

# Reading and Writing with Dual Language Books



Raymonde Sneddon  
University of East London / Birkbeck  
r.m.sneddon@uel.ac.uk

# Bilingual Books – Biliterate Children

- **Albanian** - Magda and Albana aged 6: negotiating meaning with mother, checking with English text, using illustrations.
- **Turkish** - Lek and Durkan aged 7: collaborative reading, Using the whole context, both languages and all environmental clues, comparing language structure
- **Urdu** – Myadda aged 7: cracking the code with grandmother’s primer, learning to love reading
- **French** – Sarah aged 9: Balanced bilingual – taught herself to read in French – similes, metaphors and the deeper meaning of stories
- **Gujarati** – Mohamed aged 7: developing high level oral skills before tackling the Gujarati script

# Children learning to read - 1

- Children working at the cutting edge of their ability, highly motivated and proud of their skills
- Children using the home language more, developing their vocabulary and 'book language'
- All children transferred skills from reading in English to reading in the family language in varying degree depending on the script
- Children have been more interested in reading generally and improved their reading in English

# Children learning to read - 2

- The 3 older children are beginning to explore and understand the differences between the morphology and syntax of their languages and getting an insight into the translation process.
- Magda and Albana are very motivated to learn to write in Albanian and Sarah in French.
- Interest and pride in their two languages and cultures.

# Biliteracy in the classroom: key issues

- Role of the school in creating a language friendly educational environment
- Role of the teacher in encouraging and supporting parents to read in the home language with their children and in valuing children's progress and skills
- Importance of teacher knowing the language and literacy background of families
- Awareness of the different challenges presented by different languages and the need for targeted resources
- Availability of suitable resources, including bilingual staff
- Availability of resources that value children's cultural heritage and encourage exploring and sharing of personal identities.

# Children as bilingual authors

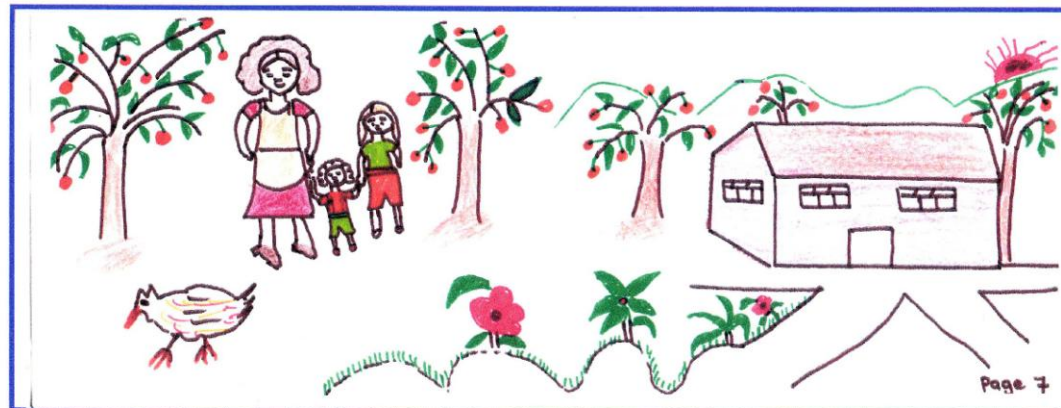
- Starting points: telling / reading / retelling stories  
In two languages
- Making personal bilingual books at home and in school
- exploring personal experience with drawings or photographs
- making a personal version of a favourite family story
- writing about a significant personal or family event writing about holidays, significant
- **The power of personal text – “Identity Texts”**

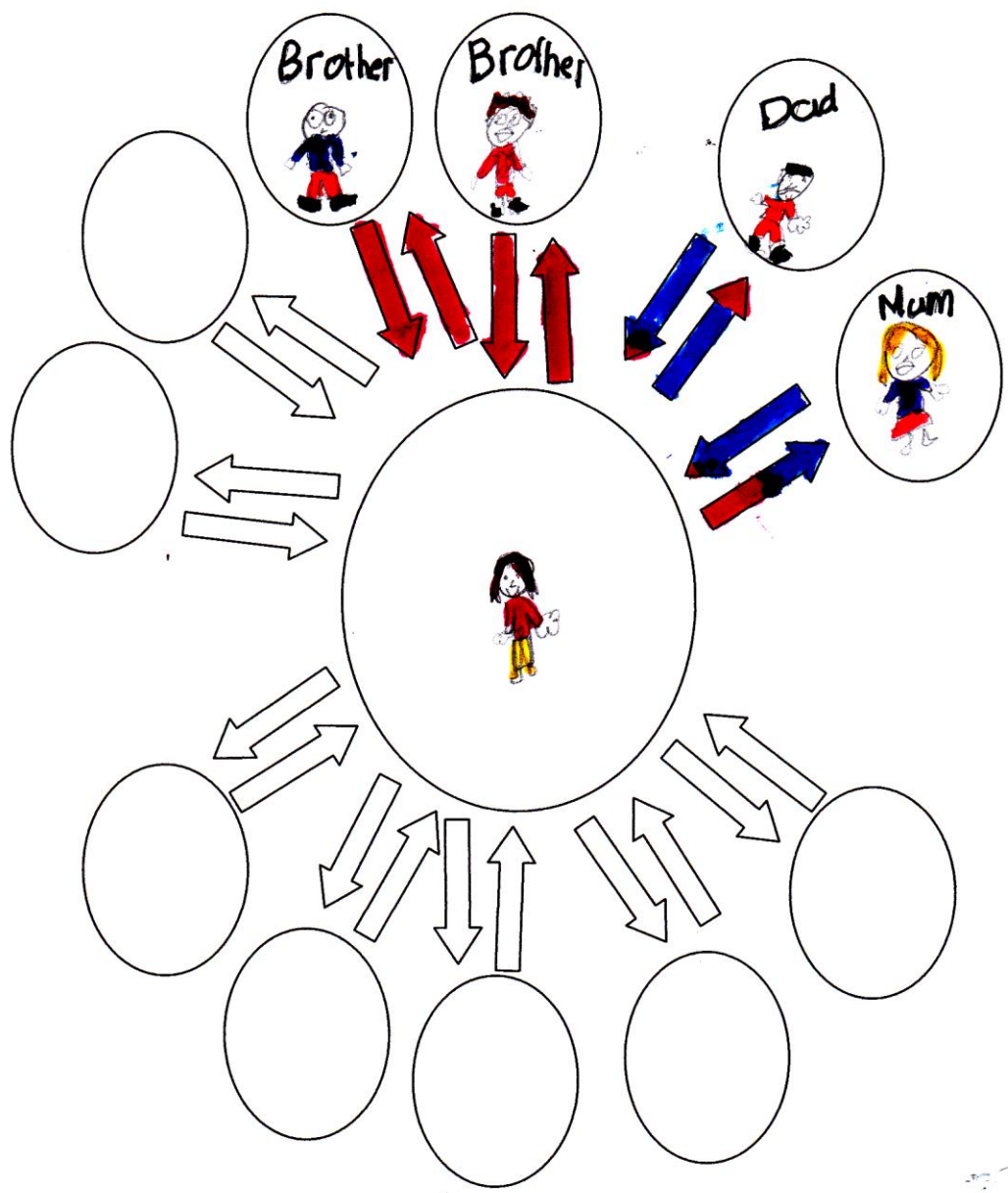


# Madda's book: My Holiday in Albania

My grandma was so happy to see us. My Grandma had a big house with a big garden all around the house with lovely and wonderful trees. She used to bake lots of lovely food for us. I felt upset when I saw my Grandma worried because my young uncle had gone to Italy. I had fun when I used to stay with my four aunties and my second auntie's boy. I even liked to stay and play with my third auntie's little girl who was very beautiful and cute. I tried to play with her but she didn't know me.

Gjyshja ime ishte shumë e gezuar që na shikonte ne. Gjyshja ime kishte një shtëpi të madhe me një kopesht të madh rreth shtëpise me shume peme të bukura dhe të mrekullueshme. Ajo kishte përgaditur gjellë shushme të shijsh me posacerisht për ne. Unë nuk u ndieva mirë kur shikoja Gjyshen time të merzitur sepse daja im i vogel dhe i vetem kishte ikur në Italy. Unë u kenaqesha, kur rrinja me kater tezet e mia dhe me dy cunat e tezes se dytë dhe gocen e vogel të tezes së tretë që e dua shumë. Ajo ishte shumë e bukur dhe e ëmbel. Une doja të luaja me ta por ajo nuk më nihte.







Dual Language Books

[Dual Language Home](#)

What are dual language books?

Why and how are they used?

Themes to explore

Research Project

Who can research the books?

Starting points for research

Recent and current research

Personal books

Multilingual resources

References and websites

This section:

## Using and Researching Dual Language Books for Children

### A Resource for Teachers and Researchers

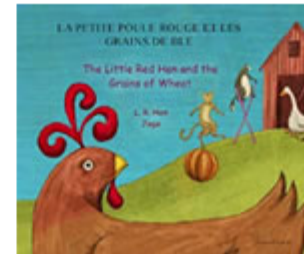
#### What are they?

Dual text books are published in two languages. Texts for children may have both languages on one page or two languages facing each other on alternate pages. Books published in the UK generally have English as one of the languages.

The School of Education at UEL is in the process of building a substantial collection of these books for teaching and research.

#### Why?

- Because more than 300 languages are spoken in London (Philip & Baker, 2000) and there is a growing interest in building on and developing the language skills of London children.
- Because the value of community languages is being increasingly recognised in education. [See Positively Plurilingual](#)
- Because in the context of the National Languages Strategy (Languages for All: Languages for Life [www.dfes.gov.uk/languagesstrategy/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languagesstrategy/)) primary schools are developing language teaching which includes community languages as well as the more traditional "Modern Foreign Languages". CILT ([www.cilt.org.uk/primary/](http://www.cilt.org.uk/primary/)).



#### What's New

[INFO & NETWORKING](#)

[BOOK REVIEWS](#)

#### Insight

The School of Education is a highly successful provider of teacher training and educational programmes, playing a key role in the provision of education services throughout East London and beyond.

[>> School of Education website](#)

#### Feedback

Can't find what you're looking for? Use our feedback form to let us know.