

Topic 18



Language Lizard is an invaluable resource for teachers working in schools and educational programs (heritage language, language intervention, arts) where learners come from different language backgrounds and speak one or more home languages. **Language Lizard** offers a wide selection of beautifully illustrated bilingual books in over 60 languages that provide a fun-filled way to strengthen home languages, enhance awareness of language diversity and enrich multilingual teaching.

Language Lizard

- is a woman-owned independent publisher and bookseller;
- includes English + dual-language story books, information books, posters, teaching resources, a newsletter, and lesson plans; videos, audio files, interactive talking books and a language and a literacy blog;
- works closely with schools, libraries, families, and charitable organizations, and
- supports language learners of all ages and levels.

The Language Lizard Story

Twenty years ago Anneke Vanmarcke a multilingual, first-generation, American founded **Language Lizard**. An author of several children's book and a speaker of English, French, Dutch and Japanese, Anneke's goals were as follows:

- acknowledge the multilingual reality of our world;
- provide young readers with stories that reflect their language and culture;
- extend learners knowledge and understanding of world languages;
- encourage additional language learning;
- put the brakes on home language loss;
- make language learning meaningful, relevant and enjoyable;
- highlight the importance and value of family languages;
- encourage bi-literacy;
- support families in their language maintenance efforts;
- support and help integrate newcomers;
- encourage multilingual learning, and
- enrich multilingual teaching agendas.

Why lizard?

Browsing the **Language Lizard** website I wondered about the choice of the word lizard. Why lizard? Why not spider or turtle? A Google search quickly revealed that even though the symbolism of the lizard varies across cultures and belief systems, there are a number of common themes that are attributed to what Native Americans call Brother Lizard. Due to their ability to shed skin and regenerate tails, lizards are associated with transformation, **renewal**, **adaptability**, **regeneration**, **survival** and **healing**.



With this in mind I encourage all professionals working in language-rich classrooms and all bi/multilingual families to adopt the lizard as their language talisman, a companion that will guide language learning and teaching and support all learners: those who are discovering languages, those who are learning new ones, those who are bringing their forgotten or lost languages out of hiding, and those who are newcomers, navigating home, school and community languages.

References

Language Lizard <https://www.languagelizard.com/>

Bookworm for kids: Review of Language Lizard

<https://www.bookwormforkids.com/2021/01/review-multicultural-idiom-books-by.html>