When do they start speaking?

Does Spanish harm English?

What would a bilingual do? take the Quiz!

Luxembourg: Everyday multilingualism & multiculturalism

Dominant Multilingualism

Tongue Twisters from around the world

Our Multilingual Lives

Pumpkin Soup

Language Playgroup Tips from Bilingual Moms
In each issue we offer fun prizes for you to win! All you have to do is go to the link below and enter to win!

Go to: www.biculturalfamily.org/drawing.html for more information!

WIN the fabulous double DVD set of Spanish for Children from Bilingual Fun!

www.bilingualfun.com

CONGRATULATIONS to our September-October winner:

Martha C., Boston, MA, USA

To enter the November-December contest, go to:

www.biculturalfamily.org/drawing.html
We offer a wide selection of popular German children books, CDs/DVDs/Software, toys, games & more products imported from Germany in our store and invite you to browse! Our quality merchandise has been carefully selected to encourage children of any age to read, learn, and/or play with German language products, especially in a bilingual environment. Most of our products are in stock for fast and economical shipping, including optional gift wrap service. We ship worldwide and accept major credit cards, Paypal, checks or money order.

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My child mixes two languages. Is this normal?
Does switching between languages have any value?
Before we know it, the bustle of the winter holidays will be in full swing. Here in the northern hemisphere we are gearing up for the cold of winter as well as the warmth of family gatherings. This can be a bittersweet time of year for many of us who live abroad from family members. A telephone call or even Skype just doesn’t match the closeness of a shared mug of tea or coffee. For others this is an extremely stressful time of year - visiting with family means having to make language compromises (or at least preparing to translate back and forth for family members who come for visits and don’t speak one or the other language). In the end, there are no easy answers but coming up with a plan ahead of time is key and will make your holiday season all the warmer in the long run.

In this issue of Multilingual Living Magazine we again bring you a mixture of articles and essays to warm your heart and strengthen your dedication to raising children in more than one language. Our loyal experts continue to educate us with their knowledge (see Madalena’s delightful quiz and important articles) as well as teach us through example (Jean-Marc shares his personal experiences growing up multilingual). Who knew that Luxembourg was so multicultural, multilingual and interesting? Check out Simone’s article to learn all about this wonderful place! Santi has outdone herself with tips on starting and maintaining a playgroup (her Indonesian one is full of fun and music) as well as her other heart-warming and insightful contributions. Don’t miss our fun multilingual tongue twisters! And our interview with Suzanne is simply fascinating - talk about a global nomad family! This one is full of expertise at making the world’s continents their home.

We were absolutely, positively DELIGHTED with your responses to our July-August Drawing where we asked when YOU thought bilingual and multilingual children first started speaking! Who would have known there were so many different ideas, answers and perceptions. We have compiled a few of your responses as well as quotes from experts in the field of childhood bilingualism and multilingualism for your reading pleasure. What you will see is that there are no exact answers, only bits and pieces which point in general directions. Luckily for us, we can breathe a sigh of relief in the knowledge that children are all unique and that living with more than one language is simply another (normal) facet of that uniqueness. Growing up with more than one language does not cause the myriad of language issues which so many monolinguals fear. If there are underlying language issues which manifest themselves in your child, more often than not, they would be there whether your child was raised in one language or four.

Finally, we would like to take this chance to thank all of YOU, our dedicated subscribers, for helping to keep our magazine and website alive! We honestly could not do this without you! There will come a time when Multilingual Living Magazine will be in print and you will be able to pat yourself on the back for helping to make it happen. Please continue telling everyone you know about our magazine - word of mouth is one of the most potent and valuable forms of advertising!

Happy Holidays everyone! We’ll see you next year!

Corey & Alice
Photos of the Month

PROFESSOR FRED GENESEE
UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

On October 19th, Professor Fred Genesee gave a talk at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA. Many of us parents raising children in more than one language were overjoyed to have the opportunity to attend his presentation and to talk with him in person!

Professor Fred Genesee and Multilingual Living Magazine Editor-in-Chief, Corey Heller. Professor Genesee was such a vocal supporter of Multilingual Living Magazine that he kept us blushing the whole evening!

Professor Fred Genesee and bilingual parent, Hidy Basta, a student in the UW linguistics program focusing on bilingualism.

Professor Fred Genesee with parents and fellow colleagues from the UW linguistics department.
I just want to say that I am so inspired by the work you do!! I run Melting Pot Moms, an organization supporting multicultural and multiracial families. We are working toward becoming a non-profit and hope to support multiethnic families throughout the nation. I am so excited to share your magazine with our multilingual families, and will encourage them all to subscribe! I am very impressed by your web site and magazine - both in content and in design. VERY well done (and totally worth the $12.00 in my opinion)! Here is a link to our MeetUp site where you can read about our group. :-) We have 80 members in the one chapter, and 14 members in another. http://multiculturalfam.meetup.com/28/about/ My best, Angela Williams Melting Pot Moms

I just wanted to comment that I really like the magazine viewer that was available with this issue. I am typically very averse to reading lots of content on-line, but the magazine viewer was easy-to-use and made it possible for me to comfortably read the whole issue on-line. What a great idea! 
Emily

I am a Ph.D. student looking for a family with two or more children who are exposed to three languages (one from each parent and one from a nanny/daycare/school, etc.) for a case study. The study involves two interviews with the parents and several recording sessions with the children. I am willing to offer compensation (money, as well as any other help the family would request, such as babysitting). I speak Russian, Spanish, English, and some German and Portuguese, and would prefer if at least two of the languages spoken in the family were from this group. Ready to provide additional information on the purposes of the study as well as references from my academic advisor. I have received permission from my university’s Human Subjects Review Board and have the consent letters ready. Please feel free to contact me at 319-54100689 or jamurzik@hotmail.com for any additional information. Thank you in advance for your help! Elena

A CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS!
I am writing a book on Siblings and Bilingualism (due to be published in 2008 by Multilingual Matters) and I need your input! What is it all about?
‘From informal website discussion groups to organized seminars and workshops, parents wonder how they can facilitate the best language environment within their particular family. The majority of the important academic research on bilingualism over the last century was carried on first-borns or only children. Although this research is still valid we need to widen the net and look at the bigger picture of one, two, three or more children. How does birth order, gender, age-gap or personality affect language leaning in the bilingual family?

We should not forget parents who may not be living together, step-parents and step-siblings, or adopted children. There are other important people in their world of the bilingual child too, such as teachers, daycare workers, tutors, nannies, babysitters, or anyone who might affect the child’s decision to use or refuse to use a language.

As an independent researcher I focus on the bilingual family as a whole, because these are people that I meet regularly and hear their concerns. They are often geographically divided from their extended families, and struggling to keep their children academically on track in one language, while supporting another at home or through the community. This book will bring together the thoughts of real bilingual families on siblings taken from an online questionnaire, case-studies from around the globe, and current research on multilingualism.’

For three ways to participate and more information, please go to my blog at: bilingsiblings.blogspot.com

1. Click on the blog link to complete the anonymous online Questionnaire.

2. Be part of a mini case-study for the book. Send me details of your family, with a brief history of your family, and any particular issues you may have had with siblings and bilingualism.

3. Reply to the open questions on my blog, or email me your thoughts and experiences of siblings and bilingualism.

Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert
Author of Language Strategies for Bilingual Families
(Multilingual Matters, 2004)
Email: bilingsiblings@yahoo.com
RESEARCH PROJECT:
EUROPEANS in MANCHESTER, UK
BI-NATIONAL COUPLES and FAMILIES
Looking for interviewees
Conducted by Benedicte Brahic, PhD candidate at Manchester Metropolitan University, this research project aims to document the experience of European bi-national couples living in Manchester/Greater Manchester. It focuses on bi-national couples and families formed by:
- 2 European expatriates
- A British citizen and a European expatriate.
This project is based on interviews with bi-national couples and families. Interviewees are invited to discuss their everyday experiences in Manchester, their relations with their partner, friends and family in the UK and in home countries. All information is anonymous and strictly confidential. Interviews usually take up to an hour, and are arranged to take place where and when is convenient for you. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

This doctoral research project is funded by Manchester Institute for Social and Spatial Transformations. Findings will be presented at conferences and may be published in research journals. Once the research is complete, results will be communicated to you on request.

if you are a member of a bi-national couple/family living in Manchester/Greater Manchester (or know someone who is) and would like to talk about your experience, please contact me to arrange an interview.

Benedicte BRAHIC
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I love the magazine viewer. Your magazine rocks! The chosen topics are getting more varied and it inspires my creativity. You make people realize that multilingual multicultural matters touch every aspect of our life.

Regards,
Santi

I am starting a Bilingual Music and Creative Movement Class in the Seattle Area and would like people to know about it. Here are the details:

BILINGUAL (Spanish/English) MUSIC AND CREATIVE MOVEMENT FOR KIDS!
Come join this fun-filled class where kids will embrace music and enjoy learning Spanish at the same time!
PLACE: West Seattle YMCA - 4515 36th Ave SW, Seattle WA. 98126. (206) 935-6000
TIME: Parent/Tot-Thursdays 12:00-12:45
Parent/Preschooler-Saturdays 12:00-12:45
COST: YMCA Memebers: $58/six week session
Program members: $68/six week session
Please let me know if you have any questions! Thanks!

Manuela Slye

My name is Peta Lowry and I'm on your mailing list and really enjoy reading your updates. I am a monolinguisit mother trying to raise my two boys (9 & 4) to be bilingual (Italian) and as a result of this challenge over the past 4 years I have created a unique language learning tool and used this to start my own small business here in Australia. LOTE@HOME is a company that provides Language Other Than English (LOTE) packs to use in the home to support the formal learning of another language. Basically they create a little “in country” environment for the students of other languages to use their language in. Instead of only using it in the classroom.

Regards,
Peta Lowry
www.lote-at-home.com.au

EDITORS: Make sure to read our review of Peta Lowry’s LOTE@HOME products in this issue of Multilingual Living Magazine. If you would like to learn more about LOTE@HOME products, make sure to contact Peta Lowry via the contact information on her website: www.lote-at-home.com.au.

We want to know what you think! Which articles do you enjoy the most? Did any impact you positively or negatively? Let us know! Email us at info@biculturalfamily.org and tell us your thoughts!

Note that we reserve the right to edit your message for grammar and length if we include it in Multilingual Living Magazine.
Hand in Hand

This is a fun game for the whole family and easy for the little ones! Children from all over the world hold hands in this game, and two dices will decide who’s next: a boy or a girl, with or without a hat. It contains 36 picture boards, 2 dices with symbols and instructions. You can also vary this game and play different versions of memory with older children. Age 3+.

Das Ravensburger Buch der Advents- und Weihnachtsgeschichten

This beautiful anthology is filled with lots of stories, songs and poems for the Christmas time. They are telling from Santa Claus and snow men, fairies and gnomes, angels and Christmas trees, and, of course, from the Holy Night.

Different authors like Janosch, James Krüss, Ottfried Preussler, Ursel Scheffler contributed to this 164 p. book, just to name a few. A nice book to share the Christmas spirit with your loved ones, regardless of age.

Die Jahreszeiten

This book is the 10th of a series called Wieso? Weshalb? Warum? Junior which is for children aged 2+. The four seasons are nicely shown and explained in different settings that are known to a child of this age. The book helps the child understand why, for example, we have to dress warm in winter, not in summer and what are goose bumps. There are many lift-a-flaps that reveal more details and are fun to find.
Max auf dem Mond +
Max und der Zauberer
- Doppelpack

Max on the Moon and Max and the Magician can be played in the four languages German, English, French and Spanish and are for children aged 4-8 years. The illustrations are hand drawn and full of details. In each game Max has to look for something: either moon chickens, to help his friend Mona who is stranded with her spaceship on the moon in order to get her keys back from the man in the moon or, help his friend the Magician find the right spell to become a person again. It is easy to play and especially good for computer beginners. For PC and MAC.

Mäuseschleier & Bärenstark
Wissen, Lachen, Sachen machen

A fun board game that gets you moving! The rules are simple and the whole game lasts about 15-20 min. Mouse cards will ask you interesting questions, e.g., when do we see a rainbow?, while Bear cards will ask you to do silly actions like flying like a butterfly around the game table. The clock has to be set if you pick a card and you’ll learn to tell time in no time!

The game contains of 1 board, 6 figures, 1 Clock, 80 cards and instructions. Age 5+.
Did you know...

…that of all the nearly 7,000 known spoken languages of the world, the most widely spoken language is Mandarin, with an estimate of 873 million speakers, followed by Spanish, with 322 million? Ranking in third place, with its 309 million speakers, is English, followed by Arabic with 206 million speakers. (ranking by www.ethnologue.com).

…that the last speaker of Barbareño, a dialect of Central Chumash Indian language (California), died in 1965, which means that Barbareño is one of the most recent languages to become extinct?

…that Belgium has the highest multilingual population density per square kilometer in Europe, with Dutch, French, English and German spoken?

…that there are 210 languages in the Pacific alone that are classified as nearly extinct? (according to www.ethnologue.com/nearly_extinct.asp Ethnologue Report).

…that there is a word in English that contains 10 different words without having to change a single letter? The word “therein” contains: the, there, he, in, rein, her, here, ere, therein und herein.

…that many languages in Africa include a “click” sound that is pronounced at the same time as other sounds. You must learn these languages in childhood to do it properly. (www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0769288.html)

…in ancient Greece the word ‘idiot’ meant a private citizen or layman.

…more than 1,000 different languages are spoken on the continent of Africa.

Silent Night, Holy Night

Who doesn’t know the melody and text of this song!? Of all the Christmas songs, Silent Night is probably the only one that has been translated into over 300 different languages. The song was first sung as a tenor-baritone duet with a simple guitar accompaniment on Dec 25, 1818 at midnight mass in Oberndorf, Austria. Written by Franz Xaver Gruber and assistant pastor Fr.Josef Mohr, the song rapidly grew to become the most popular carol of all time. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_Night_%28song%29
Do You Live in a Language Hot Spot?

About every two weeks another language dies, taking millennia of human knowledge and history with it. By 2100, more than half of the nearly 7,000 languages spoken on Earth—many of them never yet recorded—will likely disappear, taking with them a wealth of knowledge about history, culture, the natural environment, and how the human brain works.

National Geographic’s Enduring Voices Project strives to preserve endangered languages by identifying language hotspots—the places on our planet with the most unique, poorly understood, or threatened indigenous languages—and documenting the languages and cultures within them.

Which parts of the world have high numbers of languages in danger of extinction? Go to the National Geographic website and find out: www.nationalgeographic.com/mission/enduringvoices/. Click on the map and then click on each “hot spot” region to learn more.

Another wonderful spot to visit is Living Tongues - Institute for Endangered Languages at www.living-tongues.org/. Despite the horrible reality of languages disappearing, never to be heard again, there is hope in the preservation which is taking place. See if you can help support the efforts in your area!

The Welsh Have the Longest!

And boy is it long! 58 letters long to be exact! The longest name in Britain is of the Welsh village Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch. The URL is even listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the longest in the world! Have some fun and go to the website: www.llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch.co.uk. Learn how to pronounce the village name (which, by the way, was used in the 1960’s cult film Barbarella as the password for Dildano’s headquarters) as well as other interesting information and tidbits about this village with the famously loooooong name.

Yeah, right...

A linguistics professor was lecturing to his class one day. “In English,” he said, “A double negative is said to form a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian or Spanish, a double negative is still a negative. However, there is no language in which a double positive can form a negative.”

A voice from the back of the room piped up, “Yeah, right.”

When Did Humans Start Talking?

Although this question is still being debated, most linguists assume that the full language capacity had evolved by 100,000 BC. This is when modern humans (homo sapiens sapiens) evolved in Africa with a modern skull shape (indicating modern brain function) and a modern vocal tract which would allow these people to articulate all the sounds found in modern languages. Some anthropologists speculate that language or parts of the language ability may have developed earlier, but there is no firm consensus yet.

From Ask a Linguist: linguistlist.org/ask-ling/oldest.html
Still Misinformed After All These Years

Even after years of research by experts to prove that raising children bilingually will not, in and of itself, cause a disadvantage in students, many educators and administrators still encourage families to speak only the community language at home with their children. Oneyda M. Paneque, in her article “Good Intentions, Bad Advice for Bilingual Families” in *Childhood Education* states that “Teachers consider learning two languages to be too overwhelming for children from poor families, believing that the children are already burdened by their home situations.” Yet, as Panequet points out, it is the poorer, often immigrant, families whose community language skills are lacking the most and who should be encouraged by administrators to speak their native languages with their children. This is a significant problem in the United States where many bilinguals are in low socioeconomic groups (unlike many other parts of the world). Before making blanket recommendations that families speak the community language with their children, teachers and administrators should have to first inform themselves of the plethora of current research on bilingualism in children. Panequet points out that the problems lie in “…the language learning environment, the educational opportunities, and the attitudes towards people who speak other languages, rather than in the individual child’s ability to learn languages.” (From: “Good Intentions, Bad Advice for Bilingual Families” by Oneyda M. Paneque, *Childhood Education*, Spring 2006.)

Bilingual Program? Or Immersion?

Trying to decide which is best for your child: a bilingual language program or an immersion program? Or perhaps you are an educator trying to figure out what type of program to suggest to your school district? Research is starting to show that it matters less what kind of program and more the quality of the program. No surprise there! While politicians are bickering over the minutia of educational approaches for bilingual and non-community language speakers, children and bilingual families are falling by the wayside, especially immigrant families who need the most support of a good educational program. “…the discussion about quality has only begun,” says Dr. Tim Shanahan, professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Illinois-Chicago and director of its Center for Literacy. A review he conducted “found only 17 studies concerned with educational quality, compared with more than 450 studies examining types of reading programs.” (From: “Bilingual or immersion? A new group of studies is providing fresh evidence that it’s not the language of instruction that counts, but the quality of education” by Kendra Hamilton in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, April 20, 2006.)

Processing English

Researchers at Edinburgh University are conducting a study to find out the differences between how native English speakers store language in their minds vs. those who have learned English as a second language. They have chosen Arabic as their target non-English language for the study. “Our theory is that even if a non-native speaker is extremely fluent in English, his or her memory code for some words will be quite different from the memory code of a native speaker,” states researcher Sarah Haywood. “Understanding bilingualism is important in understanding how the brain learns and deals with language.” Those of us raising bilingual children, or who grew up bilingually ourselves, are already in awe of the way the brain sorts out different words, grammars and sounds. Each step that researchers can take toward understanding exactly why is extremely exciting. Volunteers for this study need to have learned Arabic as their first language and should have lived in an English-speaking country for at least 12 months. For more information: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/edinburgh_and_east/6992991.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/edinburgh_and_east/6992991.stm)
Professor Fred Genesee Research

One of the benefits of living in a large city is that experts turn up in person from time to time to share their research, insights and knowledge with the rest of us! (Keep an eye on our Calendar of Events in each issue of Multilingual Living Magazine as well as your local universities and colleges which may host an expert in the field of bilingualism and multilingualism.) Those of us living in the Seattle area were delighted to have the opportunity to attend a talk given by the brilliant Prof. Fred Genesee, a regular contributor to Multilingual Living Magazine and an expert on child bilingualism. His talk focused on the different research which he and his team have conducted with respect to children growing up with two languages. One very important point of their research has been to show that children exposed to two languages actually separate them into different “language repositories” right from the beginning, rather than first putting them all into one big language “pot” and differentiating them out later (termed “Dual Language Hypothesis”). They have also spent time focusing on what is called “code-switching,” which is when we either use words from different languages in the same sentence or use one sentence in one language and another sentence in another language. Although most still believe that this is a sign of low language proficiency, Genesee and his team have shown time and again that this is actually exactly the opposite. It takes a mastery of the language to be able to code-switch with confidence and there are some fairly clear patterns to when and why this happens. We recommend that everyone take a look at the long list of books published by Prof. Fred Genesee and his team. We highly recommend the book Dual Language Development and Disorders: A Handbook on Bilingualism and Second Language Learning. Don’t let the word “disorders” in the title distract you from the main focus of the book which is about research on childhood bilingualism and how individual the experiences and patterns of each child (and family) can and will be. For more information about Prof. Fred Genesee: www.psych.mcgill.ca/perpg/fac/genesee/fredad.html

Left Brain Views the World Through Language?

Researchers claim that our perception of color can demonstrate how language can alter the way we see the world, at least according to a study by Richard Ivry of the University of California, Berkeley, and colleagues. The researchers suspected that separating out the effects of visual input to the right and left brain hemispheres might yield some clues. Since language is processed mainly in the left hemisphere of the brain, it also deals with signals from the left side of the retinas in both our eyes. Researchers hypothesized that colors appearing to the right would feel the influence of language more keenly (since light from objects to our right falls mainly into the left-hand area of our retinas). On the other hand, objects on the left activate the right hemisphere of the brain, so the effect of language would be minimal. The tests consisted of showing people a circle made up of green squares and measured how long it took people to pick out a single square of a different shade of green or blue, depending on which side the squares appeared. The results were as expected: “If this square was positioned on the left, people detected both the blue and green square in the same amount of time. But if the square was on the right, the subjects took longer to identify the green square than the blue one.” Researchers claim that this is due to the fact that “the colour blue has a distinct name, and so the language-loving left hemisphere could perceive the colour difference faster than it could a square with a different shade of green.” They then had the participants memorize words while picking out the colored squares, thus keeping the language areas of the brain occupied and unable to help with visual perception. As expected, “the subjects picked out blue or green squares on the right-hand side of the picture in the same time.” To read the Nature News article about this research, go to: www.nature.com/news/2005/051226/full/news051219-18.html.
“Mir welle bleiwen wat mir sin!”
We want to stay what we are!
Luxembourg and its languages
BY SIMONE ZAREMBA
"This is how I see it," says the grey-haired man in front of me. He pushes a big plastic cup across the table in which he put three 1 Euro pieces. "The Euros are the three languages your son is learning and the cup is his brain. Every word, expression, phrase or grammatical structure he registers, be it in English, German, or French, goes into one big pot. When he talks, he uses all the languages in the pot, he mixes, he matches, he improvises and he turns things around to make himself understood. This is all normal, considering he is learning three sets of vocabulary and three different grammatical systems simultaneously. Don't worry, he will in his own time learn to distinguish between the languages. He is still only little." I think it was the simplicity and nonchalance of his words, or the way he used tangible items to exemplify the workings of my then three-year-old son's brain, or maybe it was because it came from someone who was trilingual himself. Fact is, I will remember this little anecdote forever.

TRILINGUAL = MULTILINGUAL = MULTICULTURAL

The grey-haired man is my brother’s old music teacher. He is from Luxembourg, and like 80% of his countrymen he speaks Luxembourgish, French and German, plus a considerable amount of English as well. During our half-hour conversation in the lobby of a concert hall in Luxembourg, he demonstrated his trilingual competency, and with an incredible ease performed something that I call “the art of the Luxembourger.” He spoke German to me one moment, French to my son the next, Luxembourgish to my Dad (who speaks Moselle-Franconian, the dialect Luxembourgish derives from), and English to my husband. This, as impressive as it sounds, is nothing extraordinary in Luxembourg. Multilingualism is part of life in the Grand Duchy, and language switching a normal everyday occurrence. The three official languages, Luxembourgish, French and German, in their written and oral forms, are used throughout the whole of Luxembourg. This makes the country’s language situation a rarity. While in other multilingual countries like Switzerland or Canada the use of language is territorial and thereby regionally bound, people in Luxembourg choose their language according to personal preference, context, and purpose. Luxembourgish (or, Letzebuergesch as the Luxembourger calls it), French and German co-exist in all the different spheres of life, be it social, professional, cultural or political. On official level, a law introduced in 1984 regulates the use of the three languages in a more systematic way. According to this, Luxembourgish is the national language and French the language of the law (on the judicial level only texts in French are authentic), while all three languages count as valid in administrative matters.

Luxembourg’s trilingualism has its origin in a long history of French and German occupations, and in its unique geographical position on the linguistic and cultural border of the Romance and Germanic worlds. Situated in the heart of Europe, it shares borders with France, Germany and Belgium. The country’s extraordinary socio-linguistic and cultural make-up is partly due to its closeness to these neighbouring countries; moreover, it is the result of Luxembourg’s unprecedented openness to the exterior world and to foreign cultures in general. What Luxembourg lacks in size it makes up in its diverse and multifaceted population. Thanks to its ever-expanding service-sector economy (banking and insurance), its status as an EU capital, and its popularity with guest workers, Luxembourg is home to over a hundred different nationalities. Multiculturalism is everywhere; but it can nowhere be felt better than in the country’s capital. It is here, where the multinational crowd gathers for work and pleasure, that it gives the relatively small town a cosmopolitan feel par excellence. The mix of languages in the busy bars, restaurants and clubs at night is as diverse as on the playground, in the shops and on the streets by day. Luxembourg’s cultural agenda caters to its diverse audience by boasting an impressive array of acts from all over the world, and cinemas in the Grand Duchy show all films in original version with subtitles in 4 different languages.

LETZEBUERGESCH – THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

The majority of Luxembourgers feel quite content and at home in this multilingual-multicultural melange, and it is hard to find one of them who truly minds being surrounded by three official languages and many more unofficial ones. However, when asked what language he/she feels most comfortably conversing in, many a Luxembourger will instantly reply: “Letzebuergesch!” Luxembourgish is the language of the Luxembourger and is by many perceived as the symbol, if not the essence of Luxembourgish identity. It is the language of everyday conversation among Luxembourg nationals, and a certain degree of competency in it is expected for a full integration of the foreigner. Luxembourgers are proud of their language and in recent years this has been reflected by an upsurge in its popularity and in its general validity outside of private conversations. Regular debates in Parliament are held in Luxembourgish, road signs and street names, once predominately French, are becoming
bilingual, and in and around the capital courses in Luxembourgish for foreigners are proving ever more popular. The local and regional radio stations that broadcast their programs in the national language enjoy the highest rankings, and the same accounts for a daily-televised news program in Luxembourgish. The Grand Duchy’s national language is, however, predominately an oral medium. Efforts have been made in recent years to standarise it in its written and spoken form, but it is still subject to many limitations. This becomes apparent in the Luxembourgish press where one, besides the occasional local or private ad, finds very few articles written in the ‘langue national’. Here, Luxembourgish makes room for its more established co-languages French and German.

**THE ROLE OF EDUCATION**

The Grand Duchy’s trilingual education system focuses heavily on linguistic skills and allocates a staggering 50% of overall teaching time to language learning. Obligatory schooling starts at the age of four with pre-school, where the children are primarily exposed to Luxembourgish. For most foreign children this is their first contact with the national language and the development of their linguistic abilities, and hence their integration is one of the main objectives here. Primary school introduces the other two languages. In the first year children are taught to read and write in German and in the second year they begin to learn French. The lingua franca of Primary school is German, although depending on the composition of the class (portion of immigrant children) the teacher might choose a different language. During the
first two years of secondary schooling German prevails as the principal language of instruction, but is in the following years gradually replaced by French, which is the lingua franca of grammar school. Other foreign languages like English, Spanish, Italian are also taught during secondary school.

The trilingual education system has its benefits as well as its drawbacks. Whilst the system offers invaluable advantages, personally and professionally, to those who master all three languages well, it heavily disadvantages those who fail to reach a certain proficiency in either German or French, and may even doom them to educational failure. In a recent sociolinguistic study it has been proven that social position and level of education in Luxembourg is closely interlinked with linguistic competencies, in particular with the knowledge of French. This implies the existence of an underlying language hierarchy that makes French the language of prestige and intellectualism, and German and Luxembourgish the more widely spoken, popular languages.

EUROPEAN CITY OF CULTURE

Luxembourg’s trilingualism is only one aspect of many that make this country a truly fascinating place. It is a multicultural melting pot with its own national identity. The latter is important to the people who are born and bred here and those that came from outside, but have chosen to stay. The national motto: “Mir welle bleiwen wat mir sin!” underlines the desire of the Luxembourgish people to hold on to what defines them, but it doesn’t stop them from reaching out further and beyond their borders. Luxembourg, together with Sibiu (Transylvania, Romania), has been European City of Culture this year. It was the second time after 1995 that this pan-European event has been hosted here. The concept of the ECC has been created to bringing the people of Europe together by sharing and exploring each other’s culture. Luxembourg has this year taken this idea to a different sphere by creating a crossborder event, involving the border regions of its neighbouring countries. When I went on their official website www.luxembourg2007.org to find out more about it, I came across their slogan for this year’s event: “Reaching beyond borders. Daring to take on the unexpected.” What more can I say about this country and its people?! ❖

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Simone is a German national currently living in France with her English husband and her two little trilingual trainees. She is a stay-at-home mum with a Master’s degree in English Philology, German Linguistics and German Literature, and has a true fascination for, and interest in, multilingualism.
Jean-Marc Dewaele has had a truly remarkable career. His most recent triumph has been his accession to the presidency of the European Second Language Association (EUROSLA). He embodies the very best elements of the EUROSLA tradition – academic excellence, breadth, supportiveness and sociability.

His academic achievements are well-known to everyone in the field of applied linguistics; suffice it to say that he publishes in the best journals and collections, and that he is invited to give plenaries at the choicest conferences. His breadth is evidenced by his multilinguality (see below), but also by the topics of his research – which range from the psycholinguistics of gender, extraversion and emotion to specific aspects of the learning and teaching of French as a second language – and, in addition, by his involvement in a quite breathtaking spectrum of international bodies and activities. His supportiveness to his students and to more junior researchers can be gauged from the glowing account such students and researchers give of him – usually unprompted. As for the sociability dimension, his ready smile, his wit, his genuine empathy and his love of good food and wine render him excellent company in all circumstances. Given all of this, I predict that his successes, all of his various endeavours, will continue apace, to the benefit of the entire field, and to the delight of his many friends. -- David Singleton, Trinity College, Dublin

What are your languages? French is the first language I came in contact with, as it was the language my parents used at home in Bruges (Flanders, Belgium). Living in a Dutch-speaking environment meant that my sister, my brother and I grew up bilingual. We went to Flemish state schools and all our friends were native speakers of Dutch, or the local dialect - which I don’t speak well. When we went to France on holiday, we felt that our French was somewhat stunted. My parents did not use “argot” with us (most social classes in France use this vernacular) and we felt very “uncool” when speaking to peers. We did pick up some of it, but we never became really fluent. I had an incomplete English immersion between the age of 1 and 2 when my father became a Fulbright exchange teacher, and we lived in Connecticut from 1963 to 1964. Unfortunately, I don’t seem to have picked up much and so I started learning English as a true beginner, at school, at the age of 13. When I started doing my PhD, I struggled with academic writing in English, and funnily enough English has now become my dominant written language. Having lived and worked in London for 13 years has not erased my French accent in English, though. Luckily, it is an accent that the British find quite cute, so I don’t worry about it. I learned Spanish at university, aged 18, and during great summer camps in Salamanca and Malaga. I understand it well, but I don’t use it enough to be fluent in it. I can understand German and Italian pretty well if it’s not too fast and if it’s a standard variety.

What language do you use in your family (with your child and wife)? I use Dutch, French and English with my wife (in decreasing order) and French (and occasionally English) with my daughter. In fact, we’re a trilingual codeswitching family.

In what language did you receive your schooling? Dutch.

What languages do you commonly read in for work? English, French, sometimes Spanish.
What languages do you commonly read in for pleasure (can you name some titles of your favorite books, poems, etc.)? English, French and Dutch. I prefer poetry in French, and Paul Eluard is my favorite poet. I used to love science fiction books by LeGuin, Asimov, Herbert, Orson Scott Card. I still love Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings, Gombrowicz’ Cosmos, the short stories by Borges, all the books by Auster (In the Country of Last Things, The Music of Chance, Leviathan, New York Trilogy), most books of Murakami (especially Norwegian Wood), Zafon’s masterpiece La sombra del viento, Pirsig’s Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Palliser’s Quincunx, detective stories by Dibdin and the brilliant French author Fred Vargas, (L’homme à l’envers, Sous les vents de Neptune).

What languages do you commonly watch movies? (what are some of your favorite movies?) Any language that I can understand. And as a Belgian I’m used to reading subtitles and enjoying the melody of an unknown language.

I’ve got four favorite directors: Pedro Almodovar, I adored Mujeres al borde del ataque de nervios, Volver; Krzysztof Kieslowski (La double vie de Véronique, Trois couleurs: bleu); David Lynch (Wild at heart, Mulholland Drive) and Michael Haneke (The Piano Teacher, Code inconnu). I loved Delicatessen by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro. I also greatly enjoyed the series Twin Peaks and West Wing.

What language do you dream in? A lot in English, but also French and Dutch.

When you get angry, what language comes to you first? I can get angry in the three languages. But I avoid getting angry because it is usually counterproductive and bad for stress. Also, as a karate-ka I have learned that the highest aim is the avoidance of confrontation.

What is the language you prefer to use to make a declaration of love? French or Dutch.

In which language do you prefer to debate over a controversial issue? I’d be happy to debate in my three languages.

In what language do you prefer to write, and why? I would prefer to write poetry in French and I prefer English for academic publications.

Do you like to mix languages or do you like to keep them strictly separate? I love mixing them if my interlocutor can follow them.

Did you ever rebel against a language/ decide not to speak a language, and if so, why? When I lived in Brussels I identified with the Flemish minority, and therefore I always started in Dutch to embarrass my monolingual French interlocutor. When the person was suitably embarrassed I would switch to French, pointing out that it is important to know Dutch in Brussels. I’ve stopped playing that game in Brussels since living in London. I’ve become a bit of an outsider, and no longer feel the need to stand on linguistic barricades. On the contrary, in the current situation I feel more linguistic tolerance is needed in Belgium, in order to save the country from disintegration.

Do you think you are different when you speak a certain language/ does it affect your personality? I’ve got a PhD student, Rosemary Wilson, who is finishing her research on this, and Aneta Pavlenko also wrote an excellent chapter on this topic. It turns out that most multilinguals do feel different when switching languages, and that it may be linked to their personality profile. Switching languages can allow an escape for linguistic and cultural constraints. I do not feel any different when switching languages, except maybe when I yell in Japanese during karate classes: because then I’m in a fighting mood! So my very limited Japanese is a purely martial language.
A Parents’ and Teachers’ Guide to Bilingualism

By Colin Baker

“Families around the world raising bilingual and multilingual children will sigh a breath of relief to find Colin Baker’s third edition of A Parents’ and Teachers’ Guide to Bilingualism. With its expert answers and easy-to-read format, this book will be a touchstone for families just getting started as well as those needing guidance along the way. As the world changes quickly, Colin Baker has taken the initiative to seek out and answer the most pressing questions and concerns of today’s bilingual families including questions on dyslexia, multiliteracies and autism with the same ease and expertise that we have come to expect from him.”

Corey Heller, Bilingual/Bicultural Family Network founder and publisher/editor of Multilingual Living Magazine

For more information: www.Multilingual-Matters.com
Dominant Multilingual...

When applied to multilinguals, the word dominant doesn’t describe a personality trait (as in “My neighbour speaks four languages and bullies anyone who says she’s semilingual”), but a rank order among your languages (as in “My neighbour speaks four languages and has no idea which one is his best language”).

It is sometimes claimed that multilinguals must have a Mother Of All Their Languages (this is not to be confused with ‘mother tongue’, which comes later in this article series). This is often said to be the default language in which you spontaneously swear, or dream, or even the language in which you do your maths. But I’m sure I’m not alone in having heard all the multilinguals I know, including myself, utter fluent profanity in all their languages, depending on what catches their ire or their big toe and depending, of course, on the language they are using or thinking in when the offending incident takes place. Likewise for those multilinguals with whom I have intimate enough contact to hear them dreaming: my family mumble and grumble in all their languages in their deepest sleep. The math argument doesn’t work either. Math is something that you don’t learn unless you’re specifically taught, and whoever teaches you must speak to you in some specific language(s), which thereby will become your maths language(s). So if you can’t decide which of your languages is your dominant one, don’t worry: you don’t have to have one single dominant language, because having a single dominant language is a typical monolingual condition, and multilinguals are not monolinguals.

Research on language dominance aims to ascertain a hierarchical ranking among the languages of multilinguals according to various qualitative and quantitative criteria. For example, multilinguals fill in questionnaires about which of their languages they feel more comfortable using for what, when and why, or they are experimentally timed when asked to name different pictured objects in their different languages, respectively. This research takes of course into account that responses will vary wildly, not only among different experimental populations, but more interestingly also within the same population or the same individual, depending on variables like the language being used to give instructions, whether the informants have just spent (how much) time using one or the other of their languages, etc. So the findings are that there are shifts in language preference according to myriad factors like time, place, interlocutor, activity, mood, etc.

This reflects what multilinguals experience as their linguistic repertoire evolves, but what is really funny is that, by doing so, these findings are not findings about language dominance in the absolute Mother-Of sense but about plain, everyday, humdrum multilingualism itself. Since today is Monday and I’ll be teaching the whole morning, I’ll be dominant in English by lunchtime. When the kids get home from school, they will be dominant in English but I will have shifted dominance to Portuguese in order to talk to them, which will cause the usual cross-dominance multilingual glitches at snack-time. In the evening, when daddy comes home, everyone will be dominant in Swedish and Portuguese, to recount the day’s happenings to everyone else at the dinner table. And so on. This is what multilingualism is about, alternating language preference according to all the factors that make language choices appropriate. Just like you wear different clothes on different occasions for similar reasons of appropriateness, with no questions raised about dominant outfits.

Funny-lingualism
Using a label as a tool
BY MADALENA CRUZ-FERREIRA

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira, a native of Portugal, is the author of Three is a crowd? Acquiring Portuguese in a trilingual environment, (2006). She is currently a Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore. She has lived in Singapore for over 10 years with her Swedish husband and their three trilingual children.

Coming in the next issue of Multilingual Living Magazine: “L1, L2, L3, ..., Ln speaker”
**Global Wisdom**

**Whistling Language Revived!**

On La Gomera, one of Spain’s Canary Islands off West Africa, “Juan Cabello takes pride in not using a cell phone or the Internet to communicate. Instead, he puckers up and whistles,” at least according to CNN.com! It is thought that the language arrived with early settlers from the African continent and after near extinction is finding a revival. In fact, school children until age 14 are expected to learn it in school. “Like his father and grandfather before him, Cabello, 50, knows ‘Silbo Gomero,’ a language that’s whistled, not spoken, and can be heard more than two miles away.” The name of the language, Silbo, comes from the Spanish verb silbar, which means to whistle. It has four “vowels” and four “consonants” which can be strung together to form more than 4,000 words! Cabello says that he uses it in all kinds of situations: “to call my wife, to tell my kids something, to find a friend if we get lost in a crowd.” Once telephones were introduced to the island of La Gomera, there was no longer the need to use Silbo, which before had saved residents from climbing hill and dale to converse with others on the island. Cabello still sees the value in preserving the language since “it’s good for just about anything except for romance: ‘Everyone on the island would hear what you’re saying!’ ” For more information: [www.cnn.com/2003/TECH/science/11/18/whistle.language.ap](http://www.cnn.com/2003/TECH/science/11/18/whistle.language.ap).

**Pajamas/Pyjamas**

The word *pajamas* or *pyjamas* originally comes from the Persian words *pāî* (leg - from Middle Persian) and *jāmah* (garment). The word *pyjama* was incorporated into the English language from Hindustani (the progenitor language of modern-day Urdu and Hindi). In Hindi the word *pāyjāmā* means “loose-fitting pants” and refers to the loose, lightweight drawstring trousers tied around the waist often worn in South and West Asia. From these origins, comes the loose, two-piece garment worn as sleepwear (especially by men and boys), in Britain, the United States, and other countries. “These first appeared in Britain as a result of British colonial presence in South Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries, and by the early 20th century had replaced nightshirts as the dominant style of sleepwear for men and boys there. (In South Asia these are known as night suits.)” For more information: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyjama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyjama).

**India**

India is the second most culturally, linguistically and genetically diverse geographical entity after the African continent. With an estimated population of 1.12 billion, it is the world’s second most populous country and is expected to be the most populous by 2040. [Ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com) has 428 languages listed for India. Of those, 415 are living languages and 13 are extinct. Hindi, with the largest number of speakers, is the official language of India. English, which is extensively used in business and administration, has the status of a ‘subsidiary official language’. The constitution also recognizes in particular 21 other languages that are either abundantly spoken or have classical status (and as many as 1,652 known dialects). The Government of India is under an obligation support all of its country’s language so that “they grow rapidly in richness and become effective means of communicating modern knowledge.” For more information: [ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com), [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_languages_of_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_languages_of_India) and [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India).
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Butter Trivia to Warm the World!

Many in the United States purchase butter from the organic coop [Organic Valley](http://www.organicvalley.coop). It is a delight to find that inside the butter packages are some fascinating historical tidbits about butter around the world! Here are two from Russia and Norway. You can read a delightful list of many more countries in their [The Zen of Butter](http://www.organicvalley.coop/pdf/zen_butter.pdf) online pdf file: [www.organicvalley.coop/pdf/zen_butter.pdf](http://www.organicvalley.coop/pdf/zen_butter.pdf).

**RUSSIA:**
Maslyanitsa means butter in Russian, and it is also the name of the festival that says goodbye to winter and welcomes summer. From Moscow to St. Petersberg, Russians celebrate Butter Week just before their Lent fast days. Monday is the high point of celebration, when people cook pancakes, or blini, served with honey, caviar, fresh cream and butter. The more butter there is, the hotter the sun is expected to be in the coming summer.

**NORWAY:**
In medieval times, the kinf was due taxes at Yule time. Included in his demands were one spann of butter, or one bucket, from every household. In the days of Norway’s World War II barter economy, butter emerged as one of the most coveted “units of currency”. It played an important role on the table too, and as a decoration at celebrations and weddings, molded into large, lavishly decorated pyramidal sculptures. Traditional Norwegian butter molds are displayed today in a number of museums here and abroad.
Speech development and language development

Did you know that these are two different things?

BY MADALENA CRUZ-FERREIRA
I'm sure I am not alone in having heard, or read, that multilingualism may ‘impair’ language development. I’ve also heard that multilingualism is the cause of speech features like stuttering or lisping. These claims are as common as they are nonsensical: we might as well say that playing different musical instruments may ‘impair’ your musical development, or cause cramps in your fingers.

This article attempts to sort out what goes on in speech development and in language development, and to explain how child multilingualism fits naturally into both.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Speech and language are two quite different things. We’ve all heard stories about children who spent their first years without saying a word, to then start speaking in full sentences. Or, conversely, about one-year-olds who reproduce certain adult utterances to parrot-like perfection with no awareness of how these utterances are properly used. Whether apocryphal or not, these anecdotes make good sense in terms of what we know about language vs. speech: language is an intellectual ability, whereas speech is a physical one.

The difference between language and speech becomes clear from a classic illustration, reported by researchers Jean Berko and Roger Brown in 1960. One parent imitates the child’s developing pronunciation of the word fish as ‘fis’ and asks the child:

Is this your ‘fis’?

To which the child responds:

No! It’s my ‘fis’!

The child recognises that the pronunciation ‘fis’ is not up to par, but cannot reproduce the adult target ‘fish’. That is, the language item fish is clear to the child, complete with target pronunciation, but speech production doesn’t match this awareness. The ‘fis-phenomenon’, as it became known, explains why children can get very angry at someone who repeats their own baby pronunciation or grammar back to them.

Since speech and language are independent abilities, developing language does not reflect developing speech in any straightforward way, or vice versa. In the case of multilingual children, this means that their speech production is independent from the number of languages that they speak. There’s nothing wrong with someone’s monolingual or multilingual language abilities if they stutter, lisp or slur their words together. These features of their speech may need correcting only if they impair intelligibility beyond childhood (one of my children happily lisped his way through his three languages past the age of 6, when his lisp suddenly disappeared on its own). And there’s nothing wrong with someone’s speech if they can’t say She sells seashells on the seashore by age 6, although their language ability may need checking if they don’t understand what this sentence means, in any language, at the same age.

What speech and language development have in common is that they progress through stages and that their progress takes time. In speech, the precise coordination of the many different muscles involved in articulating speech sounds needs a lot of practice. English-speaking children, for example, may have difficulties pronouncing the sounds at the beginning of words like thank and than throughout their first 8-10 years. This shows us that children find some sounds trickier than others. In language, children typically struggle to sort out the use of I vs. you (everyone says I of themselves and you to everyone else, so what can these words mean??) or to follow complex instructions (which involve several clauses in one same sentence). This shows us that children, sometimes well into their primary school years, may have yet to acquire the meaning of words like or, before, after, or the cognitive ability to process complex sentences. Some children will take longer than others to acquire some speech or language feature, or will have difficulties in areas which other children will have a breeze sailing through -- even among siblings, including identical twins. These observations teach us to respect children’s learning in two complementary ways: the time it takes, and the individuality of each child’s learning.
RESPECT TIME, RESPECT YOUR CHILD

You will have heard over and over again (and I quote) that it is a ‘feat’, nay, short of a ‘miracle’, that children acquire language so ‘amazingly fast’, indeed at ‘breakneck speed’. This is of course a judgement of value. The same people who say this also say that all children acquire language in the same way and at the same pace, which is a judgement of fact. Now these claims can’t both be true, because they make no sense at all together. As the linguist and philosopher of language Geoffrey Sampson once asked, child language acquisition is ‘fast’ compared to what, if all children acquire language at the same rate?

Acquiring language takes time, and time respects nothing that is done without it. Your child won’t learn anything which she is not ready for. What your child is ready for is not found in books or in someone else’s children. It’s found in your child. Children have no idea that ‘language’ is something that adults worry about for its own sake, but they are very good at picking up distress signals, and if they learn to associate your worry with their speech, then you may start having a real problem in your hands.

So let your child experiment with her language(s), her way. There is nothing to worry about if your child doesn’t sound like an adult (which children don’t anyway) or like your friend’s child or like the ‘prodigy’ children you may hear about through the media. There may be reason to worry only if your child doesn’t sound like herself. No one knows what a child sounds like better than a parent: children are individuals, much more resourceful and creative than we are often prepared to give them credit for.

Let me end with an analogy. Acquiring language skills is as if we grown-ups wouldn’t dare go near a computer keyboard until we’ve practised the secrets of touch-typing in our head, whereas acquiring speech skills is like what we do when learning to touch-type: our fingers strike the keys to perfection without regard for whether the texts so typed make sense or not. Now suppose your child has two or more different keyboards to deal with. Children learn best through play, just like the rest of us. So let your children play with their newfound toys, speech and language. Multilingual children will naturally play with all their languages too, and may favour one or the other just like they embrace and drop favourite toys at different times. They will talk nonsense in all their languages, be repetitive, mix languages. In short, they will take these toys apart like they may do with other toys, just to see how they work. Children can best sort out their own learning by themselves. There’s no greater joy for little ones and big ones alike than finding out that you can master the secrets of very complicated things, and to then be allowed time to rejoice in every single achievement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira, a native of Portugal, is the author of Three is a crowd? Acquiring Portuguese in a trilingual environment, (2006) Clevedon, Multilingual Matters (www.multilingualmatters.com). She has received postgraduate degrees in linguistics from the University of Manchester, UK and is currently a Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore. Her main research interests are child multilingualism, multilingual phonology and intonation, and the language of science. She has lived in Singapore for over 10 years with her Swedish husband and their three trilingual children.

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When do Bilingual and Multilingual Children Start Speaking?

Multilingual Living Magazine’s July-August 2007 Drawing asked people around the world their answer to the question “When do bilingual and multilingual children first start to speak?”

The answers we offered were:
(1) Earlier than monolingual children
(2) Later than monolingual children
(3) Around the same time as monolingual children

and we asked everyone to explain why they answered the way they did.

The results?
54% answered #3 (at the same time),
31% answered #2 (later),
and 15% answered #3 (earlier).

What do the experts have to say about this? Read both the answers from YOU as well as the answers from EXPERTS on the following pages. You might be surprised!

THANK YOU everyone for your fabulous answers! And congratulations to our July-August drawing winners:

Bee in Sweden
Brooke in Massachusetts, USA
Annie in California, USA

I believe that bilingual children don’t necessarily start speaking later than monolingual. My older son started speaking later than his peers and he was raised monolingual. My second son is also a bit behind compared to his peers (he is bilingual) but I don’t think it is only due to him being bilingual maybe its a genetic issue our case :)
-Dorothy, Hungary

I have several times observed that bilingual children begin to speak a little later, but once they start they catch up very quickly.
-Elizabeth, USA

On average, research shows that bilingual children start speaking around the same time as monolingual children. What people might find interesting is that children start signing earlier than they start speaking (monolinguals and bilinguals).
-Georgina, The Netherlands
None of the above! Bilingual children are as individual as monolingual children in their language development, including onset of speech. Why do I know this? First I taught bilingual preschoolers for many years after teaching monolingual preschoolers. Then I had two bilingual children myself. One started very early and was/is very advanced in both languages. The other started later and has always mixed more than the first. I saw a whole range of linguistic abilities in the bilingual and trilingual children I taught before I had my own. So, my answer is, none of the above!

-Bee, Sweden

Not only do bilingual children speak earlier but they also read with greater fluency and comprehension- I have a seven year old who is in a dual immersion program (English/Spanish) - I speak English, his father speaks Igbo- there are a lot of languages in his environment- but because of his exposure to so many languages and cultures, he is actually excelling. He is entering a multi-level class in the fall with 3rd and 4th grade students and is one of the youngest at 7 years old and also one of the top students in the class. So, reflecting on the time when he started speaking, at 8 months, I really believe that bilingual children start speaking earlier than monolingual children.

-Carmen, USA

My sense is all children start speaking at their own time anyway. But all things being equal, presenting a child with 3 languages (the case of our son Thomas) means they will learn a similar amount of words then a monolingual child but that takes longer to translate into full sentences in each language. So they basically learn first what's more important to them and when they know a word, they typically learn it in all the languages they are exposed to roughly at the same time but that is what takes time away from learning more words from one language - resulting in a child taking longer to form full sentences in each language that he is exposed to. I believe that once they get the syntax of each language right then they will learn the rest of their vocabulary very fast. It's the early stages that are the toughest!

-Catherine, UK

A particular problem that illustrates the wrongly attributed link between bilingualism and developmental problems is ‘language delay’. Language delay occurs when a child is very late in beginning to talk, or lags well behind peers in language development. [...] Parents of bilingual children with such problems should not believe bilingualism is the cause. Sometimes, well-meaning professionals make this diagnosis. Having a bilingual background is widely believed to produce language delayed children. The evidence does not support this belief.


It really depends on the child! There is no answer to this question, there are children that are monolinguals and speak at 4 and there are trilinguals and quadrilinguals that speak at 12 months. It’s all about how exposed the child is to speech (remember most parents are tired already by the time they are home from work and having a conversation with a toddler is the last thing on their mind), if the child is the hearing type - and not visual for example, it also depends on the child’s maturity/intelligence (some children are more advanced than others, premature children are usually slower learners for example).. It's all relevant really. Paddy started speaking
at 2 1/2 and Erin is 21mts old and only says a few words WHEN she feels like it, whereas Lorraine’s bilingual kids were active speakers at the age of 2. I don’t think we have done anything less than Lorraine and Mark have done, but still 3 of her children spoke earlier than my 2.

-Clare, Greece

At the same time as monolingual children. As I have observed among my friend’s monolingual children, they are almost at the same level of ability to speak as my little daughter who is raised bilingually. Also, in most books/publications, I’ve read, they say bilingual children tend to start speaking at the same time as monolingual ones, with one major difference - the amount of words in their dictionary. It’s as big as their monolingual friends’ but the actual amount of words spoken is divided by two. Why? Well, since children at a certain age are capable of learning only a certain amount of words, and since bilingual children learn two different words to name one thing (one in each of the two languages), their vocabulary in each of the languages is half as big as it is with monolingual children.

-Czelaw, Poland

It depends! Before answering your question, one may ask: how do we define the “start of speaking” and how do we decide “in which language” does the child start speaking? I believe research has not yet found the answer to your question, but there are plenty of “myths” or stereotypes. A myth my husband and I were aware of, was that bilingual children start to speak later than monolinguals, so 5 years ago I would have answered “later” to your question. That is why we were very surprised when our daughter Maya, now 5, started saying words at 10 months and progressed rapidly to a vocabulary of 150 words (in English and Spanish) at 16 months. With the limited data I have now, I believe that bilingual and multilingual children are no different in their onset of speech, and I think researchers may find it difficult to produce evidence to the contrary.

-Isabel, USA

There is an old myth that bilingualism will delay language acquisition in children. In fact, there is no evidence that bilingual children will start speaking sooner, or later, than monolingual children. As human communicators, both types of children will develop language at the same rate. In both groups, some will be faster than their peers, and some slower. This said, one should keep in mind that children acquiring two languages simultaneously are linguistically different from monolingual children, if only that they have to deal with two (or more) languages. Thus, their actual language production (e.g. with the use of code-switches and borrowings) may be different from their monolingual peers. And, of course, depending on the relative strength of their languages, one may develop at a different rate than the other(s). But these difference do not apply to the onset of language as such.

-François Grosjean, author of Life with Two Languages (HUP). Visit his new website at: www.francoisgrosjean.ch

Multilingual children tend to speak a little later than their peers. Although there is no solid scientific evidence to suggest a delay in speech, anecdotally there is a real sense among parents that multilinguals start talking three to six month later than monolingual children.

-Kat, UK
Parents are often concerned that raising children in two languages will result in delays in learning – they will start to speak later than monolingual children or they will start to form sentences later than monolingual children. This fear seems to be based on the simple logic that learning two things at the same time is harder than learner one and, therefore, it will take bilingual children longer to sort things out and start using language. This fear may also be based on the observation that most bilingual children have smaller vocabularies in each language than monolingual children during the early stages of development and this, it is thought reflects the added burden of learning two languages at the same time. It is true that when you examine each language at a time, bilingual children have smaller vocabularies in each language. But, a very different picture often emerges when you examine what is called “conceptual vocabulary” – how many words in either language the child knows to refer to different objects, ideas, qualities (cat, fun, red, for example). In this case, bilingual children usually have the same size vocabularies, or even larger, than monolingual children.

It is also true that some bilingual children may in fact be delayed in starting to use one of their languages if they do not get sufficient exposure to and input in that language. For example, if a child is learning English and Spanish at the same time and the source of Spanish in the family is a parent who works away from home – in a different city, and is not home very much, then this child might indeed start to use single words or simple sentences later than a monolingual child. None of these scenarios, however, mean that learning two languages is harder than using one and, therefore, results in certain costs to the child. They mean that learning two languages at the same time is different from learning one and that parents need to be conscientious and ensure that their child gets lots of exposure to both languages.”

- Fred Genesee
McGill University, Montreal Quebec
www.psych.mcgill.ca/faculty/genesee.html

There are many studies that indicate that bilingual children do not take more time to start speaking. General thinking was that it should take longer as they are learning 2 languages. Children are very good at differentiating between 2 languages and more. It is more a question on when the child is ready to speak than a question of how many languages he/she will speak.

-Paula, USA

Earlier, I seem to recall that there is research that shows that infants who are more often spoken and responded to in adult language tend to start speaking earlier than children not spoken to as often. My guess is that children in a multilingual environment are spoken to more often than those in a monolingual environment, perhaps simply due to greater linguistic awareness in the multilingual environment. Hence my conclusion.

-Ranjeet, USA

Bilingual children do not speak later than monolingual children. My youngest is right on target with average language acquisition, while my oldest was WAY above average (almost 75 words by 18 months, first full sentence at 19 1/2 months, and she hasn’t stopped talking since!) I have read research that suggests that children exposed to more than one language start speaking SLIGHTLY later than children exposed to only one language. However, it must be noted that research also shows that boys start speaking later than girls, and that the gap between average age of monolinguals versus multilinguals is SMALLER than the gap between girls and boys. Additionally, it should be noted that children being raised with more than one language still start speaking within the normal range for language development. I meet many people who express concern that exposing their children to more than one
language will cause a language DELAY, but in talking with our pediatrician and friends who are bilingual speech language therapists I believe that this is a MYTH, and we shouldn’t be discouraged from giving a tremendously enriching gift to our children. If a child has a language delay, they will have it whether they are being raised in one language, or in three languages. As a good friend of mine once told me (she is raising her two children bilingually in Italian & English): “If my speaking Italian to them means that they start talking slightly later than the average, WHO CARES? If they end up to be bilingual in the end I don’t mind waiting another couple of weeks to hear their words!”

I salute all of you families out there that are seeking to provide your children with the ability to communicate in more than one language. I believe that we are all contributing to a better world!

-Martha, USA

Hi, I was born and raised in Slovakia and that’s where my family currently resides. My husband is Canadian and only knows and speaks English. We have a 2 year old daughter Mia. She was born in England and we lived there until she was about 19 months. I have read in many places that for a bilingual family, it is best to keep to some sort of consistency, whether it is each parent speaking their native tongue or speaking one language at home and the other in public. While I like the idea in theory, I am finding reality to be much more challenging. At home, for me to speak only Slovak means that my husband can’t understand what I am communicating to our child. So it means I often mix Slovak and English, depending on the people surrounding me. And in public, it works in similar ways.

I have also heard a myth about bilingual kids speaking later than monolinguals. My experience? From the short time of parenting Mia, I am not worried at ALL. She started using words and language at a very early age and in fact many people comment on her ability and advancement in language. And as far as confusing our daughter by not consistently sticking to one of the earlier mentioned rules...I am finding reality to be much more challenging. At home, for me to speak only Slovak means that my husband can’t understand what I am communicating to our child. So it means I often mix Slovak and English, depending on the people surrounding me. And in public, it works in similar ways.

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So while I believe these suggestions are fantastic pointers and help when they work in one’s situation, I also think that as someone else mentioned before - adapt what works for you and go with it!

- Anna

Thank you everyone for your fabulous answers to our Drawing question! Make sure to enter Multilingual Living Magazine Drawings on our website: www.biculturalfamily.org/drawing.html.

Young bilinguals and monolinguals do exactly the same things with their language(s) at the same time and in the same way. They start by babbling sounds and speech melody, then they produce one-word utterances, and then they produce utterances with more than one word. All stumble with the pronunciation of difficult sounds or the expression of complex meanings, all hesitate and stammer in their eagerness to say long or short utterances, prattle non-stop (including nonsense), or keep mostly quiet to let language grow within themselves at their own individual pace. All the while, they play endlessly with their language(s) to check how bits and pieces of each one fit together, which word with which word, or which language with which language, and so train both muscles and mind in order to become expert users.

- Madalena Cruz-Ferreira
National University of Singapore
Website: profile.nus.edu.sg/fass/ellmcf/
Email: ellmcf@nus.edu.sg
A Tale of a Global Nomad Family and their Third Culture Kids
An Interview with Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert

Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert, author of book Language Strategies for Bilingual Families: the One-Parent-One-Language Approach, graciously agreed to be interviewed on the Third Culture Kid (TCK) and Global Nomad topic, during her hectic last days in Chicago, USA. Suzanne now lives with her family in France.

OVERVIEW
Santi Dharmaputra: In how many countries has your family lived so far? How long did your family live in each country?

Suzanne Barron-Hauwart: We have lived in 7 countries over the last ten years. Hungary (1 year), Egypt (1 year), Switzerland (2 years), France (1 year), England (2 years), Malaysia (3 years) and America (1 year).

Where were your kids born?

KIDS
Your kids are French-English bilinguals. In which primary school languages have they been taught?

It’s been rather messy. Marc spent a year in French school when he was 4 and then transferred to UK school where he did 2 school years where he learnt to read and write. In Malaysia he was in the Lycee Francais for 3 school years and the last year has been a bilingual school here in Chicago. Nina was at a UK pre-school for 2 years, then went to the Lycee also for 3 years, where she learnt to read and write. She has been at the bilingual school too for a year. Gabriel only had English tuition so far, a Montessori school in Malaysia and here a local public pre-school.

Have they encountered significant obstacles? e.g. the change of country might mean language, classmate attitude and teacher approach differs. I think they tried to hide the ‘other’ language to fit in; in fact Nina was speaking English with a French accent (like the other French girls did!) in KL. Marc tends to make friends with children from mixed-marriages. Classmates tend to find being bilingual rather odd, but they have never been teased so far. The teacher is a big factor, some have been fantastic, others truly racist, but that’s the luck of the draw and so far we have only had 2 bad teachers!

How have they coped with the transition? With the change of curriculum? Curriculum changes are hard, for example in a UK primary school the accent is on creativity and story-writing but the French want perfect attached writing and spend hours practicing before they get to write a story, so Marc was frustrated in the early days of the French system and they both dislike writing. But UK kids have to start reading around age 4 or 5, and the French delay it 6, so I think that was a good thing, to have less academic pressure early on for Nina and once they began reading they could read in both languages. Also as a parent you must never assume anything about the curriculum and always research to find out what they are doing!

Have they been sent to international schools only, to local schools only or to both? Were these schools helpful in helping them to settle down? Which schools (international vs local schools) tend to meet the needs of your TCK?

An international school is good that you can just arrive anytime and fit in with a mixed crowd of kids who travel a lot, and kids make friends quickly (parents too!) BUT kids are coming and going all the time and Nina suffered from losing four friends one year and since then she has been scared to make friendships. At a local school there is stability, but often teachers don’t appreciate the child’s linguistic or cultural background and the child is forced to ‘assimilate’ or fit it to the norms.

After living in a country for some time, did your kids blend in with the host country culture (feeling local)? No, so far, they did not. Although they had some friends from the country they preferred the expat friends.
How did your kids react each time your family was about to move to another country? Were they always feeling excited and happy? Did age change the reactions? In the beginning they had no choice, but they were happy to move to Malaysia (Marc was 6, Nina 4). They were not happy to leave, though, and have had a hard year in USA because they are unable to forget Kuala Lumpur and compare everything with that great experience there! I think that as they age it is harder to move around.

Did they feel homesick for the countries they have lived in? How did they cope with it? Did your kids keep in touch with their friends from previous countries? Yes they are homesick and miss UK/France a lot, especially when it is someone’s birthday or a special day. I make a big effort to liaise with the mothers and meet old school friends, but naturally over time some friendships fade away, but Marc & Nina both still have 2 friends in UK that we visit and some from Kuala Lumpur are going to visit us in France in the summer holidays. We have a lot of cousins in France that we keep in touch with, too.

Did your family ever return to the countries you have lived in (for holidays or longer stays)? What’s the reaction of your kids when returning to those places? No, not so far. I had a friend return to Chicago after 4 years away and she was very disappointed. The friends she had met had all moved on and life was more expensive and complicated with a son who was now a teenager.

Do your kids learn/speak the languages of the countries they have lived in? Can they maintain those languages after leaving? What’s the immediate and long term benefits for your kids to know the local language? They always learnt a little, enough to chat to locals, but it has not stuck.

Do they feel more French or English or neither? Does the feeling change based on their age? Or based on where they live? Do they ever feel they fit more in the (previous) host country cultures than to French and/or English? How do you and your husband deal with such feelings of your kids? Marc and Nina both say they feel more French, but they are deeply attached to England through me and my family. Gabriel seems more English, but it could be that he has never been to school in French or made French friends. They have not got attached to other cultures, although they were very much at home in Malaysia. I sometimes wish my kids were more English, but I am always happy to see them in England, where they fit in well and Nina’s accent becomes English again!

FAMILY

Are you and/or your husband adult TCK? We were both brought up in villages. But Jacques was born in Madagascar and lived there until he was 3 and his family had traveled a lot and I think he has inherited a traveling gene! I think Jacques’ family has been very supportive of our decisions and my family moved house a lot in UK so they understood why we move a lot.

How do you view your kids’ TCK experience? I do sometimes wonder if we are pushing the kids too much, and their childhood has been so different to mine. They have tried so many foods and traveled more than I had done at age 25!

How do you equip your family before leaving to a new host country? Does your/your husband’s company offer pre-departure orientation program to prepare you (and your family) for the new host country before leaving? We have not had the luxury of that, but we buy some books and try to talk to someone who lived there.

How do you prepare your family for re-entering your passport country? Does your/your husband’s company offer a re-entry program? Again, no luxury but we tend to go back to UK/France in between posts to chill out and recharge our batteries before starting a new life.

As a global nomad family, how do the cultures of host countries affect your family? Do your kids bring the host cultures to your home? Yes I think they have an effect, even if it is subtle. And I think later on they will be interested to learn more and hopefully re-visit or live in the countries themselves.

My last questions. How do you view your global nomad family in general? Does your family enjoy this type of lifestyle? Do you wish your family could live longer in each country? Do you think it would be better if your family now settles down in one country? Well, after 10 years we are finding it hard to relocate so often so we are taking a break from expat life to restore a 15th century house in France that we own. Marc who is nearly 11, needs some stability for his secondary education and Nina, 8, will soon follow him. It’s hard to make the decision to leave expat life, with all the travel, meeting new people and great social life and it is tempting to whiz off to another country. But this time the children come first and so we will stay put until they have finished school. Many expats have 2 year postings, like we did, but it is often too short to feel at home, by the time you have made enough friends you are off again! Ideally I would like to stay 3 to 4 years in a country.

Thank you very much for your time. You’re welcome. You can visit my blog at opol-family.blogspot.com.
Tongue Twisters from all over the world!

**GERMAN**
1) Fischers Fritz fischt frische Fische. Frische fische fischt Fischers Fritz.
2) Blaukraut bleibt Blaukraut und Brautkleid bleibt Brautkleid.

**FRANZÖSISCH**
1) Je suis ce que je suis et si je suis ce que je suis, qu’est-ce que je suis?
2) Cinq chiens chassent six chats.

**KOREAN**
간장공장 공장장은 장공장장이고 된장공장 공장장은 강공장장이다.

**SPANISH**
1) Poquito a poquito Paquito empaca poquitas copitas en pocos paquetes.
2) Mi mamá me mima, y yo mimo a mi mamá.

**CHINESE**

| 四是四 |
| si shi si |
| 十是十 |
| shi shi shi |
| 十四十四 |
| shi si shi si si |
| 四十是四十 |
| si shi shi si shi |

四十四只石狮子是死的
si shi si zhi shi shi zai shi si de
I was standing in line at a grocery store in Pasadena with my two boys, who were restless and causing a little havoc. I told them to settle down. Diego and Pablo ignored me, but I did get the attention of a woman standing in line. She was concerned not about my boys’ behavior, but about my speaking to them in Spanish.

Wouldn’t it affect their English? she asked.

I never worry about my children’s English because it is too prevalent in their lives for them to lose it. Diego, our first, communicated with my wife, Vivian, and me only in Spanish until he was two, and his first word was agua instead of water. He still understands the language easily. But since starting preschool, he’s battled with us to speak or write it.

Spanish is a part of our home life. We have books and watch TV shows in Spanish and only speak Spanish at home. We’ve also gone on trips to Mexico and Spain so that Diego would realize that in some places people only speak Spanish. But he still was unwilling to use it, and by the age of five he clearly preferred to speak English.

When Diego turned five I realized that we needed help. I had read studies about the ability of bilingual children to switch seamlessly from one language to the other. I wanted both languages to be integral to his identity, and I thought we had two more years before Spanish would no longer be natural for him.

Vivian and I realized that if we wanted our children to be bilingual and bicultural, we couldn’t do it alone. We needed a community of people. So we started looking around for Spanish language programs.

Los Angeles has a rich history of heritage language schools focusing on major languages from all over the planet. To name only a few examples, Chinese language schools have served the needs of the immigrants since

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Won’t Your *Spanish* Hurt Their *English*?

The search for heritage language schools

BY REY M. RODRÍGUEZ

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at least the early 1900s. French speakers have the five-campus Lycee International de Los Angeles, founded in 1978. Japanese Americans and recent immigrants rely on Saturday schools, some of which have been in existence for over 50 years.

I could go on, but the glaring exception is heritage language schools for Spanish-speakers.

After a lot of searching, we learned about one Saturday school too far from home, which appeared to focus on Argentine culture. Finally, a friend of mine discovered a small group of parents who met on a weekly basis to speak Spanish at a local library. I took my two boys there on the first Sunday that I could.

As I entered the library, I was excited to see 10 to 15 families with children in three groups. Some were seated on the floor, mesmerized by the teacher’s voice and hand movements; others sat at tables, writing. Some of the toddlers and preschoolers had to be reminded to answer questions in Spanish, while others spoke readily. The teachers were native-born speakers and they were fantastic. They used beautiful books and melodic children’s songs in Spanish to sing and dance to. Diego and Pablo, my second, learned about spring and named the days of the week and months of the year at their first class.

Before I knew it Diego was raising his hand, because he understood the questions and wanted to participate. He was no longer alone in a classroom where all the other students spoke English. And I was thrilled. The community that I was looking for existed and by serendipity I had found it.

Still, pleased as I was to have found a place for my boys to express themselves in Spanish, I was amazed and angry that this small “school” was all that the city of Los Angeles could offer. In a city with many Spanish-speakers, why were there not well-established institutions that would teach my children about their heritage, culture, and language?

Why was I sitting on the floor of a public library with a group of parents who after four years of struggle had cobbled together an informal Spanish language heritage school? Why was there only one option for us? Why hadn’t these institutions been created years before?

I want my children to be proud of who they are; and to help them, I need a community that signals that Spanish is important to their lives. It amazes me that a two-year-old boy can already grasp that English is the predominant language and that Spanish is secondary and less valued.

The reality is that learning multiple languages at a young age enhances cognition as children grow. We need Spanish language heritage schools to spread throughout the city in numbers that meet the community’s needs, similar to the ones that already exist for other major language groups. Without a vibrant expansion of Spanish language education we will continue to be a city divided between those who feel they belong and those who feel they do not.

So I go back to that woman in line at the grocery store: Don’t worry that children won’t learn English, because they most certainly will. Spanish speakers like my son understand the value of speaking the predominant language. Indeed, they have a thirst for it, and receive most of their education in it. Instead, I would focus on the real danger of kids losing their Spanish. We desperately need Spanish language heritage institutions that encourage the next generation of Spanish speakers to have pride in who they are and the confidence to raise their hand in a democratic society.

Rey M. Rodríguez, vice president of Business & Legal Affairs for Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures Distribution International, is a grateful son who hopes that he can pass on the gift of speaking at least two languages to his sons, just as his parents were able to do. All opinions expressed are solely his own.

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What Would a Bilingual Do?

Think you know all there is to know about bilinguals? 
Take our quiz and find out if you are right!

A big thank you to Madalena Cruz-Ferreira for creating this fabulous quiz for us.

Decide whether the statements below are correct:

(1) Bilinguals always mix their languages.
(2) Bilinguals can be better at speaking, understanding, reading or writing one of their languages than the other.
(3) Bilinguals can express themselves equally well in both their languages.
(4) Bilinguals can have one single dominant language.
(5) Bilinguals think in one language and then translate to their other language.
(6) Bilinguals can think in two languages at the same time.
(7) Bilinguals can dream in both their languages.
(8) Bilinguals can do math in one language only.
(9) Bilinguals can turn off one or the other of their languages at will.
(10) Bilinguals necessarily are, or become, gifted language learners.

Answers to the statements above:

(1) NO. Bilinguals may produce mixed speech in exchanges with other bilinguals in the same languages. Bilinguals know that they must speak one single language with monolinguals. But only bilinguals and multilinguals can produce mixed speech.
(2) YES. The four language skills are independent from one another. Reading and writing, in particular, will depend on schooling in each language.
(3) NO. Being bilingual means having different languages for different purposes, and therefore to express different things.
(4) This depends on the uses to which each language is put. One language may be dominant to talk about school matters, for example, and another language dominant to talk about what goes on at home. Only monolinguals have one single dominant language for everything they need.
(5) Possibly, if, for example, they have to describe in one of their languages one experience which took place in the other language. Bilinguals, like monolinguals, normally think in the language they are using at one particular moment.
(6) YES. This is exactly what professional interpreters have to do when they’re working. And also what children have to do when for example their parents use two different languages with them at home.
(7) YES. Dreams reflect our experiences, our worries and our wishes, which may be associated with particular languages.
(8) NO. Math doesn’t come naturally to anyone. It is a school subject, and it is therefore bound to the language in which it is learned.
(9) NO. Both languages are always on, although one or the other may be momentarily pushed to the background if the bilingual is engaged communicating with monolinguals.
(10) NO. Learning and using languages is not a gift, it’s a necessity of everyday life.
My nephew Carl is now 19 months old and in the middle of a language explosion: he says complete sentences in English (like “Grandma help open littler pink box”) and some two, three, and four-word phrases and sentences in French. He also responds appropriately to questions in French:

Carl, grabbing my keys: Clés Tatie! (Auntie’s keys)

Tatie: Où est-ce qu’on met des clés? (Where do we put keys?)

Carl: Voiture! (Car)

We can almost--just barely--converse together in French. Here’s a typical exchange:

Carl: Carl mange yaourt. (Carl ate yogurt.)

Tatie: Oui, Carl a fini le yaourt de Tatie. (Yes, Carl finished Auntie’s yogurt.)

Carl: Carl fini yaourt Tatie.

For the past six months or so he’s repeated what I said, but now he can say more words at a time. He still drops words like articles and prepositions, as if he recognizes the most important words for conveying meaning.

But our conversations are few, as he prefers to use French to narrate his activities:

“Carl mange” (Carl’s eating), “Ouvre Petit chien” (I’m opening Petit chien--the name of a book), or “Écris noir” (I’m writing with a black pen).

Carl also likes to describe what he sees. The majority of times he uses single words, but he’s beginning to get more precise: “courgette jaune” (yellow zucchini), “tomber hibou” (owl fell down), “Tatie porte chapeau” (Auntie’s wearing a hat), and “photo Carl” (you’re taking a picture of me).

When Carl describes what’s going on around him, it often involves restating what he’s heard, rather than simply repeating what I’ve told him. Upon hearing the question “Qui est dans la chaise bleue?” (Who’s in the blue chair?), he responded correctly, “Carl dans chaise bleue.” One day, I took out my lunch, telling him I was going to eat too: “Tatie va manger aussi.” Carl responded, “Tatie mange aussi.” (“Auntie eats too.”) While I can’t say for sure if he was merely parroting my last sentence minus a few words, or if he was creating a new sentence of his own, he did change verbs and conjugate the new one correctly (“Tatie mange,” not “Tatie manger”). Mostpressive, though, was when I hid behind a cushion and said “Je me cache!” (I’m hiding). He quickly responded, “Tatie se cache!” (Auntie’s hiding). This amazes me, because not only did he change the subject appropriately (from I to Auntie), he also correctly modified the reflexive pronoun from “me” to “se” (in French, we have to say “hiding herself”).

Carl is learning to use French to make requests, like “encore biscuits plait” (more crackers, please). We were having a snack a few weeks ago and he wanted the grapes I had brought for myself. I shook my head and said “Carl mange des biscuits, et Tatie mange du raisin.” (Carl’s eating crackers, and Auntie’s eating grapes.) With his hand still outstretched, he corrected, “Carl mange raisin” (Carl eats grapes). He loves to eat, so it makes sense that some of his longest sentences involve asking for food!

Finally, Carl is also learning to invent, saying phrases that he has come up with entirely on his own. This is the most exciting part--proof that he’s doing more than repeating what he hears, that he actually understands much of what I say. When he saw me take out my notebook, he reached for it and said “Carl écrit stylo livre” (Carl wants to write with a pen in the book)--his longest original sentence in French so far! My favorite example of this phenomenon, though, comes from yet another mealtime. I’ve taught him to clink his sippy cup with my glass and say “tchin tchin” (as they do in France, meaning “cheers”). He gets a kick out of it (and I think it’s adorable). Recently, he held up a cracker and said “tchin tchin biscuit!” He wanted to clink crackers with me! I can guarantee you that no one has ever said “tchin tchin biscuit” to him.

But just so you don’t think that his progress is so mind-blowingly speedy that he’s completely bypassed the normal developmental stage of mixing up his two languages, I’ll conclude by pointing out that he definitely does use both languages in the same phrase, especially when talking to me. I think he just calls upon whichever word comes to mind first, even if he knows it in French too. This has brought utterances like “stylo bleu away” (Auntie put the blue pen in her purse), “car Tatie dehors” (Auntie’s car is outside), “Tatie write stylo noir” (Auntie is writing with the black pen), “Tatie drink un coca” (Auntie’s drinking a Coke), and “Tatie chaise off!” (Auntie, get off the chair!)
Top Tips from Parents:

FUN, FUN, FUN!
Keep it fun! Read books, listen to music. Use extended network of family and friends to expose them to lots of languages.
-Anneke

FAMILIES
It helps to surround your child with other families who speak the minority language. It also helps if both parents are consistent in speaking the second language even if just a few basic words like please and thank you so the child associates that language with that person. So far that has really worked with my 4 year old.
-Giovana

THE THREE KEYS
Persistence, confidence, and patience are key!
-Shanon

CAREGIVER SUPPORT
I work full time outside of the home and have always had a Spanish-only speaker take care of my child to give him the Spanish foundation that it hard for me to give to him. This really works!
-Patricia

POSTCARD FOLDER
Make a postcard folder! We have some children in the family that we regularly send postcards to from different countries and cities. These kids then make a page about the postcard, what the country flag is, what language they speak and what animals are there. They add and draw information into their folders and the text on the postcards includes something different about the culture. They have world maps on their bedrooms walls too so that they can point to where we are travelling too. This has benefited children as young as 4 and they can tell you a little bit about the country and what its like without having visited there. This is a low cost way of educating the kids as well as giving them research activities and a fun task. If a colleague goes to a new country, I give them the address and ask them to write a postcard, in a language of their choosing.
-Alicia

Recommended Resources from Parents:

POWELL’S
When my boy was a baby, I had a very hard time finding age-appropriate books in German for him. The online resources seemed to start with books for three-year olds. The problem was solved by a trip to Powell’s bookstore in Portland. Since then, Powell’s has started listing their books online, so you don’t need to drive all the way to Oregon: www.powells.com/subsection/ForeignLanguagesGermanChildrens.html.
-Paul

AMAZON
For families that speak Spanish-English there is a wealth of on-line shopping resources: in addition to Amazon (for books, music, DVDs) I like SchoolSpecialtyPublishing.com, DiscountSchoolSupply.com, Two-Can books, KiddoMusic.com, and bilingualjourney.com.
-Martha

INSTRUCTIONAL FAIR
My favorite resource are the “German” workbooks by instructionalfair.com.
-Marita
Question: The last couple of months I’ve been translating English stories to Indonesian on the spot while reading to my preschooler. What I’ve been doing is to follow the letters with my index finger while reading in English and to point at the pictures when retelling in Indonesian, so I think I make a pretty clear contrast between the two languages. Plus I finish a full sentence or paragraph before retelling to make sure there is no language mixing in a sentence. From the way my son reacts, he seems able to distinguish well between me reading and retelling. But I’ve just heard that translating stories while reading to a child can give him trouble when he starts reading himself, as he will be unable to know what the words really represent. Is that the case? If yes, will it be safe if I read the story in English one day and retell it in Indonesian another time?

Answer: I see no problem in reading the story in English, pointing at the English text as you do, and then talking about or retelling the same story in Indonesian. If you are worried about this, you may want to ask yourself why you chose to translate stories from one language to another. There are many stories that are the same or very similar across languages and cultures, but there are also stories that hang together with particular cultures. In the latter case, it may make no sense to the child to discuss those stories in a language which is not meant to be part of them. Languages are not just alternative ways of talking about the same thing, they are an intimate part of the cultures associated with them.

You can spend part of your reading sessions talking with your child about how different languages add different ‘flavours’ to similar story plots, or why an Indonesian story is Indonesian. Ask him what he thinks about this. Raising your child’s awareness of the uniqueness of each language can only be beneficial to his bilingualism and biculturalism. Children love finding similarities and differences of this kind, including in languages, and they are very good at this.

Question: Should I use another language than my own with my child? I ask this for two reasons. First, other people tell me that my child is much more fluent in my own language, and I should help him develop his father’s language too, which is besides the language of the country we live in. I know in the end he will be fine and completely fluent in each, but I have to ask whether I should start focusing on his other language only. Second, I notice that strangers sometimes give us strange looks when they hear me speaking to my child in a language that they don’t understand and even ask what we are saying. Is it rude to use my language in public?

Answer: There is no problem in using different languages with your child, if you so choose. I gather from your questions that this is not what you want to do, though. First, your role as a parent is not to help your child develop the languages that other people find relevant. As you say, your husband’s language will develop properly as and when the child sees the need for it. You may even come to witness a complete switch in your son’s language preference. When you do, it will be interesting to ask those same people whether they think you should then start focusing only on your own language. Second, I had exactly the same problem with my children as you describe here. For some strange reason, (monolingual) people always assume that what they don’t understand is necessarily wrong, or even targeted at them! The way I found to try to assuage their fears was to explain nicely to them that I was only doing what they all do, speak my language to my child, and that if they really wanted to know, what I was saying was exactly what they all say to their children: take your finger off your nose (that’s rude!), look at the birdie there, are you hungry? and all kinds of boring things like that. This didn’t solve the matter completely -- I still got stares and frowns -- but it did help a little.

Just go on as you are doing now. If you chose to use your language to your child, go on doing it. It can be very, very confusing to a child to suddenly switch to another language with him. Just imagine your husband one day starting speaking to you nothing but a language you never heard from him!
Question: We have a two-year old daughter and my husband and I decided to follow the OPOL policy. I always speak my language to our child, and my husband always speaks his. We live in my husband's country, but I am the one spending most time with the child at home. I notice that our daughter now addresses me and replies to me in my husband's language, even when I try to make her repeat what she said back to me in my own language. It seems like she just wants to use my husband's language. Sometimes she mixes languages too when she talks to me, which she didn't do before. What should I do for her to go on speaking my language? Is it cruel to make her repeat things in that language, or pretend that I don't understand what she says in her other language?

Answer: There are several issues here, all typical of young bilinguals’ language development. First, and most importantly, your child's age. She is at the stage when all children start becoming aware of their surroundings, and exploring them. For bilingual children, this means that they now realise that mum and dad ‘talk different.’ She is simply trying out the patterns that she finds around her (like the OPOL pattern you're following), to see how they work. Second, you ask whether you may try to ‘pretend’ not to understand another language. This means that you do understand it, and this also means that whatever you do, you won't be able to fool your child about this! She's heard you use the language countless times, all the more so if you live in your husband’s country, surrounded by that language, so why should you not understand it only when your daughter uses it? This makes no sense to a child’s budding awareness of what languages are all about. So just go on responding to her in your language. If you give in, and give up your language, what you are showing her is that there is no need to use your language. Third, forcing children to use a language. I don't think this works, because languages are not about enforcement. They either come naturally, or they don't at all. Show her the wonders of your language instead, by doing with her as many fun activities as you can think about, all from playing hide-and-seek around the house with different toys (who speak your language only!) to serious tickling sessions.

Lastly, the mixing of languages. I’m sure you have also noticed that your child is now attempting to speak in longer utterances? This is a very complicated thing to master. Her strategy is that she will say whatever she needs to say and she can’t be bothered about ‘the’ language. She does this because her two languages are developing differently (they must, since different people say different things to her in each), so certain things come easier to her in one language rather than another, and because she has no idea that languages are things to pay attention to. The bottom line is that she will sort out both the languages and their users in time. I’ll give you a preview: the next stage will be that once she associates a language with a person, say, when meeting new people, she will vigorously refuse to use any other language with that person.
When my eldest kid Joseph was two years old, my friend Ake and I formed a structured playdate called Kelompok Bermusik dan Berkarya (KBB), or “Music and Art Group”. The aim was for our kids to sing children songs and create some artworks, all in the Indonesian language. Coincidentally, both of us had some teaching experiences while in college, thus we had pretty clear concepts on how we wanted it to be. We wrote a proposal for ourselves and agreed to let Ake handle the art and me the music. As a start, I made some piano arrangements to accompany the singing, and she came with tailor-made activities that fit our group. We always began the playdate with an ‘attendance rhyme’, adapted from the song Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. I called each kid’s name while singing a line, for example, “Keith Keith ada di mana” (Keith Keith where are you), followed by the mom and kid answering with their line “Saya ada di sini” (I am over here). The kids were excited to hear their names called, and in no time some were able to answer all by themselves. On every playdate we sang three songs, twice each, until they more or less learned them by heart. Some songs became favorites, and our kids requested us to sing them more often. Basic notes were also introduced in a playful way; for instance, I asked them to squat when low tunes were played, raise their bodies as the notes got higher and reach their arms above their heads during the highest ones. The kids were also using toy music-instruments such as flutes or tambourines when hearing certain piano tones and moved their bodies to the music. For art, kids and moms painted with brushes, sponges and water paints, colored with crayons, pencils and flour. We also made shapes like sandals, faces, hats from papers, traced pictures and played with bubbles. We did simple baking and cooking as well. For each activity, Ake gave instructions and the others followed. The instructions were repeated several times until she was sure the kids got the main idea. Of course it was hard to keep a bunch of two-year-olds seated, but between their jumps and screams, they got the message and did some parts of the artwork. When done, we displayed the results on the wall and later brought them home. Further, I also wrote down on paper names of some objects around the house, both in capital and lower cases. I glued them on each object, just to introduce the kids to Indonesian writing.

Although our kids were singing the songs imperfectly and we moms were the ones doing most of the artwork, we could say our group has reached its goal. Within a year, they immersed themselves into Indonesian by singing eleven songs and making numerous artworks. In addition, they were also acquiring basic music knowledge, learned to follow instructions, and interacted with other Indonesian kids. As a bonus, hearing moms talking among themselves enriched the kids’ understanding and ability of the language. We moms were also having a great time. We socialized, had some good potluck food, and compared notes on our kids’ developments. Thus, since everybody was happy, both moms and kids looked forward to each and every KBB time. Because we talked about our little group to families and friends, some asked how we managed to do it. The answer was commitment. All of us were fully committed to what we were doing. Ake and I worked seriously on the lesson plans, other moms often contributed ideas on things to do, and sometimes took turns to provide art materials. Above all, we spoke only Indonesian during the whole sessions and it became the ultimate unwritten rule. These behind-the-scene tasks were important factors for the outcome of our KBB.

Somewhere in between, I got pregnant with my second child. When I reached third trimester, we stopped this wonderful KBB until now. All of us are missing those great moments, but with a baby around, Joseph and other KBB members going to school, and Ake busy with her new project, it’s getting complicated to find time to gather. Yet, one way or another, we should encourage ourselves to restart such positive get-together, as it provides multi-purpose benefits to our kids.
Feeling annoyed with that helluva noise your kids make on play dates? Coach them to make some hullabaloo in fun yet directed ways!

Prepare some music instruments: they can be as simple as pots, pans and spoons from the kitchen or toy music-instruments such as tambourines, flutes, ringers, etc. Choose any song to sing together.

For younger preschoolers: Before starting, tell kids and moms to play their instruments only at the end of the song and stop immediately when you give a sign. Sing the song together. When it ends, guide them to begin playing with their instruments. When you want them to stop, say the word ‘stop’ in your language with your arms above your head. This is an effective way to get their attentions. Repeat two or three times, as well as during several other playdates. This activity teaches kids to sing and follow instructions in your language, as well as motoric control while playing with instruments.

For older preschoolers and kindergarteners: Tell them they may play their instruments one time at the end of each line of song. Give an example by singing the song yourself and hitting your instrument at end of each line, i.e: Twinkle twinkle little star (hit your instrument at the word ‘star’), how I wonder what you are (hit at ‘are’), up above the world so high (hit at ‘high’), etc. Moms should help their kids and you continue to lead until everybody does it correctly. Repeat it several times during several playdates. This activity teaches kids to sing and follow instructions in your language, as well as motor control while playing the instruments, and sensitivity towards tones and lyrics of the song. Give rewards such as stickers and stamps to motivate everybody.

To add more excitements to your playdates, create a theme! For example, when you want them to learn about insects, sing The Itsy Bitsy Spider (you can also sing it while doing the activities mentioned above). Then show some pictures of two or three different kind of insects while you’re giving short description such as their names, places they live and things they eat. Invite kids to speak up and praise each time they say something.

After that, you may also ask each kid to do some artwork, for instance, to color a picture of an insect with crayons, markers, paints, etc. Pictures can be downloaded from the internet, just google the words ‘insect preschoolers activities’ and list of links will appear. When the weather permits, spend time outside the house and let kids point and name insects they just learn. Change the theme on each playdate to have more fun with other things, even recycled themes are thrilling!

Having a specific theme on every playdate assists kids to learn something in various ways (singing, playing music, creating art, exploring, moving, etc) and keeps their enthusiasm high.
Yummy, Yummy, Yummy!

It’s that time of year (at least in the Northern Hemisphere), when the days get shorter and the weather gets colder and wetter. Time to beeline it to the kitchen and start baking up some cold weather goodies to warm both home and taste buds! But don’t go at it alone. Make sure your kids help you! Get your kids mixing, sifting, measuring and more! You can find some kid-friendly recipes on the internet. For example, Family Fun has a great listing on their cooking with kids page: familyfun.go.com/recipes/kids. A fabulous recipe idea is their “Gingerbread ABC Cookies.” Why? Because you can use the cookie dough to create the letters of the alphabet! What could be more fun for a multilingual family than creating an edible alphabet? And while you are having all of your fun in the kitchen, make sure to use as much vocabulary as possible! Use words for the different utensils and talk about the ingredients. For example, where exactly does flour come from? Chat about these things with your kids so that when those cookies come out of the oven, they will have a whole history behind them!

Time to Rhyme

“Hickory Dickory Dock, the mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck one, the mouse ran down, Hickory Dickory Dock.” What the heck is that supposed to mean? Actually it doesn’t have to mean really anything for it to be a wonderful way to teach your child about rhyming words (as well as other things like telling time). Hickory Dickory Dock is a popular rhyme which parents recite with their children in English. The catchy rhythm and easy vocabulary make it perfect for younger kids. What kinds of nursery rhymes are popular in your language? Perhaps they are mainly through songs or poems? If you can’t find any in your language, then make up some of your own! All that is needed is a catchy theme and some short sentences that rhyme. If you just can’t think of anything, get your kids involved, they will certainly have some suggestions of words that rhyme. If have young boys and aren’t too squeamish (or already had your fill of “boy talk”), you can give in to their giggles and let them have at least one line that rhymes with “poop” and another with “fart.” But prepare yourself to hear that rhyme all day long!

Memory, Memory...

How many items can you remember? Start by coming up with a list of 5-10 items - best is if the items are all the same type of thing. For example, fruits or vegetables or colors or places or toys. One way to play this game is to have someone start by naming off an item related to the theme. Then each person would repeat what the others before him or her said and then add one more item from the theme. For example, let’s say you choose fruit as the theme. You might say “apple” and then the child next to you would have to say “apple” plus another fruit, such as “banana.” Then the next child would say “apple, banana” and then another fruit. It goes on like this until someone can’t remember the full list and then are either out or they stay in the game and try to get it right the next time around. Variations on the game can be made depending on the age of the kids. For younger kids, you can have each child say the same list each time around and you are the only one who adds another fruit to the list. Then the children can hear the others before it gets to them. Another fun variation is to have people think of items in alphabetical order (if the theme lends itself to enough items). This game can be especially fun at playgroups by having people say their name when it gets to them. By the end of the game, everyone is bound to remember at least a few names!
Which Language?

Rather than worrying about code-switching (which we shouldn’t be worried about anyway!) instead have fun changing between languages and see if you can out-trick the other person. Come up with a list of words from both/all of your family’s languages. Then slowly go through the list and see if your children can tell you which language the word comes from. Super fun are words that are spelled the same or sound the same except for the difference in accent. If just calling out the word is too hard, then say a complete sentence and have fun that way. The purpose is not to test anyone with this game, so make sure your children know that it is all for fun. After you have called out a few words, turn it over to your kids and have them call out words which you and your other kids have to answer. A way to make the game more challenging is to have the person who answers then use the word in a sentence. For example, if you say the word “cat” then the person who answers would say, “English!” and would then say something like: “We have a black cat.”

Hand in the Bag

Ewww, what is that thing in the bag? Collect some crazy things from around the house: fuzzy sock, cotton balls, play dough, almonds, piece of a coconut shell, etc. Put them all into a cloth bag and have each of your kids put their hand in and describe what they feel. Don’t let them take anything out yet. After each child has felt what is in the bag, have them guess as many items as possible. Once that is done, let each child pull out one item. Talk about if it was what they thought it was. A variation on this kind of game is to put a little bit of scent on tissues crumpled into balls. Blindfold each child and put each tissue under their nose to have them smell it. Ask them what they think each is and what they think of it. Is it perfume, something to eat, maybe it is a kind of soap or cleanser. Once they are done with that part, take off the blindfolds and show them what each thing was. The crazier the items, the more fun! In fact, they may be inspired to prepare the game for you next time!

Changing of the Seasons

No matter where you live in the world, the seasons go through changes (some areas more than others!), which means fabulous opportunities for sharing vocabulary with your children! In the northern hemisphere the leaves have been changing colors, the sky has been more overcast and the rains have come more often. It is autumn and close behind are the days of winter. We notice that the weather is getting colder but there are so many more changes that are taking place! Bundle up your children and get out and about to experience and discuss these wonderful seasonal developments! Start by talking about the air - the temperature of it, the smell, the whole feel of it (is it drier or moister, cleaner smelling or stuffier from more fires burning in fireplaces). Then focus on the visual changes of the season. Have the leaves on the trees been changing color or maybe are already brown and decaying on the sidewalks and paths around your home? Don’t just focus on the changing colors though, talk about textures and the process of decay that takes place during this time of year: the leaves mulching the soils to prepare things for the cold winter and eventually the rebirth of Spring. In many areas the days are significantly shorter and the hours of darkness longer. Explain why this is the case (a globe is great for this or even a basketball as the earth and an apple as the sun) and why the days will get longer after the spring (Vernal) equinox. Just think of the various vocabulary that your child will be exposed to! And the time spent together is priceless, especially during this time of year when the cold days make the comfort of family even more priceless!
The Art of Coming Home,  
by Craig Storti

Somehow returning home after several years abroad has not been as easy as you always thought it would be. How did it happen that you’ve become a stranger in your own homeland? “Reverse Culture Shock,” is Craig Storti’s answer. But don’t kid yourself. Returning home isn’t as easy as it sounds! Storti, in his excellent book The Art of Coming Home, takes these issues by the horns. In this sympathetic and understanding book, he not only analyzes what is going on that might contribute towards feeling the way you do, he also provides practical, hands-on tips to make your overall repatriation process a lot easier. Highly recommendable for all those who live abroad and are about to return home soon. For those who have returned home already, even if it was some time ago, this book will most likely provide some valuable and delightful “Ah-Hah” experiences. ISBN-13: 978-1877864476, $21.95.

The Expert Expatriate: Your Guide to Successful Relocation Abroad,  
by Melissa Brayer Hess and Patricia Linderman

About to move overseas and feeling overwhelmed, stressed and about ready to tear your hair out? The Expert Expatriate aims at helping you face and overcome the challenges that you might encounter in the relocation process. This handbook contains a wealth of useful tips, checklists and even a moving plan. Also included is information on how to get started and organized, find support, packing and moving tips, advice on how to develop strategies to adapt to a new culture, and even advice on settling in after you’ve arrived there. Chapters on moving abroad with children, pets, and special issues for spouses abroad are particularly valuable. Make sure to check out this book before you make that big move or relocation to another country. ISBN: 1-85788-320-9, $19.95.

Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds,  
by David C. Pollock

This classic by Pollock and Van Reken is a must-read for all who are interested in learning more about the challenges and rewards of a nomadic childhood and growing up in several cultures. Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are a highly privileged group of people, yet they face a host of cultural and emotional issues that not everyone might understand. This book helps to mediate, support and explain. Who, and what are TCKs? Where is home? What are the benefits and challenges of being a TCK? What about identity and rootlessness? Whether you are a Third Culture Kid yourself, a parent, or an educator dealing with TCKs, this book will make an insightful read and will certainly help to clarify this often confusing subject. ISBN-13: 978-1857882957, $19.95.
Going Dual? Make bilingualism even more fun with books in Two languages!

10% Discount for Multilingual Living Magazine Readers!

This month Language Lizard is offering Multilingual Living readers 10% off of these popular myths and legends from around the world. These titles are great for older kids (ages 7-11) who are comfortable with the language and can handle more mature themes. To receive your discount, simply apply Coupon Code CCS-ML when placing your order on-line at www.LanguageLizard.com.

isis and Osiris
By Dawn Casey
Illustrated by Nilesh Mistry

 Isis and Osiris is an ancient Egyptian myth that retells the legend of two of the most popular Egyptian deities. It is upon their story that Egyptian burial rites are based as well as the explanation for the annual flooding of the Nile. It also describes how the first mummy was created. The beloved King Osiris is murdered by his jealous brother Set and his casket is thrown into the Nile. Queen Isis searches all over Egypt to find his body and set his spirit free. Osiris becomes ruler over the Land of the Dead where Egyptians longed to journey after they died. This book is available from www.LanguageLizard.com in English with translations in: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Croatian, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Panjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

Beowulf
By Henriette Barkow
Illustrated by Alan Down

Read this book with your child before he or she sees the upcoming movie! Grendel, the most evil creature alive, is killing and devouring Hrothgar’s bravest warriors. For twelve long years no one can stop his evil ways until Beowulf, the strongest and mightiest Great warrior, arrives on the Danish shore and with his bare hands fights Grendel. All rejoice that peace has been restored at last. But who is the creature living beneath the dark dank waters waiting for revenge? This book is available from www.LanguageLizard.com in English with translations in: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Czech, Farsi, French, German, Gujarati, Italian, Panjabi, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish and Urdu.

Pandora’s Box
By Henriette Barkow
Illustrated by Diana Mayo

This famous Greek myth tells the story of the creation of life on earth and the loss of innocence. Pandora, created by Zeus, is given the gifts of the gods and sent to earth where Epimetheus falls in love with her. Zeus gives them a box which must not be opened. Pandora, having been given the gift of curiosity, opens the box and unleashes suffering into the world. This story is retold with stunning illustrations that progressively depict the forthcoming doom. This book is available from www.LanguageLizard.com in English with translations in: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Czech, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Italian, Panjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese.
How many times have you said to yourself, “That’s it, today I am going to create some hands-on language activities for my kids!”? And then ten minutes later you remember the hundreds of other things you need to get done before dinner! Well, stop stressing and let Peta at LOTE@HOME do the work for you! These are NOT junky, disappointing products. Peta has done her research and has put together a wonderfully comprehensive package to help you and your child have fun with your language! As requested, Peta sent us her standard LOTE@HOME Italian package complete with a calendar (which includes interesting facts about Italy), over 50 Italian stick-on flash cards to post around the house (the handy Blu Tack is included), a body parts card game in Italian, 4 conversation cards which contain everyday Italian phrases, 5 double-sided traditional Italian recipe cards (in English and easy to make, thank goodness!) and a lovely purple bag to keep everything in one spot (including additional language activities and work). After we opened the package, my children begged me to post the stick-on cards around the house (the cards pertain to items around the house). I can’t tell you how much fun we had! The kids were running everywhere repeating the Italian words they were learning. The cards are still posted everywhere and have become our new favorite activity. The other night, as my husband entered the front door he promptly called out, “Potal!” since the card for door is posted there. The body parts game is fabulous! Peta has included different ways to play games with the cards, which is very helpful. And who can resist the wonderful information and number learning from the calendar. We have even tried out some recipes which are easy, kid-friendly and delicious. This product is high quality and highly recommended! Website: www.lote-at-home.com.au Cost: AU$40 full package (or individual items can be purchased)

Il Cocco di Mamma

Who hasn’t spent time looking for some stylish multilingual clothing for their child? I know I have! I only wish I had known about il cocco di mamma when my children were little! What a delightful set of Tees for toddlers (and pregnant moms)! Donna Bottari has put together a lovely online boutique, complete with her own Signature Tees line as well as other high-quality products from other manufacturers. We offered to review her Signature Tees and a few days later, they arrived carefully packed inside two pieces of lovely polka-dotted tissue paper. Donna also included a letter introducing herself and her company as well as the additional products that she offers through her online boutique. As expected, my kids were delighted to see the lovely Tees and wanted to try them on immediately. Luckily for my daughter, she was the only one small enough for the largest Signature Tee size (24 months). I noticed immediately that these Tees are of a high quality. The material is a perfect weight: light enough to wear in the summer heat yet thick enough to endure wear and tear of toddler activities. Without a doubt, the fun sayings are the highlight of these Tees. We were delighted with the mixture of languages and sayings: French: “C’est la vie!” Italian: “baci e abbracci xoxo” and “bello” Spanish: ¿Qué pasa? We were delighted to see that each of the language’s sayings came with its own uniquely chosen font. This really added to the whole look, feel and fun of each of the Tees. We sincerely hope that Donna will consider producing her Tees for larger sizes, at least through age 6 or 7 since that is when kids could really take pride in some Signature Tees! Make sure you go to the Il cocco di mamma website to see Donna’s wonderful line of carefully chosen products for yourself! Signature Tees: 11 different sayings plus 1 for pregnant moms Cost: $22 each (long-sleeved or short-sleeved options) Website: www.ilcoccodimamma.com

Have a product that you’d like us to review? We do product reviews for free as a service to our readers. Just contact us first at: info@biculturalfamily.org.
Pumpkin Soup

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 6 cups chicken stock
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 4 cups pumpkin puree (*see information box below on making your own pumpkin puree)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 5 whole black peppercorns

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Heat stock, salt, pumpkin, onion, thyme, garlic, and peppercorns. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 30 minutes uncovered.

2. Puree the soup in small batches (1 cup at a time) using a food processor or blender.

3. Return to pan, and bring to a boil again. Reduce heat to low, and simmer for another 30 minutes, uncovered. Stir in heavy cream. Pour into soup bowls and garnish with fresh parsley.

Creating pumpkin puree is easier than you might think! Cut your cooking pumpkin (sugar pumpkins are the best for this) in half from stem to base. Remove the seeds and pulp (for a tasty and nutritious snack, bake the seeds in the oven at 300 degrees Fahrenheit for about 45 minutes). Place the pumpkin halves (cut side down) on a cookie sheet, cover with tinfoil and place into a preheated 350 degrees Fahrenheit oven. Bake for about an hour or until the inside of the pumpkin is tender. Scoop out the inside of the pumpkin from the skin, place into a food processor or a blender and puree until desired texture. Pumpkin puree can be put into freezer bags and stored in the freezer for future use.
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Did You Know?

“Children develop much of their capacity for learning in the first three years of life, when their brains grow to 90 percent of their eventual adult weight.”


“To encourage the healthy development of a newborn, parents need to know that it is the earliest interactions with themselves and other caregivers that most affect the way a baby’s brain becomes wired for later learning.”

Basic findings about brain development:

- Although genes control the initial unfolding of the brain, neural activity begins well before birth as axons make their first connections.
- At birth a baby’s brain contains 100 billion neurons or virtually all the nerve cells it will ever have.
- A trillion glial cells, named after the Greek word for glue, form a kind of honeycomb that protects and nourishes the neurons.
- Shortly after birth a baby’s brain produces trillions more connections between neurons than it can possibly use.
- By the age of two a child’s brain contains twice as many connections and consumes twice as much energy as the brain of a normal adult.
- The brain’s greatest growth spurt draws to a close around the age of 10.
- The brain eliminates the connections that are seldom or never used, preserving those that have been transformed by experience.

Tips for parents to stimulate brain development.

1. To enhance problem solving, play contingency games with babies like Peek-a-boo.
2. To enhance recall memory, videotape outings and show them to your toddler and ask questions about what happened.
3. To enhance language development, provide toys for your toddler which lend themselves to pretend play and take an active role yourself.
4. To enhance reading, sing songs and play games with rhymes beginning at birth.
5. To enhance math, make numbers a feature in any activity that involves repetition. For example repeat a word like tickle, tickle several times with the action, then change the action and your descriptive words to sets of three.
6. To enhance drawing, have you toddler tell you about his pictures. Point to various parts and ask questions.
7. To enhance writing, label your children’s pictures. When he scribbles ask what he is writing.
8. To enhance her sense of humor, be on the lookout for opportunities to do inappropriate things with familiar objects like trying to put your toddler’s shoe on your own foot.

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Books:


World Wide Web:

November 9-10, 2007
*Language and Globalization*

The annual Autumn Symposium of the Finnish Association of Applied Linguistics (AFinLA) is to be held in Kouvola, Finland

[rosetta.helsinki.fi/AFinla.htm](rosetta.helsinki.fi/AFinla.htm)

November 10, 2007
*Seventh Portsmouth Translation Conference*

Conference Theme: Translation As Negotiation

A forum for discussion of issues pertaining to language translation by scholars, students and professional translators.

Portsmouth University, United Kingdom

[www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/slas/translationconference2007/](www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/slas/translationconference2007/)

November 21-24, 2007
*Language, Education and Diversity Conference*

This international conference focuses on the impact of increased cultural linguistic diversity, at both national and supernational levels, and its consequences for the theory, policy and practice of language education.

University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

[education.waikato.ac.nz/research/conference/item.php?id=28](education.waikato.ac.nz/research/conference/item.php?id=28)

December 3-5, 2007
*Moving Cultures, Shifting Identities:*

A conference about migration, connection, heritage and cultural memory. This conference will examine issues of migration, transnational connection, displacement heritage, global space and cultural memory created by the movements of peoples between cultures in the modern world.

Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

[fhrc.flinders.edu.au/events/movingcultures.html](fhrc.flinders.edu.au/events/movingcultures.html)

December 6-9, 2007
*KCTOS: Knowledge, Creativity and Transformations of Societies*

The conference “Knowledge, creativity and transformation of societies” (KCTOS) is a public conference and a wide participation – including non-specialists - is encouraged. A detailed program will be available as a PDF-file from the end of November 2007. You can follow the progress of the development of the program at:

[www.inst.at/kctos/updateinfo.htm](www.inst.at/kctos/updateinfo.htm),

Reed Conference Center, Vienna, Austria

[www.inst.at/kctos/index_english.htm](www.inst.at/kctos/index_english.htm)

Send us information!

Are you giving a presentation, workshop or seminar on bi/multilingualism or bi/multiculturalism? Know about an upcoming conference or event which would be of interest? Send information to:

[editor@biculturalfamily.org](mailto:editor@biculturalfamily.org)
The Legacy

By Santi Dharmaputra
11 July 2007 in Illinois, USA (for now)

When young
I went around the globe
seeing the world
like no other kid
spoke foreign languages
more than my mother tongue
befriended
beyond the neighborhood
tasted food
internationally
young diplomat, third culture kid
this is
what I was

When adult
homesickness strikes
behaviour the world
I used to know
yes
I return to them
hoping to relive
pleasent memories
yet
that world
has vanished
forever
Then
I return to my own country
dreaming
about being home
yet
it feels
unfit
unworthy
unfriendly

Looking back
to my childhood
Thank God
how lucky I was
hence
the legacy
of growing up global
leaves
both
joy and sorrow
alike
DOES SWITCHING BETWEEN LANGUAGES HAVE ANY VALUE?

“When both or all participants in a conversation understand both languages, switching has a purpose. It’s almost as if a third language is introduced. Code-switching may occur in large blocks of speech, between sentences or within sentences.”

Some authors have made a distinction between language mixing and code-switching. Language mixing has been used to refer to early bilingual infants who sometimes seem (on the surface) to use either language indiscriminately. Code-switching was then used to refer to bilinguals who had separated their two languages. Many authors now feel that a distinction between mixing and code-switching is not sensible or real.

“Monolinguals who hear bilinguals code-switch may believe that it shows a deficit, or a lack of competence in both languages. Bilinguals themselves may be anxious or apologetic about their code-switching and attribute it to sloppy language habits. Few bilinguals keep their two languages completely separate. Few bilinguals speak both their languages with native speaker fluency. One language may influence the other, and sometimes the bilingual’s dominant language influences his or her less dominant language. However, code-switching is a valuable and purposeful communication strategy. It does not happen at random. There is usually considerable reason and logic in changing languages. Children tend to code-switch only when they are talking to people who understand both languages. Also, children soon become aware if code-switching is acceptable or not with different people. That is, bilinguals quickly learn to recognize those social situations and those people with whom they can and cannot code-switch.”

“Familiarity, projected status and the ethos of the context as well as the perceived linguistic skills of the listeners affect the nature and process of code-switching. This suggests that code-switching is not just linguistic; it indicates important social and power relationships.”

MY CHILD MIXES TWO LANGUAGES. IS THIS NORMAL?

“There is probably no child raised as a bilingual from birth who does not mix words from their two (or more) languages. Bilingual adults tend to do this regularly, but almost only when with other bilinguals. For adults, switching or mixing is seen as fully utilizing linguistic resources; for a child it is sometimes seen as linguistic incompetence. That is unfair to the child. Instead we need to see suitably switching between two languages as effective child communication. A child is using all the language resources available to convey meaning. These are clever children showing both cognitive competence, linguistic adeptness and social aptitude. If they lack a word in one language, they use the word in the other language, often knowing that the listener understands. For example, they are using their stronger language to help communication in a weaker language. It is not that such children are cognitively confused, talking inappropriately or are unable to separate their two (or more) languages. They are being pragmatic and purposeful in conveying meaning. They may even be copying their parents who mix a little and know it is appropriate when with other bilinguals.”

“In some communities, it is acceptable and normal to code-switch. For various Puerto-Rican communities in New York, Spanglish is a symbol of pride in a dual language heritage. Mixing Spanish and English is a badge that they identify with two cultures, two language worlds.”