel sounds in “to” (t’), “about” (‘bout), and “sir” (sur) are also common. However, there are no distinctions made between Southern Black dialect and Southern White dialect.

ASA2

Uchida, Toshiko, illus. Carrick, Donald. Journey to Topaz: A Story of the Japanese-American Evacuation. Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Company. 1985.

This story is about a Japanese-American family during World War II in the United States detention camps. The author uses Standard English throughout the story but occasionally includes Japanese words such as “Jan Ken Po” (rock, paper, scissors) and “zoris” (shoes) (79) in the dialogues and narration.

NA4

Wallis, Velma, illus. Grant, Jim. Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun: An Athabaska Indian Legend from Alaska. New York: Harper Perennial. 1997.

This Indian story focuses on specific Athabaskan clans group, Gwich’in, and two children who want to live free. The story is focused exclusively on Athabaskan characters and culture, but very little Native American language is included except for the names of the tribal clans and few characters. For example, the main character’s name “Daagoo” is Gwich’in for ‘ptarmigan’.

ASA3

Yep, Lawrence. Dragon’s Gate. New York: Harper Trophy. 1995.

This is a story about a Chinese boy’s, Otter, experience working on the San Francisco railroad. Throughout the story, Standard English, in Roman type, was used for the dialogue of the Chinese and the White speakers while italicized words are used to represent the broken-English interlanguage. For example, Otter’s Uncle Foxfire’s language, a mix of Chinese and English, was presented in italic: “*You sure boy? If I listen your mother long ago, I never leave Three Willow*” (34).

ASA4

Yep, Lawrence. Ribbons. New York: The Putnam and Grosset Group. 1996.

This story focuses on the relationship between a young Chinese-American teenager, Robin, and her Chinese Grandmother. The dialogue is presented exclusively as Standard English; however, Robin’s grandmother occasionally “mutters something in Chinese” (129), suggesting some level of interlanguage. The only Chinese word integrated into the narration is “paw paw,” or maternal Chinese grandmother.



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