

Representations of Social Activism in Bilingual Children's Books

This paper explores social activism themes in bilingual children's literature. Using a text set of bilingual books that are told in two languages within the same text provides opportunities to explore social activism across languages and cultures. Drawing on the theoretical framework of critical multicultural analysis of children's literature, this paper examines how power is exercised among characters including oppression, collusion, resistance and social action. Bilingual dual language Spanish/English texts including *¡Si, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can!: Janitor Strike in L.A.* and *Side by side/lado a lado: The story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez/la historia de Dolores Huerta y Cesar Chavez*, as well as the Tagalog/English text *Lakas and the Makibaka Hotel/si Lakas at Ang Makibaka Hotel* are used as focal texts to unpack how power is exercised and highlight different forms of social activism, which are represented in the bilingual picture book text set. In particular, it explores the exercise of collaborative power and how characters re/organize to participate in new ways of being in the world. Characters' visions for equitable social change, their practices to enact their visions, the supports and challenges that the characters encounter, and the role that language plays in these power relations are unpacked.